

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2503**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.08.2018

**INDIA-ASEAN RELATIONS**

2503. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken measures to introduce rules for services trade to ensure special and differential treatment for ASEAN countries ;
- (b) if so the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Government to bring down barriers to trade and enhance the capacity to engage with the ASEAN countries;
- (c) the details of the number of agreements regarding trade, commerce, military, etc. signed with ASEAN countries recently; and ?
- (d) the extent to which trade has increased and the manner in which the ASEAN countries and India are likely to get benefited at the International Platform?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) Yes. As per Least Developed Countries waiver decision of the World Trade Organization, India has offered preferential treatment to Least Developed Countries in September 2015 in the following three areas:

- i. Waiver of Visa Fees for Least Developed Countries applicants;
- ii. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building programmes; and
- iii. Market Access in some service sectors and movement of professionals.

Among the ASEAN Member States, the preferential treatment has been offered to three Least Developed Countries i.e. Cambodia, Lao Myanmar.

(b) India tabled the "Concept Note for an initiative on Trade Facilitation in Services" (S/WPDR/W/55) at the Working Party on Domestic Regulation meeting of the World Trade Organization on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The objective was to initiate discussions at the World Trade Organization on how to comprehensively address the numerous border and behind-the-border barriers, across all modes of supply, which are impediments to the realization of the full potential of services trade. Like the Trade Facilitation Agreement, adopted by World Trade Organization Members in 2014 to facilitate trade in goods, a well structured Trade Facilitation in Services will significantly enhance the potential for trade in services for all World Trade Organization Members.

Subsequently, India tabled a follow up proposal dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016 on "Possible Elements of a Trade Facilitation in Services Agreement"

(S/WDPR/W/57) at the World Trade Organization, which outlines the possible elements of the Trade Facilitation in Services agreements, as conceived by India, in a more detailed manner.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, India tabled a draft legal text on Trade Facilitation in Services at the World Trade Organization to facilitate discussions among World Trade Organization member and to take forward this agenda. Our proposal was discussed in the various services bodies of the World Trade Organization. Based on the comments received from Members on the Indian proposal, India has tabled a revised draft text on Trade Facilitation in Services in the Council for Trade in Service-Special Session for Consideration of members on 27 July 2017.

(c) The India-ASEAN Agreement on Trade in Services and Trade in Investment were signed on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015. During the recent period two Defence related agreements have been signed with Singapore and Indonesia during the visit of Prime Minister to these countries from 29 May - 02 June 2018. An Implementation Agreement has been signed between Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy concerning Mutual Coordination, logistics and services support for Naval Ships', Submarines and Naval Aircraft (including Ship borne Aviation Assets) visit. An Agreement has also been signed between India and Indonesia for Cooperation in the field of Defence.

(d) As part of Balance of Payment Statistics of the RBI, the bilateral services trade data is released by the RBI with certain caveats for internal use only as the export data is not specifically captured for services trade but more as Balance of Payment mechanism. Therefore, it is not being released in public domain.

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