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Documents submitted on TFA on services at WTO

332. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has submitted a legally vetted document on Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on services at WTO in Geneva;

(b) whether the WTO held discussion on the documents submitted by India recently;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether India has stressed to the WTO that there should be a counterpart agreement in services just like the TFA in goods; and

(e) if so, the views of the WTO in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) On 22nd February 2017, India circulated the draft legal text on the Trade Facilitation in Services Agreement (TFS) at the WTO, Geneva. The Indian proposal has been discussed in the relevant services bodies of the WTO, namely the Working Party on Domestic Regulation (WPDR), Council for Trade in Services (CTS) and Council for Trade in Services in Special Session (CTS-SS). India's proposal for facilitating trade in services provides a framework to address the various impediments to trade in services in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) India's proposal received a mixed response from the WTO members. Some members appreciated India's proposal as being comprehensive in scope and well balanced. However, several developed and developing country members expressed concern on the scope and content of the draft agreement.

Nevertheless, India's proposal has imparted the much needed momentum to the discussion on Services and India has urged members to engage constructively on this initiative.