

India to lead effort to tap MSMEs: FM

FE BUREAU
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AHEAD OF THE virtual G20 Leaders' Summit on November 22, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said India could lead the way in ensuring that what was set out in the "Jaipur Call for Action" continues to be taken forward through the G20 and WTO, so that the full potential of MSMEs can be fully exploited.

In August, G20 trade ministers issued the Jaipur Call for Action to enhance access to information for MSMEs. The ministers called upon the International Trade Center (ITC), Geneva to work on an implementation plan, in consultation with UNCTAD and WTO, for the upgradation of ITC's Global Trade Helpdesk which would address informational gaps MSMEs face. G20 leaders in their New Delhi Declaration recognised challenges before MSMEs, particularly in developing countries.

"While presenting the 2023 Union Budget, I noted that MSMEs are the growth engines of the Indian economy," Sitharaman said address-

ing a webinar on 'Strong, Sustainable, Balanced and Inclusive Growth'.

The minister said under India's presidency, the G20 gave close atten-

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
FINANCE MINISTER

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tion to integrating MSMEs into international trade. MSMEs account for 90% of businesses, 60 to 70% of employment and 50% of GDP worldwide. "They play a key role in sustaining livelihoods, in particular among the working poor, women, youth, and groups in vulnerable situations. However, MSMEs, particularly in developing nations, often struggle with limited access to information, hindering their international trade involvement," she said.

Sitharaman said since the pandemic the global economy has been grappling with multiple crises. While the recovery is under way, it remains slow and uneven. The pace of global growth remains well below the 3.8% average in the two decades before the pandemic and looking ahead, over the medium term, growth prospects have weakened further, she said.

"Policy coordination, both global as well as domestic, is critical to ensure growth comes back on track and remains strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive," Sitharaman said.

Looking at ways for MSMEs to access foreign govt buying

THE GOVERNMENT IS looking at ways where its small and medium businesses can get access to government procurement programmes of different countries, but such an effort would require providing similar access to the partner countries, commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal said on Monday.

"More cooperation agreements (FTAs) are being signed. We are also looking at how MSMEs internationally can have access to public procurement of different countries. Indian companies may get an opportunity. MSMEs from other countries can get access to our Government e-Marketplace," he said at a seminar.