

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

Agenda Item 12: 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. India thanks Brazil for its communication contained in document WT/GC/W/815.

2. Chair, while India remains fully committed to the negotiations on fisheries subsidies as provided under the SDG 14.6 and the MC11 mandates, we shared our concern regarding lack of explicit reference to the Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries and LDCs, an integral and important part of the SDG14.6 and mandate of MC11.

3. In the previous GC meeting, we had highlighted and sought clarification on some of the few phrases used in the communication such as “ambitious outcome”, “to curb subsidies that threaten global maritime fish stocks”, “clarify and improve existing WTO disciplines in fisheries subsidies” and “highest standards of environmental sustainability”. But we did not receive any clarification on these terms used in the communication.

4. Its disconcerting that in the name of collective responsibility the communication puts at par countries with no or very few industrial fishing fleets with countries having highly developed industrialised fishing fleets. We believe that environmental sustainability of fisheries resources, is a classic case for the application of the Polluter pays principle and common and differentiated responsibility.

5. Chair, at the 15 July Ministerial TNC on fisheries subsidy negotiations it was evident that Members agreed that status quo is not the preferred option because irrational subsidies and overfishing by many countries is hurting interest of our fishermen; but it was also evident that significant gaps still exist. I am sure delegations would have noted that more than 80 delegations said they did not believe the draft consolidated text is balanced to call it a landing zone for them. We heard Minister after Minister calling the text imbalanced and requiring to be reworked to make it a negotiating text. On the issue of S&DT, once again speakers representing more than 80 delegations said that what the text offers on S&DT is grossly inadequate and they rejected the notion that S&DT should be restricted to artisanal fishing and that too within 12 nautical miles. They also demanded the text should provide sufficient policy space for developing their future fishing capacities for achieving equitable growth. Ministers/Members emphasized that, if this agreement is about sustainability,

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based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, biggest subsidizers who are responsible for the present state of marine resources should take greater responsibility and to reduce their subsidies and fishing capacities.

6. Let me finish by saying that while India remains committed to concluding these negotiations, unfortunately we are quite far from the necessary landing zones required to reach an agreement. We hope that after the summer break, sincere efforts will be made to accommodate the interests of developing countries and LDC's in the draft text, which at the moment remains highly imbalanced.
