

**General Council Meeting
(07-08 October 2021)**

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Statement by India – Delivered by Ambassador & PR to the WTO

AGENDA ITEM 8. SUPPORTING THE CONCLUSION OF FISHERIES SUBSIDIES NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE OCEAN AND FISHING COMMUNITIES - DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECISION - COMMUNICATION FROM BRAZIL (WT/GC/W/815)

Thank you Chair.

We thank Brazil for its communication regarding the draft Ministerial decision on supporting the conclusion of fisheries subsidies negotiations for the sustainability of the ocean and fishing communities, contained in document WT/GC/W/815. India wishes to recall its earlier statements on this item.

2. India remains fully committed to the negotiations on fisheries subsidies as provided under the SDG 14.6 and MC 11 mandates.

3. Chair, let me reiterate once more that effective and appropriate S&DT is an integral part of these negotiations. This must ensure the developmental and future policy space needs of countries with negligible industrial fishing fleet and LDCs so as to develop their fisheries sector and to provide equitable opportunities to harness fisheries resources in all geographic zones, including in high seas.

4. This S&DT will be in line with the objectives mentioned in the preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement which recognizes a need for positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, especially the least developed among them secure a share in the field of trade and economic endeavour with a view to raising standards of living with their respective needs and concerns at different levels of economic development.

5. In the TNC meeting held on 15 July 2021, many Members raised concerns regarding the imbalance in the draft text and suggested the way out to bring balance by incorporating the principle of “Polluter Pays” and “Common but differentiated responsibility” in formulating the disciplines. To have a balanced outcome, India has submitted a comprehensive proposal in the document RD/TN/RL/147 on Article 5 of the draft text keeping in view the demands of developing countries and LDCs on S&DT for future policy space to diversify and develop fishing sector sustainably especially in the high seas where many of these countries generally lack presence. Further, there is a need for S&DT in the form of

carve-outs for low income, resource-poor and livelihood fishing or fishing related activities up to coastal Members EEZ (200 nautical miles).

6. The sustainability of the ocean's marine resources is at the core of the disciplines being negotiated and it's a shared responsibility for all. Keeping in line with this understating, India in the document RD/TN/RL/147 has suggested moratorium for 25 years on the subsidies provided by the distant water fishing nations for fishing or fishing related activities beyond their Exclusive Economic Zone as this type of fishing is the most harmful and cannot be continued without huge subsidies either for construction of large industrial vessels or allowing these vessels with subsidised fuel to exploit the high seas and waters of other countries. We believe this prohibition will be the real step towards sustainability, which is the main objective of the ongoing negotiations.

7. Chair, to conclude, let me assure you that India is fully committed to having disciplines on harmful fisheries subsidies by MC12 if the demands of developing countries having negligible industrial fishing fleet and LDCs on S&DT for future policy space to diversify and develop the fishing sector sustainably, including in the high seas.

Thank you, Chair.
