

innovative effort. Plant variety protection would make available to farmers new and more productive varieties and encourage investment in agricultural research. The biological diversity in India and the skills of our scientists would indicate that India would stand to benefit from such a system.

8th Uruguay Round of Talks

5329. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY :

SHRI G. G. SWELL :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) when the Eighth Uruguay Round was initiated;

(b) which were the Governments including India and their Commerce Ministries or other representatives participated and what attitude they held on the trade in services and intellectual property rights and other issues facing Eighth Round on behalf of their Governments;

(c) whether services and Intellectual property rights were agreed upon for the inclusion in proposed draft treaty from the beginning of the Eighth Round or prior to that and the details about the attitude taken by our Commerce Minister at every session of Eighth Round;

(d) whether former Prime Ministers who are opposing GATT treaty today had earlier taken a different stand on service and IPRs through their Commerce Ministers and other representatives and if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether it is a fact that biological processes for the production of the plants and animals are not patentable; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) The Uruguay Round commenced in September 1986. Trade in Services and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights were included in the scope of the negotiations from the very beginning. There have been four Ministerial meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee in the course of the Uruguay Round. These were held at Punta-del-Este, Uruguay, in September 1986; the mid-term review at Montreal, Canada in December 1988; the unsuccessful attempt to conclude the Round in Brussels, Belgium in December, 1990 and the concluding meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco, in April 1994. Texts of the statements made by Indian Ministers at each of these meetings have been placed in the Parliament Library. Various ministries and departments of the Government participated in the negotiations, depending upon the stage and subject of negotiations. All the governments of the country during 1986—1994 participated in the negotiations.

(e) and (f) The TRIPs agreement provides, inter-alia, for the possibility of exclusions from patentability. Members have the flexibility to exclude from patentability essentially biological process for the production of plants or animals. However, non-biological and micro-biological processes are to be made patentable.