

New Legislation for Protection of Plant varieties and Farmers' Rights

1132. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are going to bring forward a new legislation for the protection of plant varieties and farmers' rights and for the better protection of geographical indication of goods'

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposed legislation would extend adequate legal cover against deceptive trade practices; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) Legislations to protect trademarks and geographical indications have already been introduced in Parliament. Legislation to protect Plant Varieties also under finalisation.

WTO Agreement on Agriculture

1133. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that WTO Agreement on Agriculture, being introduced globally, could spell doom for India's hard-earned self sufficiency in foodgrain production as well as food security going into the hands of the multi-nationals, as reported in Indian Express, dated 17th November, 1999;

(b) whether a nine-member delegation of Indian Farmers going to Seattle has in their report strongly protested against the WTO agreements;

(c) if so, what is Government's of India's reaction thereto; and

(d) in what manner interest of small and marginal farmers is proposed to be protected by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) There have been reports in some sections of the press regarding a report prepared by a nine-member delegation of farmers which went to Seattle. It is not correct to say that the WTO

Agreement on Agriculture spells doom for India's self-sufficiency in food production and food security. The Agreement on Agriculture permits unrestricted support to the agriculture sector for general research, pest and disease control inspection, extension, training and advisory services, marketing and promotion services, infrastructural facilities, public stockholding for food security purposes, domestic food aid, payments for relief from natural disasters, payments under environmental programmes and payments under regional programmes for producers in disadvantaged regions.

Developing countries are also permitted to provide domestic support which is measured in terms of Aggregate Measurement of Support, upto 10% of the value of their total agricultural production. Any domestic support given to the low-income or resource poor farmers in developing countries is permitted to be excluded from the Aggregate Measurement of Support. The domestic support extended to the agriculture sector through the current policies for the welfare of farmers in India including the minimum price support mechanism and provision of agricultural inputs at reasonable prices is also well within the permissible limits under the Agreement. Further, the import of agricultural items can be suitably regulated by imposing appropriate tariffs, within the bound levels.

In the context of the forthcoming negotiations on Agreement on Agriculture in the WTO, India has been successfully highlighting the concerns of food security and rural employment in large agrarian developing economies.

Protection of Public Interest under Patents Ordinance

1134. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the safeguards provided in ordinance regarding patents to protect public interest and involvement of the domestic industry on such claims which would be admitted by Government;

(b) whether it is possible for Government to create another source of manufacture within the country in public interest;

(c) if so, under which provision of the ordinance;