

WTO negotiations in Cancun

*115. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

SHRI G.K. VASAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalized its position for the WTO negotiations in Cancun scheduled for September, 2003;

(b) whether the opposition parties have been consulted to arrive at a political consensus so as to effectively present the country's perspective on the crucial negotiations at Cancun;

(c) whether Government have had detailed discussions with EU, China, Brazil, Mexico on the issues relating to agricultural subsidies; and

(d) what are the areas of agreement or disagreement, if any, with the other countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) As per the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the Fifth Session of the Ministerial conference at Cancun in September 2003 will take stock of progress in the on-going negotiations under the work programme adopted at Doha; provide any necessary political guidance; and take decisions as necessary.

India has been actively participating in the negotiations on various issues included in the Doha Work Programme. India has consistently taken the stand during these negotiations that the development dimension of the Work Programme should be maintained and not diluted at any cost.

Since agriculture is a priority sector for all countries, India has pointed out that satisfactory resolution with respect to distortions in global agricultural trade is possible only if both domestic support and export subsidies were substantially reduced or eliminated in the developed countries. India strongly emphasized the highest priority that it would give to the food security and protection of its farmers. India also stressed the need for sufficient special and differential treatment provisions for

developing countries, such as the use of special safeguard measures in case of surge in imports.

In respect of non-agricultural products India has strongly advocated increased market access for products of export interest to India such as textiles, leather goods. It also stressed the need for providing for 'less than full reciprocity' in the matter of reduction commitments. Expressing strong interest in the services' negotiations, India has asked for greater liberalization in the movement of natural persons.

On the so-called Singapore issues, namely Trade and Investment; Trade and Competition Policy; Transparency in Government Procurement; and Trade Facilitation, views are still divergent on many of the key aspects. Greater clarity would be required before any decision on modalities could be considered.

The negotiations are an on-going process and while India's position on these issues generally remain as stated above, it is fine tuned from time to time depending upon the progress in individual negotiations. With regard to preparations for the Cancun Ministerial Conference, India has been taking steps at bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels, both with developed and developing country partners aimed at resolution of all the development-related issues, such as TRIPS and Public Health; Special and Differential Treatment; and Implementation-related issues, on a priority basis so as to have a successful outcome at the Cancun Ministerial Conference. Further, domestic consultations with stakeholders including State Governments and Union Territories and experts, on issues under negotiations are regularly held. Consultations with the political parties are part of the on going domestic consultation process.

(c) and (d) India has been holding discussions with major trading partners, including the European Union (EU), China, Brazil and Mexico from time to time, on issues of shared common interests in the on-going negotiations under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. Most developing countries, including India, China and Brazil, favour substantial reductions in all forms of trade-distorting domestic support and elimination of export subsidies provided by developed countries. The EU Member States, in turn, are prepared to agree only to gradual reductions in domestic support and export subsidies. The Cairns Group (which includes Brazil) and the United States (US) have demanded

substantial improvements in market access with elimination of export subsidies and reduction in trade distorting support. India and many developing country Members, however, favour minimal tariff reductions by developing countries. In the negotiations held so far, there has been no convergence of views among Members of the WTO on many key issues.

Dutch funds for urban development projects in Andhra Pradesh

*116. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Dutch Government has decided not to fund any new projects in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether this decision to discontinue the funds would affect the Urban Development projects in the State; and

(c) whether Government propose to pursue the matter with the Dutch Government?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) No, Sir. It has been decided by the Union finance Ministry to discontinue taking fresh aid from the Dutch Government.

(b) No, Sir. The existing programmes which are on-going will continue and reach their completion.

(c) Does not arise.

Charges fixed by CGHS

*117. SHRI N.R. DASARI:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the charges fixed for surgery and other treatments by CGHS for its approved hospitals vary in different cities;

(b) if so, the criteria adopted for fixing the charges;