

**General Council Meeting  
22-23 November 2021**

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

**Agenda Item 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI, NAIROBI AND BUENOS AIRES OUTCOMES (G/RO/94) – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR**

Thank you Chair. I welcome incoming Ambassadors, particularly Ambassador of Indonesia for his leadership in G33. Also, I thank Ambassador David Walker for his 2<sup>nd</sup> innings as Mentor and coach for new generation.

**General Intervention on PSH**

2. We had stated in all preceding GC meetings through the year, that PSH has a clear ministerial mandate: that PSH negotiations have to be on an accelerated, separate track; and any effort to link these discussions with other pillars is undermining the ministerial mandate. Unfortunately, the progress on finding the PS solution as per the mandate has not progressed much.

3. It has not progressed despite;

- i. Two large WTO negotiating groups, the G33 and the African Group making submissions.
- ii. Despite the G33 Ministers Joint Statement of September 2021 reiterating the need for expeditious resolution of Permanent Solution on the PSH at MC 12 and reaffirming the G33 Members commitment and readiness to work with the rest of the WTO members based on the elements contained in the proposals submitted by the G33 Members.

4. Chair, if the WTO membership cannot deliver on the mandated issues of the past ministerial meeting, then first, its competency comes under question. In a nutshell, credibility of the WTO hinges on the outcomes of the Bali and Nairobi Ministerial Mandates, especially when the food security issues have become pronounced due to the ongoing pandemic.

5. The scale and its continuous resurgence over different parts of the world indicate that the pandemic may not be easing anytime soon. In these unprecedented times, WTO should get out of the self-imposed impasse and redeem itself by delivering a permanent solution on the PSH.

6. Pursuant to the Bali Ministerial Decision on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes and the General Council Decision of 2014 as contained in document WT/L/939, India notified the Committee on Agriculture that it has exceeded the de minimis level of market price support for rice for the marketing year 2018-2019 and 2019-20.

7. Market price support for rice, a traditional staple food crop, is notified under Article 7.2(b) of the Agreement on Agriculture to pursue public stockholding programmes for food security purposes. India's public stockholding programmes for food security purposes, covering rice and several other commodities, have been consistently reported in its Table DS: 1 notification since 1995.

8. The programme is consistent with the criteria mentioned in paragraph 3, footnote 5, and footnote 5&6 of Annex 2 to the Agreement on Agriculture. Further, the stocks under the programme are acquired and released to meet the domestic food security needs of India's poor and vulnerable population and not impede commercial trade or food security of others. For these reasons, the notified level of market price support for rice is covered by the peace clause set out in the Bali Ministerial Decision on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes (WT/MIN (13)/38) and the General Council Decision (WT/L/939).

9. India has been constructively engaging on this issue with other Members in the meetings of the Committee on Agriculture Special Session. A simple, efficient, and permanent solution on extending PSH for food security purposes to new programs and new products is, therefore, a key deliverable.

10. Chair, the proponents calling for transparency should lead by example. One flag bearer of transparency submitted DS1 Notification for the marketing year 2018-19 in May 2021, many months past the deadline of 30 September 2019. (Table DS:1 for the Marketing Year 2018/2019 was notified on 17 May 2021 vide G/AG/N/EU/69) [Status as on 18/11/2021]

11. This Member gave its reasons in the past to explain the delay. While it feels it can have reasons not to notify in time, it is ironic; it does not see that others can also have genuine reasons for not notifying in time.

12. As a responsible member of the WTO, India is conscious of its notification obligations and has consistently complied with them, including the notification obligations prescribed in the document G/AG/2. Our Domestic support and Market Access notifications are up to date. Our track record with meeting our transparency obligations has been much better than that of several members pressing for enhanced transparency at the WTO.

\*\*\*