STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

All about India's stand at WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference, Cameroon (Africa) March 2026

International Relations

26 Mar 2027

WHAT?

India has affirmed its support for a "reset" of the World Trade Organization (WTO), emphasizing the need for reforms that maintain the organization's core focus on developing and least-developed countries.

This stance was prominently articulated at the 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) held in Cameroon from March 26-29, 2026. India's position underscores a commitment to a transparent, inclusive, and member-driven reform process, with development remaining at its heart. Key principles such as non-discrimination, consensus-based decision-making, and equity are considered foundational and must be upheld.

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Major points of India's advocacy for WTO reform include:

1. **Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT)** : India insists on precise, effective, and operational S&DT provisions for developing countries, ensuring they have adequate policy space. Dispute Settlement Mechanism : A high priority for India is the urgent restoration of the WTO's automatic and binding dispute settlement system, which is currently dysfunctional due to a lack of appointments to its Appellate Body.
2. **Public Stockholding for Food Security** : India continues to push for a permanent solution regarding public stockholding programs, deeming them vital for its food security and the livelihoods of its farmers.
3. **E-commerce Moratorium** : India has opposed the extension of the moratorium on customs duties for electronic transmissions, arguing that it disproportionately disadvantages developing nations by preventing them from collecting potential revenue and limiting their policy flexibility in the digital economy.
4. **Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD)** : India has expressed reservations about the China-backed Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) agreement, stressing that the incorporation of plurilateral outcomes into the WTO framework should be based on consensus and not impose obligations

on non-participating members. Fisheries Subsidies : India advocates for a balanced and comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies that protects the interests of small and traditional fishers while promoting sustainability.

5. **"30 for 30" Proposal** : In 2023, India put forth a "30 for 30" proposal, suggesting 30 incremental operational improvements to various WTO bodies and committees by January 1, 2025, to enhance efficiency and functionality. India also maintains a cautious stance against plurilateral agreements that could potentially undermine the WTO's multilateral, consensus-driven architecture and impose obligations on non-members.

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