

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1481
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29th JULY, 2022

WTO SUMMIT ON SUBSIDIES TO FISHERMEN COMMUNITY IN INDIA

1481. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR:
SMT. JEBI MATHER HISHAM:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** be pleased to state:

- (a) India's stand in the recently held WTO Ministerial Summit 2022, Geneva, with regard to subsidies to fishermen in India;
- (b) how India's stand would protect Indian fishermen;
- (c) whether Government intends to stop the subsidies given to fishermen community; and
- (d) whether Government would provide kerosene and diesel at subsidized rates to country boats and fishing boats?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

- (a) to (d): India's stand is that we are one of the lowest fisheries subsidisers despite a large population and also one of the disciplined nations by sustainably harnessing fisheries resources. India does not exploit resources indiscriminately like other advanced fishing nations and India's fisheries sector primarily supports several millions of small-scale and traditional fishers. Therefore, those WTO Members who have provided huge subsidies in the past, and engaged in large-scale industrial fishing, and are responsible for the depletion of fish stocks, should take more obligations to prohibit subsidies based on the 'polluter pay principle' and 'common but differentiated responsibilities'. India also proposed that up to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the determination of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as for overfished stocks, coastal Members' determination should be given primacy if there is overlapping jurisdiction between the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations/ Agreements (RFMO/As) and coastal Members.

As per the Agreement, no prohibition has been imposed on a WTO Member regarding granting or maintaining subsidy to its vessel or operator as long as it is not carrying out IUU fishing. Similarly, no prohibition on providing subsidies or other measures has been imposed for fishing regarding overfished stocks as long as such subsidies or other measures are implemented to rebuild the stock to a biologically sustainable level. Further, the Agreement provides primacy to determinations made by coastal Members vis-a-vis RFMO/As concerning overlapping jurisdiction. In addition, India along with other like-minded developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs) got Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT), wherein a transition period of two years has been allowed from the date of entry into force of this Agreement. During this period, no disciplines will apply to developing countries and LDCs.

As per the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, support and subsidies to holistically develop marine fisheries sector of our country, welfare and capacity building of fishermen, infrastructure facilities, and kerosene and diesel at subsidized rates are allowed to be provided to our Indian fishermen.
