



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

India Joins the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

22 July 2026 ·

IR

GS2

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotesFree UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →

ADVERTISE

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

✉ epicbharat@gmail.com

India Joins the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

22 July 2026 · 4 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

On , India formally deposited its **Instrument of Acceptance of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS)**, becoming the **123rd member** to ratify the pact. Commerce Secretary **Rajesh Agrawal** handed the instrument to WTO Director-General **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** in Geneva.

WHAT THE AGREEMENT DOES

The **Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies** is a landmark **multilateral** rulebook because it is the **first WTO agreement with an environmental-sustainability objective at its core**. Rather than being purely a trade-liberalisation deal, it links global trade rules to the health of the world's oceans and fish stocks.

The agreement prohibits three broad categories of harmful subsidies:

PROHIBITED SUBSIDY	WHAT IT TARGETS
IUU fishing support	Subsidies for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing
Overfished stocks	Subsidies for fishing stocks that are already overfished
Unregulated high seas	Subsidies for fishing in the unregulated high seas

By curbing the flow of public money into these activities, the AFS aims to reduce the global overcapacity and overfishing that have pushed a large share of marine fish stocks beyond biologically sustainable limits.

The Journey to Force

The agreement was **adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in Geneva in June 2022**. Under WTO rules it needed acceptance by **two-thirds of the membership** to take effect. That **threshold** was crossed, and the agreement **entered into force on 15 September 2025**. The WTO itself is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

INDIA'S NEGOTIATING POSTURE

India, one of the world's largest fish producers and home to a vast small-scale fishing community, has approached the negotiations with the interests of its **traditional and artisanal fishers** front and centre. India's core demands have been:

- **Stronger special and differential treatment (S&DT)** for developing and least-developed countries, recognising their limited historical role in depleting global fish stocks.
- **Longer transition periods** so that poor fishing communities are not penalised while they build capacity.
- **Robust protection for small and subsistence fishers** who fish within a country's own waters for livelihood and food security.
- **Tighter curbs on large distant-water fishing fleets** that operate far from home shores and account for the bulk of global overcapacity.

India's stand reflects a **"polluter pays" logic in reverse**: countries that subsidised industrial-scale fishing for decades should shoulder the deepest cuts, while nations whose fishers operate at subsistence scale deserve policy space.

Balancing Sustainability and the Blue Economy

For India the agreement sits at the intersection of three priorities: protecting **fisher livelihoods and food security**, conserving marine ecosystems, and growing the **blue economy**. Fisheries support millions of livelihoods along India's long coastline and are a significant source of nutrition and export earnings. New Delhi has argued that sustainability and development are complementary, not opposed, provided the rules leave room for **equitable** growth.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The current AFS covers the prohibited-subsidy categories, but a **second wave of negotiations** on subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing remains under discussion. India continues to press that any future disciplines must embed generous developing-country flexibilities before it accepts binding cuts on support to its own fishers.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: International institutions and agreements; the WTO and India's role in multilateral trade negotiations; the pursuit of national interest through developing-country coalitions.

GS Paper 3: Marine resources and conservation; the blue economy; **sustainable development** and the environment-trade interface.

Prelims pointers:

- The AFS was adopted at MC12 (Geneva, June 2022) and entered into force on 15 September 2025.
- It is the **first WTO agreement with an environmental-sustainability objective**.
- IUU stands for **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated** fishing.
- India is the **123rd member** to deposit its Instrument of Acceptance; the WTO is headquartered in **Geneva**.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

The WTO was established in 1995 as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, 1947) and now has over 160 members.

The Ministerial Conference is the WTO's highest decision-making body and meets roughly every two years.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria is the WTO's first woman and first African Director-General.

Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) provisions give developing and least-developed countries flexibilities such as longer implementation periods and technical assistance.

India's flagship fisheries scheme is the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), launched in 2020 to promote a sustainable and inclusive fisheries sector.

Sources: WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (official), Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, The Hindu Business Line report on India depositing its Instrument of Acceptance (July 2026).

Source: India Joins the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

RELATED EDITORIALS

BUSINESS STANDARD

[The Ten Per Cent Edge: India, US Tariffs and Export Competitiveness](#)

25 Jul

THE HINDU

[Look Seaward: Protecting the Indians Who Crew the World's Ships](#)

25 Jul

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Europe Rearms, and India's Case for Self-Reliance Sharpens](#)

24 Jul

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Chabahar and the INSTC: Guarding India's Connectivity Lifeline](#)

23 Jul

RELATED KEY TERMS

KEY TERM

[Act East Policy](#)

India's strategic foreign policy framework prioritising active...

KEY TERM

[BBNJ Treaty](#)

The first legally binding international agreement for conservation and...

KEY TERM

[Bilateral Investment Treaty \(BIT\)](#)

A treaty between two countries that protects cross-border private...

KEY TERM

[Bilateral Swap Arrangement](#)

A reciprocal agreement between two central banks to exchange specified...



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/07/22/india-wto-fisheries-subsidies-agreement-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](#)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com