

Indo SriLanka Free Trade Agreement “ISFTA”

Preamble

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, (hereinafter referred to as the “Contracting Parties”),

CONSIDERING that the expansion of their domestic markets, through economic Integration, Is a vital prerequisite for accelerating their processes of economic development.

BEARING in mind the desire to promote mutually beneficial bilateral trade.

CONVINCED of the need to establish and promote free trade arrangements for strengthening Intra-regional economic cooperation and the development of national economies.

FURTHER RECOGNISING that progressive reductions and elimination of obstacles to bilateral trade through a bilateral free trade agreement (hereinafter referred to as “The Agreement) would contribute to the expansion of world trade.

Article-I Objectives

1. The Contracting Parties shall establish a Free Trade Area In accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and In conformity with relevant provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1994.
2. The objectives of this Agreement are:
 - (i) To promote through the expansion of trade the harmonious development of the economic relations between India and Sri Lanka.
 - (ii) To provide fair conditions of competition for trade between India and Sri Lanka
 - (iii) In the implementation of this Agreement the Contracting Parties shall pay due regard to the principle of reciprocity
 - (iv) To contribute in this way, by the removal of barriers to trade, to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade

Article-II Definitions

For the purpose of this Agreement:

1. "Tariffs" means basic customs duties Included In the national schedules of the Contracting Parties.
2. "Products" means all products Including manufactures and commodities In their raw, semi-processed and processed forms.
3. "Preferential Treatment" means any concession or privilege granted under this under this Agreement by a Contracting Party through the elimination of tariffs on the movement of goods.
4. "The Committee" means the Joint Committee referred to in Article XI.
5. "Serious Injury" means significant damage to domestic producers, of like or similar products resulting from a substantial Increase of preferential imports In situations which cause substantial losses in terms of earnings, production or employment unsustainable In the short term. The examination of the impact on the domestic Industry concerned shall also Include an evaluation of other relevant economic factors and Indices having a bearing on the state of the domestic industry of that product.
6. "Threat of serious Injury" means a situation In which a substantial Increase of preferential Imports is of a nature so as to cause "Serious Injury" to domestic producers, and that such injury, although not yet existing is clearly Imminent. A determination of threat of serious Injury shall be based on facts and not on mere allegation, conjecture, or remote or hypothetical possibility.
7. "Critical circumstances" moans the emergence of an exceptional situation where massive preferential imports ore causing or threatening to cause serious injury" difficult to repair and which calls for Immediate action.

Article-III Elimination of Tariffs

The Contracting Parties hereby agree to establish a Free Trade Area for the purpose of free movement of goods between their countries through elimination of tariffs on the movement of goods In accordance with the provisions of Annexure A & B which shall form an Integral part of this Agreement.

Article-IV General Exceptions

Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent any Contracting Party from taking action and adopting measures, which it considers necessary for the protection of its national security, the protection of public morals, the protection of human, animal or plant life and health, and the protection of articles of artistic, historic and archaeological value, as is provided for in Articles XX and XXI of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, 1994.

Article-V National Treatment

The Contracting Parties affirm their commitment to the principles enshrined in Article III of GATT 1994.

Article-VI State Trading Enterprises

1. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent a Contracting Party from maintaining or establishing a state trading enterprise as understood in Article-XVII of General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, 1994.
2. Each Contracting Party shall ensure that any state enterprise that it maintains or establishes acts in a manner that is not inconsistent with the obligations of the Contracting Parties, under this Agreement and accords non-discriminatory treatment in the import from and export to the other Contracting Party.

Article-VII Rules of Origin

1. Products covered by the provisions of this Agreement shall be eligible for preferential treatment provided they satisfy the Rules of Origin as set out in Annexure C to this Agreement which shall form an integral part of this Agreement.
2. For the development of specific sectors of the industry of either Contracting Party, lower value addition norms for the products manufactured or produced by those sectors may be considered through mutual negotiations.

Article-VIII Safeguard Measures

1. If any product, which is the subject of preferential treatment under this Agreement. Is Imported Into the territory of a Contracting Party In such a manner or In such quantities as to cause or threaten to cause, serious injury In the Imparting Contracting Party, the Importing Contracting Party may, with prior consultations except in critical circumstances, suspend provisionally without discrimination the preferential treatment accorded under the Agreement.
2. When action has been taken by either Contracting Party In terms of paragraph I of this Article, it shall simultaneously notify the other Contracting Party and the Joint Committee established In terms of Article XI. The Committee shall enter Into consultations with the concerned Contracting Party and endeavor to reach mutually acceptable agreement to remedy the situation. Should the consultations in the Committee fail to resolve the issue within sixty days, the party affected by such action shall have the right to withdraw the preferential treatment.

Article-IX Domestic Legislation

The Contracting Parties shall be free to apply their domestic legislation to restrict Imports, In cases where prices are Influenced by unfair trade practices like subsidies or dumping. Subsidies and dumping shall be understood to have the same meaning as in the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, 1q94 and the relevant WTO Agreements.

Article-X Balance of Payment Measures

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Agreement, any Contracting Party facing balance of payments difficulties may suspend provisionally the preferential treatment as to the quantity and value of merchandise permitted to be Imported under the Agreement. When such action has taken place, the Contracting Party, which initiates such action shall simultaneous', notify the other Contracting Party.
2. Any Contracting Party, which takes action according to paragraph 1 of this Article, shall afford, upon request from the other Contracting Party, adequate opportunities for consultations with a view to preserving the stability of the preferential treatment provided under this Agreement.

Article-XI Joint Committee

1. A Joint Committee shall be established at Ministerial level. The Committee shall meet at least once a year to review the progress made in the implementation of this Agreement and to ensure that benefits of trade expansion emanating from this Agreement accrue to both Contracting Parties equitably. The Committee may set up Sub-Committees and/or Working Groups as considered necessary.
2. In order to facilitate cooperation in customs matters, the Contracting Parties agree to establish a Working Group on Customs related Issues including harmonisation of tariff headings. The Working Group shall meet as often as required and shall report to the Committee on Its deliberations.
3. The Committee shall accord adequate opportunities for consultation on representations made by any Contracting Party with respect to any matter affecting the Implementation of the Agreement. The Committee shall adopt appropriate measures for settling any matter arising from such representations within 6 months of the representation being made. Each Contracting Party shall Implement such measures Immediately.
4. The Committee shall nominate one apex chamber of trade and industry in each country as the nodal chamber to represent the views of the trade and Industry on matters relating to this Agreement.

Article-XII Consultations

1. Each Contracting Party shall accord sympathetic consideration to and shall afford adequate opportunity for, consultations regarding such representations as may be made by the other Contracting Party with respect to any matter affecting the operation of this Agreement.
2. The Committee may meet at the request of a Contracting Party to consider any matter for which it has not been possible to find a satisfactory solution through consultations under paragraph 1 above.

Article-XIII Settlement of Disputes

1. Any dispute that may arise between commercial entities of the Contracting Parties shall be referred for amicable settlement to the nodal apex chambers. Such references shall, as far as possible, be settled through mutual consultations by the Chambers. In the event of an amicable -solution not being found, the matter shall be referred to an Arbitral Tribunal for a binding decision. The Tribunal shall be constituted by the Joint Committee in consultation with the relevant Arbitration Bodies In the two countries.
2. Any dispute between the Contracting Parties regarding the Interpretation and application of the provisions of this Agreement or any instrument adopted within Its framework shall be amicably settled through negotiations failing which a notification may be made to the Committee by any one of the Contracting Parties.

Article-XIV Duration and Termination of Agreement

This Agreement shall remain in force until either Contracting Party terminates this Agreement by giving six months written notice to the other of its Intention to terminate the Agreement.

Article-XV Amendments

The Agreement may be modified or amended through mutual agreement of the Contracting Parties. Proposals for such modifications or amendments shall be submitted to the Joint Committee end upon acceptance by the Joint Committee, shall be approved In accordance with the applicable legal procedures of each Contracting Party. Such modifications or amendments shall become effective when confirmed through an exchange of diplomatic notes and shall constitute an Integral part of the Agreement.

Provided however that in emergency situations, proposals for modifications may be considered by the Contracting Parties and if agreed, given effect to through an exchange of diplomatic notes.

Article-XVI **Annexures to be finalised**

Annexure D(i) and D(ii) (Negative Lists of India and Sri Lanka respectively). E (Items on which India has undertaken to give 100% tariff concession on coming into force of the Agreement) and F (Items on which Sri Lanka has undertaken to give 100% tariff concession on the coming into force of the Agreement) shall be finalised within a period of 60 days of the signing of this Agreement. All the Annexure shall form an Integral part of the Agreement.

Article-XVII **Entry Into Force**

The Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the Contracting Parties hereto have notified each other that their respective constitutional requirements and procedures have been completed.

In witness whereof the undersigned, duly authorised thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Done in duplicate at New Delhi this 28th day of December 1998 in two originals in the English language.

Annex.-'A'

The Government of India shall grant duty free access to all exports from Sri Lanka in respect of items freely importable into India, except on items listed in Annex D of this Agreement, in accordance with the phase out schedule detailed below:

1. Upon entry into force of the Agreement :-
 - (a) Zero duty access for the items in Annexure 'E'
 - (b) 50% margin, of preference on the remaining items except on items listed in Annexure D. Concessions on items in Chapters 51 to 56. 58 to 60 and 63 shall be restricted to 25%.
2. The margin of preference on the items mentioned in (b) above shall be increased to 100% in two stages within three years of the coming into force of the Agreement, except for the textiles items referred to in 1 (b) above.

▶ Annex.-‘B’

Government of Sri Lanka shall provide tariff concessions -on exports from India to Sri Lanka in respect of items freely importable into Sri Lanka, as detailed below:

1. Zero duty for the items in Annex F-I, upon entering into force of the Agreement.
2. 50% margin of preference for the items in Annex F — II. upon coming into force of the Agreement. The margin of preference in respect of these items shall be deepened to 70%. 90% and 100%, respectively, at the end of the first, second and third year of the entry into force of the Agreement.
3. For the remaining items except those in Annex D’, the tariffs shall be brought down by not less than 35% before the expiry of three years and 70% before the expiry of the sixth year and 100% before the expiry of eight years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement.

Rules of Origin

- 1. Short title I commencement:-** These rules may be called the rules of Determination of Origin of Goods under the Free Trade Agreement between the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Republic of India.
- 2. Application:-** These rules shall apply to products consigned from the territory of either of the Contracting Parties.
- 3. Determination of Origin:-** No product shall be deemed to be the produce or manufacture of either country unless the conditions specified in these rules are complied with in relation to such products, to the satisfaction of the appropriate Authority.
- 4. Claim at the time of importation:-** The importer of the product shall, at the time of importation:

(a) make a claim that the products are the produce or manufacture of the country from which they are imported and such products are eligible for preferential treatment under the Agreement, and

(b) produce the evidence specified in these rules.

- 5. Originating products:-** Products covered by the Agreement imported into the territory of a Contracting Party from another Contracting Party which are consigned directly within the meaning of rule 9 hereof, shall be eligible for preferential treatment if they conform to the origin requirement under any one of the following conditions:

(a) Products wholly produced or obtained in the territory of the exporting.

Contracting Party, as defined in rule 6; or

(b) Products not wholly produced or obtained in the territory of the exporting Contracting Party, provided that the said products are eligible under rule 7 or rule 8.

6. Wholly produced or obtained:- Within the meaning of rule 5(a), the following shall be considered as wholly produced or obtained in the territory of the exporting Contracting Party

(a) raw or mineral products' extracted from its soil, its water or its sea bed;

(b) vegetable products² harvested there;

(c) animals born and raised there;

(d) products obtained from animals referred to in clause (c) above;

(e) products obtained by hunting or fishing conducted there,

(f) products of sea fishing and other marine products from the high seas by its vessels 3.4;

(g) products processed and/or made on board its factory -hips exclusively from products referred to in clause (f) above 4.5;

(h) used articles collected there, fit only for the recovery of raw materials;

(i) waste and scrap resulting from manufacturing operations conducted there;

(j) products extracted from the seabed or below seabed which is situated outside its territorial waters, provided that it has exclusive exploitation rights;

(k) goods produced there exclusively from the products referred to in clauses (a) to (j) above.

7. Not wholly produced or obtained :-

(a) Within the meaning of rule 5(b), products worked on or processed as a result of which the total value of the materials, parts or produce originating from countries, other than the Contracting Parties or of undetermined origin used does not exceed 65% of the f.o.b. value of the products produced or obtained and' the final process of manufacture is performed within the territory of the exporting Contracting Party shall be eligible for preferential treatment, subject to the provisions of clauses (b), (c), (d) and (e) of rule 7 and rule 8.

(b) Non-originating materials shall be considered to be sufficiently worked or processed when the product obtained is classified in a heading, at the four digit level, of the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System different from those in which all the non-originating materials used in its manufacture are classified.

(c) In order to determine whether a product originates in the territory of a Contracting Party, it shall not be necessary to establish whether the power and fuel, plant and equipment, and machines and tools used to obtain such products originate in third countries or not.

(d) The following shall in any event be considered as insufficient working or processing to confer the status of originating products, whether or not there is a change of heading:

1) Operations to ensure the preservation of products in good condition during transport and storage (ventilation, spreading out, drying, chilling, placing in salt, sulphur dioxide or other aqueous solutions, removal of damaged parts, and like operations).

2) Simple operations consisting of removal of dust, sifting or screening, sorting, classifying, matching (including the making-up of sets of articles), washing, painting, cutting up;

3) (i) changes of packing and breaking up and assembly of consignments,

(ii) simple slicing, cutting and repacking or placing in bottles, flasks, bags, boxes, fixing on cards or boards, etc., and all other simple packing operations.

4) the affixing of marks, labels or other like distinguishing signs on products or their packaging;

5) simple mixing of products, whether or not of different kinds, where one or more components of the mixture do not meet the conditions laid down in these Rules to enable them to be considered as originating products;

6) simple assembly of parts of products to constitute a complete product:

7) a combination of two or more operations specified in (a) to (f):

8) slaughter of animals.

(e) The value of the non-originating materials, parts or produce shall be: -

(i) The c.i.f. value at the time of importation of the materials, parts or produce where this can be proven. or

ii) The earliest ascertainable price paid for the materials, parts of produce of undetermined origin in the territory of the Contracting Parties where the working or processing takes place.

8. Cumulative rules of origin : - In respect of a product. which complies with

9. Direct consignment: - The following shall be considered to be directly

condition.

- 10. Treatment of packing :** - When determining the origin of products, packing should be considered as forming a whole with the product it contains. However, packing may be treated separately if the national legislation so requires.
- 11. Certificate of origin :** - Products eligible for a Certificate of origin in the form annexed shall support preferential treatment issued by an authority designated by the Government of the exporting country and notified to the other country in accordance with the certification procedures to be devised and approved by both the Contracting Parties.
- 12. Prohibitions :** - Either country may prohibit importation of products containing any inputs originating from States with which it does not have economic and commercial relations.

Notes :-

1. Includes mineral fuels. Lubricants and related materials as well as mineral or metal ores
2. Includes agricultural and forestry products
3. Vessels” shall refer to fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing registered in the country of the Contracting Party and operated by a citizen or citizens of the Contracting Party or partnership, corporation or association, duly registered in such country, at least 60 per cent of equity of which is owned by a citizen Or citizens and/or Government of such.

Contracting Party or 75 per cent by citizens and/or Governments of 11w Contracting Parties. However, the products taken from vessels, engaged In commercial fishing under Bilateral Agreements which provide for chartering/leasing of such vessels and/or sharing of catch between Contracting Party will also be eligible for preferential treatment.

4. In respect of vessels or “factory ship” operated by Government agencies, the requirements of flying the flag of the Contracting Party does not apply.
5. For the purpose of this Agreement, the term factory ship means any vessel, as defined, used for processing and/or making on board products exclusively from those products referred to in clause (I) of Rule 6.
6. Cumulation as implied by Rule 8 means that only products which have acquired originating status in the territory of one Contracting Party may be taken into account when used as inputs for a finished product eligible for preferential treatment in the territory of the other contracting Party.

Certificate of origin					
1. Goods consigned from (Exporter's, Business, Name, Address, Country)		Reference No. INDO-SRI LANKA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (ISFTA) (Combined declaration and certificate)			
2. Goods consigned to (Consignee's Name, Address Country)		Issued in (Country) see notes overleaf			
3. Means of transport and route (as far as known)		4. For Official use			
5. Tariff item Number	6. Marks and numbers of Packages	7. Number and kind of packages: description of goods	8. Origin criterion (see notes overleaf)	9. Gross weight or other quantity	10. Number and date of invoice
11. Declaration by the exporter : The undersigned hereby declared that the Above details and statements are correct: That all the goods were produced in (Country) and that they comply with the origin requirements specified for those goods in ISFTA for goods exported to (importing Country) Place and date, signature of Authorised signatory		12. Certificate: It is hereby certified on the basis of control carried out, that the declaration by the exporter is correct. Place and date, signature and Stamp of Certifying authority			

I. General Conditions

To qualify for preference, products must :

- a. Fall within a description of products eligible for concessions in the country of destination under this agreement.
- b. Comply with ISFTA Rules of Origin. Each Article in- a consignment must qualify separately in its own right: and
- c. Comply with the consignment conditions specified by the ISFTA Rules of Origin. In general products must be consigned directly within the meaning of Rule 9 hereof from the country of exportation to the country of destination.

II. Entries to be made in Box 8

Preference products must be wholly produced or obtained in the exporting Contracting Party in accordance with Rule 6 of the ISFTA Rule of Origin. or where not wholly produced or obtained in the exporting Contracting Party must be eligible under Rule 7 or Rule 8.

- a. Products wholly produced or obtained enter the letter 'A' in box 8.
- b. Products not wholly produced or obtained; the entry in box 8 should be as follows:
 1. Enter letter 'B' in box 8 for products, which meet the origin criterion according to Rule 7. Entry of letter would be followed by the sum of the value of materials, parts or produce originating from non-contracting parties of undetermined origin used, expressed as a percentage of the f.o.b. value of the products; (example B- () percent.
 2. Enter letter 'C' in box 8 for products, which meet the origin criteria according to Rule 8. Entry of letter 'C' would be followed by the sum of the aggregate content originating in the territory of the exporting Contracting Party expressed as a percentage of the f.o.b. value of the exported product : (example 'C() per cent.