

Home » Economy

India's position on fish negotiations at WTO gets support from many developing countries

Updated - September 13, 2024 at 10:28 PM. | Geneva

Efforts on at WTO to conclude negotiations by year-end; small fishers want better deal

BY AMITI SEN

 COMMENTS  SHARE

 READ LATER



Small-scale fishers from around the world had expressed significant concerns about the current WTO proposed text on fisheries subsidies. | Photo Credit: NIRMAL HARINDRAN

India's submissions at the WTO demanding that disciplines on fisheries subsidies should effectively check large-scale industrial fishing fleets involved

FEEDBACK

Latest News



ZF Rane opens a new inflator plant and sled test facility

in deep-sea fishing while not inhibiting small players looking to expand their fishing capabilities have received support from many developing countries and LDCs, a Geneva-based trade official said.

ADVERTISEMENT

 **PREMIUM**

Back to Basics: Have You Filed in Nomination For Your MF?

BY BL RESEARCH BUREAU

ADVERTISEMENT

“Efforts are on at the WTO to conclude the second part of the fisheries subsidies agreement, that deals with disciplining subsidies contributing to over capacity and over fishing, by the end of the year. India’s submissions, made in response to the fisheries committee chair’s draft proposal, has been supported by many developing and least developed countries,” the official said.

On Friday, Chair of fisheries negotiations Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson of Iceland, in a note asked all member-countries to maintain considerable momentum to engage with each other and senior leaders in capitals to find the political will necessary to conclude the negotiations by the year-end.

Businessline updates on your Whatsapp

Get it Now

FEEDBACK

India's submissions on the WTO draft text on fisheries subsidies point to significant loopholes that may perpetuate unsustainable fishing operations, particularly by large-scale industrial fishing nations.

"It is essential to carefully review these aspects of the current draft text to ensure that it effectively aligns with the sustainability goals of the OCOF pillar without unfairly burdening developing countries," it said.

Reflecting India's worries, Alieu Sowe, Coordinator, Gambia Fisher Folks Association, said that small-scale fishers from around the world had expressed significant concerns about the current WTO proposed text on fisheries subsidies.

Speaking at the ongoing WTO Public Forum in Geneva on the issue of meeting sustainability development goals in fisheries negotiations, Sowe said the proposed text did not effectively discipline the large-scale, industrial fishing operations that are primarily responsible for overfishing and depletion of marine resources. Instead, it imposed stringent conditions on small-scale fishers, particularly in developing countries.

The sustainability exemption clause was also seen as problematic as it allowed advanced fishing countries with better monitoring and notification capabilities to avoid commitments to cut harmful subsidies. "This discriminates

against poorer countries that lack such capacities, even if they fish sustainably," Sowe said.

differential treatment provisions

The proposed special and differential treatment provisions for small-scale fishers are considered inadequate. The exemptions are based on non-industrial characteristics, which do not address the core issue of industrial fishing.

"Overall, small-scale fishers are calling for more effective measures to curb industrial fishing subsidies and better support for sustainable small-scale fishing practices," he said.

An estimated 37.7 per cent of global fish stocks are overfished compared with 10 per cent in 1974. There is a total government funding of \$35 billion for fishing, of which an estimated \$22 billion increases the capacity to fish unsustainably, per figures shared by the WTO.

While China, the EU, the US, South Korea and Japan are among the top subsidisers. India's subsidies are relatively small estimated by the government at less than \$15 per fisher family annually.

(The reporter is in Geneva at the invitation of the WTO)