

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:262  
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2001  
WTO MINISTERIAL MEETING AT DOHA  
RASA SINGH RAWAT;S. SAIDUZZAMAN

**Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:**

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- (a) whether the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference was held at Doha from 9th to 13th November, 2001; (
- (b) if so, the details of agenda prepared by developed countries; (
- (c) whether India and other developing countries have opposed the agenda particularly the `Social Clause` issues like labour and environment of developed countries; (
- (d) if so, the agenda presented by India and other developing countries; (
- (e) whether India was compelled by developed countries to participate and support new round of trade; (
- (f) if so, the reaction of the Indian Government thereto;
- (g) the developing countries which had supported India`s view point and the extent to which the same had been accepted;
- (h) the details of other issues raised by India at the meeting;
- (i) the final outcome of the meeting; and
- (j) the extent to which India has been able to protect the trade interest of the country at the aforesaid meeting?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ( SHRI MURASOLI MARAN )

(a) to (j) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (j) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.262 FOR ANSWER 7TH DECEMBER 2001 REGARDING `WTO MINISTERIAL MEETING AT DOHA`

(a) to (j) : The Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference was held at Doha, Qatar during 9-14th November, 2001, copies of the declarations have been placed on the Table of the House on 22ND November, 2001.

Before the Doha Ministerial Conference, the Government held wide consultations with various stakeholders. Several formal and informal meetings were also held at Geneva prior to the Conference to decide the agenda. The developing countries including India, the least developing countries and the developed countries participated in the discussions. The Chairman of the General Council forwarded a draft to Doha for consideration by the members.

The Government had attached high priority on resolution of the implementation of various WTO rules. Major gain has been achieved in the form of recognition of asymmetries for the first time. Some of the implementation concerns have been adequately addressed. The remaining items have been referred either to negotiations or to subsidiary bodies for further examination and thus are an integral part of the Work Programme.

India had strongly opposed linkage of core labour standards with trade. The Declaration reaffirms that ILO is the appropriate forum to address the issue of core labour standards.

The Ministers at Doha committed themselves to negotiations aimed at substantial improvement in market access, substantial reduction in trade distorting domestic support and gradual phasing out of export subsidies in agriculture. The special and differential treatment for developing countries including recognition of food security and rural development have now become an integral part of the mandated Agricultural Negotiations.

On the four Singapore issues, trade and investment, trade and competition, transparency in Government procurement and trade

facilitation, the study process will continue until the 5th Ministerial Conference and a decision regarding any negotiation would be based on explicit consensus.

A separate landmark declaration on TRIPS and Public Health would now enable Member countries to take measures to protect public health as the Declaration recognizes the flexibility under the TRIPS Agreement when dealing with public health problems affecting human beings, such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other epidemics.

In the context of TRIPS Agreement, we have been raising the issue of extension of higher level of protection for geographical indications as provided for in the Agreement to items other than wines and spirits. This issue will be specifically taken up by the TRIPS Council for considering extension to products like Basmati rice, Alphonso Mangoes, Darjeeling tea etc. It has also been agreed that the Council for TRIPS will address the issues of biological diversity, protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.

Following the Uruguay Round Agreements (1994), the Committee on Trade and Environment was asked to study certain issues and submit a report whether any modifications in the WTO rules were required. The Doha declaration proposes negotiations on three items, namely the relationship between the existing WTO rules and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), process for regular information exchange between MEAs and WTO and negotiations for market access for environmental goods and services. India is already a signatory to most of these MEAs and therefore, these negotiations would not widen the environmental window in trade.

Doha outcome is, therefore, in conformity with the shared stakeholders' interests - the interests of agriculture, industry and most importantly development of India.