

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1252
ANSWERED ON 11/02/2025

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE OF WTO

1252. DR. C M RAMESH:

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

- (a) whether it is true that a meeting of the Committee on agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was held in the first week of December, 2024;
- (b) if so, the details of issues that have come up for discussion;
- (c) whether it is true that in spite of India's insistence that negotiations on unresolved/previously mandated issues in agriculture, including permanent solution to public stockholding, special safeguard mechanism and elimination of trade-distorting cotton subsidies by rich countries, no action has been taken on these; and
- (d) the reasons due to which WTO wanted to club above issues with the other issues and the details of the approach of India if advanced countries try to club all issues?

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) The Committee on Agriculture (CoA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) oversees the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and provides a forum for Members to raise and address related questions and concerns. It had its last meeting on 26th and 27th November, 2024. However, the Committee on Agriculture Special Session (CoA SS) established in 2002 as the separate negotiating body in charge of the agriculture negotiations under the Trade Negotiations Committee of the WTO had its meeting on 4th and 6th December, 2024.

(b) The meeting of CoA SS was conducted to find common ground on a facilitators-led process proposed by few members to discuss all the issues in agriculture negotiations; take stock of the state of play in the agriculture negotiations; and discuss the way forward with respect to substance and process. Members raised

concerns regarding the facilitators-led process. India and other developing countries' Members opposed the facilitators-led process and emphasised that the mandated issues of Permanent Solution (PS) on Public Stockholding (PSH) for food security purposes, Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) and Cotton should be discussed and negotiated in the CoA SS, led by the CoA SS Chair in an accelerated time-frame, as per the Nairobi Ministerial Decision of 2015 and Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of 2005, respectively. It was reiterated that the most optimal way forward lies in addressing the long pending mandated issues on priority and rebuilding trust among members for resolution of remaining issues in a sequential manner.

(c) The WTO is a member-driven organisation where decision making takes place on consensus basis, i.e. all the members have to agree on a particular decision to make it effective and implementable. The negotiations on the mandated issues i.e. PS on PSH for food security purposes, SSM and Cotton are ongoing in the CoA SS. India demands outcomes on these mandated issues on priority and opposes the attempts by some developed and large agriculture exporting countries members to dilute the mandates decided in past Ministerial Conferences.

(d) The WTO did not club the above-mentioned mandated issues. Some WTO Members from developed and large agriculture exporting countries demanded a comprehensive outcome in agricultural negotiations, by treating all issues at par, without prioritizing the mandated issues, thus attempting to dilute the past Ministerial mandates. India, alongwith other developing countries, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), strongly opposes all attempts to dilute the mandates decided in the past Ministerial Conferences and advocates a sequential approach to delivering outcomes in agricultural negotiations, i.e. prioritizing the outcomes on mandated issues - PS on PSH for food security purposes, SSM, and Cotton followed by outcomes on other issues.
