



Challenge of overcapacity and overfishing arises from heavily subsidised industrial fleets, not from small-scale fishermen in India and other developing countries and LDCs: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal at WTO Ministerial Conference

Shri Piyush Goyal highlights the role the fisheries sector plays in securing India's food security, ensuring livelihood and supporting more than 9 million fisher families

Indian fishing comprises largely of small, traditional, and artisanal fishermen practising sustainable methods: Shri Piyush Goyal at WTO

Shri Goyal emphasises India's proactive and historical conservation efforts, including the annual fishing ban, says India had long-standing commitment to sustainability well before it became a global priority

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Fisheries Subsidies was one of the key agenda items discussed by Trade Ministers at the World Trade Organization's Fourteenth Ministerial Conference (MC14) held from March 26–29 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The Indian delegation, led by Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal, actively contributed to shaping the Ministerial Decision that sets out the future course of Phase II negotiations on fisheries subsidies relating to overcapacity and overfishing.

Keeping sustainability concerns at the forefront and in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14.6, India emphasised that Phase II negotiations must reflect core principles of equity, including Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) for developing countries and Least Developed Countries, as well as the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) and the Polluter Pays Principle. Consistent with these principles, India highlighted key priorities such as a 25-year transition period for developing countries, stronger disciplines on distant-water industrial fishing fleets, a permanent carve-out for small-scale and artisanal fishers, and subsidy disciplines based on per capita intensity, thereby broadening the scope of Phase II discussions.

In the Ministerial discussions held on the issue, Shri Goyal emphasised that fisheries sector play a key role in securing India's food security and ensuring livelihood, supporting more than 9 million fisher families largely comprising small, traditional, and artisanal fishermen practising sustainable methods. He also highlighted that India is not a heavily industrialized fishing nation and do not have large-scale, distant-water fleets or heavily mechanized operations. Further, India's fisheries subsidies are among the lowest in the world—barely about USD 15 per fisher family annually—compared to tens of thousands elsewhere.

Shri Goyal presented India's balanced and people-centric approach to fisheries governance. Emphasising on India's proactive and historical conservation efforts, including the annual fishing ban, Shri Goyal underlined India's long-standing commitment to sustainability well before it became a global priority. India also underscored that the challenge of overcapacity and overfishing arises from heavily subsidised industrial fleets, and not from small-scale fishermen in India and other developing countries & LDCs. Therefore, India made a strong case in the WTO forum for ensuring that emerging decisions remain fair and do not disproportionately impact vulnerable communities.

In the negotiations on the MC-14 Ministerial Decision on Fisheries Subsidies, India engaged constructively and based its negotiating stance on the principles of equity, sustainability, and common but differentiated responsibilities. India also highlighted that further decisions must deliver an equitable and development-oriented outcome that protects both marine resources and livelihoods.

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