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Ongoing WTO Doha Round Negotiations
Concerns and Interests of Bangladesh and other LDCs

Publisher

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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 *Ongoing WTO Doha Round Negotiations: Concerns and interests of Bangladesh and other LDCs* held on 6 April, 2009 at the BRAC Centre Inn Auditorium, Dhaka. The dialogue was organised under CPD's TRRPD Programme.

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Dialogue on
**Ongoing WTO Doha Round Negotiations: Concerns and interests of
Bangladesh and other LDCs**

The Dialogue

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised a dialogue on 6 April, 2009 titled *Ongoing WTO Doha Round Negotiations: Concerns and interests of Bangladesh and other LDCs* at the BRAC Centre Inn Auditorium, Dhaka. The open floor discussion was preceded by two presentations titled *The Doha Round in the Context of the Economic Crisis* and *WTO and Bangladesh: The Way Forward*. The two keynote presenters were *Dr Shishir Priyadarshi*, Director, Development Division, WTO Secretariat and *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, the immediate past Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the WTO and UN offices in Geneva, and now Distinguished Fellow – Designate at the CPD. *Mr M Syeduzzaman*, Former Finance Minister and Member of the CPD Board of Trustees attended the session as the *Guest of Honour*. The *Special Guest* was *H E Mr Robert McDougall*, High Commissioner, Canadian High Commission. The session was chaired and moderated by the Executive Director of CPD, *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*. Following the welcome address from the Chair, the two keynote presenters shared their views on key aspects of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations. *Dr Priyadarshi* outlined the current state of negotiations, taking into cognisance the ongoing global recession and the relevant issues of concern for LDCs and developing countries, whilst *Dr Bhattacharya* took the problem further and related it to Bangladesh's context and put forward strategies in terms of moving the country's agenda forward.

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

Presentation by Dr Shishir Priyadarshi on The Doha Round in the Context of the Economic Crisis: The Way Forward for LDCs

Profile of LDCs

Dr Priyadarshi started his presentation by highlighting the trade profile of LDCs in the global trading arena. He mentioned that most of the LDCs were members of the WTO

and that their share in world trade had been increasing in recent years, though in incremental terms only. This was mainly because of two reasons – (a) market concentration; and (b) product concentration. In connection with the former, *Dr Priyadarshi* mentioned that the market base of LDCs was narrow in the sense that the EU and the US accounted for the lion's share of LDCs' exports. China is emerging as the third largest destination though south-south trade still represented about 45 per cent of LDCs' exports. With regard to the issue of product concentration, *Dr Priyadarshi* affirmed that LDCs' export baskets were highly skewed and on average, two to three products generated more than 70 per cent of their export revenues.

It has generally been the case that LDC exporters of oil and minerals recorded the fastest growth, especially since 2003 due to rise in the price of fuels. *Dr Priyadarshi* stated that five oil exporting LDCs today accounted for more than half of total LDCs' exports – Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan and Yemen. On the other hand, in case of LDCs which are exporters of manufactured goods as well as primary products, they have continued to register overall trade deficit.

Financial crisis and LDCs' economic status

When relating the ongoing global financial crisis with the LDCs' present state of affairs, *Dr Priyadarshi* cited the WTO's forecast where it estimated the volume of world trade to fall by 9 per cent in 2009 when compared to recent years. Though LDCs witnessed an overall exports growth of 36 per cent (in terms of value and thanks to the oil exporters), they registered a fall in their export growth rates in the second and third quarters of 2008. *Dr Priyadarshi* opined that LDCs which were specialised on export of commodities may be able to avert the adverse impact of the crisis, but for others, such as Bangladesh who is specialised on export of manufactured items (particularly apparels) the crisis may have a stronger and also a lasting impact. Then again, despite the type of exports, *Dr Priyadarshi* pointed out that most industries in LDCs would not be able to cope with any sustained period of downturn.

On the same note of apprehension, he mentioned that aid was also likely to decrease and according to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), official aid may decline by US\$ 20 billion in 2009. Furthermore, the World Bank has forecasted a financing shortfall between US\$ 270 billion and US\$ 700 billion for emerging markets, whilst the UNCTAD has estimated a 10 per cent decrease in foreign direct investment (FDI) where it expects the developing countries to be the most severely affected.

Taking into cognisance the ongoing global financial crisis, it can be safely affirmed that the impact of the crisis is going to be much stronger in countries that rely on trade for

generating economic activities. Most of the LDC economies are vulnerable by virtue of their dependence on the two-thirds of the World that is in recession – i.e., the US, the EU and Japan. Hence, LDCs whose exports and also the destinations are concentrated, they are likely to be more affected than others. In case of Bangladesh, the country's export destinations are the US and the EU where she exports predominantly ready-made garments (RMG). According to *Dr Priyadarshi*, it was imperative for countries dependent on a limited number of items to diversify their export baskets and also increase trade to non-traditional markets (including major developing countries).

Concluding the Doha Round

Pascal Lamy, the Director General of the WTO, has reiterated the demand for concluding the Doha Round of trade negotiations and in this connection, he went on to assert that Doha proposals, which are on the table for agriculture and industrial goods, were the equivalent of a stimulus package for consumers of over US\$ 150 billion.¹ According to *Dr Priyadarshi*, the current global financial crisis has attached much additional importance and urgency to a successful conclusion of the Doha Round. Financial uncertainty has already led to the adoption of protectionist policies by many developed countries and the WTO has been stressing that raising barriers will prove to be a misguided political option. *Dr Priyadarshi* opined that the WTO can act as a 'firewall' against protectionism based on its experience in the areas of trade liberalisation and regulation.

The WTO exemplifies how the lessons of history led to the construction of an international governance system. Assuming that Doha Round has successfully concluded, *Dr Priyadarshi* felt that it will enhance multilateral cooperation and help restore confidence of entrepreneurs in developing, developed and LDC world. He mentioned that developed countries perceive benefits accruing to them through enhanced access to developing country markets. Leaving aside the nitty-gritty issues, *Dr Priyadarshi* opined that the political environment has not been conducive to an early conclusion of the Doha Round. In this regard it is worth highlighting here that the US election in 2008 had an impact on the pace of negotiations and now members are awaiting the outcome of the upcoming elections in India, he added.

In the event that the Doha Round reaches a fatigue point, this will have severe repercussions for the prevailing multilateral order. It will inevitably weaken the multilateral trading system alongside the proliferation of bilateral and regional trading agreements across the globe. With such an outcome, according to *Dr Priyadarshi*, there

¹ <http://uk.reuters.com/article/motoringAutoNews/idUK192911+26-Mar-2009+RTRS20090326>

will be three implications – (a) pressure on smaller countries to accept WTO plus conditions in the regional arrangements where they decided to participate; (b) significant rise in protectionist tendencies; and (c) increased litigation.

The way forward

The goal, in Priyadarshi's opinion, ought to be not only to consolidate progress across the negotiations, but also to strengthen the relevance of the WTO as a system. Though many WTO members are seeking to revisit the Doha Development Agenda, Priyadarshi affirmed that the mandate of the Doha Development Agenda should remain unchanged. It is strategically vital to lock-in the progress that has been made in the cases of Agriculture and NAMA and technical work needs to continue to not only bridge the remaining gaps in these respective texts, but also in other negotiating areas (particularly, services). It is urgent that the LDCs continue to work towards the implementation of the DFQF decision which might also bring something at a bilateral level.² In this regard, *Dr Priyadarshi* suggested LDCs to focus on market access in developing countries by working on the extension of the 1999 Waiver which was granted to allow developing countries provide preferential market access to LDCs. *Dr Priyadarshi* pointed out that the Rules of Origin (RoO) needs further work and LDCs should submit more specific proposals in order to have a simple and transparent RoO requirement.

With regard to LDCs export of services, *Dr Priyadarshi* mentioned that excluding tourism, the other sectors were not likely to be much affected. Nevertheless, he underlined the importance for the implementation of the LDC Services modalities and that it was vital to capitalise on any consensus that offers a waiver to LDC services and service suppliers. On the same issue *Dr Priyadarshi* asserted that work needs to continue on dealing with Mode-4 issues. As a result of the ongoing global economic crisis it was important that LDCs help build momentum on the aid for trade (AfT) initiative, which was mooted in the Fifth Ministerial in Hong Kong in 2005. In this connection, he suggested that Bangladesh and other countries which are not beneficiaries of the enhanced integrated framework (EIF) mechanism, may consider joining it since increased resources are being made available to support LDCs' trade development purposes.

Concluding remarks

Dr Priyadarshi concluded by pointing out a crucial aspect of the global aid regime – whilst AfT flows increased substantially in Africa from 2002 to 2007, the reverse was experienced in Asia. He underlined that it was crucial for Bangladesh to do the necessary homework in view of the upcoming 2nd Global AfT Review which will evaluate progress

² The US-sponsored New Partnership for Development Act 2007 (NPDA 2007) which seeks to grant duty-free access to exports from African LDCs, Bangladesh and Cambodia.

made since the First Review and scrutinize how Aid for Trade is being operationalised on the ground.

Presentation by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya on WTO and Bangladesh: The Way Forward

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya thanked the CPD for giving him the opportunity to present one of the keynote papers. Referring to the earlier presentation by Dr Priyadarshi, *Dr Bhattacharya* stated that it was a concise report of the concerns and interests of the LDCs in the current Doha Round negotiations, especially in the well-settled settings of the ongoing global economic contraction.

Eight 'C's for Bangladesh

Bhattacharya affirmed that Bangladesh faced eight key challenges in terms of the ongoing Doha Round of trade negotiations. The *core challenge* was to ensure an early implementation of the DFQF decision, imposing an 'anti-concentration clause' on the remaining 3 per cent of the US list for granting DFQF market access to Bangladesh's exports, and ensuring that key products of export interests are included in the 97 per cent DFQF list. Secondly, there was a *complementary challenge*. This challenge was to include more tariff lines in the absence of the US DFQF list and also to seek the same treatment that had been granted to Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in case Bangladesh was not provided with the DFQF market access to developed countries' markets.

According to *Dr Bhattacharya*, the issue of *contingent challenge* was also a major issue of concern for a country like Bangladesh. In other words, DFQF treatment of agricultural goods would be subject to similar treatment as under NAMA products. Accessing service markets in developed countries has been a *constant challenge* for Bangladesh who has witnessed buoyant growth in remittance in recent times. Bhattacharya mentioned that it was urgent to seek modalities in services whereby LDCs' interests could be prioritised and more importantly, negotiations in this area can kick-off. Overall, in Bhattacharya's opinion, the services sector is comprised of a double jeopardy between – (a) an enabling mechanism for according priority to sectors of LDCs interest needs; and (b) prioritising LDCs' sectoral interests, particularly in Mode 4 of GATS negotiations.

The fifth challenge, in Bhattacharya's keynote presentation, was the *consequential challenge*. The challenge was that, there would be pressure on developing countries and particularly LDCs with regard to accepting the rules on anti-dumping measures, TRIPS, CBD, GI etc. One of the formidable challenges for Bangladesh at present is 'alliance building'. Bhattacharya observed that there was a *coalitional challenge* especially in the

backdrop of the proliferation of country groups and coalitions across the globe and it was imperative for Bangladesh to build political alliances in order to assuage the apprehensions of other LDCs who are weary about her competitiveness in the global apparels market.

The last two challenges concerned conditional and capacity challenges. The *conditional challenge* correlates with political developments across the world, especially the new Obama administration, rotating EU presidency and the upcoming elections in India. Bhattacharya opined that the *capacity challenge* had long constrained Bangladesh from not only being adequately prepared during the negotiations, but also from utilising her potential to the maximum level.

Developments in 2008: The doables in 2009

According to *Dr Bhattacharya*, it was imperative to consolidate the progress that had been made with regard to the different negotiation areas (especially NAMA text on DFQF). He strongly felt that Bangladesh needs to do the necessary homework in order to address the issues of interest to the LDCs on the table – tariff lines for disproportionately affected countries (DAC), ‘Waiver’ as LDC priority mechanism for services, Mode 4 request list – and also engage in other outstanding issues (Rules, TRIPS, AfT agenda). Bhattacharya went on to suggest that Bangladesh may prepare a voluntary binding commitment list with regard to NAMA tariff lines as a goodwill gesture which would indirectly help build solidarity in Geneva and particularly in the African capitals. Furthermore, given the severe lack of interface between Bangladesh’s offices in the Capital, Geneva, Washington DC and Brussels, Bhattacharya underlined that it was strategically vital to coordinate their works. In the context of regional cooperation, Bhattacharya recommended strengthening outreach to the SAARC and other emerging economies. He highlighted the importance of fostering and strengthening national partnership among the government, the private sector, think-tanks and individual trade experts in advancing and also promoting the country’s trade interests.

In reference to the preceding Ministerial (referred to as mini-Ministerial) meeting of the WTO members in December 2008, Bhattacharya pointed out that though new modalities text had brought the membership closer to the objectives, several difficult political choices needed to be made before the modalities could be conclusively established. In other words, political desire has not translated into sufficient political will to assure any successful outcome. Three core divergent issues continue to persist which relate to –

1. Sectorals: Irreconcilable divergence among members on value of scope of Sectoral Initiatives.

2. SSM: The key difference remained over the issue of the duration of SSM and evolution of domestic policies.
3. Cotton: Although there is political will to address this issue, it remains contingently conditional upon the resolution of the other issues.

Bhattacharya stated that as of now, there were various negotiating and interest groups engaged in closed consultation and open-ended meetings pursuing their respective incomplete agendas. Such meetings, in the words of *Dr Bhattacharya*, provided ‘ventilation’ through which negotiations can be at least expected to move forward. This new ‘window of opportunity’ will be defined by emerging global realities such as the new administration in the US, outcome of the G20 summit in April 2009, formation of a new government in India, rotating EU Presidency and reappointment of the incumbent Secretary General of the WTO. *Dr Bhattacharya* confirmed that a consolidation and warming-up phase is expected till July 2009 and Bangladesh needed to do the necessary homework in order to make the best possible use of the upcoming events.

Agenda for action

According to *Dr Bhattacharya*, Bangladesh could consider a three pronged approach in attending to the immediate issues and concerns emanating from the worldwide global financial crisis, and the trading Doha Round of trade negotiations. These are –

(a) Political outreach, coordination and capacity building

Dr Bhattacharya opined that Bangladesh needed to consolidate political outreach in three areas – (i) the new US administration; (ii) the African LDCs; and (iii) other national and regional counterparts. As the new US administration undertakes trade policy reviews and revisits various preference schemes, Bangladesh will need to initiate a multi-dimensional strategy to secure political attention in order to convince the economic rationale of an effective DFQF, both multilaterally at the WTO and bilaterally under the New Partnership for Development Act 2007 (NPDA 2007). Towards this, all available capacities including advocacy groups overseas will need to be harnessed so that Bangladesh market access interests are promoted. It is also imperative to send delegations to African capitals (particularly to Lesotho, Uganda and Tanzania) in order to assuage their apprehensions if Bangladesh is granted DFQF market access to the US, and persuade them in supporting the country’s position during the WTO negotiations.

With regard to (iii), *Dr Bhattacharya* opined that Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) may jointly strategise to approach regional partners, especially SAARC members, to support the country’s position in the WTO negotiations. They should work on strengthening national partnerships with participation of the

government, private sector, think-tanks and individual trade experts. Bhattacharya recommended that the MOFA may also encourage delegations, in Geneva, of countries that have already granted Bangladesh DFQF market access in supporting the country's endeavour to get such preferential market access in developed countries' markets.

In this connection, *Dr Bhattacharya* felt that organising a round with Ambassadors of countries that have already granted DFQF market access to Bangladesh may help them to advocate in Bangladesh's support during the negotiations. These will include both developed (the EU, Canada, Australia, Japan and Switzerland) and developing countries (Turkey, India, China and Brazil). It was also recommended that effective use of public-private partnerships (PPPs) can help meet the prevailing capacity deficit in the government.

(b) *Research and analysis*

In order to be fully prepared and also effective during the negotiations, *Dr Bhattacharya* pointed out many areas which required extensive research and analysis. He suggested that an analysis of LDC exports to the US market will be strategically useful in estimating advantages to be gained and also persuading the African LDCs that they will not be affected, if Bangladesh is granted DFQF access to the US market. In this connection, Bhattacharya underlined the need to assess the DFQF schemes announced by the developing countries for the LDCs. In the backdrop of the surplus in Bangladesh's labour market, *Dr Bhattacharya* affirmed that sectoral study on demand and supply sides be conducted in order to analyse prospects of movement of natural persons from Bangladesh under Mode 4 of the GATS negotiations.

Following Bhattacharya's conclusion, *Professor Mustafizur Rahman* invited the Guest of Honour to present his comments before opening the floor for discussion.

Comments by the Guest of Honour

Mr M Syeduzzaman 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 agriculture negotiations. He was concerned about the agriculture sector, particularly of Bangladesh, and stated that till date there was no capacity to subsidise production or exports. He opined that though the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations shed some light for agriculture trade, the current round of trade negotiations had various trade-distorting provisions. In line with Bhattacharya's recommendation for strengthening political outreach, *Syeduzzaman* maintained that political alliances needed to be built with African LDCs, who are also the largest agricultural exporters in the world. He concluded by

affirming the need to diversify the country's exports basket (dominated by manufactured items, RMG) and not ignoring agricultural goods in coping with the ongoing financial crisis.

Open floor discussion

Political Alliance Building

Ambassador Farooq Sobhan, Chairman, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) extended a warm welcome to Dr Bhattacharya and went on to endorse the keynote presenter's recommendations relating to 'political outreach' in the context of the Doha Round of trade negotiations. He opined that Bangladesh's government officials in the Capital needed to work together in closely examining African LDCs' position and coordinating with their foreign counterparts in assuaging the Africans' apprehension if Bangladesh is granted DFQF market access in the US. On the same note, *Mr Shafiul Islam*, Vice President, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) asserted that Bangladesh and Cambodia were almost 'alienated' from discussions pertaining to DFQF access in the US market and reiterated the need to make friends in Africa. *Mr Shabbir Ahmed*, Chair, US-Bangladesh Advisory Council underlined that African LDCs considered Bangladesh to be an exceptional threat and agreed with Dr Bhattacharya's recommendations concerning fostering and strengthening political outreach to Africa in particular. He strongly felt that think-tanks like the CPD ought to play the strategic role in bridging the private-public gap.

At this point *Dr Bhattacharya* informed the audience that till now the country's politicians have remained reactive in nature in the sense that they wait for an event to take place and then respond with management type of policies. He strongly felt that policies ought to be proactive in nature in the sense that adverse events can not only be managed, but also averted. *Bhattacharya* mentioned that one of the major concerns for Bangladesh was that of the African community's misplaced understanding on granting any kind of market access to Bangladesh, since it may take away the benefits that are accrued to the poor from Africa. *Bhattacharya* confirmed that this needed to be explained in a manner that could assuage their apprehensions. He felt that inter-ministerial coordination, particularly between the three ministries of Commerce, Finance and Foreign Affairs, was fundamental in bridging this gap. He went on to assert that negotiations were expected to move rapidly 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 during the negotiations.

Capacity building

Mr Manzur Ahmed, Advisor, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) highlighted the need to build capacity in terms of being fully able to utilise the country's technical and professional expertise when negotiating for DFQF access in the US market. *Mr Shafiul Islam*, Vice President, BGMEA put emphasis on building professional expertise and recommended that no relocation should take place in government job designations for a certain period of time which would allow individuals to develop expertise in their respective fields. *Mr Farooq Ahmed*, Secretary General, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) also underlined the need for capacity building and suggested that the CPD ought to involve policymakers in such dialogues which would also facilitate the decision-making process.

Operationalising the AfT Agenda

Ms Azizun Nahar, Deputy Director, WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce inquired about the position of LDCs in the context of the upcoming 2nd Global Review of the AfT initiative in July 2009. She queried what Bangladesh needed to do in order to prepare for the upcoming Review meeting in Autumn?

By way of response to this query *Dr Priyadarshi* informed the audience that the 2nd Global Review of the AfT initiative would be a technical one in the sense that it would take stock of the progress made in terms of fulfilment of the WTO members' commitments and also aid utilisation. He suggested that Bangladesh put forward two or three projects with estimated amounts and pursue them vigorously during discussions with development partners.

Other comments and queries

Dr Abid Khan, Fellow, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI) mentioned that a study was ongoing with a focus on the NAMA text and its implications for Bangladesh. *Mr Kamal Uddin*, Research Officer, BGMEA recommended exploring markets for the country's RMG exports. He expressed dissatisfaction over the progress made in SAFTA till data, despite there being a proliferation of such regional trading agreements across the globe and more importantly, increase in trade among member countries. *Mr Mir Nasir Hossain*, Former President, FBCCI and Managing Director, Mir Ceramics Ltd. queried about the influences of the newly elected US government on the Doha Round's negotiation process. He opined that politicians ought to understand how to get the process of negotiations initiated and also successfully completed.

Professor Mustafizur Rahman then called upon the Special Guest, H E Mr Robert McDougall, to make some special remarks.

Remarks by the Special Guest

H E Mr Robert McDougall started by mentioning that Canada has had a longstanding commitment in assisting developing countries like Bangladesh to make full use of their potentials and that the country is committed towards making trade work as an engine for development. He affirmed that CIDA has been proud to be a partner with the CPD in supporting the Trade Related Research and Policy Development (TRRPD) Programme and the Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD) project which are being implemented over the past several years. The Special Guest strongly felt that the trade policy appreciation workshops in the past have had contributed significantly to strengthen trade related policy understanding and appreciation in Bangladesh within the framework on the ongoing negotiations at the WTO – particularly under the Doha Development Round negotiations. He informed the audience that the Canadian GSP scheme was the most LDC friendly and expressed satisfaction over the increase in trade between Bangladesh and Canada – from USD 110 million in 2002 to about USD 533 million in 2007.

H E Mr McDougall also confirmed that Canada was committed to contribute additional resource towards the enhanced integrated framework (EIF) and Aid for Trade initiatives of the WTO. He stated that Canada's one of the top twenty priorities was to help Bangladesh deal with the ongoing global financial crisis and provide assistance where necessary. He concluded his remarks by thanking Professor Rahman and his colleagues in successfully organising this event.

Concluding remarks by the Chair of the Session

Professor Mustafizur Rahman highlighted the impact of the CPD's Trade Policy Appreciation (TPA) workshops on the community and felt that such focused programmes were a necessary prerequisite for establishing a process of disseminating information with regard to trade related negotiation issues. He gave special thanks to Dr Shishir Priyadarshi and Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya for their highly valued contribution to this interactive discussion which introduced much creative thinking into policy debates and provoked serious discussion. *Professor Rahman* registered his deep appreciation towards the Special Guest for taking sometime off his busy schedule in order to be present at the dialogue.

List of Participants

<i>Mr Zeeshan Abedin</i>	Lecturer, School of Business, Independent University Bangladesh
<i>Ms Selima Ahmad</i>	President, Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vice Chairman, Nitol Group
<i>Ms Dilruba Ahmed</i>	Research Associate, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI)
<i>Professor Dr Salahuddin Ahmed</i>	Head, School of Business, Prime Asia University
<i>Mr Manzur Ahmed</i>	Advisor, The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Former Director, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI)
<i>Mr Farooq Ahmed</i>	Secretary General Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)
<i>Mr Shabbir Ahmed</i>	Chair, The US-Bangladesh Advisory Council
<i>Mr Mohammad Masud Alam</i>	Assistant Professor, Department of Economics Shahjalal University of Science and Technology
<i>Mr Mohammad Jahangir Alam</i>	Lecturer, Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University
<i>MrMd Hossain Ali</i>	Executive Director (DBI), DCCI
<i>Mr Muhammad Al Amin</i>	Research Associate, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
<i>Mr Md Abul Kalam Azad</i>	Former Secretary
<i>Dr Md Abdul Baset</i>	Principal Scientific Officer, Agricultural Economics Division Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI)
<i>Mr M A Baset</i>	2 nd Vice President, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BKMEA)
<i>Mr Robert Beadle</i>	Country Programme Director and Head of Development Cooperation (CIDA) Canadian High Commission
<i>Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya</i>	Distinguished Fellow, CPD - Designate
<i>Mr Arup K Biswas</i>	Advisor, Development Affairs, Royal Norwegian Embassy
<i>Mr Amitava Chakraborty</i>	Director General (WTO Cell), Ministry of Commerce
<i>Mr Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury</i>	Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>Mr Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury</i>	Deputy Secretary (DMT), Treasury and Debt Management Wing Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
<i>Major General (Retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury</i>	Advisor, Evinco Group
<i>Mr M A Rouf Chowdhury</i>	Chairman, Rahima Food Corporation Limited
<i>Mr Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury</i>	Former Secretary and Chairman, Janata Bank
<i>Mr Swapan Kumar Dasgupta</i>	Joint Director, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
<i>Mr Laurent Estrade</i>	Trade Commissioner, Economic Department, Embassy of France

<i>Mr Akand Md Faisal Uddin</i>	Research Officer Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)
<i>Dr Shah Md Farid</i>	Former Member, Planning Commission
<i>Mr ABM Omor Faruque</i>	Lecturer, Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka
<i>Ms Sadia Faruque</i>	Director, Multilateral Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<i>Mr A Gafur</i>	Executive Director, American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh
<i>Ms Tanzina Haque</i>	Assistant Professor Department of Accounting & Information Systems University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Md Fazlul Haque</i>	Lecturer, Department of Economics, Comilla University
<i>Professor Dr Khondoker Bazlul Hoque</i>	Chairman, Department of International Business and President, Dhaka University Teacher's Association University of Dhaka
<i>Mr Khalid Hossain</i>	Policy Officer, Oxfam GB
<i>Mr Mir Nasir Hossain</i>	Former President, FBCCI and Managing Director, Mir Ceramics Ltd.
<i>Mr Muhammad Mosaddek Hossain</i>	Lecturer, Department of Economics, Comilla University
<i>Mr Md Shamimul Islam</i>	Lecturer, Department of Economics, Comilla University
<i>Mr Shahidul Islam</i>	Deputy Secretary (IIT), Ministry of Commerce
<i>Mr Shafiul Islam</i>	Vice-President, BGMEA
<i>Mrs Hasneen Jahan</i>	Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics Bangladesh Agricultural University
<i>Ms Rubayat Jesmin</i>	Economist, Delegation of the European Commission
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<i>Dr Farah Kabir</i>	Country Director, Action Aid-Bangladesh
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