

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1517
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2000
SUMMIT ORGANISED BY THE CII
MADHAVRAO SCINDIA

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether while addressing the Partnership summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) he called upon WTO to desist from any attempts to kill the competitiveness of the developing countries by interfering in non-trade activities and asking WTO to confine itself to trade issues only; and

(b) if so, the precise concerns of the developing countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN)

(a) While addressing the Partnership Summit-2000 organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on January 10, 2000, it was urged that WTO should be given a much narrower, trade-oriented remit. It was emphasised that WTO should be confined to trade issues only as many of the non-trade related issues, like core labour standards were sought to be introduced into the WTO's agenda by the developed countries only as protectionist devices, with a view to curb the comparative advantage of the developing countries. It was also impressed that non-trade issues can be properly addressed by the appropriate international institutions, like International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the case of labour standards, as they are more competent and better equipped to handle these issues than WTO.

(b) It has been emphasised at various fora that WTO should first redress the concerns on `Implementation Issues` as have been raised by India along with other developing countries in the preparatory process to the Third WTO Ministerial Conference. These `Implementation Issues` relate to:

- (i) the imbalances and inequities inherent in some of the WTO Agreements;
- (ii) non-realization of expected benefits through WTO Agreements pertaining to subjects such as Agriculture and Textiles,
- (iii) operationalization into contractual obligations of the Special and Differential treatment provisions in favour of developing countries. It has been also stressed that WTO Agreements have already provided for mandated negotiations and mandated reviews which by themselves along with `Implementation Issues` constitute a fairly large agenda and that there is no need to further overburden the WTO agenda with non-trade related issues.