

connectivity through fiscal support and infrastructure development, and promoting ease of doing business through deregulation, simplification of procedures and e-governance. The Policy aims to promote the entire aviation sector covering passenger and cargo transportation services, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), general aviation, aircraft, components and associated equipment's manufacturing, aviation finance and taxation, and skill development in a harmonized and holistic manner.

**Duty free tariff preference scheme to African countries**

\*37. DR. BANDA PRAKASH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has accorded Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to 38 African countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the recent signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement is likely to further boost the ties with Africa; and

(d) if so, why Government has not finalised the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union and by when it would be signed and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) and (b) Sir, The United Nations has listed 47 countries including 34 from Africa as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). All these countries are eligible for benefit under the Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme.

(c) The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement, an agreement among 49 African countries, is yet to become operational. It is expected to provide opportunities to Indian firms and investors to tap into a unified African market.

(d) The proposed India-European Union Broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (India-EU BTIA) is envisaged as a comprehensive agreement covering the areas of Goods, Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Facilitation and Customs Cooperation, etc. No date for finalization of the agreement can be given on account of the bilateral nature of negotiations.