

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 16.07.2009
ANSWERED ON
FISHING RIGHTS IN KATCHATHEEVU ISLAND .

1375

Shri T.K. Rangarajan

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) the correct position vis-a-vis the fishing rights of the Indian fishermen, around the Katchatheevu Island; and

(b) whether Government can review and renegotiate the earlier agreements in order to protect the interests of the people and the rights of the fishermen in a changed context and time?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) The Government of India considers its maritime boundary with Sri Lanka settled under the Agreements concluded with Sri Lanka in 1974 and 1976. Under the Agreements, the Island of Katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line. Both these Agreements were subsequently laid before Parliament. Under the Agreement, Indian fishermen are allowed access to Katchatheevu Island for rest, for drying of nets and for the annual St. Anthony's festival. The right of access is not understood to cover fishing rights around the island to Indian fishermen. Keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions for fishermen, Government reached an understanding with the Sri Lankan Government on 26th October 2008 to put in place practical arrangements to deal with bonafide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line.