

Translation of Urdu Transcript of the Question & Answer of Hon. Syed Naveed Qamar on Protection of Ocean's Agenda

Mr. Speaker: Answer be taken as read, supplementary pleas.

Syed Naveed Qamar: Sir! My question from the honourable Minister, I hope the Minister sahib is here. I don't see..

Speaker: I think Jamil Sahib is available.

Syed Naveed Qamar: Sir it is difficult if the Minister doesn't answer, I wouldn't get an appropriate answer of my question.

Speaker: Murad Saeed please.

Minister for Communication and Postal Service (Mr. Murad Saeed): Sir there is an emergency Honourable Minister's father, he has a surgery today. So if you please defer this question and give some time, we will answer.

Speaker: I think Jamil sahib has arrived now, Naveed Qamar please.

Syed Naveed Qamar: Sir I will ask the question but if the answer isn't appropriate, I will ask you to defer this question

Question to the Minister is here.

Speaker: Ok

Naveed Qamar: ok sir, My question from the honourable Minister would be, that which he has answered, that is only stating what was the question itself. That there are fishing areas where the big boats come on our shores and affect the lives of fishermen. It affects our total fishing-stock, there is a UN's law for its protection ratified by many countries around the world. So first of all Pakistan or its fishermen or the coastal areas where they dwell, world is preparing laws for their protection. So Pakistan must support it, this isn't clear in the answer, this must be explained whether Pakistan supports it? This isn't appropriate to say it doesn't imply and secondly we would be able to give our view-point only when we are its members or we can devise a better protection-plan and policy after having ratified the treaty that fits our interests same as other countries did. So

why is Pakistan taking hands off position? Why do we not become its full-fledge members?

Speaker: Jamil Ahmed Khan sahib please.

Parliamentary Secretary for Maritime Affairs (Mr. Jamil Ahmed Khan): Thank you Mr. Speaker..! First of all I would like to inform the House that Minister wanted to come for the answer but his father fell down today in the morning and got his hip bone fractured. So, he left for the Karachi n emergency. So, I am here to answer your query and I will try my best to satisfy whatever you have basically it is asked for the Cape Town Agreement Mr. Speaker. Illegal, unreported and that of vessels and safety of fishermen on board and it's a normal practice within Pakistan that unregulated fishing or fish is being smuggled on daily basis and yes it causes annual loss of millions of dollars the national exchequer and fishing industry of Pakistan. Our export is stagnant which has potential of two to three billion US dollars. The Ministry of Maritime, we are doing our best to improve fishing potential which approximately go up to 3 billion dollars and we have to achieve this target and we have to follow the international laws and conventions and our fish would not be accepted unless our fish industry reaches at par international standards. Secondly Pakistan is one of those countries where illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing practice is at top, so it is very important that we sign agreement and international conventions. So now what Naveed qamar asks is why Pakistan doesn't aggressively become its member, the first this is Cape Town Agreement implementable upon 20 or above meter-fishing vessels, we have future plans of fetching that big vessels and I hereby answer your concerns foreign ships wouldn't be coming as you point out that it might affect livelihood of fishermen. Mr. Speaker I am speaking here on record that I personally met all stakeholders fishermen from Sindh and Balochistan provinces and have held several meetings as we are devising deep sea fishing policy. We have obtained their feedback and that how to improve fishing. Having held four or five meetings we have finalized the deep sea fishing policy's draft which we are going to take to the cabinet meeting. Similarly we shall sign and ratify the Cape Town Agreement when we have taken all the stakeholders on-board i.e Ministry of Foregin Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Maritime Security Agency. So we shall ratify having all of them on-board. Our fishing industry, we are moving ahead, we are trying our best and I assure you we shall bring all the fishermen within it at par international standards. I am talking about ordinary fishermen, I have held

personal meetings with them. We made all the stakeholders sit together including poor fishermen and I am saying this on record that we brought 3 boats through FWO and sponsored to fishermen free of cost so that their vessels are improved at par the international standards. It costs 2.5 to 3 million per vessels, so we have brought three and given them so that they improve. Mr. Speaker! We are doing our best so that we reach international standards.

Speaker: Qadir Patel to ask supplementary question.

Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel, MNA: Thank you very much. Sir I don't agree with my honourable friend that we do not have fishing boats larger than 35 meters.

Speaker: He said 24.

Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel, MNA: Sir, Oh! that's more less. We have local boats larger than 24. Secondly, the policy my friend talked about, we had our representatives too in the meetings he was referring to. Mr. Aslam Bhootani, Agha Rafiullah sahib were also present representatives. Two meetings have been held so far with them and they have been asking for minutes and were wondering if the policy has been finalized and that they must be informed in advance but! There is no response. Number 3 sir we saw in past when international vessels were allowed to enter Pakistan's territory, our local fishermen suffered, whether there is mechanism in the new fisheries policy so that small fishermen is not affected, number 4 how does the fish smuggle, I don't understand that even fish is also smuggled?

Speaker: What is your question, supplementary question?

Abdul Qadir Patel, MNA: I have all these four five questions, I want to understand how is fish smuggled? And want to know that the fisheries policy agreed upon with stakeholders has not been shown to them, if is going to be approved like this it wouldn't be acceptable.

Parliamentary Secretary for Maritime Affairs (Mr. Jamil Ahmed Khan): Thank you Mr. Speaker, I will give a copy of that draft fishing policy soon as this sitting is adjourned. That has been accepted, we have held meetings. It is a draft and they can share their reservations with me, if any, I will give him the copy. Secondly, fish is smuggled on daily basis, I am saying again, there are many unregistered boats from our neighboring countries which, according to a rough estimate, smuggle two to three hundred tons of Pakistan fish and is sold on 2 dollar per KG which

actually costs 6 to 8 dollars in international market and this t2 to 3 dollar per KG loss reaches millions of dollars and this is happenings since past many years. Previous governments have not taken any step or highlighted it, today I would like to say this on floor of the Assembly this is a decade old practice and no step was taken and this government is taking solid steps to stop smuggling, I have already written letters and to all stakeholders, Ministries so that smugglings stops and I have send it I have initiated action against this smuggling and we are devising a mechanism and the third thing he said vessels larger than 24 meters Mr. Speaker about out of 15000 fleet, 4000 are registered we have no data of unregistered, we are trying our best to register fishing vessels to bring them on record and take further action