

The World Trade Organization (WTO) came into force on 01.01.1995 with many covered agreements as annexures after lengthy deliberations amongst contracting parties. Many provisions of the WTO made remarkable contributions for regulating international trade, free flow of goods and services and enabled sovereignty to States in regulating their internal markets.

The concept of Sustainable Development is an important philosophy of the WTO and covered agreements, as it balances the Optimal Utilisation of resources as well as economic development. International community has also parallelly laid down a strong foundation stone in the process of formulating several Multilateral Agreements (MEAs).

Agro-Biodiversity is the natural selection process that results from the interaction between the environment, genetic resources including management systems and practices by farmers, herders, tribals and the fishers over millennia. Agro-Biodiversity encompasses variety of biological and genetic resources, crop varieties, micro-organism and aquatic ecosystem that are necessary for key of the agro-ecosystem. Protection and preservation of Agro-Biodiversity ensures food security for the world at large.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) significantly describes the need for conservation of resources both for present and future generations. For the effective conservation of resources, the Rio Declaration specifically postulates legal elements. National governments are required to incorporate many of the legal elements of the Rio Declaration in their national policies both to conserve resources as well as to protect domestic markets.

The Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) is significantly contributing in harmonizing the mandate of the covered agreements of the WTO with the provisions of the MEAs. Various Ministerial Declarations of the WTO, especially the Doha and Cancun Summit, have also deliberated on the mandate of the contracting States to make appropriate measures in protecting agriculture by providing various subsidies on agricultural loans and electricity.

The international instruments and institutions mentioned above originated due to different reasons and have their own mandates. The CBD originates from Rio while the WTO owes its origin from the Brettonwood Conference. These environmental and trade instruments and institutions have certain common objectives and divergent features also. The WTO-Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) Jurisprudence has made some significant contribution both for preservation and conservation of natural and biological resources in Tuna Dolphin and Shrimp Turtle cases. On the other hand it has been an obstacle in Beef Hormone and Biotech Products case.

The WTO is going to complete two decades of its existence on 31.12.2014. It is in this context that

the Conference would like to address the issues confronted by both the organization and States in achieving environmental and agricultural sustainability with the restricted unilateral measures by the national governments.

This International Conference on Agro-Biodiversity and 20 years of WTO is a premier interdisciplinary forum for the presentation of new advances and research in the fields of International Law, Trade Law, Environmental Law and Human Rights Law. The Conference will bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and scholars in domain of interests from around the world.

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