

Sixteenth Lok Sabha

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Title: The Minister of Commerce and Industry made a statement on the Outcomes of 11th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Buenos Aries, Argentina from 10 to 13 Dember, 2017.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): Madam, with your permission, I would like to make a statement on the recent 11th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation which was held in Buenos Aries from 10 to 13 December, 2017. I have already circulated the Statement but I will just give the gist of it to save the time of the House.

In the run-up to the Conference, decisions were expected on a permanent solution on the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes and other agriculture issues. Some WTO member countries were seeking outcomes on domestic regulations in services, disciplines on fisheries subsidies, e-commerce, Invest Facilitation and Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises.

We worked closely with all the members and we are hoping for a solution. We had a number of bilateral meetings as well. But, to reiterate, India participated in a positive spirit in the Ministerial Conference and worked proactively with other WTO member countries across issues to constructively find a way forward. Towards this end, India was a proponent in nearly all agenda items under consideration, including public stockholding for food security, an agricultural Special Safeguard Mechanism, agricultural domestic support and the way forward on e-commerce. On Domestic Regulations in Services, India engaged by contributing textual suggestions to find a common way forward on the proposed text.

India had created strong coalitions based on common interests in agriculture and other areas. Leading up to the Ministerial and at the Ministerial itself, India's coalition partners remained steadfast in their support not only for a permanent solution on public stockholding but also on other issues of interest to developing countries.

The 53-member African Group as well as a large number of other developing countries supported India in opposing premature rule making in E-commerce and the attempts to bring new issues such as Investment Facilitation and MSME into the WTO's agenda.

India stood firm on its stand on the fundamental principles of the WTO including multilateralism, rule-based consensual decision-making, an independent and credible dispute resolution and appellate process, the centrality of development and special and differential treatment for all developing

countries. I wish to assure the House that India is committed to preserving and promoting the WTO and the multilateral trading system with a view to taking the agreed agenda of the WTO forward.

Thank you Madam.

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