

Address of Welcome by Mr. Md. Sabur Khan, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) at the Round Table Discussion on "Dutch Delegation to DCCI", jointly organized by DCCI and Embassy of the Netherlands and Nyerode Business University in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Date: 12 September, 2013  
Time: 12:30 hours  
Venue: DCCI Auditorium (5<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
65-66, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka 1000

---

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim,

Distinguished Dutch delegation members,

My Colleagues in the Board of Directors, DCCI;

Panel Discussants:

Mr. Farzeen Alam, Initiator, Social Business institute;  
Mr. Asif Ibrahim, Chairman, BUILD and former President, DCCI; and  
Mr. Nessar Maksud Khan, Seniot Vice President, DCCI.

Distinguished Guests and Participants;  
Friends from the Media both Print and Electronic;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Assalamu A'laikum and a very good afternoon,

On behalf of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) and on my own behalf, I cordially welcome all of you to the Business Meeting between DCCI and Dutch Water and Agro Food Trade Delegation. I specially extend my gratitude and thanks to the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka and Nyerode Business University for their cooperation.

The main objectives of the visit of the Dutch Delegation are:

- to identify business opportunities for Dutch business and innovation in the agro-food and water industries;
- to demonstrate business practices of agro food and water industries of Bangladesh;
- to understand Bangladeshi business culture, code of conduct, economies; and
- to establish a network by a fruitful B2B Match Making.

Distinguished Gathering;

Let me introduce about our chamber. DCCI is the largest and most active chamber in the country rendering trade supporting services to its 14000 members and other business communities in the country. The chamber has taken various activities to build capacity of the private sector to face the challenges of globalization and exploit the emerging opportunities in the international market. During its journey towards promotion of trade and investment, DCCI has been maintaining a close relationship with Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka.

DCCI is the first chamber of Bangladesh who has achieved ISO 9001:2008 certifications for its international standard of quality. It has also won other prestigious awards like: "MLS-SCM (P) Best Network Partner Institution Award 2010"; "The 4th Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of

Commerce & Industry (CACCI) Award in Big Chamber Category"; "World Chambers Competition Award 2007" in "Best Skills Development Program" at Istanbul etc.

We organized similar programs with Dutch Embassy in several times and a good number of entrepreneurs had shown their interest to make joint venture initiative with Dutch business partners. I believe today's program will refresh our memory and help us to take a stock to the activities of the last program. I have seen that the delegation represents sectors like Water and Agro food for exploring business opportunities. Now I would like to highlight some of the following issues regarding Corporate Social Responsibility in Business, water management, food security.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in a business perspective: The private sector can play an important role in development by working in partnership with NGOs and government to advocate responsible business practices, achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promote economic growth of the country. For instance, by creating employment opportunities and building individual capacity, companies are enabling people to be self sufficient and development sustainable livelihoods. As a result, new suppliers enter the market and demand for consumer good increase, thereby enabling companies to strengthening their supply chain and increase revenues.

Water Management: Water is crucial for Bangladesh; it determines agriculture, health, safety, economic activities, and culture. The Netherlands and Bangladesh have been working together in the water sector since 1975. Our two low lying delta countries face similar problems and can learn from each other's solutions. In the early years the cooperation focused on rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure like embankments, bridges. These interventions proved highly successful and Bangladesh became self-sufficient in food production. In close coordination with the key stakeholders in Bangladesh's water sector, The Netherlands water program now focuses on: (i) participatory water management in polders in the coastal zone, (ii) river management, (iii) drinking water and sanitation in rural and urban areas and (iv) strengthening of key water institutions (BWDB, WARPO, Ministry of Water Resources).

Food security: The Netherlands program on food security aligns with the national food security plan of Bangladesh. The overarching goals are improving access to healthy food and fostering sustainable production.

The Netherlands uses two entry points for its food security program: i) connecting food security interventions to the water sector, an area in which we have a strong recognition and deep experience in Bangladesh and ii) food security in relation to trade (import and export). In line with Bangladesh's country investment plan which acts as a road map towards investment in agriculture, food security and nutrition, four areas of cooperation have been established: i) improved water resource management and infrastructure for irrigation purposes, ii) fisheries and aquaculture development, iii) livestock development and iv) food safety and quality improvement.

Distinguished Guests,

For attaining targets of GDP growth and investment/GDP ratio to be increased to 32% in 2015 and 40% in 2021, Bangladesh should have to be prepared to provide attractive and efficient business environment to prove the strength of the country. It requires the coordinated actions of all

stakeholders involved in trade and business and thereby enable Bangladesh to attract investment both domestic and foreign and a level playing field for all.

As a developing country, Bangladesh needs FDI for its ongoing development process. Since independence, Bangladesh is trying to be a suitable location for FDI. EPZs have been set up, Special Economic Zones are going to be set up and lucrative incentive packages have been provided to attract FDI into the country. However, the total inflow of FDI has been increasing over the years. According to the World Investment Report 2012 of the UNCTAD Bangladesh achieved a significant growth in inflow of foreign direct investment in 2012, despite a major decline in global inflow of FDI.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will be happy to know that Bangladesh has moved up eight notches to 110th in Global Competitiveness Index (GCI)-2013, compared with last year's 118th. According to the Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) Bangladesh got significant improvement in two key areas—macro-economic management and infrastructure—helped the country make progress in the index for 2013-14, according to the Global Competitiveness Report (GCR).

Bangladesh is a winning combination with its competitive market, business friendly environment and cost structure for investment. I like to mention in the following some of investment opportunities in Bangladesh which may be useful for Dutch entrepreneurs:

- **Industrious Low-Cost Workforce:** Bangladesh offers a well-educated, highly adaptive and industrious work-force with the lowest wages and salaries in the region. 60% of the population of Bangladesh considered as young which would be potential workforce of the country to contribute to the economic development of the country.
- **Strategic Location, Regional Connectivity and Worldwide Access:** Bangladesh is strategically located next to India, China and ASEAN markets.
- **Strong Local Market and Growth :** Bangladesh has proved to be an attractive investment location with its 160 million populations and consistent economic growth leading to strong and growing domestic demand.
- **Low Cost of Energy:** Energy prices are the most competitive in Bangladesh. Transportation on green compressed natural gas is less than 20% of the diesel price.
- **Proven Export Competitiveness:** Bangladesh enjoys tariff-free access to the European Union, Canada, Australia and Japan. In Europe, Bangladesh enjoys 60% of the market share and is the top manufacturing exporter amongst 50 least developed countries.
- **Competitive Incentives:** Bangladesh offers the most liberal FDI regime in South Asia, allowing 100% foreign equity with unrestricted exit policy, easy remittance of royalty, and repatriation of profits and incomes.

Distinguished Guests,

Here, I would like to inform you that in order to support the business community of home and abroad and facilitate investment process, DCCI has established DCCI Helpdesk at its own premises. All the distinguished members of DCCI and the business community are getting services regarding registration, trade, commerce, business and investment from this help desk. The investors from all over the world can use DCCI help desk as 'first point of contact' in getting required information of investment in Bangladesh.

In order to bring huge potentials of Bangladesh to the Non Resident Bangladeshi (NRBs) to invest in various potential and productive areas, DCCI wants to create a strong relationship with the NRBs and support them to invest in Bangladesh. The Chamber is going to hold an event namely "NRB for Positioning Bangladesh" in Dhaka this year.

DCCI has also taken a noble initiative to create 2000 new young entrepreneurs. In order to achieve the employment targets, industrial growth, improved socio-economic structure and keep positive impact to GDP aligned with the targets of the government's announced policies, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in association with Bangladesh Bank came forward to join hands with an innovative idea of creating 2000 new entrepreneurs in 2013 along with a parallel event of an expo titled "Entrepreneurship and Innovation Expo-2013".

I would not prolong my speech further. I once again thank you for your active participation.

Allah Hafiz

Md. Sabur Khan  
President, DCCI  
12 September, 2013