

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2758  
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2003  
COMMON PLATFORM ON SINGAPORE ISSUES  
YEMPARALA VENKATESWARA RAO

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

- (a) whether India has joined several other countries to form an informal group to arrive at a common platform on the Singapore issues;
- (b) if so, the details of those issues and India's view point in that matter; and
- (c) the extent to which the joint efforts on those issues would be helpful for these countries including India?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI S.B. MOOKHERJEE)

(a) to (c): The Doha Ministerial Declaration stated that negotiation on each of the four Singapore Issues, viz.(i) Relationship between Trade and Investment; (ii) Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy; (iii) Transparency in Government Procurement; and (iv) Trade Facilitation, will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Conference on modalities of negotiations. In pursuance of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, a clarificatory process has been going on in WTO on all the four Singapore Issues.

India has expressed its concerns about the launch of negotiations based on simple modalities, which do not give an idea of the nature and direction of obligations under any proposed agreement. Some developing countries, including India, have argued that at this stage, there is divergence of views and lack of clarity even among proponents regarding the structure of any possible multilateral framework or its components. Hence, they want the clarification process on all the four Singapore issues to be continued. This position has been reiterated by a group of twelve developing countries consisting of Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe in their joint communication before the WTO General Council.

A similar position has been taken by developing countries at some of the recent meetings held in connection with preparation for the Cancun Ministerial Conference. These include a meeting of the Ministers of Trade from the Eastern and Southern Africa held in Nairobi on 28 May 2003; the Second LDC Trade Ministers' meeting in Dhaka held from 31 May- 2 June 2003; the Trade Ministers' meeting of the African Union in Mauritius from 19-20 June 2003; and the sixth meeting of ACP Trade Ministers held in Brussels from 31 July - 1 August 2003.

In addition, a group of twenty six developing countries consisting of India, Argentina, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, submitted a paper to the Trade Negotiations Committee (TN/C/W/13) on 6 June 2003 in which on Singapore Issues, they reiterated the position that in spite of intensive discussions, a large number of differences still exist on many of the subjects identified for clarification and there is a need for further analysis and that any modalities to be decided in Cancun by explicit consensus need to provide certainty on the structure and precise content of negotiations.

An informal grouping on Singapore issues consisting of 13 developing countries, namely, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines and Zambia, has also been formed, which will attempt to take a common stance on issues relating to negotiations on Singapore issues.