



WTO REGIME

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The World Trade Organization (WTO) deals with the rules of trade among nations, as negotiated and agreed among its member countries, and inter alia, also settles trade disputes between its members. Its fundamental principles include non-discrimination in trade matters, freer trade, predictability and transparency. Decision-making is largely based on the principle of consensus. However, the impact of the rules on different member countries and sectors would depend on several factors, both external and internal to a member country, and would consequently vary across countries. Negotiations in a multilateral forum such as the WTO require some give and take, so that the best possible outcomes are achieved. The Government is pushing for outcomes in the priority areas of India's interest, such as in the area of agriculture negotiations.

Under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), for the year 2017-18, out of a total allocation of Rs. 1720.00 Crore Government has allocated an amount of Rs. 1069.87 Crore for pulses as central share to increase the production of pulses in the country. A programme on Additional Area coverage of Pulses is operational since 2013-14 under the NFSM to increase the production of rabi/ summer pulses through area expansion of rabi pigeon pea, gram, pea and lentil during rabi and, moong and urad during summer in NFSM-Pulses implementing States.

The Government believes that a rules-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system is necessary for bringing transparency, equity and fair play into global trade relations. The multilateral trading system potentially offers a suitable institutional architecture for a developing country. While framing trade-related policies, the Government is mindful of the need to ensure that these are aligned with India's obligations and commitments under various WTO Agreements. Internal economic and market reforms are an ongoing autonomous process based on national goals and priorities. These include strengthening and upgradation of trade-related infrastructure, steps to enhance the ease of doing business, steps to improve India's export competitiveness and deepen engagements with new markets, deepen and widen the export basket and promote product standards, packaging and branding of Indian products.

India has a long standing position on the need to prioritize the agreed mandate of the Doha Round, in particular, the Ministerial decision to find a permanent solution by December 2017 on public stockholding for food security purposes, which relates to protection of our food-grain procurement programme at Minimum Support Prices and subsidized distribution to economically weaker sections. The Government is committed to pursuing this issue in the WTO in order to take forward the mandate given in the Bali and Nairobi Ministerial Conferences of the WTO in 2013 and 2015 respectively. India is seeking to implement the decisions on the issue through active and constructive engagement with Member countries.

Further, India's proposal for facilitating trade in services in the WTO was made with the objective of imparting much needed momentum to the discussion on services. The proposal provides a framework to address the various impediments to trade in services in a comprehensive and holistic manner. The proposal has been discussed in the relevant services bodies of the WTO.

This information was given by the Commerce and Industry Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman in a written reply in Lok Sabha today

MJPS

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