

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 651
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20th JULY, 2022

FISHERIES SUBSIDY NEGOTIATIONS AT WTO

651. SHRI VINAYAK RAUT:
SHRI BALASHOWRY VALLABHANENI:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of final text that has come up for fisheries subsidy negotiations at the WTO;
- (b) whether the proposed text provides level-playing field for Indian fisheries sector, our traditional fishermen and their livelihood;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of support measures that developed countries provide to their fishing sector and reasons behind their demand to stop developing countries from giving subsidies?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती अनुप्रिया पटेल)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

- (a) : The Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (Agreement) agreed at the recently concluded World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial meeting will prohibit subsidies being provided for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and overfished stocks. As Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT), Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have been allowed a transition period of two years after the entry in to force of the Agreement. The Agreement also prohibits providing subsidies for fishing in high seas, which are outside the jurisdiction of coastal countries and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations/ Arrangements (RFMO/As).

As per the Agreement, no prohibition has been imposed on a WTO Member regarding granting or maintaining subsidy to its vessel or operator as long as it is not carrying out IUU. Similarly, no prohibition on providing subsidies has been imposed for fishing regarding overfished stocks as long as such subsidies are implemented to rebuild the stock to a biologically sustainable level.

- (b) &(c): Under the Agreement, enough flexibility is available to India with a complete right to determine within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) regarding any IUU fishing activity and on overfished stocks. Since fish move across maritime zones, IUU fishing deprives India of fisheries resources, thereby greatly impacting the livelihood of our coastal traditional fishing communities that depend upon fisheries. With the implementation of Agreement, India will be in a position to take action against subsidies provided to foreign vessels or operators of other countries by challenging such subsidies at the WTO Committee on Fisheries Subsidies and the dispute settlement system of the WTO. Similarly, if any country provides subsidies for catching fish in an overfished stock, India will be able to challenge such subsidies at the WTO.
- (d): As per notifications by WTO Members, the subsidy provided by developed countries to their fishing sector consists of: programmes for support to acquisition of fishing vessels, vessel de-commissioning programmes, research and development, improving fishing practices, purchase of innovative gear technologies, and support for establishment of environmentally and economically sustainable fisheries.

The Agreement is to discipline the subsidies on IUU and Overfished stocks rather than stop the subsidies.
