

Fifth Trade Policy Review of India:

In order to promote transparency and provide better understanding of the trade policies and practices of its Members, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has a mechanism for regular review of their trade policies. The Trade Policy Reviews (TPR) provide the country under review a feedback on its performance in the WTO system. For this purpose, the WTO Secretariat prepares a detailed report on the trade policies and practices of the country under review ('the Secretariat Report'), which is supplemented by a policy statement of the Government under review ('the Government Report'). These two reports form the basis for the review, and are public documents, available on WTO website.

2. The TPR offers opportunity to other WTO Members to ask questions and raise concerns on different aspects of policies and practices of the country under review. These written advance questions, generally based on the contents of the Secretariat Report and the Government Report, are required to be replied in writing by start of the review meeting.

3. Depending upon its share in world trade, each Member's trade policy is reviewed by the WTO at fixed periodic intervals. India's Trade Policy Review is carried out every four years.

4. The **Fifth Trade Policy Review of India** was held on 14th and 16th September, 2011 at WTO Geneva. Before the meeting, the WTO Secretariat circulated a compilation of India's written replies to 886 (eight hundred and eighty-six) advance questions raised by 26 (twenty-six) WTO Members. Replying to these questions required coordination involving almost 70 (seventy) Departments and Ministries of the Govt. of India.

5. On 14th Sept 2011, the proceedings started with the introductory remarks of the Chairperson of the TPRB (Trade Policy Review Body). This was followed by the opening statement of the Commerce Secretary, who led the Indian delegation, giving an overview of policies and new developments. Thereafter, the Discussant spoke on main issues covered in the WTO Secretariat Report and the Government Report. The subsequent proceedings witnessed oral interventions from 42 (forty-two)

WTO Members: Brazil, Mexico, China, US, Switzerland, Korea, Malaysia, Colombia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Japan, Norway, EU, Chinese Taipei, Canada, Thailand, Argentina, Turkey, New Zealand, Ecuador, Chile, Peru, Zimbabwe, Uruguay, Bangladesh, Venezuela, South Africa, Oman, Morocco, El Salvador, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Zambia, Nigeria and Guinea.

6. Most of the Members commended the resilience of Indian economy that smoothly withstood the adverse effects of global financial crisis without taking recourse to protectionist measures. Members appreciated India for using its trade policy to promote sustainable development and inclusive growth. Members also noted India's positive engagement in Doha Round negotiations. Some of the Members, notably US, raised concerns in certain areas, viz. tariffs and duties; licensing and restrictions; trade defense measures (anti-dumping); SPS & TBT; Government Procurement; incentives schemes to promote investments & exports, and to protect agriculture; tariff protection on agriculture; services and investments.

7. The issues raised in the first session were effectively responded in the Closing Statement of the Commerce Secretary, delivered on 16th Sept 2011. Some of the Members – EU, US, Japan and Ecuador, took the floor and requested India for written response to their additional / follow up questions.

8. The Fifth Trade Policy Review was concluded successfully with a wrap-up statement made by the Chairperson of TPR Body.

Trade Policy Division
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