

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1268
ANSWERED ON 30/07/2024

EFTA COUNTRIES

1268. THIRU DAYANIDHI MARAN:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) the extent to which the Ministry ensure that the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries meet their \$100 billion Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) commitment under the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of measures taken by the Government to monitor and enforce the withdrawal of concessions, if EFTA fails to fulfil investment commitments;
- (c) the extent to which the Ministry has any proposals to attract and facilitate \$100 billion in FDI and ensure it contributes to the creation of Ten Lakh direct jobs in the country;
- (d) the details of steps taken by the Government to support Indian firms in forming partnerships with companies from the EFTA nations;
- (e) the extent to which the Ministry addressing quality standards and contamination issues in Indian spice exports to maintain international trade relationships; and
- (f) the details of the key areas of focus in the ongoing negotiations for the India-UK (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) FTA and the manner in which the Ministry plan to engage with the new Labour Party Government in the UK?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री जितिन प्रसाद)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

- (a) To ensure that European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries meet their commitment of USD 100 billion in FDI to India, under the TEPA, cooperation between the two sides is envisaged to conduct high-level government-to-government meetings, stakeholder engagement and consultations, thematic exchanges, road- shows, sector-specific business roundtables, and other investment promotion events. Article 7.5.1(b) of the India-EFTA TEPA envisages, a dedicated EFTA investment desk to assist investors from EFTA States seeking to invest, investing or having invested in India.

(b) Article 7.4 of the India-EFTA TEPA envisages a Sub-Committee on Investment Promotion and Cooperation (referred to as 'Investment Sub-Committee'), consisting of government officials from both sides to monitor the progress of the commitment. Under Article 7.8 of the India-EFTA TEPA, India may undertake remedial measures to rebalance concessions given to EFTA States in the Schedule of Commitments under the Chapter on Trade in Goods, if EFTA fails to fulfil investment commitments.

(c) The following activities have been identified to attract and facilitate \$100 billion in FDI and ensure it contributes to the creation of ten lakh direct jobs in the country:

- Regular economic and scientific missions with high-ranking delegations; Annual
- high-level meetings between individual EFTA States and India with the participation of the private sector;
- Regular investment promotion events, such as, at the World Economic Forum with participation of the private sector;
- Sector-specific business roundtables;
- Roadshows in India and in the different EFTA States;
- Thematic expert exchanges;
- Support for Invest India in setting up representations in some EFTA States; Exchanges
- within the framework of existing town twinning programmes; Support for vocational
- education and training projects; and
- Other activities as mutually agreed by the Parties.

(d) Government-to-Government and Government-to-Business meetings are being organised at the highest levels to work towards the next steps on the implementation of the TEPA, including to realize the objective of USD 100 billion in FDI and creation of 1 million jobs by EFTA investors in India. Regular business-to-business meetings are also being encouraged for forging partnerships with companies from the EFTA nations.

(e) In order to address quality standards and contamination issues in Indian spice exports to maintain international trade relationships, Spices Board India has established 8 state-of-the-art quality evaluation laboratories (QEL) across major production/ exporting centers, viz. Cochin, Mumbai, Guntur, Chennai, Delhi, Tuticorin, Kandla and Kolkata and has also empanelled NABL accredited laboratories across India. The export consignments are screened for known and emerging quality and safety concerns including toxins, contaminants, residues. The parameters are revised periodically based on the standards of the importing country, potential and emerging risks etc. For the EFTA countries, pre-shipment

sampling and testing for the parameters such as Aflatoxin & Sudan Dye for Chilli & Chilli products and Ethylene oxide for Spices & Spice products falling under HS codes 0904 to 0910, 2103 & 1302 is undertaken. Further, assistance is provided to stakeholders for post-harvest improvement of spices, setting up of in-house laboratories for testing the quality and safety parameters across various stages of the supply chain, obtaining certifications that demonstrate compliance with quality and safety aspects, purchase of rapid quality testing devices for spices etc. Capacity building programs are also conducted for the stakeholders aimed at improving the quality and safety aspects of spices.

(f) India and the UK are negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) since 13th January 2022. 13 rounds of negotiations have been held so far. Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Rules of Origin are key focus areas under negotiations. Both sides are engaged to work out a trade deal that is fair, equitable, balanced and mutually beneficial, which takes into consideration the ambitions and sensitivities of both the sides.
