

Talking Points for Mr. Md. Sabur Khan, President, DCCI at the **meeting with guests from European Union on Trade Policy Support Program (TPSP).**

Date: 26th February, 2013

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Good Afternoon,

1. Distinguished Guests welcome to Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI). I would like to thank you for coming to Bangladesh and showing interest to have meeting with DCCI.
2. **Introduction of DCCI:** DCCI is the largest and most active Chamber of Bangladesh having about 14000 members. They represent a cross-section of exporters, importers, manufactures and other SMEs. The basic functions of DCCI are related to the promotion and development of the private sector and strengthen bilateral trade and economic cooperation with foreign partners. It signs MOUs with foreign chambers, arranges bilateral business meetings, buyers & sellers meet, and other business meetings to promote business and investment cooperation in the country. DCCI has taken up various programs and services for its members to build capacity of the private sector to face the changes of globalization and exploit the emerging opportunities in international market. 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.
3. **European Union and Trade:** We all know that the European Union is the world’s biggest trader, accounting for 20% of global imports and exports. Free trade among its members was one of the founding principles of the EU, and it is committed to liberalizing world trade for the benefit of rich and poor countries alike. Trade is everybody's business. Trade policy affects us all, every day, whatever we do and wherever we live. Without trade, our lives would be severely restricted. Our morning tea or coffee, the cars we drive, the computers we increasingly depend on or holidays on another continent everything is result of trade. Globalization is bringing more and more countries, rich and

poor, into the world economy and subjecting them to increased competition. This process is being changed rapidly. If the development of trade is properly managed, an opportunity for economic growth will also happen.

4. **Objective:** The overall objective of the Trade Policy Support Program is to contribute to trade-led growth and poverty reduction in Bangladesh through providing technical assistance capacity building of key trade-related institutions.
5. **Automation:** Automation is important for reaping maximum benefits from GSP in exporting Bangladeshi products to the European Union. We hope the program will help Bangladesh in this respect. We appreciate the European Union for giving quota-free access of Bangladesh origin products to the EU market and we request EU to make the automation process of GSP faster to make it easier.
6. **Comprehensive Trade Policy:** A clear and specific trade policy is very important for Bangladesh to become more competent in trade and business in the present competitive world. Bangladesh government has already taken initiatives to formulate a comprehensive trade policy.
7. **Trade Facilitation (TF):** There is no doubt that trade facilitation can help to achieve higher growth and economic development of a country, as through TF, Trade can be increased and it creates possibility to go for more industrialization that results more employment generation. But it is of course true that Trade alone can not create employment if it is not supported by the Domestic Policies. The benefits from trade facilitation are numerous and can be seen not only in direct monetary gains, but also in increased transparency, time, increased business opportunity, amplified customer value and improved security. It levels the playing field for SMEs in relation to larger companies and enables them to grow and trade more efficiently, while at the same time governments will benefit directly in terms of increased security and Customs revenue.

It is imperative that four key elements are present for a successful trade facilitation process: a strong political will; a clear strategic plan; a close co-operation with the business community; a well-funded and long-term technical assistance program based on a partnership between donor and recipient.

8. **Major trade facilitation initiatives:** In the last two decades, Bangladesh has been pursuing liberalized trading regime and achieved significant progress. Along with trade liberalization, customs procedures have also been simplified and modernized substantially. Some other initiatives are:

- Infrastructure and facilities at different customs points as well as in different sea and land ports have been improved.
- Almost all the Ministries have their own websites now, ASUCUDA ++ is also in place, Chittagong Port is under process of several reforms, Introduction of PSI etc are some of the examples.
- Dhaka Customs House Automation is another example of trade facilitation in the country. It has drastically reduced number of documents required.
- With the introduction of PSI physical inspection of consignments have been reduced from 100% in 1999 to around 10% now.
- Number of pre-clearance signatures has gone down to 5 from 25 and export clearance time for 95% of consignments has been reduced from 72 hours in 1999 to 3 hours now.

The importance of Trade Policy Support Program is essential for the country like Bangladesh. We expect more technical assistance from the European Union in this respect for boosting up the trade and economy of Bangladesh.

Before concluding once again I thank you very much and assure you full support from DCCI.

Md. Sabur Khan
President, DCCI