

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3952

ANSWERED ON:30.04.2012

WTO MODALITIES ON AGRICULTURE AND SUBSIDIES

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

- (a) the details of revised draft of World Trade Organisation (WTO) modalities for Agriculture;
- (b) India`s stand and concern with respect to the modalities for agriculture and Tariff and Trade distorting subsidies;
- (c) whether India is also concerned over the slow progress in Doha talks;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the efforts made by India to overcome the situation?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA)

(a) From time to time, the Chairman of the negotiating group on agriculture in the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been bringing out draft proposals in the form of a modalities text, based on discussions among Members. A revised text was issued on 6 December 2008, which is currently the basis of the agriculture negotiations under the ongoing Doha Round of trade negotiations in the WTO. It contains proposals for cuts in customs duties, and limits and other disciplines on domestic and export subsidies, for liberalizing agricultural trade. The draft also has several special provisions for developing countries. These include provisions to self-designate a certain percentage of agricultural products as Special Products that would undergo lower or no tariff cuts, and a Special Safeguard Mechanism that would allow the imposition of additional safeguard duties in the event of a surge in import volumes or a fall in prices of agricultural imports.

(b) India's position and strategy in the negotiations are guided by its concerns relating to the food, income and livelihood security of its farmers and the need to secure additional markets for agricultural products. Substantial and effective reductions in domestic support and customs tariffs by developed countries, while enabling developing countries to protect and promote the interests of their low income and resource poor farmers, is a key priority for India and other developing countries in the agriculture negotiations.

(c) India has expressed concern over the slow progress of the Doha talks on several occasions.

(d) India is a founding member of the WTO and is committed to a fair, equitable, rules-based multilateral trading system, as this best serves the interests of global trade and the requirements of developing countries. The Doha Round is a development round and provides a historic opportunity to correct trade distortions, particularly the agricultural protectionism that is rampant in developed countries. It is also an opportunity to gain market access for India's exports, while simultaneously safeguarding the interests of farmers and sensitive industrial sectors.

(e) Following a stalemate in the negotiations after a mini-Ministerial meeting in the WTO in July 2008, India sent out a strong signal of support by hosting an informal Ministerial meeting in New Delhi in September 2009 to re-energise the Round. Negotiations resumed in the WTO soon afterwards. India is closely involved in the negotiations and regularly holds bilateral and plurilateral discussions with other countries, towards a balanced and development-oriented conclusion of the Round. India has been working together with like-minded countries in the WTO for an early conclusion of the Round while ensuring that the interests of the developing countries are protected. Further, India actively participates in international discussions on the Doha Round, including the World Economic Forum and G20 meetings.