

CLARIFICATION ON THE STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Outcome of the 9th Ministerial Conference of the WTO held at Bali, Indonesia from 3rd to 7th December, 2013

18th December 2013

SHRI N.K. SINGH (BIHAR): Sir, I recognize that the WTO dynamics of negotiation, like all negotiations, must be conducted in a spirit in which there is, obviously, the dynamics of negotiation. But what we have to really assess is that in the negotiating dynamics the advantage is tipped in our favour for the reasons which I share, which the Leader of the Opposition has raised -- that it does not look that in the fulcrum of trying to evaluate the gains from Bali, the balance is tipped in our favour. So, how would the Minister want to assuage us that we have turned out to be, broadly speaking, net gainers as an outcome of the Bali agreement? Coming to my next question, I draw the attention of the Minister to paragraph 2 of his statement which he made yesterday, and I will read only one sentence from that paragraph. In that paragraph, the Minister has said, "Accordingly, after deliberations among members in 2012, it was agreed that members would strive for an agreement on trade facilitation, a few areas in agriculture, development issues and issues of relevance to the Least Developed Countries". Now, could you really tell us on development issues the progress that you have achieved? I can understand the progress you have achieved perhaps on trade facilitation, namely that we have given in. But, on the development issues, which were the centrality of the things, and this was supposed to be a development round, what is the incremental progress which we have made on any of the more difficult development issues which will facilitate us? My third important issue is that I share the view of the Leader of the Opposition on any anti-circumvention and safeguards, particularly, in relation to the impact of Clause 4 which he has read out and, so, I need not read the Clause again. But continuing in the same spirit, Sir, my next question to the Minister is: What is the implication of Clause 6 of that Agreement? Clause 6 of the Agreement makes it binding upon India to hold consultations with other members whenever requested about the operation of the public stockholding programme.

As a result, therefore, has India taken the binding commitment for international scrutiny arising not only out of the various other concerns but from directly also arising out of clause 6 of that agreement? Similarly, Sir, there are other clauses in which we have lent ourselves to open-ended unbridled powers on other WTO members to scrutinize us, to answer questions, to downsize our food security programme to conform to what they believe would be acceptable. My next question to the Minister is: What are the factors which really didn't enable us to make any progress whatsoever on freezing the baseline figures to 1986-88 figures which are completely misaligned with prices which are prevalent in 2013? Would you share with us the process that went through and why we utterly failed to make any progress on moving the baseline to 1986-88? My fifth question on trade facilitation is this: Who gains from the trade facilitation? I recognize that in give-and-take, you need to take on some commitment also. But, if you look at one broad picture on trade facilitation, India's trade as a global trade is 1.6 per cent. Eighty per cent of the global trade benefits really the more

developed countries. So, the trade facilitation measure on which we desperately feel, and looking at our miniscule position, clearly, the advantage is tipped in favour of the developed countries, to whom the bulk of the benefit goes. I have two other questions and I will finish very quickly. Would the Minister enlighten us whether any progress has been made on the difficult issue of a large amount of subsidy of the developed countries to their agriculture? Sir, the volume of that subsidy and the value of that subsidy is one billion dollars a day! Have we made any progress whatsoever in relation to persuading the developed countries in knocking out those? Indeed, Sir, they continue to gain from the Amber Box which really entitles them to subsidies to produce more, from the Blue Box which entitles them that their subsidies give incentives to limit production, and, what is worse, the Green Box, namely, in the name of environment, a livestock production enables them to give further subsidies. Sir, would the Minister share with us any progress in relation to production sharing contracts and in relation to production matters? Finally, would you share with us the attitude of the developed countries, particularly some important developing countries like China, in the conduct of these Bali Negotiations?