

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1469
ANSWERED ON:16.07.2004
RUBBER IN WTO LIST AS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT
Sujatha Smt. C.S.

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any suggestion for including rubber as an agricultural product in the WTO list;
- (b) if so, details thereof alongwith benefit of including rubber in the agricultural list;
- (c) whether the Government has taken initiative to get rubber included in the agricultural product list;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the results thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN)

(a) & (b):Yes, Sir. The Government has been receiving representations from the State Government of Kerala, various Members of Parliament and Planters` Associations from time to time for including rubber under the scope of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Whether or not a product falls under the scope of the AoA, any renegotiation of tariff bindings on imports attract the provisions of Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994. India`s domestic subsidies to agricultural products are well within the quantitative limitations, wherever applicable, and other entitlements including for low-income and resource-poor farmers, set out in the AoA. In respect of non-agricultural products also, India falls under the Annex VII list of developing countries under the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreement and is therefore not prohibited from extending subsidies contingent upon export performance or upon use of domestic over imported goods.

(c) to (e):The Government has already filed its negotiating proposals with the WTO for including rubber in the rationalization of product coverage in the AoA. The negotiations are scheduled to conclude by 1 January 2005.`