

World Trade Organisation (WTO) related issues

6.34 **Implementation:** India along with other like-minded developing countries has continued to maintain pressure for resolution of implementation issues relating to various perceived asymmetries and imbalances in existing WTO Agreements and effective operationalisation of various special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries. These implementation issues were highlighted in the preparatory process to the Third Ministerial Conference at Seattle and formed a prominent part of the Draft Ministerial Text (DMT) at Seattle.

6.35 This consistent pressure by developing countries to address implementation issues upfront and the position that satisfactory resolution of these issues was necessary before considering any fresh agenda for the WTO has yielded results. The General Council decided on 3rd May 2000 to hold Special Sessions to discuss various implementation related issues and concerns raised by Members, including paras 21 and 22 of the Draft Ministerial Text dated 19 October, 1999 for the Seattle Ministerial Conference. It was also decided that these would be addressed by the fourth Ministerial Conference and appropriate decisions will be taken. Further, a Work Programme was adopted at the meeting of the General Council on 20th June 2000 and in accordance with this, formal and informal meetings of the General Council have been held for resolving these issues.

6.36 At the December 15th 2000 meeting of the General Council, a Decision has been taken on 9 tirets out of the 54 tirets that were mentioned in para 21 of the DMT. It has also been decided to continue with the Work Programme as envisaged in the General Council's Decisions of 5th May and 20th June, 2000. While Decisions on the 9 tirets taken so far are modest in terms of their impact, the pressure mounted by India and other developing countries has succeeded in putting implementation issues firmly and squarely in the Agenda of the WTO for the first time.

6.37 **Agriculture:** As mandated under Article 20 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, the process of negotiations has begun in the year

2000. These negotiations are being conducted in the Special Sessions of the WTO Committee on Agriculture. Four Special Sessions of the Committee on Agriculture have already taken place in 2000 in which negotiating proposals submitted by different countries/group of countries were considered. While supporting the proposals which highlight the need for sufficient flexibility required by large agrarian developing economies to address their food and livelihood security, we have made it clear that India is not supportive of the attempts of certain developed countries to maintain their trade distorting subsidies. India has also co-sponsored a paper on 'Market Access' along with 11 other developing countries. This paper highlights the trade distortions prevalent in international markets and consequent hindrance to exports from developing countries. It has been demanded that the developed countries should effect substantial reductions in their tariffs on a weighted average basis and that the administration of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) should be transparent and equitable.

6.38 **Services:** Mandated Negotiations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) commenced at the WTO on 1st January, 2000, involving a further round of progressive liberalisation of specific commitments on market access undertaken by Members. This is a comprehensive round covering all Services sectors and all the modes of supply of Services. Special Sessions of the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) are being held for these negotiations and currently the CTS is in the process of formulating Negotiating Guidelines and Procedures. India, along with 22 other developing countries, has filed a proposal in the WTO containing the essential elements of such Negotiating Guidelines and Procedures. The main features of this proposal are that the basic architecture of GATS should remain unchanged; the "Request-Offer" Approach should be the principal modality of these negotiations; there should be appropriate flexibility for developing country Members while undertaking commitments; and the starting point of these negotiations should be the bound level of commitments undertaken by Members.

6.39 India's primary interest in these negotiations lies in ensuring freer movement for natural persons especially professionals.

Accordingly, India has filed a proposal in the WTO suggesting possible strategies and approaches for bringing about effective liberalization in the Movement of Professionals. The main features relate to broader and deeper horizontal and sectoral commitments in sectors of interest to India, commitments to be based

on uniform and well defined categories of personnel, removal of existing practices requiring social security contributions for temporary movement, greater facilitation and use of mutual recognition agreements for recognition of qualifications, etc.