

Report No. 94

## **Future of Doha Round**

Publisher

**Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)**

House No 40/C, Road No 11 (new)

Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209

Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 8124770, 9141703. 9141734

Fax: (880 2) 8130951

E-mail: [cpd@bdonline.com](mailto:cpd@bdonline.com)

Website: [www.cpd-bangladesh.org](http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org)

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The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), established in 1993, is a civil society initiative to promote an ongoing 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 dialogues at local, regional and national levels. The CPD has also organised a number of South Asian bilateral and regional dialogues as well as some international dialogues. These dialogues have brought together ministers, opposition frontbenchers, MPs, business leaders, NGOs, donors, professionals and other functional group in civil society within a non-confrontational environment to promote focused discussions. The CPD seeks 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.

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 the CPD include **The Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), Trade Related Research and Policy Development (TRRPD), Governance and Policy Reforms, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Investment Promotion and Enterprise Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Ecosystems, Environmental Studies and Social Sectors.** The CPD also conducts periodic public perception surveys on policy issues and issues of developmental concerns. With a view to promote vision and policy awareness amongst the young people of the country, CPD is implementing a **Youth Leadership Programme.**

Dissemination of information and knowledge on critical developmental issues continues to remain an important component of CPD's activities. Pursuant to this CPD maintains an active publication programme, both in Bangla and in English. As part of its dissemination programme, CPD has decided to bring out CPD Occasional Paper Series on a regular basis. Dialogue background papers, investigative reports and results of perception surveys which relate to issues of high public interest will be published under its cover. The Occasional Paper Series will also include draft research papers and reports, which may be subsequently published by the CPD.

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 contains the highlights of the dialogue on ***Future of Doha Round*** held on 28 December 2007 at the Brac Centre Inn Auditorium, Dhaka. The dialogue was organised under CPD's TRRPD Programme.

**Report Prepared by:** *Hasanuzzaman*, Research Associate, CPD.

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

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

Dialogue Report on  
**Future of Doha Round**

**The Dialogue**

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised a dialogue on 28 December 2007 titled *Future of Doha Round* at the BRAC Centre Inn Auditorium, Dhaka. The Chief Guest at the dialogue was *Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury*, Hon'ble Advisor to the Caretaker Government, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Overseas Employment & Expatriates' Welfare and CHT Affairs. *Dr Rajani Alexander*, Counsellor and Head of Development Cooperation, Canadian High Commission attended the dialogue as the *Special Guest*. The session was chaired and moderated by the Chairman of CPD *Professor Rehman Sobhan*. Presentation titled *The Doha Round: The Way Forward* was made by *Dr Shishir Priyadarshi*, Director, Development Division, World Trade Organization (WTO) Secretariat. *H E Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the WTO and UN Office in Geneva who was also the *Guest of Honour* made a presentation titled "*End Game*" of the *Current WTO Negotiations: Priorities and Challenges for Bangladesh*. *Priyadarshi* outlined the current state of negotiations with respect to the relevant issues of concerns for least developed countries (LDCs) and developing countries while *Bhattacharya* took the problem further and related it to Bangladesh's context.

Following these two presentations, the floor was opened for discussion by the participants who included academics, policymakers, entrepreneurs, journalists and other professionals (a list of participants is attached at the end of this report). This report offers a succinct resume of the two presentations and the exchange of views and ideas among the participants.

**Presentation by *Shishir Priyadarshi* on *Doha Round: Where is it Headed?***

*Priyadarshi* started his presentation by tracing back the origins of the Doha Development Round. He recalled that the Doha Developed Round was launched at the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001 as a result of the cumulating dissatisfaction with the current world trading system for more than 50 years and this frustration originated from the weaker and vulnerable countries. He went on to highlight that the 49 LDCs' share in world trade fell from 0.8 per cent to 0.4 per cent between 1980 and 1999. The *Single Undertaking* principle made it mandatory for the weaker and vulnerable countries to undertake commitments as part of the Uruguay Round which led to increased dissatisfactions from

this particular group of countries. *Priyadarshi* felt that this dissatisfaction somewhat reflected the failure of the Seattle Ministerial Conference during 1999.

*Priyadarshi* confirmed that the Doha Development Round has been perceived to be 'larger, deeper and fairer' than the other previous Rounds of trade negotiations. *Larger*, because of the significantly enlarged and built-in agenda of the Uruguay Round; *deeper*, because the envisaged tariff reductions were much higher than what had been achieved in the previous Rounds, and in particular, this style of reduction was needed to provide greater market access for developing and LDCs; *fairer*, because concerns had been expressed about some of the obligations that were considered to be unfair. *Priyadarshi* emphasised the importance of this Round as being 'larger, deeper and fairer' and should be taken into cognizance while negotiations on different issues are taking place.

### **Stocktaking of the Doha Round (2002-2006)**

When describing the events that occurred during the period 2002-2006, *Priyadarshi* mentioned about the many missed deadlines of the Doha Development Round. He opined that there were several timelines, such as January and July 2005, coupled with the expiration of the Fast Track Authority<sup>1</sup>, which put pressure on Members to reach an agreement on modalities and overall, achieve a consensus based agreement. Although there were timeframe pressures, Member countries failed to meet its demand, he noted. Recalibration of immediate ambitions was a prominent feature in this period and Member countries often felt that they were progressing towards reaching an agreement. *Priyadarshi* recalled that while heading to the Cancun Ministerial in 2003, it could be felt that Member countries were in the midst of either reaching an agreement or completely discarding the Doha Round of trade negotiations. However, the period between 2002 and 2006 was not only a time for recalibration of ambitions, but also of outcomes and perhaps the most striking example would be that for the first time in the Doha Round of trade negotiations, Members started discussing framework for modalities.

*Priyadarshi* highlighted three key aspects in the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations from 2002-2006. *First*, modalities received heavy attention but when Member countries observed that these modalities were not forthcoming, they stopped talking about it. *Second*, the Doha Development Agenda was reduced during the Cancun Ministerial Conference and the central focus was put on agriculture, cotton, Non-

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<sup>1</sup> Fast track is the traditional trade negotiating authority granted by Congress that allows the President to negotiate international trade agreements. Under fast track procedures, the President submits the legislation to Congress for approval or rejection. No amendments are allowed and the Congress has ninety legislative days to approve or reject.

Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) and Singapore issues. *Third*, several unplanned decisions were observed during the period, particularly the July 2004 General Council decision, where achievements with respect to these decisions are very minimal. Nevertheless, there were some concrete decisions taken at the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial including five decisions in favour of the LDCs. Among those, duty-free quota-free (DF-QF) market access decision was of particular interest to LDCs. But the key to that decision is its implementation and Members were still far away from it. *Priyadarshi* summarised the five years negotiations record as being extremely *chequered*.

### **After the Hong Kong Ministerial and 2007 Onwards**

*Priyadarshi* recalled that in 2004, the G-4 (the US, the EC, India and Brazil) attempted to resuscitate the Doha negotiations process. Critics did not say much at the beginning because they felt perhaps the G-4 countries could resolve their differences which would in turn pave the way for further negotiations, he noted. However, in July 2007 at the Potsdam meeting, talks between the G-4 collapsed over agriculture and NAMA issues. But *Priyadarshi* also mentioned a positive consequence of this meeting. Instead of four Members negotiating, the process was once again multilateralised and the negotiation baton was passed back to its wider membership.

Against this backdrop, the Chairs of agriculture and NAMA negotiating groups circulated their first draft texts in July 2007. According to *Priyadarshi*, for many, this was a significant point of departure in view of the history of Doha Round of trade negotiations. For approximately five and half years, the focus had been on agriculture but the reactions from Members with respect to these two texts illustrated that not just agriculture but in actual essence the NAMA text required more attention. *Priyadarshi* felt that the criticisms of some of the aspects of the NAMA text were more vitriolic when compared against reactions to the agriculture text.

*Priyadarshi* went on to remind the audience that a number of attempts were made between September 2007 and November 2007 to revise both the agriculture and NAMA texts. However, they failed to have a new text in either of these areas. He remarked that this can be attributed to the differences that had always persisted but more importantly, there was a perceptible lack of political will to make the concessions in those texts. Moreover, the real craving for an early conclusion to the Doha negotiations was not also there. Text on rules came out in December 2007 and although initially there were not too many comments (because it was one of the most complicated and technical texts) as the Members were still familiarising themselves with its content. Later the concepts of “zeroing” and anti-dumping actions became the focus of the entire negotiations. The

notion of “zeroing” was proposed and subsequently adopted by the Chair of the NAMA group and it literally pitched the US against all other Members who were very strong critiques of the Chair’s decision to include zeroing into the text.

### **Forward Looking Approaches and Challenges on Issues Discussed**

*Priyadarshi* highlighted a number of important issues which had to be addressed before any progress in negotiations could be made.

#### Agriculture

*Domestic support* – With regards to domestic support, *Priyadarshi* mentioned that the US was the key protagonist and it formally tabled an offer of USD 22 billion. He recalled that the present level of support is close to USD 10 billion, although the suggested range was between USD 12 to USD 16 billion. *Priyadarshi* asserted that the key will be to get the US to agree and thereafter get the others to accept what the US has agreed on this key issue of domestic support in agriculture.

*Tariff reduction* – *Priyadarshi* highlighted that the European Union (EU) was the main focus in this particular aspect. He recalled that although the EU had broadly accepted a tariff reduction of approximately 50 per cent in agriculture, the US and the G-20 wanted more. He noted that in the past, the G-20 demanded the EU to reduce its agricultural tariffs to about 65 per cent.

*Special products (SPs)* – *Priyadarshi* claimed that under SPs developing countries were seeking agriculture to be completely exempt from reductions. He also stated that the G-33 in the WTO had placed all its resources and ambitions into acquiring appropriate flexibilities for SPs, an issue which cannot be ignored.

*Sensitive products* – As regards sensitive products, *Priyadarshi* stated that problem was not about how any sensitive products, but it was going to be extremely problematic in the kind of actual treatment that would be finally proposed for sensitive products.

#### NAMA

*Less than full reciprocity (LTFR)* – In the keynote presentation, *Priyadarshi* mentioned that negotiations in terms of LTFR was based on a formula with coefficients – the larger the coefficient, the lower the reductions. Developed countries felt that having two coefficients, one for the developed world and a larger one for the developing countries –

would meet the principles of LTFR. The very large number of developing countries, particularly the NAMA-11, felt that actual reduction commitments should determine LTFR, not a mere difference in coefficients. He noted that a coefficient of about 20+, would result in greater reduction in most developing countries' tariffs than a coefficient of 8-9, simply due to the fact that the existing levels of bound lever were very different. *Priyadarshi* claimed that the LTFR was a difficult issue and without adequately addressing it, there was no prospect of moving the Round forward.

*Flexibilities* – With regard to flexibilities, *Priyadarshi* recalled the Chair's text which explicitly mentioned that developing countries and LDCs can completely take away certain products from reduction commitments. *Priyadarshi* identified an inherent theoretical flaw in this area. The flaw was that, by including one tariff line countries can keep the rest of the lines in the chapter excluded. This text had once again raised the shackles in developing countries and became an additional problematic issue, he noted.

#### Duty-free quota-free (DF-QF)

In 2005, the extent of DF-QF market access for LDCs exports as percentage of tariff lines and imports demonstrated that five countries were very close to 100 per cent market access.<sup>2</sup> Japan and Switzerland had revised their schemes which were close to 99 per cent DF-QF market access. Against this perspective, *Priyadarshi* informed the audience that Bangladesh had been focusing on bilateral and multilateral negotiations with the US in order to get the latter to modify its scheme and bring it closer to other developed and developing countries' programmes. *Priyadarshi* stressed that an effective implementation of the DF-QF decision is the most important concern for the LDCs and the 3 per cent exclusion listed needed to be identified mutually, not unilaterally and LDCs should be focusing on developing countries for DF-QF market access, not only to the developed world.

In his keynote presentation, *Priyadarshi* mentioned that during 1995-2005, the total volume of exports (the size of the pie) from LDCs had increased, alongside their exports to the developing countries. Hence, he posed a strong rationale for the LDCs to seek DF-QF market access from the developing countries. In view of this rationale, he referred to a study by the IFPRI which showed that the gain in global income from a successful Round on the basis of an average ambition and 97 per cent DF-QF would be USD 55 billion, where the LDCs' capture approximately USD 1 billion. However, he opined that when

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<sup>2</sup> Australia, Canada, the EC, New Zealand and Norway.

DF-QF was increased to 100 per cent and with the same average ambition, the global income increased to USD 69 billion where the LDCs share increased to USD 8 billion.

*Erosion of preferences* - Regarding erosion of preferences, *Priyadarshi* acknowledged it as a difficult issue and hoped that aid for trade (Aft), or at least some of the intentions that had been expressed during the meetings, would compensate for such sufferings.

### Services

Services, especially for LDCs, will be a key area in the Doha Round of trade negotiations, *Priyadarshi* asserted. This was going to be the key, not just because of what was on the negotiation table but also due to the traditional perceptions. He quoted a survey conducted by an institute in the University of Adelaide, Australia headed by Andy Stolar, where it questioned both existing and former government officials, Ministers and delegates about the issue which possessed the least gains. A majority of the respondents labelled services as the least rewarding area, since Member countries would most likely bind their existing commitments and avoid committing themselves to any new issue, the survey confirmed.

There are a large number of issues that needed to be resolved and *Priyadarshi* stressed that the list he presented should not be treated as an exhaustive one. For the LDCs, the most important action will be an effective implementation decision. From his past experience, *Priyadarshi* stated that when a positive momentum for one issue is built up, it often took other issues along. Hence, if a country can get a positive momentum on certain issues, the chances of flexibility being shown in other areas will increase.

### **Challenges in view of the Approaches**

*Priyadarshi* outlined the challenges ahead for Bangladesh with regards to a number of issues. He informed the audience that there was a plan to issue revised texts on agriculture, NAMA and Services by the end of January 2008, following the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos. If it is issued before the Davos meeting, the texts could become a political 'football' game, he noted. The attempt would be to finalise modalities by March 2008 and conclude the Round by the end of 2008. According to this roadmap, the first quarter of 2008 will be intensive and smaller delegations, especially the LDCs will need to be prepared to meet the prevailing demands. Perhaps, given limited resources, LDCs should prioritise the issues with high return and subsequently, they should divert their resources in those areas.

The next few months were critical from the LDCs perspective in the international political context mainly due to (a) the US Presidential election in November 2008, which will mean an effective timeout of about 4-6 months; (b) elections in India; (c) the rotating EC Presidency and France is expected to lead the EC from mid-2008 onwards, who is very much sceptical about an ambitious Round of negotiations. *Priyadarshi* thought that if modalities were not finalised by early 2008, LDCs and developing countries could be in for a long period of hibernation, in which case, the Round could get pushed to 2011 or after.

He noted that there had to be balance and equity and any attempts made to conclude the Round by 2008, should in no way undermine the development dimension. He went on to stress that although substance was more important than timeline, political will and leadership are the two crucial factors for a successful completion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations. Re-calibration of agreed outcomes may be accepted but this should, in no way, weaken the development dimension of the Doha Development Round. He went on to state that the objectives should not only be to provide targeted and focused Technical Assistance (TA), but also AfT, which still appears to many Members as only an initiative. This needs to be converted into reality.

*Priyadarshi* mentioned that there was another agenda that needed to be addressed, discussed and finally, negotiated. Although the initial idea was to allow trade-offs between each negotiating areas (NAMA, agricultural, services), the opposite has taken place, he noted. There is high connectivity among these areas which has resulted in a grid lock and in view of the Doha Round of trade negotiations chequered history of missed deadlines, the March 2008 deadline does not appear to be credible enough. For most of the negotiators, it is business as usual (simulations) since their GDPs are growing. These simulations, however, indicated that there were limited gains from the Doha Round negotiations and more importantly, if there are gains, how they are to be distributed across regions – remains an unsettled issue.

*Priyadarshi* observed that both rhetoric and political grandstandings were increasing and this is evident from Hillary Clinton's perception about the Round. She has questioned the concept of free trade and comparative advantage, and like the French, she is sceptical about an ambitious Round of negotiations, he noted. India will reject any attempts to limit flexibilities of the NAMA and South Africa is supporting them in this regard. Political grandstanding is the major barrier to a successful Round of negotiations, he asserted.

### **Concluding remarks by Dr Priyadarshi**

*Priyadarshi* concluded by stating that a development round must address the long standing concerns of developing countries, especially the LDCs. The priority of the Doha Round must be to provide market access and to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers. Structural flaws (provision, agricultural subsidies and implementation of rules) in multilateral trade and the imbalances need to be eliminated, he noted. *Priyadarshi* observed there must be an effective implementation of the DF-QF decision, accompanied by additional and unconditional 'AfT,' and there needs to be clarity in what the LDCs ask for with respect to the 'AfT' initiative.

### **Presentation by Debapriya Bhattacharya on Interests and Concerns of Bangladesh in the Context of Ongoing Negotiations in the WTO**

*Debapriya Bhattacharya* thanked the CPD for giving him the opportunity to present the paper and registered his deep appreciation for their highly welcoming gesture. With reference to the earlier presentation by *Priyadarshi*, *Bhattacharya* stated that it was a concise report of the concerns and interests of the LDCs in the current Doha Round negotiations, which have laid the ground-work for his presentation.

### **WTO and the Ongoing Trade Negotiations**

*Bhattacharya* remarked that the WTO is very creative in terms of new nomenclature. This meant that when the WTO failed to progress in terms of substance, they would engineer a word in order to discretely avoid the issue, which they call *creative ambiguity*. His presentation focused on three key areas:

1. Current context of the end game
2. Bangladesh's priorities
3. Evolving scenario

### **Current Context of the End-Game**

According to *Bhattacharya*, end game period for the Doha Round of trade negotiations begun in July 2007 and the game would end by mid June of 2008. *Bhattacharya* went on to state that this was the twilight zone for the Doha Round to conceive a successful conclusion to the Round. He informed the audience that the last momentum (latest cycles of negotiations) started in July 2007 when the NAMA & Agriculture texts were circulated by the respective Chairs.

With regard to the positive aspects of the Doha Round negotiations, *Bhattacharya* noted that the WTO Members clearly understand that if this process of negotiations fails, it will have serious ramifications not only for the bilateral and multilateral trading regimes, but also for the domestic constituency. The other reason mentioned by him was that there was a lot of declared political willingness to negotiate and Members seemed to be enthusiastic to negotiate and had a positive attitude with respect to the Doha Round of trade negotiations and its implications. The third positive part was that the Chairs of the negotiation groups appeared to be vigorous in their course of actions in getting the Member to negotiate on draft modalities. *Bhattacharya* then defined the *Geneva process*, where all the assembled Members are in charge of specific negotiation agenda and they are responsible for operationalising the negotiation process, in collaboration with essentially the Secretariat. In this process the inputs of other Members are quite significant in their management of the negotiations. *Bhattacharya* confirmed that this was a commendable development both with regard to the WTO's policymaking and transparency processes.

*Bhattacharya* then went on to explain how the negotiations are carried out in the WTO. Text-based negotiations are taking place in the WTO which is a significant departure from the traditional mode of negotiations, i.e. rhetoric speeches by Ministers and diplomats. Then again, text-based negotiation process has its downside. *Bhattacharya* informed that WTO Members' representatives were attempting to negotiate text but the problem with this was that there were areas other than agriculture and industrial goods (NAMA) which lacked clarity in its content. And given that all the issues on the Doha Development Agenda were agreed through the Single Undertaking principle, interlinkages (connectivity) could not be established. Consequently, key Members were holding back the best offers because they were aware that if the Round did not send out a positive signal within the next 3-4 months, they would prefer not to reveal their cards for the next Round of WTO trade negotiations. Nevertheless, *Bhattacharya* felt that if the Round gained a positive momentum, it would move very fast towards the finale Round of issue-specific agreements and these Members would then have to face a high opportunity cost for not making any offer. Hence, he claimed that time was ripe to formulate offers with regards to their specific interests.

Although there was a feeling of stand-off in negotiations, *Bhattacharya* felt optimistic that by the end of January 2008, there would be some movement away from these status quo. *Bhattacharya* recalled that following the July 2004 Framework, Members agreed that liberalisation issues of agricultural and industrial goods had to be resolved before

proceeding with other issues. He then went on to define the *sequenced approach* where Members would have to initially resolve their differences on these two areas and the balanced outcome would need to be subsequently accepted in an unanimous manner, whereby the other areas of negotiations (TRIPS, TRIMs, Services, Rules) would *in* organically fall into the balanced outcome. In other words, agriculture and NAMA were the two key pieces of the puzzle and once they were put in place, a successful conclusion to the Doha Round of negotiations would be inevitable. Nevertheless, *Bhattacharya* stated that the problem with this kind of approach was that Members were extremely reluctant to commit themselves to agriculture and NAMA modalities without exactly understanding and knowing what they will get in other areas of negotiations (TRIPS, TRIMs, Services, Rules). He, however, felt that even though there was a lot of ambiguity in the July 2007 circulated draft modalities texts, all groups were rigorously negotiating during December 2007.

According to *Bhattacharya*, the main concern for Bangladesh was that she needed to identify agricultural-industrial goods issues as early as possible since there would be little time left to address and discuss rest of the agenda. This was a very difficult task for a small group of delegation to go around and attend meetings for the other eight to nine issues, he mentioned. *Bhattacharya* went on to identify two problems with regards to the current context of negotiations: (a) there would be time-management problems since there was going to be increasing tension among the LDCs; and (b) some of the LDCs were not very keen in negotiation on fast track in the coming months.

### **Bangladesh's Priorities**

*Bhattacharya* then went on to classify Bangladesh's priorities in terms of defensive and offensive interests. He defined these two types of interests as -

*Defensive:* when a Member is willing to give away something

*Offensive:* when a Member is in need of gaining something

The defensive interests have not been satisfied as there has been no liberalisation commitment and with regard to offensive interests, they have been identified more or less although the technical options have not been worked out, he noted.

*Bhattacharya* expressed his dissatisfaction over the fact that Bangladesh has been focused excessively on accessing DF-QF market access for her industrial goods. As a result, Bangladesh did not have much time left to address other issues on the agenda for

negotiations and although this may not be much of a concern at the moment, it is sure to become increasingly important as she graduates from the LDC status in 5 or 10 years.

*Bhattacharya* mentioned seven issues as Bangladesh's priorities (in descending order):

1. Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA)
2. Services
3. Agriculture
4. Trade Facilitation
5. Aid for Trade (Aft)
6. TRIPS (Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights)
7. Rules

In case of NAMA, negotiations were persistently geared towards dealing with duty-free and quota-free (DF-QF) market access initiative. The Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration stipulated that WTO Members (developed countries) would provide 97 per cent DF-QF market access for products originating from LDCs. The issue is that what exactly will go into 97 per cent, he questioned. *Bhattacharya* referred to *Priyadarshi's* presentation and put his emphasis on the negative list approach, i.e. what should be in the remaining 3 per cent exclusion list which may be gradually phased out over an agreed period of time?

*Bhattacharya* then shared an experience he had with the US Ambassador in Geneva. During bilateral discussions with the US Ambassador in Geneva, he was asked which of the sectors' discussion did Bangladesh want to be included and particularly, which of the Bangladeshi products required the immediate DF-QF market access to the developed country markets. With regard to the criteria for selecting items in the 97 per cent DF-QF list, the US Ambassador wanted to see sectors which were experiencing a severe downturn after the multi-fibre arrangement (MFA) quota phase out. In such a case, Bangladesh would have great difficulty in convincing the United States Trade Representative (USTR) authorities, since her apparels sector has continued to increase exponentially after the MFA phase out, he noted. Hence, *Bhattacharya* went on to assert that the private sector in Bangladesh was not going to obtain whatever they demanded for and subsequently, they will need to make a cut in their demands.

On the issue of rules of origin (RoO), WTO has indicated its support with respect to simplifying its method for calculating the RoO criterion. With regard to the loss of tariff preference, *Bhattacharya* mentioned that the CPD had completed a study which showed that Bangladesh was going to suffer a loss of USD 220 million, if the new Swiss coefficients were applied on Bangladesh's preference-giving markets.

In *services*, the issue concerns the legal basis for giving special priority to LDCs, he noted. Within WTO there is an enabling clause which allows Members to move away from most favoured nation (MFN) and interestingly, the services agreement does not have this. In this case it is either done by an amendment which is extremely difficult or through waiver, or Members go through an understanding or decision of the General Council, he explained.

*Services* sector is one of the contentious issues on the Doha Development Agenda. *Bhattacharya* confirmed that in the area of services negotiation, there has been a commendable progress. He noted that following the joint proposal from EU-Canada-US-Australia, Members agreed to take some time out and make an attempt to identify other options in January 2008. Once this is completed with regard to which are the sectors that might get priorities for LDCs, there will be a request for a mechanism, he went on to confirm. *Bhattacharya* questioned that if in early 2008, he asked the Ministry of Commerce regarding the sectors in services that require market access, would they be able to prepare and submit this list to the Bangladesh Mission in Geneva? He indicated that there were other issues that needed to be taken into consideration by the relevant Ministerial bodies, such as stringent labour laws, regulations, etc.

With regard to *agricultural negotiations*, *Bhattacharya* mentioned that agro-commodities were the primary sectors under consideration in the Doha Round negotiations and also that it represented the future of export diversification. The focus had been heavily on tariff erosion of industrialised goods, at the cost of ignoring erosion of preference in terms of agricultural tariff reductions, he noted. Therefore, one ought to be cautious about the agricultural commodities which have been liberalised and will go under further tariff reductions. *Bhattacharya* explained that on the other side of it, there were also sensitive and special products in both developing countries and developed countries which have not been included in tariff, in order to provide protection from tariff reduction. *Bhattacharya* stressed that this particular area required serious technical work.

The fourth area of concern for Bangladesh, according to *Bhattacharya*, was *trade facilitation* and its implications. He noted that the multilateral trade regime moved initially on tariff concessions and once these were eliminated, attention shifted towards addressing and tackling non-tariff barrier issues. Once these were resolved, all WTO Members (developed, developing and the LDCs) would depend on trade efficiency, which in turn would depend on their strength in physical infrastructure and other mechanisms geared towards enhancing trade capacity. *Bhattacharya* explained that this

was the key area where trade competitiveness would be determined by the investment decision making, supply of energy, telephone services, ports, etc.

*Trade facilitation* is a unique opportunity for Members to use more effectively. *Bhattacharya* observed that, although this was a unique opportunity, there was no support in the sense that where and what infrastructures would be necessary and where exactly Members wanted the resources to be allocated. This paved the way for the AfT issue, which he felt was a virtual mechanism. This was mainly because there would be no new fund from the WTO dedicated towards achieving the trade facilitation initiative, while other traditional agencies (World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), etc.) would be expected to re-fill their funds with new money. If Bangladesh wanted to gain access to the AfT fund, designing training programmes, establishing institutions would not suffice, he informed the audience. There is a need to bid for 'big-billing' projects, such as enhancing port efficiency, constructing Dhaka-Chittagong Highway (6 to 8 lane) etc. *Bhattacharya* stated that he was eagerly waiting to see how Bangladesh manages the warranted coordination between the Ministry of Commerce (which is not the legal agent to bid for large-scale projects) and the Ministry of Finance (which is the legitimate agent for bidding 'big-billing' projects).

*TRIPS* is not much of a concern to Bangladesh, since as per the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration LDCs have been exempted until 2016 to implement this. With regard to Rules, 'Zeroing' emerged as a problematic issue. This was because of US's method for estimating and imposing anti-dumping duty and *Bhattacharya* confirmed that the US's position was against many WTO panel decisions. He informed that developing country Members, in particular, have expressed their dissatisfaction in view of the fact that the Chair considered the US proposal against all of their proposals.

### **Prioritising the New Timeline**

Revised texts on agriculture and NAMA were expected to be released by the end of January 2008, (after Davos), *Bhattacharya* noted. Subsequent to the drafts circulations by early February 2008, modalities are expected to be discussed for another month or so whereby other issues will enter the agenda following these intense discussions. However, *Bhattacharya* mentioned that there was one critical question that remained to be addressed such as, when would the political masters enter the negotiations arena? Usually the meeting of the highest policymaking body (Ministerial Conferences) takes place once every two years (which was missed in 2007), *Bhattacharya* informed. The likelihood of a Ministerial Conference to be held in June 2008 will depend on the progress made in March and April 2008. Following the Conference, trade representatives will start

horizontal negotiations on (industrial goods, agro-products, services, etc.) and start looking for inter-linkages to maximise in the single undertaking process which is one of the Doha Round principles, he noted.

*Bhattacharya* explained that although it took at least 6 months to complete the schedules and in many cases a longer period of time, Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO, has set the deadline to conclude the Doha Round negotiations before the end of 2008, with finalisation of the modalities and commitments by Member countries taking place within July-December 2008. Many trade negotiators consider this timeline as an over optimistic timeline. Nevertheless, he informed that Lamy's job demanded optimism in order to get the momentum of the negotiations move forward and hence, the timeline had been set taking into consideration the need to conclude the Doha Round by 2008. Then again, as mentioned earlier by *Bhattacharya*, there were many discernible difficulties which would prevent a successful conclusion to the Doha Round of trade negotiations.

### **The Evolving Scenario**

*Bhattacharya* asserted that the first two to three months of 2008 would be very critical for LDCs, particularly Bangladesh. He pointed out was that Bangladesh needs to organise her technical competences as early as possible, since Bangladesh does not have sufficient time to build new competence in order to address the issues on the Doha Agenda.

#### *NAMA negotiations*

Subsequently, these technical competences need to be assembled at one level and different organisations will need to collaborate in preparing the 97 per cent DF-QF market access (positive) list, where the leadership is expected to come from the Ministry of Commerce. *Bhattacharya* went on to stress that Bangladesh also needed to prepare the request list for services negotiations under Mode 4, where negotiations are expected to move faster.

#### *Aid for Trade*

*Bhattacharya* emphasised that given the global price-hike of essential commodities, the inflationary implications on commodity price (which is related to Doha tariff liberalisation principle) need to be thoroughly examined and understood. Bangladesh will need to place concerted and vigorous efforts in order to obtain more funds from development partners, who may contribute under the AfT programme. *Bhattacharya* commended that Bangladesh rightly played down the AfT card in the sense that it

involved insignificant amount of money and high transaction costs. He pointed out that experiences of 2007 demonstrated that Bangladesh needed that money, particularly when the revenue situation is weak and also for an expanded implementation of PRSP.

*Political coherence*

*Bhattacharya* mentioned three other issues which required immediate attention if Bangladesh was to successfully complete the Doha Round negotiations to her advantage. Trade delegations cannot do much if there is no backed up political mobilisation, he noted. Bangladesh's trade negotiation is devoid of political negotiation and she needs to integrate trade negotiations with political initiatives. The other issue stems from the problem that there were different trade negotiating tracks in the global trading regime – (a) multilateral; and (b) bilateral/regional.

There was no interface in between those who were negotiating Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) or Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and with those representatives in Geneva who were negotiating WTO, *Bhattacharya* informed. These have mutual implications for selection of sectors, coefficients, etc. for how and what Bangladesh chooses in the Doha Round of trade negotiations. There was a strong need to combine bilateral issues with multilateral one and Bangladesh needs to immediately coordinate between Geneva, Brussels and Washington in order to foster a healthy information network in the global trading regime.

*Bhattacharya* observed that the LDC group was performing well and it was approaching a time when there would be a high demand to strike bilateral agreements. Bangladesh has some competences and it was time she opened up her bilateral windows. Finally, he noted that the LDC Ministerial is expected to be held in February 2008, and hoped that Bangladesh would contribute in the usual technical manner as she had always done in the past.

*Preference erosion: possible strategies*

On preference erosion, *Bhattacharya* observed that there would be no new erosion of trade preferences. Preferences are bilateral and in view of the multilateral liberalisation taking place, Bangladesh can slow the reduction process or strategically modulate it in manner that reflects her interests. Hence, acquiring the DF-QF is important for LDCs in general and Bangladesh in particular. In preventing Bangladesh from suffering from immediate preference erosion, *Bhattacharya* informed the audience that Bangladesh's

Representatives at the WTO had already submitted a list in order to slow down those sectors, where Bangladesh has high export interest.

*Cross-cutting issues within the WTO: State of the Art*

Regarding the slow implementation of special and differential treatment, *Bhattacharya* noted that even one year back, special and differential treatment was the ‘hot’ topic for any discussion. DF-QF is a type of S&DT in NAMA negotiations, he added. He then informed the audience of the upcoming platforms, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) XII Conference in April 2008, where Bangladesh will be expected to play an active role by as she is the coordinator of the LDCs in the UN system.

**Concluding Remarks by *Debapriya Bhattacharya***

*Bhattacharya* raised a strategic question whether Bangladesh would be better off signing the deal when George Bush is in power or should she wait for the new government. Then he went on to explain why it was important that a successful conclusion of the Doha Round should be conceived in 2008. He mentioned that the Doha Development Agenda had moved to ‘Doha light’ from ‘Doha heavy’ and there remained some indispensable elements which had to be addressed if negotiations are to reach a certain saturation point, such as the issue of market access, agriculture, RoO etc. However, according to *Bhattacharya*, if the agenda is too light, many Members will be reluctant to negotiate and if this happens, the entire process of the Doha Round of trade negotiations will enter into full hibernation.

*Bhattacharya* concluded his presentation by indicating that the next three-four months would very crucial for LDCs. Bangladesh still had a lot of tasks that were yet to be completed and hoped that the relevant ministries and organisations would be supporting the Bangladesh Mission in Geneva at the WTO.

Following *Bhattacharya’s* conclusion, *Rehman Sobhan*, opened the floor for further discussions and questions from the audience.

**Open Floor Discussion**

*Make DF-QF market access commercially effective and operational*

Representatives from the garment industries expressed their satisfaction with respect to quality of content of both the presentations. They were eager to know, if the DF-QF bill

was passed by the WTO and although it would be a *great* achievement, who would mostly be benefited by this bill. They then went on to discuss the strategies for the Bangladesh Ambassador in Geneva and enquired whether the discussions with the Ministry of Finance, Commerce and other key stakeholders would be helpful for the upcoming negotiations. They also asked for specific suggestion as to how the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) or the government could assist the Ambassador as regards upcoming Doha Round negotiation.

In response, *Bhattacharya* mentioned that one of the major concerns for Bangladesh was of the African community's misplaced understanding on granting any kind of market access to Bangladesh. They thought that this might take away the benefits that are accrued to the African poor. *Bhattacharya* noted that this needed to be explained in a manner that could assuage their apprehensions. He went on to confirm that the CPD was working on organising such a meeting in Washington DC. He felt that inter-Ministerial coordination, particularly between the three Ministries - Commerce, Finance and Foreign Affairs, was fundamental in bridging this gap. He went on to say that negotiations were expected to move fast in the coming months and that the Bangladesh Mission in Geneva would require the necessary documents and other support in order to make fruitful contributions in the negotiation process.

*Rubayat Jesmin*, Economist, Delegation of the European Commission enquired about the basis of DF-QF market access provision and whether it would help in achieving the goals under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or not. She wanted to know which sectors would be included in the 97 per cent positive list: sectors which were not growing after the MFA phase-out, or sectors which have continued to post a positive growth. She went on to emphasise on trade diversion, and probable implications of a total exclusion of sectors with Bangladesh's interest, from the 97 per cent list. Taking cue from *Jesmin Ferdous Ara Begum*, Additional Secretary, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI) also asked if Bangladesh could demand the 97 per cent to be determined through trade (import-export) volume.

In response, *Priyadarshi* said that the 97 per cent list could be linked to the trade volume, but it would then raise more complexities with regards to determining the remaining 3 per cent exclusion list. On the DF-QF market access, *Bhattacharya* remarked that the response from the developing country group was encouraging. He urged the CPD to undertake a market access study with respect to the market potentialities in the developing countries and assist in preparing the list that Bangladesh is yet to submit to the WTO.

*Mostafa Abid Khan*, Joint Chief, Bangladesh Tariff Commission (BTC) praised the excellent quality of both the presentations. He was eager to know whether there would be any change in the NAMA modalities text in context of the DF-QF market access. He went on to inquire about the link between DF-QF market access under WTO and the New Partnership for Development Act of 2007 (NPDA). He then moved towards more technical issues such as the RoO criterion and asked whether it had any prospect of being addressed in the current Round of trade negotiations. He strongly felt that determining the RoO criterion could undoubtedly help pave the way for a successful NAMA outcome.

With regards to *Abid Khan's* queries, *Bhattacharya* noted that WTO's relation with the NPDA 2007 was very transparent in the sense that Bangladesh needs to acquire DF-QF market access. And it is immaterial whether it is acquired through the bilateral process or multilateral process. He, however, requested the audience to bear in mind that the quality of DF-QF access through WTO would be much higher compared to the quality of DF access through any other bilateral initiative. He stated that although the BGMEA's appointment of lobbyists in Washington was plausible, it was moving fast which may result in an obstruction from realising the real gains in areas under negotiation. Hence, he emphasised on acquiring DF-QF market access in Geneva, which would be of higher quality and much more fruitful for a simple reason that it would have a broader potential Bangladesh would also be entering markets in the developing countries and not only the developed countries. With regard to the question on whether there will be any change in the NAMA text or not, he answered yes. *Bhattacharya* then subsequently pointed out three issues which were being discussed.

1. How to operationalise the commitments?
2. How to phase-in the remainder 3 per cent?
3. How to simplify RoO criterion?

#### *Implementation issues in the WTO: its stands*

*Farooq Ahmed*, Secretary, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI), proposed a two-track method for implementation purposes. His proposal was that in the first year all Members would follow whatever the developing countries wanted and the following year all Members would follow what the developed countries wanted. In the third year, LDCs would get the privilege to lead. *Mohammad Mejbahuddin*, Additional Secretary, Economic Relations Division, focused on implementation related issues and commented about the WTO's Aft initiative and highlighted the need to identify real sectors (infrastructure) in view of acquiring the funds under Aft initiative.

In response to I proposal, *Priyadarshi* explained that WTO was a consensus based organisation and all Members had to agree unanimously on the issues negotiated. Hence, it was not really in the hands of Director-General to decide the options and guide the implementation process. Although in principle it was important to start implementation, many issues (e.g. 28 S&DT proposals to the Green Room) remained unsettled, he added.

*Importance of services negotiations: streamlining Bangladesh's interests*

*Abid Khan* expressed his amazement in context of the need to have a text in service. He noted that five years back in 2003, they prepared a request list under mode 4 for 13 countries, which unfortunately were not submitted to these respective countries. Moreover, in June 2006, LDCs together submitted a request list to the developed countries but whether they will consider this list or not, remains an open-ended question.

In reply to *Khan's* query, regarding the text on services *Bhattacharya* remarked that it had to be a single undertaking where the service text essentially implies that Members would reiterate the mandate and also discuss the operationalisation of the mandate decisions. Hence, a text was necessary.

*NAMA modalities: room for negotiations?*

*Selim Raihan*, Assistant Professor, Dhaka University, wanted to know why the developing countries' were against the proposed coefficients. He was puzzled by the developed countries apprehensions against reducing farm subsidies given that it accounted for less than 2 per cent of GDP to employment ratio.

*Priyadarshi* felt that *Raihan* was not incorrect in not being able to understand the developing countries' apprehensions against the coefficients. On the issue of agriculture negotiations, he mentioned that agricultural subsidies in the Western world were highly politically motivated and therefore, the implications for politicians to sustain in their domestic constituencies would be trivial.

**Remarks by the Special Guest**

Before presenting her remarks, the Special Guest of the dialogue session *Rajanai Alexander*, Counsellor and Head of Development, Canadian High Commission thanked *Rehman Sobhan* for giving her the opportunity to be present at the dialogue. She said that Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was proud and privileged to have been a partner like CPD for more than 10 years and that this relationship was highly

valued by both the parties. She went on to state that the negotiations in the Doha Round, under auspices of the WTO, will be moving fast and that the two keynote presenters had accurately pointed out the specific priorities and subsequent strategies to be pursued. She thanked the CPD for organising the dialogue which was attended by private sectors, NGOs individuals, academes and think-tanks and groups that normally may not have got together with an objective to address the trade issues. Although CPD regarded its Independent Review of Bangladesh's economy as its flagship programme, she felt that CPD had been strengthened through its work on trade policy issues, which were getting a lot of attention over the recent past. She expressed that she was happy to learn about trade-related development that H E Dr *Bhattacharya* had mentioned. She then concluded her remarks by thanking the CPD once again and registering her appreciation for Dr *Priyadarshi's* contribution towards the dialogue.

### **Comments by the Chief Guest**

*Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury*, Hon'ble Advisor to the Caretaker Government began his comments by confirming that the Doha Round of trade negotiations was reaching a point of 'Doha-fatigue.' He insisted on one particular point – the Single Undertaking principle. According to the *Chief Guest*, the Single Undertaking principle imposed significant costs on developing countries, especially those with small negotiating teams. He noted that the Single Undertaking principle coerced Members to accept unfair deals, and he mentioned NAMA as an example, where Bangladesh's resources were trapped in the discussions of special and differential treatment. He then proceeded to identify another recent innovation in the WTO's negotiating process – the formation of Groups like G-6, G-20 and G-90 – and referred to the 'Principal-Agent' problem, which is one of the main components of political economy. He mentioned that trade negotiations should not face the pressure of deadlines to accept an agreement that is not in their best interest and that there was a growing recognition of the fact that no agreement was better than a *bad* agreement. Before concluding his comments, he mentioned that the proposed DF-QF access granted to the LDCs to the developed markets, have undermined the special and differential treatment (S&DT) principle. The *Chief Guest* concluded his remarks by stressing that Bangladesh needed to gear her efforts towards liberalisation of Mode 4 under services negotiations and confirmed that the Doha Development Round would redeem itself as the true development round if it could make tangible progress in Mode 4 liberalisation.

### **Concluding Remarks by the Chair**

*Rehman Sobhan* highlighted the importance of the CPD's Trade Policy Appreciation (TPA) workshops. He felt that such focused programmes in our country were a necessary factor for establishing a process of disseminating information with regards to trade-related negotiation issues. In his final remarks he emphasised on the need for more inter-Ministerial coordination for effectively addressing and tackling the issues on the agenda. He gave special thanks to *Shishir Priyadarshi* and H E *Debapriya Bhattacharya* for their highly valued contribution to this interactive discussion which introduced much creative thinking into our policy debates and provoked serious discussion. *Sobhan* registered his deep appreciation towards the Hon'ble Advisor, *Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury*, for taking sometime off his busy schedule in order to be present at the dialogue. He also thanked all the participants for actively taking part in the discussion.

## List of Participants

<i>Mr Yeakub Ali</i>	Senior Information Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)
<i>Mr Farooq Ahmed</i>	Secretary, MCCI
<i>Mr Manzur Ahmed</i>	Advisor, FBCCI , Former Director, DCCI and Proprietor , M/S. Fare Trade Centre
<i>Mr Mostaque Ahmed</i>	Chief Instructor, Academy for Planning and Development (APD)
<i>Mr Quazi M Ahmed</i>	Founder and CEO, Futureleaders
<i>Ms Shirin Akhter</i>	President, Kormojibi Nari
<i>Mr A N M Ferdous Alam</i>	RIO, RDTI Cell, BGMEA
<i>Dr M Shahe Alam</i>	Chief Scientific Officer and Head, Agricultural Economics Department Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI)
<i>Mr N M Zeaul Alam</i>	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce (MoC)
<i>Dr Rajani Alexander</i>	Acting High Commissioner, Canadian High Commission
<i>Mr S M Nazmul Anam, psc, GD (P)</i>	Wing Commander, Bangladesh Air Force (BAF)
<i>Mr Afsarul Arifeen</i>	Joint Secretary, FBCCI
<i>Mr A K M Nurul Huda Azad</i>	Assistant Commissioner, Dhaka Customs House
<i>Mr Salahuddin Bablu</i>	Senior Reporter, The Daily Inqilab
<i>Mr M A Baset</i>	Director, Southern Knitwear Limited
<i>Ms Ferdous Ara Begum</i>	Additional Secretary, DCCI
<i>Mr Ronald Berghuys</i>	Officer in Charge, International Labour Organization (ILO)
<i>Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya</i>	Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the WTO and UN offices in Geneva
<i>Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury</i>	Hon'ble Advisor to the Caretaker Government Ministries of Foreign Affairs Overseas Employment & Expatriates' Welfare and CHT Affairs
<i>Mr Jafor Raja Chowdhury</i>	PS to the Hon'ble Advisor Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Overseas Employment & Expatriates' Welfare and CHT Affairs
<i>Mr M Iftikhar H Chowdhury</i>	Consultant, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
<i>Mr Shahidullah Chowdhury</i>	Presidium Member, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)
<i>Dr Shishir Kumar Deb</i>	CEO, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
<i>Ms Rama Dewan</i>	Deputy Head, Bangladesh Tariff Commission (BTC)
<i>Mr A Gafur</i>	Executive Director, American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmChan)
<i>Ms Suparna Das Gupta</i>	Research Associate, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
<i>Mr Khandker Md Iftekhar Haider</i>	Deputy Secretary (Admin), Administration 1 Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance (MoF)
<i>Mr Md Nazmul Hoque</i>	Research Associate Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
<i>Mr Asif Ibrahim</i>	Director, DCCI and Managing Director, New Age Garments
<i>Mr Mohammad Rafiqul Islam</i>	Lecturer, Department of Economics Shah Jalal University of Science and Technology
<i>Professor Dr M Tajul Islam</i>	Member, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
<i>Ms Rubayat Jesmin</i>	Economist, Delegation of the European Commission
<i>Ms Begum Sharifa Khan</i>	Deputy Director (WTO), Ministry of Commerce (MoC)
<i>Dr Mostafa Abid Khan</i>	Joint Chief, Bangladesh Tariff Commission
<i>Mr Mashfiqur Rahman Khan</i>	Lecturer, Dept of Economics, University of Dhaka

<i>Dr Omar Farooq Khan</i>	Senior Development Advisor, CIDA, Canadian High Commission
<i>Ms Shaila Khan</i>	Coordinator, Policy Support and Advocacy, UNDP
<i>Ms Syeda Shahnewaz Lotika</i>	Assistant Manager, Research International Chamber of Commerce- Bangladesh
<i>Mr Md Lutfor Rahman Matin</i>	Former Vice President, BGMEA and Chairman, Luman Group
<i>Mr Mohammad Mejbahuddin</i>	Additional Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD) Ministry of Finance
<i>Mr Md Rais Uddin Mian</i>	Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Finance
<i>Ms Nazma Mobarek</i>	Senior Assistant Secretary Resource and Debt Management Wing & Budget Wing Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
<i>Ms Samina Naz</i>	Director, Office of the Hon'ble Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>Mr Sven Ostberg</i>	Counsellor, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Sweden
<i>Dr Shishir Priyadarshi</i>	Director, Development Division, WTO Secretariat, Geneva
<i>Mr Ataur Rahman</i>	Secretary, International Chamber of Commerce- Bangladesh
<i>Dr A K M Atiqur Rahman</i>	Professor, Department of Economics, North South University
<i>Mr A K M Fazlur Rahman</i>	Director General (WTO Cell), Ministry of Commerce
<i>Mr Mahfuzur Rahman</i>	Director, International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>Mr M Abdur Rahman</i>	Director, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB)
<i>Mr Mohammad Anisur Rahman</i>	Assistant Director, Foreign Exchange Policy Department Bangladesh Bank
<i>Mr Md Azizur Rahman</i>	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment
<i>Mr Md Habibur Rahman</i>	Senior Assistant Secretary, Budget Wing, Finance Division Ministry of Finance
<i>Ms Rokia A Rahman</i>	Former Advisor to the Caretaker Government and Chairman, Airlinks Group
<i>Dr Selim Raihan</i>	Assistant Professor , Dept of Economics , University of Dhaka and Chairman, SANEM
<i>Mr Syed Motahar Samnan</i>	Research Associate, CPD
<i>Mr Liton C Sarker</i>	Manager, Admin and Research, JETRO
<i>Professor Rehman Sobhan</i>	Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue
<i>Mr Masami Tamura</i>	Counsellor and Head of Economic and Development Cooperation Embassy of Japan

### List of Journalists

<i>Ms Farzana Akter</i>	Staff Reporter, Dainik Janata
<i>Mr Rukonuzzaman Anjan</i>	Staff Reporter, The Sangbad
<i>Mr Mizan Chowdhury</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Janakantha
<i>Mr Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury</i>	Staff Correspondent, NTV
<i>Mr Nazmul Haque</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Jugantor
<i>Mr Sajjadul Hoq</i>	Reporter, The Daily Manab Jamin
<i>Mr Mohammad Tauhidul Islam</i>	Staff Reporter, Bangla Vision
<i>Mr Rabiul Islam</i>	Staff Reporter, Jai Jai Din
<i>Mr Sheikh Didarul Islam</i>	Staff Reporter, The Bangladesh Today
<i>Mr Md Shamim Jahangir</i>	Staff Reporter, The Independent
<i>Mr Jahangir Shah Kajol</i>	Reporter, The Daily Ittefaq
<i>Mr Yousuf Khaled</i>	Reporter, RTV
<i>Mr Jasim Uddin Khan</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Star
<i>Mr Abul Maruf</i>	Reporter, Bangladesh Television
<i>Mr Ziaul Hoq Miza</i>	Reporter, The Daily Naya Diganta
<i>Mr Niaz Alal Pavel</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Dinkal
<i>Mr Saiful Islam Shameem</i>	Staff Reporter, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS)
<i>Mr Abul Maruf Suborno</i>	Reporter, Bangladesh Television
<i>Mr Kazi Rohan Uddin</i>	Reporter, The Executive Times