

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2014**  
**ANSWERED ON-04.08.2016**

Indias interest in South China Sea region

2014 Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Roy

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has a range of interest in the South China Sea region like creation of blue ocean economy including protection of offshore infrastructure and maritime resources, safety of trade and sea lanes of communication and also regionally favourable geostrategic maritime position, if so, details thereof;
- (b) if so, whether the award of the International Court of Arbitration dated on Philippines case against China's claim in the South China Sea shall have any consequence on India's diverse range of interest; and
- (c) if so, what remedial measures Government is going to adopt in this regard?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (c) South China Sea is a major waterway and over US\$ 5 trillion trade passes through the sea lanes in this region. Over 55% of India's trade passes through South China Sea. Peace and stability in the region is of great significance to India. India undertakes various activities, including cooperation in oil and gas sector, with littoral states of South China Sea.

The Tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in the arbitration instituted by the Republic of Philippines against the People's Republic of China delivered its Award on July 12, 2016 clarifying issues concerning maritime entitlements in the South China Sea.

Government's position on this issue and the ruling is clear. The authority of Annex VII Tribunal and its award is recognized in Part XV of the UNCLOS itself. India's own record in this regard is well known. India supports freedom of navigation and over flight, and unimpeded commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the UNCLOS. India believes that States should resolve disputes through peaceful means without threat or use of force and exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes affecting peace and stability. As a State Party to the UNCLOS, India urges all parties to show utmost respect for the UNCLOS, which establishes the international legal order of the seas and oceans.