

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 612
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03 FEBRUARY, 2026

WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

612. Shri Vijayakumar Alias Vijay Vasanth:

Will the Minister of **FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING** be pleased to state:

(a) the manner in which the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement propose to address the serious issue of overfishing and depletion of global fish stocks and the leadership role of the Government intend India to play in ensuring sustainability without harming domestic fishing communities;

(b) the details of assessment has been conducted by the Government on the implications of this agreement for India's food security, protein availability and nutritional needs of coastal and inland populations dependent on affordable fish consumption;

(c) the reasons why the Government has not placed the full text, impact assessments and negotiation positions related to the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement in the public domain and the transparency and parliamentary oversight mechanisms exist;

(d) the manner in which the WTO Committee on Fisheries Subsidies practically ensure compliance, monitor notifications submitted by the member countries and prevent manipulation or under reporting of harmful subsidies by powerful fishing nations; and

(e) the enforcement mechanisms and penalties exist for countries that fail to comply with the agreement's provisions and extent to which the Government ensure that these rules are applied uniformly rather than selectively against weaker nations?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

(a) & (b): The World Trade Organisation-Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (WTO-FSA) seeks to address overfishing and depletion of global fish stocks by prohibiting harmful subsidies. The negotiations on the WTO-FSA have been primarily on three pillars, namely, (i) Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, (ii) overfished stocks, and (iii) Overfishing and Overcapacity (OCOF). The WTO-FSA as adopted during the 12th Ministerial Conference on 17th June 2022, became the first WTO Agreement with environmental sustainability as its primary objective. However, the WTO-FSA (phase-I) *inter alia* contains disciplines limited to subsidies related to two pillars, namely, the IUU fishing and the overfished stocks. Whereas, a comprehensive Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies including the disciplines related to third pillar, i.e., 'OCOF' is still under negotiation in the WTO.

The WTO negotiations on Fisheries Subsidies including OCOF pillar continued during the 13th Ministerial Conference held in February, 2024, wherein India has reiterated its long-held positions that responsible and sustainable fisheries is a practice ingrained in the ethos and practices of India's large and varied fishing community. In that context, any comprehensive agreement on Fisheries subsidies should keep in mind the interests and welfare of the fishing community that depends on the marine resources for their livelihood and sustenance. India stressed that historically, while subsidies to the industrial fleets in fisheries sector has led to over exploitation, subsidies are also vital for developing countries and small economies to develop and diversify their fisheries sector as well as to protect the food security and livelihood security of their fishermen. This negotiation is linked to the concept of sustainability and as such, any comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies should be built on the principles of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR- RC). It should also incorporate the provisions of Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) appropriately, as is the case for all WTO agreements. India urged the Members to introduce a moratorium on subsidies by Distant Water Fishing Nations for fishing or fishing related activities beyond their EEZs for a period of at least 25 years.

(c) The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies is available in the public domain on the official website of the World Trade Organization. India's negotiating positions have been articulated through inter-ministerial consultations, including consultations with the coastal States and Union Territories, and inputs received from the relevant stakeholders.

(d) The WTO Committee on Fisheries Subsidies oversees implementation of the Agreement through notification requirements and regular reporting. Any Member can request additional information from the notifying Member regarding such notifications and information provided.

(e) The Agreement provides for dispute settlement mechanism for consultations and settlement of disputes. This mechanism is designed to ensure objective and non-discriminatory application of the Agreement for all Members. India continues to actively engage in the WTO to ensure that the rules are applied in a fair, transparent and uniform manner.
