

THE FISHERMEN'S LIVELIHOOD ON DECISIVE MODE

A POSITION PAPER OF FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

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With the ongoing WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) Geneva, Switzerland; delegates from across the world are having the storming deliberations over several crucial issues to review the functioning of the multilateral trading system and to land up with the benefitting conclusions for betterment.

As a part of it, the fisheries sector has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator. As far as LDCs (Least Developed Countries) is concerned, it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries and facilitates cheap and nutritious food to masses. Hence, it is one of the important facets of the trade verticals of the members.

Although, the issue on fishery subsidies was first raised during the WTO's Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001 and the need for global pact on fisheries subsidies has been strongly inferred thorough.

Further, perceptive data highlighted threats such as **unsustainable resource exploitation, descended livelihood of fishermen and conciliation to the objectives of relevant SDGs. Thus, preceding ministerial conferences had got across** negotiations on mandates 'to clarify and improve', 'prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing', and 'eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing'. In last ministerial at Buenos Aires (MC11), members re-committed to implementation of existing notification obligations under Article 25.3 of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures thus strengthening transparency with respect to fisheries subsidies. The incongruity has also been seen within members on definition of harmful subsidies – specific/ non specific, scope and definitions of the different concepts.

We express our strong disagreement to the inputs given by developed countries which is bringing in heterogeneous norms and unfavourable conditions for LDCs and developing countries.

We would suggest you to introduce and encourage activities in areas of capacity building, ease of access to resources, building technical ecosystems and to evolve an all inclusive strategy to bridge the unseen gaps. Article 7 of the draft Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, has already depicted similar inferences. However, it is also need of an hour to put precincts to the big players and dominating stakeholders.