

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:72
ANSWERED ON:21.02.2003
WTO MEETING ON FOODGRAINS
NAWAL KISHORE RAI;SUSHIL KUMAR INDORA

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

:

- (a) Whether the developed countries had requested to keep several agricultural products out of the purview of the World Trade Organisation in the meeting organized by the World Trade Organisation in December, 2002;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the view expressed by India on the above issue and the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the details of the final decision taken in this matter?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN THE REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION No. 72(H) 21st FEBRUARY, 2003 REGARDING WTO MEETING ON FOODGRAINS

(a) to (b) The Committee on Agriculture (COA) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) met in Special Session, informally from 18-20 November, 2002 and formally on 22 November, 2002 to continue discussions on possible modalities for negotiations under the Agreement on Agriculture based on specific inputs from various WTO Members. The COA did not meet in December, 2002.

While there is no proposal by any developed country Member to exclude any agricultural product from the purview of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, some developed country Members, such as the European Communities, Japan, Norway and Switzerland, have proposed flexibility among products such as rice, meat and meat products, milk and dairy products, in order to properly address non-trade concerns, such as maintenance of rural areas, animal welfare, and other aspects of a viable domestic agricultural sector in regions with disadvantaged production conditions. These Members have, therefore, proposed selective tariff reductions to take into account different priorities among products, maintaining current volumes under Tariff Rate Quotas, expanding current Special Safeguard measures against an import surge to cover additional products, and exemption from reduction commitments for governmental support towards addressing such non-trade concerns.

(c): India has stated that further commitments on market access by developing countries are contingent upon substantial reduction in all trade-distorting domestic support, elimination of all forms of export subsidies and substantial increase in market access by developed countries across all agricultural products of export interest to developing countries. Moreover, any market access commitments by developing countries should take fully into account their economic and social conditions, development needs, food and livelihood security and rural development requirements. India has pointed out that the mandate for negotiations provides that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations in agriculture.

(d): The negotiations are scheduled to be concluded by 1 January, 2005.