

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2478
ANSWERED ON 06/08/2024

12TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF WTO

2478. SHRI K RADHAKRISHNAN:

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

- (a) whether it is true that the Government has not been able to protect the interests of fishermen of the country in the recently concluded 12th Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organisation (WTO) concluded recently in Geneva, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is aware that the decision to scrap the subsidies for fishing after two years is against the interest of around Nine million fishermen in the country, if so, the action taken thereon;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that with no provision for special and differential treatment for developing countries at the MC12 negotiations, the poor, small-scale fishers would suffer at the hands of bigger fishermen; and
- (d) if so, the action taken thereon to protect the interest of small-scale fishers?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री जितिन प्रसाद)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) India has been able to protect the interests of fishermen under the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (FSA) adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference on the pillar of Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU), and Overfished stocks. The FSA has not yet entered into force as the Agreement has not been ratified by two-thirds of the members of the WTO.

The FSA is confined to IUU fishing and for stocks that are in overfished condition as determined by the coastal member i.e. India in its jurisdiction. Therefore, the genuine fishermen will not be impacted by the FSA and can continue to receive subsidies even after the Agreement enters into force.

(b) There is no such decision in the FSA to scrap subsidies for fishing after two years.

As per the provisions of the FSA which has still not entered into force, 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 undertaking IUU fishing and the stocks are not in overfished condition.

(c) & (d) The FSA has Special and Differential Treatment provisions under the IUU fishing and Overfished Stock pillars in articles 3.8 and 4.4 of the FSA.

Further, if a vessel/ operator is not engaged in IUU fishing, then that vessel/ operator will always be eligible for fisheries subsidies. Similarly, if the stocks are not declared overfished by the coastal member i.e. India, then, all fishermen including the poor, small-scale fishermen will be eligible for fisheries subsidies
