International Relations · GS - II

“The broader aims and objectives of WTO are to manage and promote international trade in the era of globalization. But the Doha round of negotiations seem doomed due to differences between the developed and the developing countries.” Discuss in the Indian perspective.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
12.5	~ 200 words

Answer Hint

World Trade Organization; Doha Development Agenda; agricultural subsidies; market access; special and differential treatment; food security; multilateral trade

Model Answer

Introduction

The World Trade Organization (WTO), established in 1995, provides rules for international trade and a forum for negotiating trade agreements. The Doha Development Agenda, launched in 2001, sought to make global trade more responsive to developing countries' concerns.

Objectives of the Doha Round

- Reduce trade barriers and improve market access.
- Address agricultural subsidies and distortions.
- Improve trade opportunities for developing countries.
- Strengthen special and differential treatment.
- Resolve issues involving services, industrial goods and intellectual property.

Reasons for Stalemate

- **Agricultural subsidies:** Developing countries oppose extensive support provided by developed economies to their farmers.
- **Market access:** Developed countries seek greater access to emerging markets, while developing countries protect vulnerable sectors.
- **Food security:** Countries such as India argue for sufficient policy space to maintain public stockholding and support poor farmers.
- **Special treatment:** Developing countries demand flexibility to address different levels of development.
- **Negotiating differences:** Divergent priorities and the requirement to build consensus have complicated progress.

Indian Perspective

India supports a rules-based multilateral trading system but stresses equity, livelihood protection and food security. Its position on public stockholding and agricultural safeguards reflects the importance of small farmers and vulnerable consumers. At the same time, Indian exporters benefit from predictable market access and effective dispute settlement.

The 2013 Bali Ministerial Decision and the 2014 peace clause addressed aspects of public stockholding for food security, but the broader negotiating differences remain unresolved.

Way Forward

Reform agricultural support, improve transparency, provide meaningful flexibility to developing countries and strengthen dispute settlement. Negotiations should balance trade liberalisation with development needs.

Conclusion

The Doha impasse reflects disagreements over the distribution of benefits from globalisation. India should pursue constructive negotiations while protecting legitimate food-security and development priorities.

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