

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:89
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2005
HONGKONG MINISTERIAL MEET OF WTO
Mollah Shri Hannan;Thomas Shri P.C.

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

- (a) whether India proposes to participate in the forthcoming Ministerial meeting of WTO in December, 2005 at Hongkong;
- (b) the details of the agenda to be discussed therein;
- (c) whether the Government has consulted various sections of the people for a national consensus on trade related issues;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of Indian Agriculture in the meeting?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (e) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 89 to be answered on 29.11.2005 regarding Hong Kong Ministerial Meet of WTO by Shri Hannan Mollah, Shri P.C. Thomas.

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b): The agenda for this Ministerial Conference includes negotiations on agriculture, services, non-agricultural (industrial goods) market access, trade-related intellectual property rights, trade & environment, trade facilitation, and other issues covered under the Doha Ministerial Mandate.

(c) &(d): The Government, from time to time, has held wide-ranging consultations with the Governments of States and Union Territories, representatives of political parties, farmers' associations and other non-governmental bodies, industry and trade bodies, eminent economists and research institutions, including experts on agriculture, services, NAMA, environment, trade facilitation etc. Government has also sponsored a series of stakeholders' conferences. India's position in the on-going negotiations has been evolving on the basis of these consultations.

(e): To safeguard the interests of Indian agriculture in the on-going negotiations on agriculture in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G-20, of which India is a Member, has sought elimination of all forms of export subsidies by a credible end-date, and substantial reductions in all forms of trade-distorting support provided mainly by the developed countries to their agriculture sector. At the same time, India, through the G-20 and the G-33 alliance on Special Products and the new Special Safeguard Mechanism, has sought exemption from reductions on the de minimis support provided by developing countries including those that allocate almost all such support to subsistence and resource-poor farmers. In respect of market access, the G-20 has proposed that tariff reduction commitments by developing countries should be not be more than two-thirds those of developed countries, and to make integral special and differential treatment for developing countries in all aspects of the negotiation. To safeguard food security, livelihood security and rural development needs, the G-33 has proposed more flexible tariff reduction treatment in respect of products to be designated as Special Products, and recourse to additional duties in the event of either volume-based import surges or declines in prices of agricultural products.