

India's stand in the WTO Ministerial Conference

1090. DR. BHALCHANDRA MUNGEKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) the stand the Ministry has taken in the recently held World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference with respect to the Treaty on Agriculture;
- (b) the status of the 'peace clause';
- (c) whether it has been lapsed or indefinitely postponed; and
- (d) the impact of (b) and (c) above on India's food security ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) The Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Bali during 3-7 December 2013 agreed on a Package including ten Decisions on various issues including Trade Facilitation, issues relating to agricultural trade rules and others relating to development and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Following the Bali Ministerial Conference, India had decided not to join the consensus in the WTO on the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement till its concerns relating to the implementation of other Bali Ministerial Decisions, in particular, the Decision on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes, were addressed.

(b) to (d) The General Council of the WTO adopted a decision on 27 November 2014 which makes it clear that a mechanism, under which WTO Members will not challenge the public stockholding programmes of developing country members for food security purposes, in relation to certain obligations under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, will remain in place in perpetuity until a permanent solution regarding this issue has been agreed and adopted. The Decision also includes a commitment to find a permanent solution on public stockholding for food security purposes by 31 December 2015 on a best endeavour basis through an intensified programme of work.

This decision by the WTO General Council strengthens the safeguard available for continuing the Minimum Support Price policy and will ensure that India's food security operations are not constrained due to WTO rules.

Steps to help rubber cultivators in Kerala

1091. SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the plight of rubber cultivators in Kerala due to the fall in the prices of natural rubber recently;