

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6122
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2000
INDIA S ATTITUDE ON ISSUES LIKE IT AND E COMMERCE
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Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has decided to adopt the positive stand in Geneva on the issues like Information Technology (IT) and E-Commerce;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to persuade other developing countries to raise the issue alongwith India in the WTO meeting?

Answer

MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

(SHRI MURASOLI MARAN)

(a) to (c) India's positive commitment to Information Technology is reflected in India being a signatory to the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) which is a plurilateral agreement under the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The ITA aims to expand World Trade in information technology products by providing enhanced market access opportunities while facilitating the growth and usage of Information Technology for the dynamic expansion of world economy. In respect of e-commerce, the Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organisation at Geneva in its `Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce` adopted on 20th May 1998, had declared that without prejudice to the work programme on electronic commerce or to the rights and obligations of Member countries under WTO Agreements, the Member countries would continue their current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions and that the extension of this non-imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions would be reviewed in the next Ministerial Conference. WTO has established a work programme to examine all trade-related issues related to global electronic commerce. India has actively participated in the discussions. India's concerns are with respect to issues relating to the developmental dimension of electronic commerce, applicability of existing WTO rules to electronic transmissions, domain names, jurisdiction and enforcement of intellectual property rights, etc. India would like the work programme to address these concerns. However, the discussions are still in an initial stage and India will continue to seek support from other countries on specific issues and concerns. The Third Ministerial Conference of WTO at Seattle was inconclusive and hence no specific decision about extending the practice of non-imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions was taken.