

General Council Meeting
9-10 May, 2022

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

AGENDA ITEM 8: JOINT STATEMENT ON OPEN AND PREDICTABLE TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS – REQUEST FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

Thank you Chair.

2. India would like to thank United Kingdom and all the co-sponsors for the proposal and their statement.

3. Chair, food security has emerged as a major challenge today. The present global situation has further accentuated the food security challenges that countries were already facing due to the COVID 19 pandemic. It is not a new challenge, but it is a renewed challenge. The food crisis is likely to get more prominent in the immediate future if timely measures are not adopted. Developing countries in particular will bear the disproportionate brunt emanating from it. Short supply of fertilizers and the predicted adverse climatic condition during the next cropping cycle, are likely to have severe impact on the future farm production. Identifying the challenges and difficulties in transmitting food from the available places to the needy destinations should be the priority of WTO. These are extraordinary times and there are significant concerns for world food security. This was also highlighted during the food security event organised by the WTO recently on 24th April what we heard that part of any focus solution to address the food security crisis not just in the immediate term, but also in the long-term entails finding the long pending permanent solutions to the public stock holding,

4. Chair, extraordinary times need extraordinary solutions. Countries capable of stepping up supply should be enabled to mitigate the severe food crisis prevalent in the world today. Rules written for ordinary times should be surmounted during these extraordinary times. India believes in sharing austerity, which was displayed when India shared Covid related medical products and vaccines during the pandemic with the world even while its own requirements were still being met. It is once again willing to share its food provided that the existing WTO rules do not come in its way to help other countries during these challenging times. As our Prime Minister has said, in his conversation with some of the world leaders that India is 'ready to supply food stocks to the world' if WTO can find a way out from the existing constraints

under Agreement on Agriculture. Chair, we need to look at the existing constraints in the agreement on agriculture that are coming in the way of augmenting supplies during this kind of crisis. Therefore, we appeal to Members that we need to find ways and means to support the efforts of Members who are in a position to help others during the current crisis. And we should not link this in any way to the ongoing negotiations in the agriculture pillar. And I repeat, we should not link this temporary measure in any way to the ongoing negotiations in the agriculture pillar.

5. Need of the hour is to translate noble intentions what we have heard into concrete actions and offer meaningful solutions in the short term. It is important that WTO makes a significant contribution during MC 12 to the global efforts to tackle the current food security challenges and my delegation looks forward to working towards that end.

Thank you, Chair.

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