

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2690
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4.12.2019**

JWG ON FISHERIES

2690. SHRI HIBI EDEN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India and Sri Lanka have reached an agreement on establishing a Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries to resolve the disputes between fishermen of both the countries;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the interval between two meetings of the working groups; and
- (d) the details of the decisions of the last JWG?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) to (d) India and Sri Lanka agreed on setting up of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries as the mechanism to help find a permanent solution to the fishermen issue. The decision was taken by the Ministerial level meeting held on fishermen issues in November 2016 in New Delhi. The JWG has representatives from the Ministries of Fisheries, Foreign Affairs, the Coast Guards and Navies of both countries. The first meeting of the JWG on Fisheries was held in New Delhi in December 2016 where both sides agreed to a set of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) such as (i) Cooperation on patrolling including Operationalization of Hotline between the two Coast Guards; ii) Expediting the provision of communication tracking sets to fishermen; iii) Release of apprehended fishermen and fishing vessels; and iv) Expediting the transition towards ending the practice of bottom trawling. The 2nd and 3rd meetings of the JWG held in April 2017 in Colombo and in October 2017 in New Delhi respectively, took stock of the implementation of the CBMs. Government is in constant touch with the Sri Lankan side to schedule the 4th round of the JWG.
