

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1507

ANSWERED ON:16.07.2004

WTO

Patil Shri Prakash V.

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

- (a) whether US Trade Representation has recently urged the member countries of WTO to resume International Trade Talks;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereupon?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY(SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN)

(a) to (c) In his letter dated 11th January 2004, addressed to the Trade Ministers of WTO Member countries, Mr. Robert B. Zoellick, United States Trade Representative, gave his assessment of the state of play of the on-going WTO negotiations under the Doha Work Programme which were affected due to the stalemate at the Cancun Ministerial Conference and made some suggestions for way forward in these negotiations. He suggested that WTO Members should focus further work on the core market access issues, namely agriculture, non-agricultural products and services. In addressing these market access issues, special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries should be incorporated. On agriculture, he pointed out that the Doha Work Programme can be successful only if an agreement on elimination of export subsidies by a certain date could be reached. The US Trade Representative also proposed that the WTO Members could agree to a framework on negotiations by the mid-year 2004 with a Ministerial Conference planned for the year-end.

India is receptive to the idea of a framework agreement by July 2004 as being proposed, as it could be useful in tracking movements in the on-going negotiations, provided, however, that it will not compromise India's national interests. The framework agreement should satisfy three basic criteria, namely, conformity with the Doha Ministerial mandate; these must be clear and unambiguous; and must not constrain possible trade-offs in future negotiations. The framework should cover not only market access issues but also provide a roadmap for resolution of outstanding implementation issues relating to the existing WTO agreements and the special and differential treatment issues on which there has been little progress since the adoption of the Doha Work Programme.