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Whenever the WTO membership has engaged seriously and with commitment as on the TFA, the member nations have been able to resolve issues in a matter of months or even weeks, and so must be the issue on Food Security. India also rejected the view that discussions on a permanent solution to food security cannot begin in the absence of complete information and up-to-date notifications and said the Bali Agreement has not presupposed any conditions.

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image courtesy: Khaili Bendib <http://www.corpwatch.org/>

INDIA WILL NOT SACRIFICE AGRICULTURE FOR TRADE

Geneva/New Delhi: India, at two informal meetings of Agricultural committee held at Geneva on 16th and 23rd of this month and at 15th September meeting of ambassadors, reiterated its position that adopting the trade facilitation text should be delayed until the end of the year and a permanent solution on public stockholding issue should be agreed by then. Back in India, at New Delhi on 15th September at a workshop on 'India at the WTO: The Battle between Food and Trade' was recently organized in Delhi, jointly by Third World Network, South Solidarity Initiative --ActionAid India, and Focus on the Global South Centre for WTO Studies (IIFT) that brought together government representatives, researchers, farmers groups, industry and civil society activists, there was overwhelming consensus that PDS

and MSP despite their inadequacies, still form an important food security network in India. It called for better systems to enhance their efficiency and warned against lifting them.

In Geneva meetings, several members said that the hold up on trade facilitation 'ruptured trust', which made it impossible to engage in further work in good faith and accused India with bad faith. Australia asked India to explain the difference between the G-33 group's 17 July 2014 proposal — which calls for a permanent solution on stockholding to be agreed by 2017 as was agreed in Bali — and India's own position that both the permanent solution and the Trade Facilitation Agreement should be concluded by the end of 2014. Though India said it would explain the G-33 proposal when members start negotiating a

"Prayers not to shut down the pharmacy of the developing world": Doctors without Borders

Southasia.foreignpolicy.com had published a post titled "Dear Prime Minister Modi: Stand Firm for Affordable Medicines" as Prime Minister Narendra Modi makes his first official visit to the United States, one issue at the top of the trade agenda is the strikingly different approaches of the Indian and U.S. governments toward intellectual property for medicines, particularly when patented life-saving medicines are priced out of reach of patients.

The authors Meena Narula Ahamed and Unni Karunakara, both trustees of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)/ Doctors Without Borders appreciates India for playing an immensely important role in supplying affordable medicines to people worldwide, claims India as the 'pharmacy of the developing world.' But for years, India has faced a barrage of criticism and pressure from the United States and the European Union, multinational pharmaceutical firms, and their lobbyists over its progressive intellectual property policies. The U.S. Trade Representative placed India on its Special 301 Trade list, a blacklist of countries whose laws and actions do not comport with U.S. interests on intellectual property, particularly those of the U.S. pharmaceutical industry. Congressional hearings and an International Trade Commission (ITC) investigation have also taken aim at India's policies.

In actual fact, India's laws were changed in 2005 to comply with the World Trade Organization's mandates for

pharmaceutical patenting, and over the past decade India has granted an increasing number of patents on medicines. It was only in 2012, for the first time, India issued a so-called 'compulsory license' – when a government overrides a patent monopoly to make medicines available to meet a public health need that too after paying a considerable amount of royalty fee. One must look into the factor that India's compulsory license authorized marketing of a more affordable version of a liver and kidney cancer medication that Bayer was selling for \$6000 per month in India; generics are now available for less than \$200 per month. So why is the U.S. pharmaceutical industry crying foul over India's policies? It stems from the fact that India has a law that limits the granting of secondary and unnecessary patents. This means that companies are not granted patents for obvious modifications of existing products; however, companies are granted patents for truly new medicines.

In the United States, it is standard practice for pharmaceutical companies to file for and obtain multiple patents relating to different aspects of the same medicine. It is a way to extend patent protection and block generic competition. For example, Protected by extended patent terms, asthma inhaler patent-holders in the United States now charge exponentially higher prices and have kept generic competitors out of the market long after the patent on the original medicine expired. To understand what is at stake, think back to the 1990s, when first-line medicines for

HIV/AIDS cost more than \$10,000 per patient per year. While many AIDS patients in the United States and Europe were coming back to life thanks to antiretrovirals, people in developing countries where MSF works continued to die simply because they, or their governments, were unable to afford the price of treatment. The Indian generic industry stepped up, offering to produce the same first-line medicines for \$1 a day. Today, 11 million people are on HIV treatment in developing countries, with around 90% of medicines sourced in India. Broad access to affordable HIV medicines has enabled an unprecedented global response to a disease that once seemed completely unstoppable.

India has already forged a fair and progressive path in this arena that is influencing its BRICS peers and other developing countries. South Africa and Brazil are looking to reform their patent systems to encourage public health-driven innovation and discourage patent abuse. Prime Minister Modi should reject any attempts to turn India back from this path, prays MSF. Beyond this, authors believe India can show even greater leadership by supporting proposals being considered at the World Health Organization and other forums to implement new models for medical innovation, where research and development (R&D) investments are not linked to the price of products, thereby making medicines affordable for all who need them. The authors urge the prime minister to stand firm and to continue India's vitally important role in global health.

IF YOU WANT YOU CAN - Anjali Prasad to CoA, WTO on TFA and Food Security

(continued from page1) permanent solution on 16th meeting, later on the meetign dated 23rd, G-33 group highlighted its three proposals on public stockholding, special products (which would have smaller tariff reductions than normal) and the special safeguard mechanism (for raising import duties temporarily to deal with import surges or price falls). India, a G-33 member, complained of slow progress on the permanent solution and called for a decision by the end of 2014. It recalled after Bali, the first proposal for a permanent solution came from the G-33 on 16 July 2014, which essentially repeated the group's 2012 pre-Bali proposal to move these programmes into the Green Box. The proposal also called for a permanent solution by the 2017 deadline agreed in Bali. India countered the charge of bad faith by arguing that its accusers were also showing bad faith by questioning the feasibility of the December 2008 draft deal in agriculture, which is the only one on the table and in turn was based on a framework agreement reached in 2004 and the mandate of the Doha Round.

Some countries said they were unclear about what the problem with the Bali decision on public stockholding was. If the problem arose because of lack of clarity about the duration of the present interim decision, then they would be happy to confirm that it will remain in place until a permanent solution is found, they said. However, negotiating the content of the permanent solution would take time and could not be completed by the end of 2014, they added. But

then, India's Anjali Prasad reminded India has offered constructive suggestions to arrive at an outcome on food security, and whenever the WTO membership has engaged seriously and with commitment as on the TFA, they have been able to resolve issues in a matter of months or even weeks, Mrs. Prasad is reported to have reminded the HOD with a reference to the trade facilitation negotiations before Bali. The same should be possible on the food security issue too.

She asserted that a discussion on a permanent solution should be part of the overall agriculture discussion was unacceptable, and it was also against the mandate in Para 1.11 of the Bali Ministerial Declaration. She told the HOD, that discussions on a permanent solution to food security cannot begin in the absence of complete information and up-to-date notifications was also not supported by the Bali Ministerial mandate. This has not laid down any conditions for the discussions to begin - Mrs. Prasad is reported to have reminded the HOD. She also rejected the view that the public stockholding issue was of interest only to India. India has heard of attempts being made to spread the apprehension that it would dump its accumulated grain stocks in other developing country markets. This has no basis in fact, and it was far from helpful to spread such stories, if the membership is to make some progress."

However according to a report in the Washington Trade Daily (WTD), at the informal HOD,

US ambassador Michael Punke proclaimed that Washington would not "renegotiate" the Bali agreements in order to break the impasse, but was willing to engage with India and other members on finding a "clarification" to the food security issue. Switzerland, Japan, the European Union, Australia, Norway and Canada along with Chile, South Korea, Mexico, Singapore and Hong Kong-China, supported the United States. According to the WTD, Brazil said while it was important to adopt the protocol without delay for the smooth implementation of the TFA, it was also important to address other issues, while Argentina said there have been some improvements in the negotiations since July and that solutions can be found for all issues by December.

Unfortunately, in his statement at the HOD meeting on Monday, Azevedo had said that there seemed to be a clear interplay between concerns relating to the negotiations on public stockholding for food security purposes and the adoption of the protocol of amendment on the Trade Facilitation Agreement. "However, we know that strict parallelism is not possible," he claimed, maintaining that one negotiation was concluded in the Bali package, and that the other negotiation was launched by the Bali package.

Back in New Delhi, Yudhvir Singh, Farmers Movement leader said that PDS subsidy is for consumers and should not be treated as linked to agriculture. MSP is not a fair price at all and hence not a subsidy. It does not even cover the input cost of farmers.

INDIA - CHINA BEYOND THE USUAL TALKS

(news courtesy: thediplomat.com)

Sino-India relations has become the flavour of the season and popular media is overwhelmed by the swap of articles and perspectives on Sino-India relations. Why didn't President Xi Jinping fulfill China's promise of \$100 billion investment? Who is more important to India, China or Japan? India's strategic ties with Vietnam irritates China? What if there happens to be a greater co-operation with China and Russia? Is China secretly supporting Pakistan in its border conflicts with India? Is China encircling India with its port at Sri Lanka? Questions are never ending and academicians and the strategic analysts seem to be puzzling around. But beyond these euphorbia, what are some few insights we can take seriously about the synergy between India and China? There are few:

(1) Any relationship between major powers includes both cooperation and competition, and Sino-India relation will not be an exception. But so far as competition is considered economically, China has become the world's second largest economy and will soon become first), India has lost its edge to compete with China economically. Rather India would be focussing on its own growth propulsion with Chinese Co-operation.

(2) Unlike Indo-Pak or Sino-Japan Border issues, Sino-India Border issues has the characteristics of a competition rather than a conflict mood. Given that India is a major power, China has enough reasons not to scuttle down its bilateral

relations with India. It's safe to say that these mechanisms rule out the possibility of war over the border issue, even though so-called sensitive incidents are often hyped by the media in both countries. By contrast Sino-India Border issue is mostly about safeguarding territorial sovereignty and upholding of national prestige.

(3) China being seen as politically 'isolated' among the major powers of world, India is the only probable ally, besides Russia, China can have in global politics. China is already one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. India is seeking to work with China in certain international platforms (such as G20, BRICS, and now the SCO) so as to attain greater international influence. China and India already have similar positions on a number of issues, including their stances toward Syria, Russia's involvement in Ukraine, and the need to protect the interests of developing countries. In this sense, Sino-Indian partnership can help China achieve its national interests more quickly and easily.

(4) Prospects of a quasi-alliance relationship among China, India and Russia is quite important and is something which cannot be overlooked by any of these states. Strategic issues existing with Japan, Pakistan, or U.S. respectively for the three nations are more complicated and will compliment the emergence of this new power bloc, though the assertion of their powers may be soft.

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