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Text

Protecting domestic producers- An outline of measures taken

As per Article XI of GATT, maintenance of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) on imports is not permitted. However, to provide protection to the domestic producers the government can, if the situation so warrants, utilise the mechanism of raising the applied tariffs within the bound rates, if such a gap exists and take measures such as anti-dumping action, imposition of countervailing duties and safeguards actions which are permissible under the WTO Agreements. Imports are being closely monitored and the government are determined to ensure through the appropriate use of the above mechanisms that imports do not cause any serious injury to the domestic producers. Some of the recent measures taken in this regard are:

i) **Import duties on a number of agro and other items have been increased.** For example, the duty on arecanut has been raised from 35% to 100%; on poultry products from 35% to 100%; on wheat from 0% to 50%; on skimmed milk powder from 0% to 60% for imports beyond the Tariff Rate Quota of 10000 tonnes; on apple from 35% to 50%; on rice from 0% to 70% and on broken rice and paddy from 0% to 80%.

ii) **Suo-moto anti-dumping investigations have been initiated** in respect of import of battery cells, battery operated toys and sports shoes from China.

iii) **Import of all packaged commodities has been made subject to compliance of all the conditions of the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodity) Order 1977, as applicable on domestic producers.**

iv) **Import of 131 products has been made subject to compliance of the mandatory Indian quality standards as applicable to domestic goods.** For compliance of this requirement all manufacturers/exporters of these products to India shall be required to register themselves with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The list of 131 products includes various food preservatives and additives, milk powder, infant milk food, certain kinds of cement, household and similar electrical appliances, gas cylinders and multi-purpose dry batteries.

v) **An Inter-ministerial Group headed by Commerce Secretary was constituted on 28/7/2000 to assess the likely impact of the removal of QRs on imports and to suggest suitable corrective measures.** Departments of Agriculture & Cooperation; Consumer Affairs; Small Scale Industries and Agro & Rural Industries; Chemicals & Petro-chemicals; Fertilisers; Petroleum & Natural Gas; Animal Husbandry & Dairy; and the Ministries of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises and Information Technology have been represented in the Group. The Group has met thrice on 17/8/2000, 8/9/2000 and 14/12/2000 and made its interim recommendations. Based on these interim recommendations, certain steps to regulate imports have already been notified through Notification No. 44(RE-2000)/97-2002 dated 24/11/2000. The Group is expected to make its final recommendations in the near future.

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Measures initiated to enable small industries to withstand competition: Dr. Raman Singh



The small scale industries (SSIs) are facing problems such as outdated machinery & obsolete technology, poor infrastructure, lack of access to markets, competition from allied products, and competition from competing imports. Government has initiated following measures to enable small scale industries overcome these problems and withstand competition:

- Announcement of a new Credit Insurance Scheme in the Budget (1999-2000) for providing adequate security to banks and improving flow of investment credit to SSI Units, particularly export oriented and tiny units.
- To increase the reach of banks to the tiny sector, lending by banks to non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) of other financial intermediaries for purposes of lending to the tiny sector, has been included within the definition of priority sector for bank lending.
- Exemption from excise duty, as given to SSI units, will be extended to goods bearing a brand name of another manufacturer if produced by SSI units in rural areas.
- Enhancement of excise duty exemption limit for small-scale sector including tiny units from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs.100 lakh.
- Amendment of Small Scale and Ancillary Industrial Undertakings Act to ensure timely payments to the small scale units for supplies made by these units to large industrial units.

*(Reply given by Dr. Raman Singh, Minister of State for
Commerce & Industry, in response to an Unstarred Question in
the Rajya Sabha on 18 Decemer, 2000)*



Government monitoring imports, steps being taken to safeguard domestic industry: Omar Abdullah

(Statement by Mr. Omar Abdullah, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry on 22-12-2000 in Rajya Sabha in response to the notice of calling attention tabled by Shri Sanjay Nirupam and other members, regarding dumping of Chinese goods in Indian market and its adverse effect on the Indian economy)



“As per principles of GATT, trade among member countries is conducted on the basis of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment principle. This means that any advantage, favour, privilege or immunity granted by any contracting party to any product originating in or destined for any other country shall be accorded immediately and unconditionally to the like product originating in or destined for the territories of all other contracting parties. Though China is not a member of WTO, India and China have accorded MFN status to each other as part of Bi-Lateral Agreement. Thus, after removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs), imports from China are also free.

A perusal of import data reveals that there has not been any surge of imports on an overall basis as a consequence of removal of QRs. In fact, the rate of growth of imports which stood at 36.40% in 1995-96 has come down progressively over the years to 13.2% in 1996-97, 11% in 1997-98, 14.2% in 1998-99 and 13.6% in 1999-2000. The total imports from China constitute, on an average, less than 3% of the total Indian imports. The growth rate of imports from China has been (-) 3% in 1996-97, 62% in 1997-98, 3.5% in 1998-99, 25.6% in 1999-2000 and 30% during the April-September, 2000-2001. Out of total imports of the Rs. 3224 crore from China during April - September 2000, the value of electronic goods was Rs. 515 crore. The domestic production of electronic goods is of the order of Rs. 30,000 crore.

The Designated Authority appointed by the Government conducts Anti-Dumping investigations in India under Sections 9A, 9B and 9C of the Customs Tariff (Amendment) Act, 1995. According to the Anti-Dumping Rules, initiation of Anti-Dumping investigations is undertaken when the domestic industry files fully a documented petition to the Designated Authority with prima facie evidence of dumping, injury and causal link between the dumping of the imported goods and injury to the domestic industry. However, under Rule 5(4) of the Custom Tariff Rules of 1995, the Designated Authority may initiate investigations suo-moto, if it is satisfied with the information received from the Collector of Customs appointed under the Customs Act, 1962, or from any other source that sufficient evidence exists regarding dumping of the foreign goods, material injury to the domestic industry and causal link between the two. **In all, the Designated Authority has already imposed, since its establishment, anti - dumping duties i.e. 68 crores under these provisions. In respect of import of electronic goods from Chinese companies, the Designated Authority has initiated anti - dumping proceedings against dry batteries and toys. In case any other segment of Indian industry affected by dumping from China or any other country files a petition, the Designated Authority will take appropriate action.**

The Government is closely monitoring the imports and all necessary steps to safeguard the interests of domestic industry are being taken. Towards that end, a notification has recently been issued prescribing quality standards for 131 products and mandatory compliance with the provisions of Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodity) Order, 1977 on imports, as applicable on domestic products.

It will thus be seen that the Government is fully alive to the situation and is taking every possible step to prevent dumping of goods into the Indian market and to ensure that the imports do not enjoy any unfair advantage over domestically produced goods.”

Text of notification dated 24/11/2000, making imports subject to compliance of conditions of Standards of Weights & Measures Rules & Indian Quality Standards

**TO BE PUBLISHED IN GAZETTE OF INDIA EXTRAORDINARY
PART-II, SECTION-3, SUB SECTION (ii)**

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**NOTIFICATION NO. 44 (RE-2000)/1997-2002
NEW DELHI: 24 November, 2000**

S.O. (E)- In exercise of powers conferred under section 5 of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 read with paragraph 1.3 and 4.1 of the Export and Import Policy, 1997-2002, the Central Government hereby makes the following amendments in the ITC(HS) Classifications of Exports and Import Items, 1997-2002 published on 31st March, 1997 (RE-98) as amended from time to time, namely-

2. The following shall be added after paragraph 4 of Chapter 1A: General notes regarding import policy, of ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997-2002.

"4. All such packaged products, which are subject to provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977 when produced/packed/sold in domestic market, shall be subject to compliance of all the provisions of the said rules, when imported into India. The compliance of these shall be ensured before the import consignment of such commodities is cleared by Customs for home consumption. All prepackaged commodities, imported into India, shall in particular carry the following declarations:

- (a) Name and address of the importer;
- (b) Generic or common name of the commodity packed;
- (c) Net quantity in terms of standard unit of weights and measures. If the net quantity in the imported package is given in any other unit, its equivalent in

terms of standard units shall be declared by the importer;

- (d) Month and year of packing in which the commodity is manufactured or packed or imported;
- (e) Maximum retail sale price at which the commodity in packaged form may be sold to the ultimate consumer. This price shall include all taxes local or otherwise, freight, transport charges, commission payable to dealers, and all charges towards advertising, delivery, packing, forwarding and the like as the case may be.

5. A new Appendix V to Schedule I of ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Imports Items, 1997-2002, shall be annexed as per annexure 'A' of this Notification.

6. Imports of all the products as per Appendix V to Schedule I of the ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997-2002, shall be subject to compliance of the mandatory Indian Quality Standards as mentioned in column 2 of the said Annexure which are also applicable of domestic goods. For compliance of this requirement, all manufacturers/exporters of these products to India, shall be required to register themselves with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

This issues, in Public Interest.

Sd/-

(N.L. LAKHANPAL)

Director General of Foreign Trade and ex-officio
Additional Secretary to the Government of India

(Annexure 'A' Notification No. 44
Dated 24 November, 2000)

List of 131 import products made subject to compliance of mandatory Indian Quality Standards as applicable to domestic goods

Sl. No.	Applicable BIS Standards	Name of the products
1.	IS 1694	Tartrazine, Food grade
2.	IS 1695	Sunset Yellow FCF, Food grade
3.	IS 1697	Erythrosine, Food grade
4.	IS 1698	Indigo Carmine, Food grade
5.	IS 2558	Ponceau 4R, Food grade
6.	IS 2923	Carmoisine, Food grade
7.	IS 5346	Synthetic Food Colour preparation and mixtures
8.	IS 6022	Fast green FCF, Food grade
9.	IS 6406	Brilliant Blue FCF, Food grade
10.	IS 3827	Riboflavin
11.	IS 3841	B-Carotene
12.	IS 4446 (Pt 1)	Chlorophyll, (Mg Complex)
13.	IS 4446 (Pt 2)	Chlorophyll, (Cu Complex)
14.	IS 6386	Beta-apo-8-carotenal, Food grade
15.	IS 6405	Centhaxanthine, Food grade
16.	IS 6797	Methyl ester of beta-apo-8-carotenoic acid
17.	IS 7260	Ethylester of beta-apo-8-carotenoic acid, Food grade
18.	IS 2557	Anmatto colour for food products
19.	IS 4447	Sodium benzoate, Food grade
20.	IS 4448	Benzoic acid, Food grade
21.	IS 4467 (Pt. 1)	Caramel (Plain)
22.	IS 4467 (Pt. 2)	Caramel (Ammonia Process)
23.	IS 4467 (Pt. 3)	Caramel (Ammonia sulphite process)
24.	IS 4750	Sorbitol, Food grade
25.	IS 4751	Potassium meta-bisulphite, Food grade
26.	IS 4752	Sodium meta-bisulphite, Food grade
27.	IS 4818	Sorbic Acid, Food grade
28.	IS 5191	Sodium Alginate Food grade
29.	IS 5306	Sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, Food grade

Sl. No.	Applicable BIS Standards	Name of the products
30.	IS 5342	Ascorbic acid, Food grade
31.	IS 5343	Butylated hydroxy-anixole, Food grade
32.	IS 5707	Agar, Food grade
33.	IS 5719	Gelatin, Food grade
34.	IS 6030	Sodium propionate, Food grade
35.	IS 6031	Calcium propionate, Food grade
36.	IS 6793	Fumaric acid, Food grade
37.	IS 7905	Calicium alginate, Food grade
38.	IS 7908	Sulphur dioxide, Food grade
39.	IS 7928	Alginic acid, Food grade
40.	IS 9504	Tartaric acid, Food grade
41.	IS 10563	Mineral Oil, Food grade
42.	IS 8356	Titanium dioxide, Food grade
43.	IS 9971	DL Lactic Acid, Food grade
44.	IS 1165	Milk powder
45.	IS 1166	Condensed milk
46.	IS 1547	Infant milk foods
47.	IS 1656	Milk-cereal base weaning foods
48.	IS 11156	Infant formulae
49.	IS 269	33 Grade Ordinary Portland cement
50.	IS 455	Portland Slag cement
51.	IS 1489 (Pt.1&Pt.2)	Portland pozzolana cement-Part I Flash based and Part 2 Calcined Clay based
52.	IS 3466	Masonry cement
53.	IS 6452	High alumina cement for structural use
54.	IS 6909	Suspersulphated cement
55.	IS 8041	Rapid hardening Portland cement
56.	IS 8042	White Portland Cement
57.	IS 8043	Hydrophobic Portland cement
58.	IS 8112	43 Grade Ordinary Portland cement
59.	IS 8229	Oil well cement
60.	IS 12269	53 Grade Ordinary Portland cement
61.	IS 12330	Sulphate resisting Portland cement
62.	IS 12600	Low heat Portland cement
63.	IS 1161	Steel tubes for structural purposes
64.	IS 1239 (Pt. 1)	Mild steel tubes, tubular products and other wrought steel fittings: Part I Mild Steel Tubes
65.	IS 4270	Steel tubes used for water wells (upto 200 mm dia)

Sl. No.	Applicable BIS Standards	Name of the products
66.	IS 1342	Oil pressure stoves
67.	IS 2787	Multi-burner oil pressure stoves
68.	IS 10109	Oil pressure stove, offset burner type
69.	IS 418	Tungsten filament general service electric lamps (upto 100W)
70.	IS 302 (Pt.2/Sec3)	Safety of household and similar electrical appliances-Electric Iron
71.	IS 302 (Pt.2/Sec30)	Safety of household and similar electrical appliances - Electric Radiators
72.	IS 302 (Pt.2/Sec201)	Safety of household and similar electrical appliances - Electric immersion water heater
73.	IS 302 (Pt.2/Sec202)	Safety of household and similar electrical appliances - Electric stove
74.	IS 1293	3 pin plugs and socket outlets
75.	IS 3854	Switches for domestic and similar purposes
76.	IS 4949	2 Amp Switches for electric and similar purposes
77.	IS 277	Galvanized steel sheets (plain and corrugated)
78.	IS 279	Galvanized steel wire for telegraph and telephone purposes
79.	IS 280	Mild steel wire for general engineering purposes
80.	IS 432 (Pt. 1)	Mild steel and medium tensile steel bars
81.	IS 432 (Pt. 2)	Mild steel and medium tensile steel bars and hard drawn steel wire for concrete reinforcement
82.	IS 513	Cold rolled carbon steel sheets
83.	IS 1029	Hot rolled steel strips (baling)
84.	IS 1079	Hot rolled carbon steel sheet and strip
85.	IS 1148	Hot rolled steel rivet bars (upto 40 mm diameter) structural purposes
86.	IS 1149	High tensile steel rivet bars for structural purposes
87.	IS 1786	High strength deformed steel bars and wires for concrete reinforcement
88.	IS 1875	Carbon steel billets, blooms, slabs and bars for forgings
89.	IS 1977	Structural steel (ordinary quality)
90.	IS 1990	Steel rivet and stay bars for boilers
91.	IS 2002	Steel plates for pressure vessels for intermediate and high temperature service including boilers
92.	IS 2062	Weldable structural steel
93.	IS 2830	Carbon steel billets, blooms and slab for re-rolling into structural steel (standard quality)
94.	IS 2831	Carbon steel billets, blooms and slab for re-rolling into structural steel (ordinary quality)
95.	IS 2879	Mild steel for metal arc welding electrode core wire
96.	IS 3502	Steel chequered plates
97.	IS 3748	Tool and die steels
98.	IS 3930	Flame and induction hardening steels
99.	IS 4368	Alloy steel billets, blooms and slab for forging for general engineering purpose

Sl. No.	Applicable BIS Standards	Name of the products
100.	IS 4397	Cold rolled carbon steel strips for ball and roller bearing cages
101	IS 4398	Carbon-chromium steel for the manufacture of balls, rollers and bearing races
102.	IS 4430	Mould steels
103.	IS 4431	Carbon and carbon-manganese free cutting steel
104.	IS 4432	Case hardening steels
105.	IS 4882	Low carbon steel wire for rivets for use in bearing industry
106.	IS 5489	Carbureting steel for use in bearing industry
107.	IS 5517	Steels for hardening and tempering
108.	IS 5518	Steel for die blocks for drop forging
109.	IS 5522	Stainless steel sheets and strips for utensils
110.	IS 1989 (Pt.1)	Leather safety boots and shoes for miners
111.	IS 2512	Miners' cap lamp batteries (Lead acid type)
112.	IS 1855	Standard steel wire ropes for winding and man-riding haulages in mines
113.	IS 2148	Flameproof enclosures of electrical apparatus
114.	IS 2925	Industrial safety helmets
115.	IS 3196 (Pt. 1)	Welded low carbon steel gas cylinder exceeding 5 litre water capacity for low pressure liquefiable gases: Pt1 Cylinders for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)
116.	IS 2196 (Pt.2)	Welded low carbon steel gas cylinder exceeding 5 litre water capacity for low pressure liquefiable gases: Pt 2 Cylinders for liquefiable gases other than LPG
117.	IS 3224	Valve fittings for compressed gas cylinder excluding liquefied petroleum gas cylinders
118.	IS 3745	Yoke type valve connections for small medical gas cylinders
119.	IS 7142	Welded low carbon steel gas cylinder for low pressure liquefiable gases not exceeding 5 litre water capacity
120 .	IS 7285	Seamless steel cylinders for permanent and high pressure liquefiable gases
121.	IS 7302	Valve fittings for gas cylinder valves for use with breathing apparatus
122.	IS 7312	Welded and seamless steel dissolved acetylene gas cylinders
123.	IS 7680	Welded and seamless steel dissolved gas cylinders for ammonia
124.	IS 7681	Welded and seamless steel dissolved gas cylinders for chlorine gas
125.	IS 7682	Welded and seamless steel dissolved gas cylinders for methyl bromide gas
126.	IS 8737	Valve fittings for use with liquefied petroleum gas cylinder of more than 5 litre water capacity: Pt2 Valve fittings for newly manufactured LPG cylinders
127.	IS 8776	Valve fittings for use with liquefied petroleum gas cylinder up to and including 5 litre water capacity
128.	IS 3470	Hexane, Food grade
129.	IS 8144	Multipurpose dry batteries
130.	IS 7620 (Pt. 1)	Diagnostic Medical X-Ray Equipment
131.	IS 14625	Plastic Feeding Bottles

Document

India tables proposals on Services

Greater market access for Indian professionals sought

India has filed a proposal in the WTO on the "Proposed Liberalisation of Movement of Professionals under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)" as part of Mandated Services Negotiations. The objective of this proposal is to assess the nature of liberalisation that has taken place in Mode 4 under the existing GATS framework and the key barriers that prevent movement of professionals. The paper suggests possible strategies and approaches to achieving meaningful liberalisation in this area which is of primary importance to India and could contribute to effective market access for Indian professionals.

Proposed liberalisation of Movement of Professionals under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

I. Objective of the Paper

1. The objective of this paper is to assess the nature of liberalisation that has taken place in Mode 4 under the existing GATS framework and the extent to which the objectives of Article IV of GATS have been operationalised through liberalisation in this mode, of significant export interest to developing countries. This paper then identifies the key barriers to the Movement of Professionals and the specific problems with the existing commitments undertaken by member countries. Finally, it suggests possible strategies and approaches to achieving meaningful liberalisation in this area which is of great relevance to many developing countries and could contribute to effective implementation of Article IV of GATS.

II. Empirical Assessment

2. There is considerable asymmetry in commitments between different modes of supply with minimum level of commitments having been taken by developed countries in mode 4, which is of primary interest to the developing countries. For instance, horizontal commitments in mode 4 are subject to limitations in the case of 100 countries as opposed to only 4 countries for mode 2. The effectiveness of even these limited

commitments is further reduced through a host of limitations and administrative hurdles.

3. Further, the number of aggregate entries for the main categories scheduled in the horizontal commitments are as follows :

(a) Intra-Corporate Transferees	135
(b) Business Visitors	70
(c) Executives, managers and specialists	104
(d) Independent contract suppliers	3

4. Only 12 members have made commitments in the category of independent Professionals, including those providing services within a service contract. In other works, existing commitments are largely linked to commercial presence which is of very limited use to developing countries who are interested primarily in movement of independent professionals and other persons.

III. Specific Problems with the Commitments

Nature of Commitments

(a) Horizontal : Commitments in mode 4 are primarily horizontal and these horizontal commitments are subject to many kinds of limitations. Further , they

are bound for only a small subset of service personnel related to commercial presence and at higher levels and very few commitments extend to independent movement. The existing commitments also suffer from lack of clarity and uniformity in some aspects. The personnel categories are either not well defined or differ widely in their scope and coverage.

(b) Sectoral : The sectoral commitments for most Members are Unbound and refer to the commitments filed under the horizontal schedules. And the horizontal commitments in turn are subject to many conditions and limitations as mentioned above. Mostly, they make the commitments even more restrictive allowing no predictable market access at all in the sectors of interest to developing countries.

5. Thus, the extent of liberalisation in mode 4 is quite limited given the fact that not only have important sectors (where professional movement is important) been left out by many countries in their scheduling exercise, but that even when such sectors have been scheduled, partial commitments with critical limitations exist.

Other limitations

(a) Administrative Procedures

6. The administrative and procedural problems effectively rule out market access for developing country professionals.

(i) *Restrictions on the entry and stay of service providers*

7. One important restriction to the movement of natural persons originates in immigration and labour market policies of individual countries. Temporary movement of labour is not separated from permanent movement of labour and therefore comes under the purview of immigration legislation and labour conditions. These restrictions range from strict eligibility conditions for application and processing of visas and work permits and limitations on the length of

stay and transferability of employment in the overseas market. All of these restrictions raise the direct and indirect costs of entering the foreign market, thereby eroding the cost advantage of foreign service suppliers.

8. Wage parity is another restrictive eligibility condition which negates the cost based advantage of developing countries in exporting labour-intensive services. Wage parity is an important part of the labour certification process in many countries and constitutes an administrative hurdle delaying issuance of work permits and visas.

9. There are also constraints in the form of quantitative limits on visas in important developed countries for movement of professionals.

10. Restrictions also apply to natural persons after they enter the foreign market such as limitations on the transferability of work permits and mobility of the provider after he enters the host country. There are also limits on the duration of stay for service providers.

(ii) *Requirement for Economic Needs Test*

11. Major entry barriers exist in the form of Economic Needs Test (ENT), Local Market Tests and Management Needs Tests to ascertain the need for entry as well as the number to be allowed to enter. The ENTs are artificial barriers preventing free movement of labour. Further, the conditions on which they are based have not been clearly specified and defined, leaving complete discretion in their application thereby reducing the predictability and certainty of the commitment. Use of such discretionary ENTs is widespread and in only three out of a total of 54 cases have criteria been specified in the schedule.

(b) *Recognition of qualifications and licensing requirement*

12. The ability of professionals to supply services in developed country markets is also adversely affected by the lack of recognition of professional qualifications and licensing requirements. These requirements may

either prevent market access for the foreign service provider causing a rejection of the work permit or visa application, or may limit his scope for work to specific activities once he enters the overseas market, preventing him for practising.

13. Article VII of GATS provides for Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and also provides opportunity to Members to participate in negotiations to such Agreements. However, the provisions of Article VII remain largely unused.

14. Developing countries have normally been kept outside the ambit of such MRAs, they being limited to developed countries. Besides, members are not complying with notification requirements under Article VII:4. Members have also not informed in advance regarding opening of negotiations and interested Members are not getting adequate opportunity to participate in them. All this has greatly reduced the scope for qualifications being recognised leading to complete discretion and lack of multilateral/bilateral norms.

(c) Payment of Social Security Taxes without corresponding benefits

15. The developing countries' professionals are being subject to payment of social security contributions in the host country even though they are not eligible to get the benefits from such contributions since their period of stay under GATS is invariably lower than the minimum period required for such benefits to flow to them.

16. The direct or indirect effect of all these limitations is to raise costs of entry and operation for service providers, reduce the scope for technology and skill transfer, and force substitution of domestic with foreign service personnel.

IV. Strategies & Approaches to effective liberalisation

17. Given the unsatisfactory nature and extent of liberalisation in Mode 4, alternative approaches and strategies need to be adopted in this round for bringing

about effective market access in this mode thereby contributing significantly to the operationalisation of Article IV : 1 (c) of GATS.

Improving the Structure of Commitments

(a) Horizontal Commitments

- Horizontal commitments to specifically include category of Individual Professionals in addition to the various categories that currently exist. Consequently, delinking of commitments with mode 3 is to be achieved.
- Relevant criterion for determination of eligibility to particular category needs to be clearly specified.
- Uniform definitions and coverage of broader service personnel categories included in the horizontal commitments need to be drawn up for bringing about greater certainty in these commitments.
- Further expansion in the scope of categories covered by Horizontal Schedules by defining coverage of "other persons" and "specialists" to include middle and lower level professionals by specifying relevant criteria.

(b) Sectoral Commitments

- Specific Sectoral/sub-sectoral commitments need to be taken in addition to the horizontal commitments for Professional and Business Services where movement of professionals is important.
- Sectoral commitments should be detailed and specific in terms of :
 - Measures applicable to individual sectors
 - Categories for which commitments apply
- All limitations, conditions etc. relevant to the individual sector/sub-sector to be clearly laid down in sectoral schedules.

(c) Finer Classification of Categories

- Dis-aggregated categories of Service providers in Sectoral Schedules to be clearly specified relevant

to the market needs and potential for each sector/sub-sector.

In order to achieve this objective, one approach that is suggested in the super-imposition of International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-88) of ILO on the WTO Services Sectoral Classification List-MTN/GNS/W/120. The ISCO has established an internationally adopted classification of 9 major occupational groups.

For purposes of illustration and also the fact that this paper seeks to focus on professionals, Annex "A" to this paper indicates how this superimposition can be done for the occupational Category Professionals in so far as it relates to Professional Services Sector of W/120. Professionals are included in two Major Groups covered by ISCO-88.

- Major Group 2 : Professionals
- Major Group 3 : Technicians and Assistant Professionals

- Commitments may be made by Members with respect to the specific sectors/sub-sectors as contained in W/120 buttressed by specific occupational categories relevant to these sectors/sub-sectors as contained in ISCO-88 as indicated in Annex "A".

Removal of existing limitations:

(a) Economic Needs Tests (ENT)

- Need for establishment of Multilateral Norms to reduce scope for discriminatory practices in use of ENT.
- Clear criteria to be laid down for
 - Applying such tests
 - Establishing norms for administrative and procedural formalities
 - Specifying how results of such tests would restrict entry to foreign service providers.

- Fewer occupational categories to be made subject to such tests and consensus achieved on such categories.
- Specific suggestion is to exclude applicability of ENTs to specified occupational categories of Professionals as contained in ISCO-88 under the relevant sectors/sub-sectors of W/120.
- In sectors/sub-sectors and Occupations where applicability of ENT is not excluded, its application should be based on Multilateral Principles laid out in "Reference Paper on Use of ENT".

The various Principles that such a Reference Paper should address could be :

- Definition of ENT
- Criteria (Qualitative/Quantitative) for introduction of ENT
- Procedures for application
- Guidelines for administration of ENT
- Transparency & Full Availability of information
- Duration & Review of ENT application

(b) Administrative procedures relating to visas, work permits

18. Multilateral guidelines/norms are necessary to tackle this area as it negates even the limited market access available.

- The member countries should try to have more transparent and objective implementation of visa and work permit regimes in future.
- Temporary service providers should be separated from permanent labour flows, so that the normal immigration procedures would not hinder the commitments made for temporary movement. This could be achieved either by introducing a special GATS Visa for categories of personnel covered by horizontal and sectoral commitments undertaken by a Member in mode 4 under GATS or through a special sub-set of Administrative Rules and Procedures within the overall immigration policy framework.

- The conditions for entry to stay in the case of both these alternatives should obviously be less stringent than for permanent immigration.
 - The above would be possible if the aforementioned recommendations on specificity, finer classification and wider coverage of personnel categories and transparency are reflected in the sectoral and horizontal commitments so that minimum discretion and greater degree of certainty is achieved.
 - The main features would include:
 - Strict time-frames within which visa must be granted (2-4 weeks maximum);
 - Flexibility for visas on shorter notice for select categories of service providers;
 - Transparent and streamlined application process;
 - Mechanisms to find out the status of applications, causes of rejection, and requirements to be fulfilled;
 - Easier renewal and transfer procedures;
 - GATS visas for select Companies for use by its employees deputed abroad temporarily;
 - Adequate in-built Safeguard mechanisms to prevent entering into permanent labour market;
- (c) Introducing norms to address Social Security Issues**
- Bilateral Totalisation Agreements need to be entered into by Members for overcoming this problem.
 - Exemption from such contribution for developing country professionals so that their comparative advantage is not affected.
- (d) Strengthening GATS norms and disciplines on recognition of qualifications**
- (i) *Implementing existing Notification Requirements under Article VII of GATS providing for MRAs between Members.*
19. India has already made a statement before the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) in its meeting held on 6/10/2000 on this issue. The operational features that would be involved are:
- Prompt compliance by all Members with Notification Requirements laid down in Articles VII:4(a), (b) & (c)
 - Full text of existing MRAs on recognition to be made available immediately to the WTO Secretariat and circulated amongst all Members. This should be done automatically in all future cases
 - Effective opportunities to be provided to developing country Members to join in negotiations for establishment of MRAs
 - CTS to regularly monitor implementation of all the above requirements
- (ii) *Establishment of Multilateral Norms to facilitate MRAs among Member countries*
- Norms for Professional Service sectors where no formal accreditation or licensing procedures are required
 - Suitable example is Software Services. In this case, criteria should be laid down for minimum professional experience and minimum professional education. The idea is to lay down minimalistic international standards to reduce discrimination or excessive discretion.
 - Norms concerning equivalence of work-related and academic qualifications
 - This would seek to draw an equivalence between on-the-job experience and academic degrees so that this could facilitate entry requirements for specific sectors.
 - Norms concerning broad-based equivalence
 - Granting recognition through broad-based equivalence of qualifications and standards.

For this purpose, it is necessary to establish bridging mechanisms in case of divergence of requirements and existing standards between host and home countries.

- Compensatory system based on Local Adaptation Periods and Aptitude Tests for recognition in host country needs to be developed without requiring actual harmonisation of standards and qualifications between the host and home countries.
- Norms Concerning temporary licensing
 - Provisions for temporary licensing to practice in the host country where such licensing procedures are absent in home country e.g. in the case of Engineering profession.
 - Procedures and Sectors where such norms could be applicable to be multilaterally determined.
- Establishment of Bilateral MRAs to be facilitated through this framework.

V. Modalities and administrative procedures for effecting such liberalisation

- Special Session of CTS should discuss this as a horizontal issue as it is one of the most important

ways to operationalise Article IV on increasing participation of developing countries in world Services trade. It should feature permanently on its Agenda.

- CTS should regularly monitor implementation of Article VII with respect to notification requirements and also special opportunities provided to developing countries to enter into such MRAs with developed countries.
- The Committee on Specific Commitments (CSC) should oversee the implementation of existing specific commitments relating to Mode 4 as laid down in the “Decision on Terms of Reference for CSC - S/L/6 DAted 24.11.1995”.
 - Specifically, the Administrative Procedures involved in granting visas, work permits etc. are required to be administered in a reasonable, objective and impartial manner according to Article VI:1. Such administrative procedures significantly impact the actual working of the commitments undertaken on Mode 4 and hence, may be discussed in CSC so as to achieve the objectives laid down in Article VI:1.



Annex - A**Superimposition of ISCO-88 of ILO relating to category of Professionals on the Professional Services sector of Services Sectoral Classification list - MTN/GNS/W/120**

W/120 Service sector classification	International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88)	
1 A Professionals Services	Major group 2 : Professionals	
a. Legal Services	242	Legal professionals
	2421	Lawyers
	2422	Judges
	2429	Legal professionals not elsewhere classified
b. Accounting, Auditing and Book-keeping Services	241	Business Professionals
	2411	Accountants
	Major Group 3 : Technicians & Associate Professionals	
	343	Administrative Associate Professionals
	3433	Book Keepers
d. Architectural Services g. Urban Planning & Landscape Architectural Services	214	Architects, Engineers and related professionals
	2141	Architects, town and traffic planners
	2149	Architects not elsewhere classified
e. Engineering Services f. Integrated Engineering Services	214	Architects, Engineers and related professionals
	2142	Civil engineers
	2143	Electrical engineers
	2144	Electronics and telecommunications engineers
	2145	Mechanical engineers
	2146	Chemical engineers
	2147	Mining engineers, metallurgists and related professionals
	2148	Cartographers and surveyors
	2149	Engineers and related professionals not elsewhere classified
h. Medical and Dental Services	222	Health professionals (Except Nursing)
	2221	Medicals Doctors
	2222	Dentists
	2229	Health professionals (except Nursing) not elsewhere classified

W/120 Service sector classification	International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88)	
	322	Modern Health Associate Professionals
	3221	Medical Assistants
	3222	Sanitarians
	3223	Dieticians & Nutritionists
	3224	Optomerists & Opticians
	3225	Dental Assistants
	3229	Modern Health Associate Professionals not elsewhere classified
i. Veterinary Services	222	Health Professionals
	2223	Veterinarians
	322	Modern Health Associate Professionals
	3227	Veterinary Assistants
j. Services provided by midwives, nurses, physiotherapists and paramedicals personnel	222	Health Professionals
	2224	Pharmacists
	223	Nursing & Midwifery Professionals
	2230	Nursing & Midwifery Professionals
	322	Health Associate Professionals
	3226	Physiotherapists & Related Associate Professionals
	3228	Pharmaceutical Assistant
	323	Nursing & Midwifery Associate Professionals
	3231	Nursing Associate Professionals
	3232	Midwifery Associate Professionals
b. Computer and related Services	213	Computing professionals
	2131	Computer systems designers and analysts
	2132	Computer programmers
	2139	Computer professionals not elsewhere classified
	312	Computer Associate Professionals
	3121	Computer Assistants
	3122	Computer Equipment Operators

(Text of the proposal submitted by India at the Special Session of the WTO Council for Trade in Services in Geneva on 24 November, 2000)

Fact File: India and the World

Trade in Services

Exports of commercial services globally have been growing steadily in the Nineties. From a low \$657 billion in 1990 these services exports crossed the one trillion mark to reach \$1.32 trillion in 1999 (**Chart I**). Throughout the Nineties, global transportation and travel services receipts expanded by 3.5 and 6 per cent annually, much less than those of "other commercial services" which rose by 8.5 per cent.

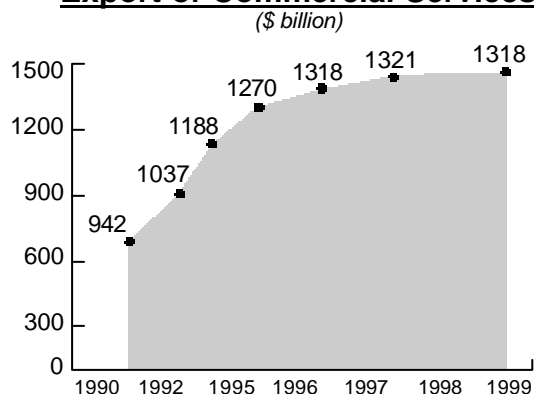
As in 1998, the overall modest trade expansion masks a large regional year-to-year changes, North America, Asia and Africa showed a stronger performance last year, while Eastern Europe, the transition economies and Latin America were much weaker. The weaker performance of western Europe's commercial services trade could be observed in all three product categories, but was most pronounced in the residual group "Other commercial services".

Chart II shows that the U.S. tops the list of commercial service exports. The U.K.'s exports were twice that of South Korea. Strong export and import growth in commercial services was achieved in the U.S. and the Asian developing countries. India's services exports totalled \$13.9 billion, higher than those of Malaysia and the Russian Federation.

The right hand side of Chart II indicates that China's exports actually declined by one per cent while India had a whopping 26 per cent rise. Egypt's tourist earnings lifted the country's commercial services by 18 per cent.

Chart I

Export of Commercial Services



Source: WTO Annual Report 2000

Chart II

Leading Exporters



(From The Hindu dated December 18, 2000)

India protests against WTO Appellate Body move inviting amicus curiae briefs

At a special meeting of the General Council held on 22 November, India joined a vast majority of WTO members in protesting against the Appellate Body's decision to invite amicus curiae (literally meaning "friends of the court") briefs in the case relating to "European Communities- Measures affecting Asbestos and Products Containing Asbestos."

India's statement at the meeting by India's Ambassador to WTO, Mr. S Narayanan, made it clear that India did not regard this issue as a procedural one, as viewed by the Appellate Body, but a substantive matter in which the Appellate Body's approach was totally unjustified.

In his statement Ambassador Narayanan dwelt at length on how the Appellate Body's approach to accept unsolicited briefs as well as to invite submissions from any source on the most sensitive of all issues in the WTO, namely dispute cases, amounts to changing the inter-governmental character of the WTO. For one thing, the ultimate compliance is to be done by Governments, not by others. Furthermore, Governmental position in disputes are arrived after consultations with all domestic stakeholders. If Governments know that their non-governmental agencies have a further chance to influence the dispute settlement mechanism, then, they would pay

less attention to finalising their positions and even worse, there may be implications for compliance by the Governments themselves, he said.

Ambassador Narayanan also said that the Appellate Body's approach will also have the implication of putting the developing countries at an even greater disadvantage in view of the relative unpreparedness of their own non-governmental agencies who have much less resources and wherewithal either to send briefs without being asked for or to respond to invitations for sending such briefs.

Looking at the record of the Appellate Body, Ambassador Narayanan said that the Appellate Body was at its best when it confined itself to its mandate i.e. deal with issues of law and legal interpretation. When it went beyond its mandate and started making rules or amending rules and thus encroached into what was admittedly Members' territory, it created a problem for itself and the entire membership.

In conclusion, Ambassador Narayanan said that the Appellate Body should show deference to the conviction of almost the entire Membership that in accepting unsolicited amicus curiae briefs and seeking amicus curiae briefs, the Appellate Body is acting without mandate and to take appropriate measures to remedy the situation.



India highlights need for upfront redressal of implementation related concerns

India along with other developing countries has brought "Implementation Issues" relating to the perceived asymmetries and imbalance in the existing Agreements of the WTO to the forefront, highlighting the need for the upfront redressal of implementation related concerns of the developing countries as part of the confidence building measures for the developing countries.

The Implementation related issues and concerns were first reflected in Paras 7 & 9 of the Geneva Ministerial Declaration relating to the Preparatory Process for the Third Ministerial Conference, and have also figured prominently in the paras 21 and 22 of Draft ministerial Text (DMT) dated 19/10/1999 for the Seattle Conference. Consequent to the inconclusive Seattle Conference, the General Council in its resolution of May 2000 decided that the General Council in Special Sessions shall address issues and concerns raised by Members to identify ways needed to resolve them and take appropriate decisions and that the process should be completed not later than the 4th Session of the Ministerial Conference.

In its first Special Session on 22.6.2000, the work programme on Implementation Issues was agreed to by the General Council and it had been decided that in the 3rd Special Session in December 2000, decisions will be taken for appropriate action where possible and in accordance with the decision of May 2000, the organisation of further work would also be decided so that the process envisaged in the May Decision of General Council, should be completed not later than the 4th Session of Ministerial Conference.

The General Council, in its Special Session on 15.12.2000, has taken decisions on 9 items out of a total of 54 items of para 21 of DMT as were under consideration. These 9 items relate to Agreement on Agriculture, Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, Agreement on the Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, Agreement on Rules of Origin & Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures. It has also been decided that the General Council shall address the

outstanding implementation-related issues and concerns, including those set out in paras 21 and 22 of the DMT as well as any other implementation-related issues raised by Members, as envisaged in the Decision of May 2000 and the work programme agreed in June 2000, with a view to completing the process not later than the Fourth Session of the Ministerial Conference.

India during its intervention in the General Council on 15/12/2000, has expressed its disappointment with the progress achieved so far and has expressed that the resolution of the implementation-related issues and concerns required a certain amount of political sensitivity and can not be dealt with in a narrow and legal straight jacket and, therefore, it would be extremely difficult for the subsidiary bodies of WTO, who deal with issues in a technical and legalistic manner, to do justice to their resolution. It was, therefore, emphasised by India that the implementation issues should be referred to the subsidiary bodies of WTO only when it is absolutely necessary and that to with a clear mandate and a specific time frame.

It was also emphasised by India that it must be obligatory for all member countries to incorporate appropriately in their domestic legislations even the best endeavour obligations and clauses as have been enshrined in the various WTO agreements which somehow has not been done in some cases by some member countries.

The membership of WTO was also reminded that this present exercise about addressal of implementation issues was, is and should continue to be about confidence building and that it can be achieved only through a combination of political will and good faith effort which India hopes will be exhibited by the member countries in the new year so as to find meaningful solutions well before the dead line of 4th Ministerial Conference. This alone will build confidence of the developing countries in WTO.

Thus the work programme initiated on "Implementation Issues" will continue. India will continue to press for solutions to the various items of paras 21 and 22 of the Draft Ministerial Text dated 19/10/1999.

Monthly report on the salient multilateral trade subjects and developments in WTO in November 2000: A Summary

I Meeting held in Geneva

a) Implementation Issues

No formal meeting of the General Council was held in November on Implementation Issues but a number of Informal consultations were held by the Chairman of the General Council. These consultations covered the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, Agreement on Countervailing Measures and Balance of Payments Provisions. The discussions held on these subjects broadly followed the earlier pattern and no substantive progress was made. India continued to express its concern on the lack of effective and meaningful resolution of the Implementation concerns. India also highlighted that the May Decision of the General Council clearly envisaged decisions being taken in the December meeting of the General Council and the Chairman should, therefore, come out with Draft Decisions on certain issues and concerns for the December meeting.

In this connection, meetings of the Like Minded Group (LMG) was held by Ambassador, PMI, Geneva on 23-24 November and all the Members expressed their concern about the lack of meaningful progress and the need for specific decisions to be taken in December meeting that would redress some of the issues. As a consequence of the continued pressure by LMG, a Draft General Council Decision contained in Job. No. (00/7635 dated 29.11.2000) was brought out.

b) Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture

The 4th Session of the Committee on Agriculture for the mandated Agricultural Negotiations was held on 16/17 November 2000

During the Special Session, Proposals on 'Non-trade Concerns' by 24 members countries including European Communities, Japan, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, Norway and some other developing countries,

and least developed countries, and on 'Export Subsidies, Food Security on Food Dependency' by Argentinian, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia and Costa Rica, were discussed. **India in its intervention, inter-alia, has suitably highlighted the fact that though sufficient flexibility is required by large agrarian developing economies to address their food and livelihood security concerns, it is not supportive of the attempts of certain developed countries to maintain their trade distorting subsidies under the garb of 'multifunctionality'.** India has supported the proposal on "Export Subsidies, Food Security and Food Dependency" as was put forward by Argentina and others. Philippines on behalf of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) introduced a paper on 'Special and Differential Provisions' which was supported by India in its intervention. Besides, these, 2 other proposals on market access and domestic support were introduced by transition economies viz. Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Slovak Republic Slovenia and Estonia. There was also a brief discussion on the United States' proposal for Tariff Rate Quota reform.

c) Services

The Cluster of Services meetings as part of the mandated Services Negotiations started in the last week on November and continued upto 6 December 2000.

India has filed Document No. S/CSS/W/12 on "Proposed Liberalisation of Movement of Professionals under GATS". This paper highlights the strategy and approach to be adopted in the Negotiations in Services for achieving further liberalisation of Professionals, in which India's main interest lies.

India along with a Group of 22 developing

countries has filed the proposal, Document No. S/CSS/W/13 on Negotiating Guidelines and Procedures under Article XIX of GATS. This paper highlights the various elements of the Negotiating guidelines that we would like to be incorporated.

d) Disputes

In the dispute initiated by India against European Communities (EC) on Anti-Dumping Duties levied on Cotton Type Bed Linen exports from India by EC, EC has filed the notice of Appeal against certain rulings of the Dispute Settlement Panel which has ruled in favour of India. Both India and EC have filed their submissions.

e) Issue relating to Appellate Body issuing instructions on Amicus Curiae Briefs.

A special session of the General Council was convened on 22nd November 2000 to discuss the procedure put into place by the Appellate Body for inviting and accepting Amicus Curiae briefs. A detailed statement was made by Ambassador Narayanan of PMI Geneva questioning the mandate and competence of the Appellate Body in issuing such instructions. India pointed out that the issue was a substantive matter in which the Appellate Body's approach was unjustified. These instructions amount to changing the inter-governmental character of WTO. Ambassador Narayanan also highlighted the disadvantage that developing countries would be put to if such a procedure was adopted.

II Consultations held in November with Domestic Stakeholders

(a) A meeting with Secretaries of different Ministries and academicians was held under

the Chairmanship of Commerce Secretary on 16.11.2000 to discuss India's draft proposals for the negotiations under the Agreement on Agriculture.

(b) A Meeting of the WTO Coordination Group of Secretaries also took place on 30th November, 2000 to discuss India's negotiating proposals for the Agreement on Agriculture.

(c) A meeting was held in the Rajiv Gandhi Institute on Contemporary Studies on 14 November 2000 regarding the study on Electronic Commerce which has been entrusted to them. The Expert Panel was briefed as to the discussions and state of play of this matter in the WTO. The Panel was apprised of the urgency in completing the work and also the direction in which the study Report should aim at.

(d) An Inter-ministerial meeting was held by Mr. R.P. Agrawal, Joint Secretary, on the issue of the status of Sanitary & Photo Sanitary (SPS) measures in India on 6 November, 2000.

(e) A meeting of the representatives of Industry Associations was held on 23rd November under the chairmanship of Mr. Nripendra Misra, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry when, inter-alia, the issue of TRIMS* review was also discussed. Apex Chambers have promised to their inputs on the subject.

* Trade-Related Investment Measures

News Briefs

India to seek enhanced market access for farmers

The next special session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture is scheduled in February 2001 wherein the various proposals submitted by the member countries are likely to come up for discussion. India proposes to seek enhanced market access opportunities for its farmers by demanding a substantial reduction in the tariffs and elimination of export subsidies and substantial reduction in the domestic support by the developed countries. Further, to safeguard the food and livelihood security, it is proposed to seek sufficient flexibility in domestic policies. India has co-sponsored its first proposal of 'Market Access', along with 11 other developing countries in the special session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture held in September 2000. In this paper, trade distortions prevalent in international markets and the consequent hindrance to the exports from the developing countries have been highlighted. It has been proposed that developed countries should effect substantial reductions in their tariffs and eliminate tariff peaks and tariff escalations. It has also been demanded that the administration of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) should be made transparent and equitable for all trading partners with regular enhancement of TRQs to improve market access for all developing countries. The paper also proposes elimination of all forms of trade distorting export subsidies and substantial reductions in the domestic support provided by developed countries; prohibition of dumping; and effecting suitable modifications in the provisions of the Agreement on Sanitary and

Phytosanitary Measures, which inhibit the ability of developing countries to export agricultural products.

Initiatives on IPRs

The government's initiative include, among others, steps to modernise and restructure the administration of patents and trade marks, at substantial outlays, so as to update the systems and make them compatible with international standards. Ministry of Human Resources Development has been promoting the teaching and research of intellectual property matters. During the last two years, financial assistance has been given to various institutes and organisations to encourage study of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) under the Scheme for Financial Assistance for Intellectual Property Right Studies and that Ministry is also trying to redouble the efforts for the further development of IPRs studies in various Universities and Educational Institutions. Further, in order to cope with the demand of adequately trained human resources, it has been decided to restructure the office of Patent Information System, Nagpur, into a training institute which is expected to cater not only to the needs of the intellectual property offices in India but also meet the needs of the users of the system. These initiatives are in addition to those undertaken by industry associations to develop human resources in this field.

Increase in duty on agro imports

The import data in respect of agricultural imports is monitored on a regular basis. Imports are taking place

mainly in respect of edible oils and pulses which have been freely importable under the Exim Policy for the last several years due to domestic shortage. The imports this year have not shown any increasing trend in comparison with earlier years. Nevertheless, custom duties on agricultural products have been increased in recent months as follows:

	Earlier Duty	Revised Duty
Rice	0%	70%
Broken Rice/Paddy	0%	80%
Wheat	0%	50%
Millet, jowar, sorghum, maize	0%	50%
RBD Palmolein (Refined)	35%	65%
Palm Oil (Refined)	35%	65%
Other refined edible oils	35%	45%

Lithuania becomes 140th member of WTO

The WTO's General Council on 8 December 2000 approved the accession of Lithuania to the World Trade Organisation at a session attended by the Lithuanian president, Valdas Adamkus, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antanas Valionis. Following the General Council's approval, Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs signed the original copy of the terms of accession subject to ratification. At the signing ceremony Mr. Mike Moore, DG, WTO said: "Lithuania's forthcoming accession is good news for the country and good news for the WTO. Lithuania now has a stable and predictable framework for economic engagement with other nations which will boost trade, growth and prosperity. For the WTO, it means another big step in our goal of becoming a truly world organisation". Mr. Moore highlighted that Lithuania completes the list of the three Baltic States to become members of the WTO. Latvia and Estonia become members in 1999. Another two former Soviet Union republics, Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic, are also members of the WTO. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation are in the process of negotiation for accession. Mr. Moore welcomed the conclusion of Lithuania's negotiations, which started in February 1994, and looked forward to the country becoming a full Member of the Organisation after the ratification of the terms of accession by its Parliament.

Overall, 28 governments are currently negotiating to join the WTO: Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Peoples' Republic of China, Former Yugoslav Republic, Lebanon, Moldova, Nepal, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudia Arabia, Seychelles, Sudan, Chinese Taipei, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam and Yemen.

WTO membership stands now at 140 after the accession of Lithuania on 8 December 2000 and earlier of, Croatia on 30 November 2000.

Schedule of Meetings at the WTO : Geneva,* January/February 2001

JANUARY

1.1.2001	NEW YEAR'S DAY (WTO non-working day)
10.1.2001	DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY
17.1.2001	Working Party on Accession of China
22&24.1.2001	TEXTILES MONITORING BODY
24&26.1.2001	TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - MOZAMBIQUE

FEBRUARY

1.2.2001	Dispute Settlement Body
2.2.2001	Council for Trade in Goods
5 & 7.2.2001	Committee on Agriculture - Special Session
8.2.2001	General Council
12 & 13.2.2001	Sub-Committee on Least Developed Countries
12 & 14.2.2001	Textiles Monitoring Body
13 & 14.2.2001	Committee on Trade and Environment
14.2.2001	Seminar on Technology - Committee on Trade and Development
14 & 15.2.2001	Council for Trade in Services
15.2.2001	Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products
16.2.2001	Committee on Trade & Development
19 & 21.2.2001	Trade Policy Review Body - Madagascar
22 & 23.2.2001	Committee on Regional Trade Agreements
22 & 23.2.2001	Working Party on the Accession of Kazakstan
26 & 28.2.2001	Trade Policy Review Body - Ghana

*Source : WTO / Geneva as on December 31, 2000

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We welcome your comments and suggestions :

Telefax No. : 301 4622

E-mail: sbiswas@ub.delhi.nic.in

Website address : <http://commin.nic.in>