Press Release

Govt to prepare roadmap to double seafood exports: Minister Suresh Prabhu

Margao, Jan 27: Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Shri Suresh Prabhu today said the government will, in the next three months, prepare a comprehensive roadmap with the target of doubling marine products exports in the next few years, including measures to strengthen aquaculture production in states, potential collaborations, marketing and integration of supply chains.

He was speaking on the inaugural day of the 21st India International Seafood Show here while presenting the MPEDA awards for Export Excellence for the years 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Shri Prabhu said the Ministry will task the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Seafood Exporters Association of India to come up with a detailed strategy — including what the states need and can do to build robust aquaculture and fisheries industries — in the next three months and facilitate its immediate implementation.

He added that inland fishery is a priority area for the government and the aim is to create a system for all 13 coastal states to work in tandem for aquaculture development.

“Aquaculture is not just the biggest employment generator in the seafood sector, it is also helping us use land that is not fit for any other purpose, for example brackish water lands. We will try and systematically map all such regions using satellite imagery in the next few months and identify potential areas for development of aquaculture,” the Minister said. “We will actively work with the states to make sure they are able to optimally use these lands and take advantage of their exports potential.”

The government also proposes to create 10 marketing offices around the world to promote and create brand equity for Indian products.

Shri Prabhu said exporters also need to revisit marketing of their products in a changing world. “Marketing today is not just about selling your ware, attention must also be placed on the quality of the products, on packaging, on increasing their shelf-life and so on,” he said.

The Minister said he has been encouraging companies in high potential markets such as Korea and Japan to explore joint ventures with Indian partners for value-added marine products.

In 2016-17 India has exported 11,34,948 MT of seafood, principally frozen shrimp and frozen fish, worth 37,870.90 crores and provisional export figures for April-November 2017 have shown an increase of 18.72% and 15.16% respectively in quantity and value (in US Dollars) of seafood exports.

The export earnings are expected to cross a high of US$ 6 billion during the current fiscal, buoyed by aquaculture growth, enhanced processing capacity and favourable market conditions.
MPEDA Chairman Dr A Jayathilak noted that steps were need to bridge the wide gap in aquaculture development along the east and west coasts.

“Currently 70% of aquaculture is concentrated in the East Coast, if we can establish similar systems along the west coast we could even look at exports of Rs 100,000 crores in the near future,” he said.

“Marine products is one sector that bucked the global recessionary trends over the years to register consistent growth, touching close to 20% annually in the past couple of years thanks in part to the dynamism of exporters,” he added.

MPEDA presents annual awards to companies that have registered outstanding performance across multiple categories, including deep sea fishing, sustainable aquaculture, compliance and training.

A total of 27 companies were presented performance awards for the years 2015-16 and 2016-17 by the Union Minister at the ceremony attended by Goa’s Minister for Agriculture Shri Vijai Sardesai and Minister for Fisheries and Water Resources Vinoda Paliencar and MPEDA Member and MP Shri K. Hari Babu, among others.

ENDS