

Report No. 46

POST-DOHA CONSULTATION

Centre for Policy Dialogue

House No 40/C, Road No 11, Dhanmondi R/A, GPO Box 2129, Dhaka-1205,
Bangladesh

Tel: 8124770; Fax: 8130951; E-mail: cpd@bdonline.com

Website: www.cpd-bangladesh.org

May, 2002

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), established in 1993, is an innovative initiative to promote an ongoing process of dialogue between the principal partners in the decision making and implementing process. The dialogues are designed to address important policy issues and to seek constructive solutions to these problems. The Centre has already organised a series of such major dialogues at local, regional and national levels. These dialogues have brought together ministers, opposition front benchers, MPs, business leaders, NGOs, donors, professionals and other functional groups in civil society within a non-confrontational environment to promote focused discussions. The expectation of the CPD is to create a national policy consciousness where members of civil society will be made aware of critical policy issues affecting their lives and will come together in support of particular policy agendas which they feel are conducive to the well being of the country. The CPD has also organised a number of South Asian bilateral and regional dialogues as well as some international dialogues.

In support of the dialogue process the Centre is engaged in research programmes which are both serviced by and are intended to serve as inputs for particular dialogues organised by the Centre throughout the year. Some of the major research programmes of CPD include The Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), Governance and Development, Population and Sustainable Development, Trade Policy Analysis and Multilateral Trading System and Leadership Programme for the Youth. The CPD also carries out periodic public perception surveys on policy issues and developmental concerns.

*As part of CPD's publication activities, a CPD Dialogue Report series is brought out in order to widely disseminate the summary of the discussions organised by the Centre. The present report, prepared under the CPD programme on Trade Policy Analysis and Multilateral Trading System, contains the highlights of the dialogue held at CPD Dialogue Room, Dhaka on January 10, 2002 on the theme of **Post-Doha Consultation**..*

Report prepared by: *Mr M J H Javed, Research Associate, CPD.*

Assistant Editor: *Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Head (Dialogue & Communication), CPD*

Series Editor: *Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, CPD*

Dialogue on **Post-Doha Consultation**

The Dialogue

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised a dialogue entitled *Post-Doha Consultation* on January 10, 2002 in the CPD Dialogue Room, Dhaka. The dialogue was organised under the CPD's Programme on *Trade Policy and Multilateral Trading Regime*. It was chaired by Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, CPD. Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue who was also a member of Bangladesh Delegation to the Doha Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, presented the background paper. Apart from the Steering Committee members of the CPD's Trade Policy Analysis (TPA) Programme, the dialogue was attended by a cross section of people including high level policy makers, entrepreneurs, academics and trade exponents, development activists, journalists and other professionals. Amongst others, Commerce Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh Mr. Suhel Ahmed Choudhury and the Bangladesh Permanent Representative in Geneva Dr. Toufic Ali attended the dialogue. The list of participants is attached in *Annex 1*. This report captures the main points of Dr. Bhattacharya's presentation and the lively exchange of views and ideas among the participants which followed the keynote presentation.

A Resume of Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya's Introductory Remarks

In his introductory speech Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya pointed out that, as one of the leaders of the least-developed countries, Bangladesh played an active role during the preparatory phase of the Doha Ministerial. However, the outcomes of the Doha Ministerial did not satisfactorily address the critical demands of LDCs such as Bangladesh, particularly regarding a binding multilateral declaration that provided quota-free, duty-free market access to products originating in the LDC to be exported under realistic rules of origin. He suggested that, in order to enhance Bangladesh's interests in the future, one has to take a pragmatic approach rather than be hostile to the WTO and try to capitalize on the commitments made at the Doha Ministerial. He underscored the need to identify areas of priority for Bangladesh in the context of the upcoming negotiations.

Dr. Bhattacharya then focused on some of the important aspects of the Ministerial Declaration.

On *labour standards*, he noted that the preamble of the declaration reaffirms the “Singapore Consensus” (1996) regarding core labour standards.

As regards *agriculture*, he noted that the declaration commits the members to undertake comprehensive negotiations for substantive improvement in market access, reductions of all forms of export subsidies (with a view to phasing-out), and significant reductions in trade-distorting domestic support *without prejudging the outcomes of the negotiation*.

Speaking on *services* issues, he noted that there was little debate on the issue at Doha. “The Declaration endorsed the on-going negotiations and reviews provided for under the *General Agreement on Trade in Services*,” he added.

Dr. Bhattacharya termed the para on *market access for non-agricultural products* which agrees “to reduce or, as appropriate, eliminate tariffs, including reduction or elimination of tariff peaks, high tariffs and tariff escalation” as a point of relative success for the developing countries, because it allows for “less than full reciprocity” in tariff reductions between developed and developing countries.

Commenting on the Doha Declaration on the *environment* issue, he observed that despite the strong insistence of the developing countries, the European Union was successful in introducing a substantial text on environment into the draft. Salient features of the text include a commitment to negotiations on the relationship between WTO rules and Multilateral Trading Agreements (MTAs), elimination/reduction of tariff barriers on environmental goods and eco-labeling.

As regards *debt, finance and technology transfer*, Dr. Bhattacharya noted that as per the request of some developing countries, the WTO is to set up two new *Working Groups* to examine the relationship between trade, debt and finance as well as the link between trade and technology transfer.

Turning his attention to *e-commerce*, the CPD Executive Director observed that the Declaration agreed to continue the *Work Programme on Electronic Commerce* in addition to the decision that the Members will not impose any duties on electronic transmission until the Fifth Session.

Referring to the *technical cooperation and capacity building* issue, he said, the relevant paras on *technical cooperation and capacity building* demonstrate all the necessary sensitivities to the concerns of the developing countries, least developed countries, acceding countries, transitional economies and countries not having representation in Geneva. “However, regrettably, the phrase *best endeavours* does not provide for adequate capacity building as a precondition for implementation by the developing countries of their WTO commitments”, he added.

As regards the *S & D treatment*, as focused in the Ministerial Declaration, Dr. Bhattacharya pointed out that the Declaration promised that all special and differential treatment provisions shall be reviewed with a view to strengthening these and making them more precise, effective and operational. A report in this regard is to be submitted to the WTO General Council by July 2002. “It is to be keenly observed to what extent the espoused process will be successful in turning the S&DT provisions into binding commitments”-he commented.

Focusing on the major challenges facing Bangladesh in the context of the decisions reached at Doha, Dr. Bhattacharya thought that there is a strong need to review Bangladesh’s overwhelming emphasis on LDC solidarity, particularly given that the African LDCs opted for a joint platform of African-Caribbean Pacific Island countries along with other countries from the African continent.

Stressing the need to closely read the Doha documents along with the “*built-in agenda*” of the Uruguay Round agreements for identifying the implications for Bangladesh, Dr. Bhattacharya noted, “Given the enormity of the task, Bangladesh’s ability to effectively address the Doha Agenda will primarily depend on its ability to take forward the capacity-building exercise in trade related issues.”

Resume of the Open Floor Discussion

Following is a brief summary of the exchange of viewpoints and recommendations articulated by the participants at the dialogue.

The Doha Balance Sheet

The views of the participants diverged substantively as regards the gains and failures of Bangladesh at the Doha WTO ministerial. Bangladesh Permanent Representative in Geneva Dr. Toufic Ali made an optimistic observation about the Doha outcome: “I think most of the groups in Bangladesh having a stake in Doha are more or less satisfied. Though our achievements from the ministerial meeting fall short of our expectations, considering the Seattle fiasco, conflict of interest within the LDC group and the diverse economic background of the negotiating countries and other such realities, the outcome should not basically frustrate us.” FBCCI director, Mr. Rouf Chowdhury also sounded optimistic as regards the outcome of the Doha Ministerial. In his view, two very pertinent issues- the *Singapore Declaration* (which promised that the negotiating committees would look into the interests of the LDCs) and the *implementation issue* – had been sidelined during the Doha meeting, to our dismay. Nonetheless, he was not discouraged: “it was, however, not possible for us to achieve more than what we actually did.” In contrast, Mr. C.K Hyder, Secretary General of MCCI was not so encouraged by the outcomes of the Doha Ministerial. Making a reference to the complaints raised at a recent meeting held at the FBCCI, Mr. Hyder said, “Our focus of attention at the Doha meeting was on four key aspects which are the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), Market Access, first track resolution of trade related disputes and free movement of natural persons. Though the outcome on the latter two issues is not quite frustrating, maneuverings on the first two issues were hardly enough.”

Building Alliance: No permanent ally, no permanent enemy, only permanent interests

Extending support to the suggestion of Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya for pursuing her interests at the multilateral negotiating forum Bangladesh should strive to form alliance with other countries on specific issues rather than the geographical location or overall economic condition of the countries.

FBCCI Director Mr. Rouf Chowdhury observed that enough time has been spent in the past in forming alliances with fellow LDC countries “but it is by now clear to us that an *LDC constituency* is possible only in theory and never in practice.” Noting that disharmony among the LDCs is inevitable Mr. Chowdhury said, “After three years there will be hardly any confluence of interests between Bangladesh and the rest of the LDCs.” In substantiation of his argument he pointed out that, during the last three decades the LDCs had been negotiating with the developed countries in terms of reduction of tariffs; however, at present tariff related problems are almost non-existent with the developed countries. To the contrary, he said, we need to negotiate mainly the tariff issues with most of the developing and least developed countries.

Terming the non-tariff issues as very critical in our future trade relations he said, “these issues should be seriously discussed in the upcoming multilateral negotiations and we have the scope for building alliance with the Like Minded Group (LMG) on environment, labour standards, working condition and other non tariff related issues.”

Seconding the observations of Mr. Rouf Chowdhury, President of International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICC-B), Mr Mahbubur Rahman pointed out that some recent developments in the international political economy have accelerated the decline of the LDC coalition and Bangladesh is among the worst victims of such developments. Mentioning that the privileges offered to the 72 ACP countries under the USTDA-2000 has *potentially destroyed* Bangladesh’s trade opportunities, he pointed out that it is not possible to discover the criteria under which the countries were chosen to offer them quota-free, zero tariff access facilities destroying the spirit of *level playing field* in global trade. “Under the banner of ACP, 72 countries of diverse economy and geography have been chosen ignoring what consequences it would bring in the foreign trade of the rest 14 LDCs. Another sad part of the story is that out of the 9 Asian LDCs, this Act *meaningfully punishes* only Bangladesh. Therefore, rather than counting on support from other countries for advancing Bangladesh’s interest, we have to design our own strategy and move accordingly”- argued Mr. Rahman.

Commenting on the case of ACP, Dr. Toufic Ali observed that its history goes a long way back. “ Before forming their alliance, they carried out a lot of background works and successfully held the Lome Convention,” said Dr. Ali, “ The obvious lesson we can draw from the ACP is that we have to focus on *flexible alliance building* and work out appropriate strategy to lobby the administration and legislature of US as well as other developed countries.”

TRIPs

In his introductory speech Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya mentioned that the *Declaration on TRIPs and Public Health* allows the developing countries to override patents in the interest of the public health through issuance of “Compulsory Licencing”. He further informed the audience that LDC Members will not be required to enforce patent rights with respect to pharmaceutical products till January 2016. “The TRIPs document adopted at Doha has particular relevance for Bangladesh – not only because of its potential for accessing life-saving medicine at affordable price, but also for the new found opportunity for developing export-oriented pharmaceutical industry in the context of the extension of the transition period”- observed Dr. Bhattacharya.

Terming compulsory licensing as an extreme case in the trade of pharmaceutical products, former President of MCCI, Mr. Latifur Rahman noted that Bangladesh will need to resort to licensing during epidemics “because during such times, medicines are required in so large a quantity that it is more cost effective to produce the medicine within the country rather than go for import.” Mr. Rahman noted that Bangladesh is one of the most developed among the LDCs in the pharmaceutical industry and to take advantage of India’s inability to produce patented drugs after the year 2004 Bangladesh will need to make substantial investment in reverse engineering. Cautioning that hardly enough time was left for Bangladesh to carry out the necessary research for reaping the post 2004 benefits in the pharmaceutical industries, Mr. Rahman said, “Since India is a global leader in reverse engineering, we may invite our Indian colleagues to set up reverse engineering plants in joint venture to produce the raw materials and then to produce the drugs.” “We should urge upon the Indian Pharmaceutical industry leaders to seriously consider the feasibility

of setting up subsidiary companies in Bangladesh or relocating some of the Indian reverse engineering plants to Bangladesh given their ineligibility and Bangladesh's potential to produce patented drugs after the year 2004"- he suggested.

Taking part in the discussion on the TRIPs issue, Dr. Toufic Ali informed the audience that Bangladesh is the only LDC member in the International Association of the Pharmaceutical Industries. "The chairmanship of the Association rotates only between Germany and the USA. The current chairperson has assured me of giving us a strategy paper considering the Doha outcome on TRIPs and Bangladesh's potentials in the pharmaceutical business,"- Dr Ali mentioned. He, however, noted that it is a point to ponder as to why the USA moved the LDC friendly TRIPs provision which was not even in the list of LDC demands. "It is not clear to us if USA had consulted the drug manufacturing companies for extending the time limit of allowing patented drugs to 16 years"- Dr. Ali added.

Capacity Building at Home: A list of essential dos

Setting up of WTO Cell

The participants put forward a wide range of suggestions as regards the shape of the proposed WTO cell under the ministry of commerce. Some of the discussants viewed that the cell will have nothing to do except wasting scarce resources from the public purse if it inherits the age-old structure of bureaucratic exercise. However, the speakers were unequivocal in their opinion that for setting meaningful trade relations with other countries and proper coordination of country's trade negotiations, there is no alternative to the establishment of a dynamic WTO cell under the Ministry of Commerce.

The Secretary for Commerce, Government of Bangladesh Mr. Suhel Ahmed Choudhury asserted that there is a serious need to develop core competence within the Ministry of Commerce. Elaborating the urgency of the issue, he said, "*Currently there is not even a single official in the Commerce Ministry who had attended the Singapore Ministerial.* Of late we have made a request to the Establishment Ministry not to transfer the Commerce Ministry officials with trade related knowledge for the

next 4 to 5 years. We do not know what will be the response from the Establishment Ministry.”

The Commerce Secretary observed that the government has already taken up initiatives to set up the WTO cell with financial support from the World Bank. Talking over the institutional structure of the proposed WTO Cell, he said, “Currently the government is not in a position to create new posts, as a result the WTO cell is likely to be manned by serving government officials. Before inducting the officials into the WTO cell, they are expected to be imparted with the necessary training.” The Commerce Secretary expressed his hope that, though essentially a government body, the WTO cell would actively interact with private sector, academics, researchers, and chamber leaders on regular basis. This will help Bangladesh adequately prepare for the forthcoming international trade negotiations, well ahead of time. Expressing his dismay at the fact that currently there was an absence of adequate number of officials in the Ministry of Commerce who had the required expertise in trade related issues, ICC-B President Mr. Mahbubur Rahman came up with the suggestion that knowledgeable trade officials should be recruited and *such officials should not be transferred whimsically*. He criticized the Government plan of inducting only the government officials into the WTO Cell (as indicated by the Commerce Secretary). Voicing his concern he said, “To make it function better, the Government should make room for the private sector people in the Cell. As we have recommended to the immediate past Government, the WTO Cell is to be headed by the Minister for Commerce, and the Commerce Secretary is to serve as the member secretary.” In reply the Commerce Secretary said, “Initially we will set up a small body according to our capacity but it will be expanded gradually.”

Establishing a Foreign Trade Institute

While pointing out the plans of the Government as regards enhancement of the country’s capacity in foreign trade, the Commerce Secretary informed the house that steps were already underway for establishing a Foreign Trade Institute. He said that due to resource constraints the plan could not be implemented in the past. “The proposed Foreign Trade Institute (FTI), basically a joint initiative of public and private sectors, is expected to extend necessary support to us in the coming years

when the next rounds of negotiations will be taking place.” Underscoring the need for establishing a Foreign Trade Institute of high academic standard and excellence without any delay, he noted, “The Foreign Trade Institute of India was founded 39 years back. Initially it was a Government run institution, however, at present 35% of the cost is borne by the private sector.” Quoting the DG of India’s Foreign Trade Institute, the Commerce Secretary observed that though more than a dozen trade experts work as regular staff in Commerce Ministry of India, the Foreign Trade Institute submits three to four position papers to the Indian Government ahead of each and every trade negotiation that the country embarks on. He finally said, “In absence of an FTI, I am not sure how Bangladesh will prepare herself for multilateral trade negotiations in the coming years.” Elaborating on this point, Research Director of CPD, Professor Mustafizur Rahman observed, “It is true that Bangladesh will be taking part in a series of multilateral trade negotiations in the next 3-4 years; however, it also needs to be borne in mind that Bangladesh will be negotiating on critical issues on a continuing basis in future. Accordingly the need for a FTI is an issue of both short term urgency and medium to long term necessity.” Elaborating, Professor Rahman said that the difficulties facing country’s foreign trade may gain newer dimensions and Bangladesh will be required to negotiate increasingly on complex issues including anti-dumping and countervailing duties, dispute settlement understanding, and technical barriers to trade. “The area of focus of the Foreign Trade Institute can never be bogged down to the traditional trade issues rather the task is to make it into a think tank capable of serving country’s trade negotiators with necessary knowledge; the curriculum should be so designed as to address the cutting edge issues in the trade discourse and the WTO agenda”- suggested the CPD Research Director. President of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute Ambassador Farooq Sobhan who also served Bangladesh as High Commissioner to India pointed out that the Foreign Trade Institute of India has earned wide fame as a center of excellence. He informed that for admission to this institute each year about 16000 candidates vie for one single seat. President of ICC-B, Mr. Mahbubur Rahman recollected that he attended a meeting with the foreign ministry officials 15 years back on the establishment of a Foreign Trade Institute (FTI). “The current initiative of the Government as regards establishment of a FTI makes me say *better late than never*” remarked Mr. Rahman.

Private Sector Capacity Building

Dr. Toufic Ali remarked that as per universally accepted practice, it is the government officials who negotiate on behalf of the country. However, in preparing the background papers they draw extensive support from the private sector. “With that aim, steps may be taken to form an advisory council under the auspices of the Commerce Ministry comprising of people from institutions such as the CPD, BIDS, BIISS, BILIA, the universities, the chambers etc”-he suggested.

Commerce Secretary Mr. Suhel Ahmed Choudhury regretted that during the Pre-Doha preparations support from the private sector was insignificant, with the contribution received by the Ministry from CPD being the only exception. He noted, currently there is hardly any initiative for private sector capacity building. In response to the Commerce Secretary’s observation about the private sector capacity, MCCI Secretary General Mr. C.K. Hyder noted that the private sector cannot make any contribution towards capacity building in the country if the government does not feel the need. “Mainly because of the government’s reluctance, contrary to the expectation of being at the driving seat of the LDC group, Bangladesh was at quite some distance from the very vehicle during the Doha negotiations”- thought Mr. Hyder. On this issue, Ambassador Farooq Sobhan suggested that the private sector think tanks should be more deeply engaged in the negotiation process. He said, “Once an expert from outside the Government is included in the negotiating team, no difference virtually remains between the private sector people and the Government official.” In substantiation of his view, the former top diplomat of the country cited the example of privately run Enterprise Institute of Washington; “The Institute drives the Government by putting forward appropriate policy guidelines on trade related aspects, it is not the other way round.” “The most vital point in our case is that the Government should provide all types of support to the private sector think tanks so that they can be of assistance to the Government on relevant issues”- Ambassador Farooq Sobhan thought.

Overseas Capacity Building

ICC-B President Mr. Mahbubur Rahman raised the issue of capacity building of Bangladesh's overseas institutions. Terming Bangladesh's Geneva Mission as a *Post Office*, he said that there is a serious lack of competence in Geneva. "The officials serving there attend most of the meetings without undertaking the necessary ground works"-he thought. He suggested that similar to the US Permanent Representative for Trade, Bangladesh should send officials of such status in view of the importance of the mission from business standpoint. Dr. Mostafa Abid Khan, Deputy Chief of Tariff Commission pointed out that there is a lack of communication between Dhaka, Geneva and the Private Sector. According to him, the entire Geneva Mission should be *revamped* by appointing adequate number of trade officials. Former President of DCCI, Mr. Benajir Ahmed observed that, in the past, Bangladesh has failed to draw the support from other countries on various issues as a result of the incompetence of the officials serving at different important capitals and lack of coordination between the foreign missions and the capital. He thought that the issue of capacity building should be taken up with due urgency and this should address the needs both at home and abroad.

Preparedness to Negotiate

In his address Dr. Toufic Ali briefly touched upon the issues under negotiation between now and the year 2005. These are as follows:

- Implementation
- Agriculture
- Services
- Industrial Tariffs
- TRIPs
- Anti-Dumping
- Relationship between trade agreements under WTO
- DSU
- Trade and Environment

Dr. Ali mentioned that the trade negotiating committee which is technically a subsidiary body of the General Council is authorized to negotiate on these areas.

Elaborating as to how the nine negotiating committees were constituted, he informed the participants that the developing countries have proposed two co-chairs for each of the committees- one from the developed countries and the other from the developing countries. He said that the negotiating brief is often radically different from the background papers submitted by the countries. According to Dr. Ali, Bangladesh's background papers should be developed in a participatory process and in due time. In the light of his personal experience he said, *"It is useless to raise any point or present a paper, no matter how valid the point is or how well prepared the paper is, at a multilateral conference such as the WTO ministerial. At the final moment of the negotiations, countries do not show even the minimum interest in the points we raise. If we really want to make other delegates listen to our talks and gain their support, our version must be submitted to them well in advance."* "Ministerial meeting is the highest form of negotiation and at that point there is no scope for introduction of new issues or points. No country will accept new points at the last moment of negotiations"-added the Bangladesh Permanent Representative to Geneva.

Issues for Research under the TPA Programme of CPD

The participants of the dialogue came up with a number of suggestions as regards issues which needed to be addressed by the CPD as part of the Work Programme 2002 of the CPD-TPA. A list with priority issues was proposed after detailed discussion. Some of the prioritised issues included:

- Mexico Ministerial: Exploring the Issues of Bangladesh's Interests and Revisiting Negotiating Strategies
- Gender Implications of Globalisation from Bangladesh Perspective
- Bangladesh Country Perspective in the Context of Continuing Negotiations on Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) in the WTO
- Competition Policy and Investment: Compliance and Strategic Advantages for Bangladesh
- Trade and Environment: Development of Agro-Based Industry and Impact of Negotiations on Bangladesh
- Role of Technology Transfer in Economic Development: Implications of ongoing Negotiations in the WTO

- Trade Related Intellectual Properties: Implications for Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Industry
- Capacity Building in Bangladesh in the Context of the WTO

Concluding Remarks by Professor Rehman Sobhan

In his concluding remarks, the CPD Chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan underscored the need for an interactive process in the design of the negotiating strategies for the country. He observed, “For the greater interest of the country, ad-hoc bureaucratic practice must come to an end and continuing and efficient institutional support must be ensured.” Professor Sobhan remarked that to see a better-prepared Bangladesh in the next WTO Ministerial at Mexico, required resource base must be mobilized and necessary ground works should be undertaken on an urgent basis. He was not optimistic that mere establishment of a WTO Cell at the Commerce Ministry or the setting up of a Foreign Trade Institute would be enough to service the country’s increasing needs in trade related support in future unless the academic standard of the existing institutions are upgraded. Stressing the need for undertaking administrative reforms for establishing good governance, he pointed out that it would be unrealistic to expect that a single sector could be developed separately; he went on to add that unless a comprehensive development plan is designed and the structural problems in ensuring good governance addressed the felt-needs could not be properly addressed. He expressed his hope that in future CPD will be continuing its efforts to contribute to the country’s ongoing capacity building process. Professor Sobhan thanked all the participants for their important contribution to the dialogue.

List of Participants

(in alphabetical order)

<i>Mr Nashiruddin Ahmed</i>	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Kutubuddin Ahmed</i>	President, BGMEA
<i>Mr Benajir Ahmed</i>	Former President, DCCI
<i>Dr Toufiq Ali</i>	Permanent Representative of Bangladesh in Geneva
<i>Mr Abul Kalam Azad</i>	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan</i>	President, FICCI
<i>Mr Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury</i>	Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Liaqat Ali Chowdhury</i>	Director General, Multilateral Economic Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>Mr Rouf Chowdhury</i>	Director, FBCCI
<i>Mr Tapan Chowdhury</i>	President, MCCI and Managing Director Square Pharmaceuticals Limited
<i>Mr Abdul Matin Chowdhury</i>	Chairman, BTMA and Managing Director, New Asia Ltd.
<i>Mr Samson H. Chowdhury</i>	Chairman, Square Pharmaceuticals Limited
<i>Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Amjad Khan Chowdhury</i>	Chief Executive, Pran Group
<i>Mr Amir Khorsu Mahmud Chowdhury, M P</i>	Hon'ble Minister for Commerce Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
<i>Mr Yussuf Abdullah Harun</i>	President, FBCCI, and Chairman, South East Bank
<i>Mr C K Hyder</i>	Secretary General, MCCI
<i>Ms Khushi Kabir</i>	Coordinator, Nijera Kori and Member, CPD Board of Trustees
<i>Dr Mostafa Abid Khan</i>	Deputy Chief, Tariff Commission
<i>Mr Nazrul Islam Khan</i>	Secretary General, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)
<i>Mr A.S.M. Quasem</i>	President, Bangladesh Employments' Association and Chairman, Newage Group
<i>Mr Matiur Rahman</i>	President, DCCI
<i>Mr Mahbubur Rahman</i>	President, International Chamber of Commerce – Bangladesh (ICC-B)
<i>Mr Latifur Rahman</i>	Managing Director, Transcom Technologies Ltd. and Former President, MCCI
<i>Dr Zaidi Sattar</i>	Senior Economist, The World Bank
<i>Mr Farooq Sobhan</i>	President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI)
<i>Mr M. Syeduzzaman</i>	Chairman, Bank Asia and Member, CPD Board of Trustees
<i>Engineer M. Abu Taher</i>	Managing Director, Fortuna Group