

Copyright © 2014 The Pioneer. All Rights Reserved.

Thu, 07 May-15; Pioneer - Delhi; Size : 280 sq.cm.; Page : 11

India working with WTO members for solution on food security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

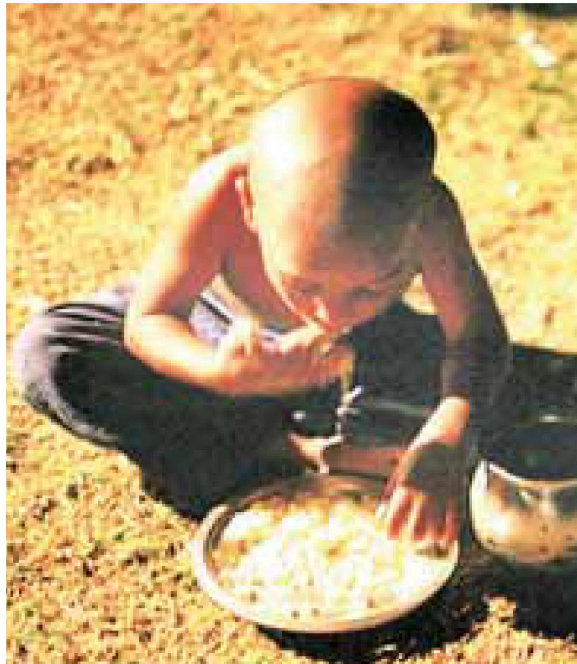
India is working with WTO members to ensure a permanent solution at the "earliest" on the issue of food security, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

Ending months-long deadlock, the WTO in November last year acceded to India's demand to remove constraints on the food stockpiling issue.

"India is working with the WTO members to ensure a permanent solution at the earliest," Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

She said the General Council decision includes a firm commitment to engage in negotiations for a permanent solution through an intensified programme of work.

The WTO's General Council, the highest decision making has accepted India's demand for extending the peace clause till a permanent solution is found for its food



stockpiling issue.

This enables India to continue pro-

urement and stocking of food-grain for distribution to poor under its food security programme without attracting any kind of action from WTO members even if it breaches the 10 per cent subsidy cap as prescribed by the multilateral trade body.

For a permanent solution to the food security issue, India had proposed either amending the formula to calculate the food subsidy cap of 10 per cent or allowing such schemes outside the purview of subsidy caps.

In a separate reply, the minister said at present there is no restriction on cotton exports.

"So far as the border countries are concerned China, Bangladesh and Pakistan are among the top five importers of cotton from India," she said.

During April-February 2014-15, India exported cotton worth \$ 696.5 million to China, \$510.26 million (Bangladesh), \$214.46 million (Vietnam), \$79.15 million (Pakistan) and \$39.59 million (Taiwan).

During the period, India has exported cotton worth \$1.70 billion. It was \$3.63 billion in the 2013-14 fiscal and \$3.74 billion in 2012-13.