

# INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 2005

FOR ADVANCING LDC INTERESTS IN THE SIXTH WTO MINISTERIAL



## CPD QUARTERLY



Vol. IV, Issue 4

SPECIAL ISSUE

October 2005

### From the Editor's Desk

The successful holding of the International Civil Society Forum 2005 is a manifestation of the commitment of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) towards promoting and advancing the interests and concerns of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the context of the multilateral trading system in general and the ongoing Doha Development Round negotiations in particular. As a member of the global civil society, CPD's active interest in trade related issues and institutions is inspired by the growing concern as regards marginalisation of poor countries in the context of globalisation and their lack of capacity to access the opportunities that emanate from this process.

The upcoming Hong Kong Ministerial Conference is expected to be of crucial importance as far as LDC interests are concerned in such areas as agriculture, NAMA, services, rules, trade facilitation and provisions relating to development. In this context, the Dhaka LDC Forum 2005 was informed by three broad objectives: (i) to create an opportunity for voicing multi-stakeholder concerns about, and providing a platform for interaction on, trade related issues of concern among various civil society organisations, networks, and special interest and advocacy groups from various regions of the globe; (ii) to prepare a Declaration articulating LDC perspectives on the Hong Kong Agenda; and (iii) to promote advocacy work around a list of priorities of the LDCs which would be passed on to the LDC Trade Ministers for their subsequent advocacy in Hong Kong.

The *Forum* was a truly collaborative effort of eight international organisations which have an extensive track record in trade related research and advocacy in support of LDCs, and 26 national NGOs which have been clearly involved in the work on advocating LDC interests in the context of multilateral trading regime. The *Forum* was also a testimony to CPD's organisational capacity, research quality, advocacy efficacy and networking ability.

The CPD has taken this initiative to bring out a special issue of the *CPD Quarterly* to provide the readership with an overall idea about the richness of the organisational and substantive work that went into the holding of this international *Forum*. However, readers will be able to get a fuller picture by logging on to the CPD website ([www.cpd-bangladesh.org](http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org)).

## Dhaka Declaration of the International Civil Society Forum 2005 Adopted

The *International Civil Society Forum 2005* adopted the *Dhaka Declaration* on the final day of the three-day event following a series of extensive discussions on the various issues related to LDC concerns in the context of the ongoing Doha Round negotiations in the WTO. The *Declaration*, in its final form, includes a preamble and ten issue-specific sections which articulate the demands of the participants who assembled in Dhaka for the *Forum*. Thus *Declaration* includes various demands in the areas of Agriculture, Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Services, WTO Rules, Trade Facilitation, Special and Differential Treatment, TRIPS, Trade, Development and Aid, Accession to the WTO by LDCs, and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).



Adoption of the Dhaka Declaration being announced at the Forum

The 19-point core demand, which was also adopted at the *Forum*, articulated the following priorities:

- 1 Duty-free and quota-free market access in developed country markets, bound in the WTO and with flexible rules of origin, for all LDC export products
- 1 Developing countries in a position to do so are requested to accord zero-tariff market access for all products from LDCs, on a non-reciprocal basis, with a view to strengthening South-South economic cooperation
- 1 Exemption from all trade remedy measures for all LDC exportables
- 1 Adequate measures to compensate for preference erosion in view of tariff reduction
- 1 Flexibility for LDCs in agriculture policy to enable these countries to protect their domestic agriculture sectors, safeguard food security and livelihood of the farmers
- 1 Ensure market based price for all agricultural products in the developed countries by phasing out all types of market distorting supports. In this context, adequate measures should be taken to address the concerns of net food importing LDCs
- 1 Humanitarian food aid must not be hampered because of any provision in the Agreement on Agriculture
- 1 Phase out the subsidies given to cotton growers in the developed countries
- 1 WTO-TRIPS Agreement should not in any way constrain access to essential medicines in LDCs
- 1 Protect the rights of farmers, indigenous people and local communities, and ensure benefit sharing arrangements in the patent process and in other forms of intellectual property rights (IPRs)
- 1 Free temporary movement of service providers from LDCs including less skilled workers under GATS Mode-4

(Cont. Page 3)

## United Front Must to Protect LDC Interests

Stressed at the Inaugural Session of the Forum



Inaugural Session: (from left to right) Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Ambassador Love Mtesa, Mr Mahbubur Rahman, Commerce Minister Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, and Ms Annet Blank

The inaugural session of the three day long International Civil Society Forum 2005 on *Advancing LDC Interests in the Sixth WTO Ministerial* was held in Dhaka on 03 October 2005.

Mr Mahbubur Rahman, Chairman of the National Advisory Committee (NAC) and President of International Chamber of Commerce- Bangladesh (ICC-B), presided over the session where Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, MP, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce, Government of Bangladesh (GoB), was present as the Chief Guest. Ambassador Love Mtesa, Zambia's Permanent Representative at the WTO, Ms Annet Blank, Counsellor and Head of LDCs Unit, WTO, and Ambassador Dr Toufiq Ali, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh at the WTO attended the session as special invitees. Representatives from the eight co-organisers and 26 national organisations represented at the NAC were present at the inaugural session. The session was attended by 46 overseas participants from 25 countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. More than 500 representatives from a large number of key national civil society institutions, eminent trade experts, academics, development practitioners, leading business personalities, trade union activists, and political leaders attended the session. The session was facilitated by Dr Fahmida Khatun, Senior Research Fellow, CPD.

In his introductory speech, CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya noted that the road to the Hong Kong Ministerial promises to be slippery and bumpy. "What we need is support of the global institutions such as the WTO to help us actualise the potentials about which we are aware, potentials which we are capable of realising," he observed. The Hong Kong Ministerial is not the end of the Doha Round, rather it is a mid-term stock taking

exercise where the primary task is to agree on the modalities and framework issues of the ongoing negotiations, Dr Bhattacharya noted. We must make the best use of this opportunity, he emphasised.

The Chief Guest of the session, Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, said that the least developed countries such as Bangladesh deserve preferential access in the markets of the developing countries. Dwelling on the issue of decreasing share of LDCs in global trade, the Minister said "Much remains to be done to reverse the continued marginalisation of the LDCs. Our hopes and aspirations have been shattered by a sense of frustration and disappointment".

Focusing on the current state of negotiations under the Doha Development Round, the Commerce Minister noted that LDCs have already set their position and priorities through the *Livingstone Declaration*, adopted at the mini-Ministerial meet of the LDCs in June 2005. "Now the major task is advancing the LDCs' interests in a united way."

The *Forum* was also addressed by the representatives of the eight co-organisers who included Mr Aftab Alam Khan, Food Rights Campaign Coordinator, ActionAid International, Pakistan; Ms Emma Harrison, Global Trade Campaign Manager, Consumers International, United Kingdom; Mr Cheikh Tidiane Diye, Trade Programme Officer, ENDA Tiers Monde, Senegal; Dr Floor Smakman, Member, Secretariat, EU-LDC Network, the Netherlands; Mr Ricardo Melendez-Ortiz, Executive Director, ICTSD, Switzerland; Mr Anil Prabhakar Tambay, Country Representative, Oxfam GB, Bangladesh; Mr Pradeep S Mehta, Chairman, Advisory Board of SAWTEE, Nepal; and Mr Nathan Irumba, Advisor, SEATINI, Uganda. The co-organisers highlighted the importance of the *Forum* and emphasised the need for partnership among advocacy groups both in the North and in the South for the purpose of promoting LDC interests in the WTO. They drew attention of the audience to the major contentious issues in the context of the ongoing negotiations and cautioned that the LDCs must be united in safeguarding their interests.

While delivering his speech as the Chair of the session, ICC-B President Mahbubur Rahman noted that the objective of the *Forum* was to voice the concerns of the international civil society over the increasing marginalisation of the LDCs, and its apprehension that business as usual will not serve the purpose of safeguarding the interests of the poor countries. He urged for identifying common grounds to address the concerns of the LDCs in the context of the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference. He felt that the *Forum* should shed light on trade policy reforms within the LDCs and also focus on trade, poverty and governance nexus within these countries. He emphasised on the importance of the CPD initiative and hoped that the *Forum* will raise awareness in Bangladesh and abroad about the concerns of LDCs in the context of the Doha round negotiations.



Dr Fahmida Khatun, Coordinator, International Civil Society Forum 2005 and Senior Research Fellow, CPD conducts the inaugural session.

## Dhaka Declaration of the International Civil Society Forum 2005 Adopted

(From Page 1)

- 1 Subsidies maintained by LDCs for upgradation of technology and diversification of industrial base must be made "non actionable"
- 1 Resolution of all 'Implementation' related issues prior to consideration of any new commitment on the part of the LDCs
- 1 A framework agreement on Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) premised on the level of development, and incorporation of mandatory obligations on the part of developed countries to implement S&DT provisions
- 1 Accession of LDCs to the WTO under conditions no less favourable than those that apply to existing LDC members
- 1 Transparent and fully inclusive decision making during the run-up to and at the Hong Kong Ministerial
- 1 Strengthening of Integrated Framework Initiative and provision for adequate and effective technical and financial assistance for LDCs to build trade related supply-side capacities
- 1 Equitable distribution of benefits from trade through practice and promotion of good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability by the LDC governments
- 1 Uphold unity of LDCs in the multilateral trading negotiations

The *Forum* called upon the civil societies in LDCs to strengthen their efforts and initiatives to ensure that trade benefits are shared by the poor and the marginalised. It further stressed the need for strengthening South-South co-operation and welcomed recent initiatives by some developing countries to extend zero-tariff market access to the LDCs and urged other developing countries in a position to do so to provide similar access to their own markets.

Dealing with the issue of meaningful integration of the LDCs in the global trading system, the *Forum* urged the governments of Bangladesh and other LDCs to ensure that the opportunities stemming from global multilateral trading system serve the cause of equitable distribution and social justice within countries.

The draft declaration, placed before the house for adoption, also stated that in order to benefit from the global trading system it is essential that the LDCs practice and promote democratic pluralism, good governance and fight corruption in all its forms in their respective countries.

The *Declaration* was adopted on the basis of recommendations originating from discussions at the various sessions of the *Forum*, feedback on the *Zero-Draft* and *First-Draft* of the *Declaration* which was put on the website, and written comments in the *Suggestion Box*. More than 300 comments were received from *Forum* participants and visitors to the CPD website. A *Drafting Committee* was constituted to work on the *Dhaka Declaration*. The Committee presented the *Declaration* at the Concluding Session of the *Forum* where it was adopted with 24 suggestions and amendments. The most important demands of the LDCs were prioritised, and were articulated through a list of *LDC Priorities for the Hong Kong Ministerial*. The *Dhaka Declaration*, in its final version, has been posted on the CPD website ([www.cpd-bangladesh.org](http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org)).

The Dhaka Declaration of the Civil Society has been widely circulated. It has been recognised as a Working Document of the WTO, and widely disseminated among concerned stakeholders in their respective countries by the participating national and international organisations. The organisers of the *Forum* have also sent the *Declaration* to the Trade Ministers of the LDCs. It may be recalled here that prior to the Cancun Ministerial as well, CPD took a similar initiative to send the *Dhaka Forum Declaration 2003* to the LDC Trade Ministers. The participants of the Dhaka Civil Society Forum 2005 hope that LDC Trade Ministers will do their best to advance and promote these demands at the time of the Sixth WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong.

### Steps towards Organisation of the Dhaka Civil Society Forum 2005

#### March - July 2005

- 1 CPD decides to explore the possibility of organising an International Civil Society Forum in view of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference
- 1 Following extensive in-house discussion, CPD exchanges views with National and International Civil Society Organisations as regards collaboration in holding the Forum
- 1 Formation of the organising committee comprising of eight international civil society organisations as co organisers and CPD as the Convenor of the Forum
- 1 Setting up of the National Advisory Committee (NAC) comprising of 26 national civil society organisations with CPD as the Convenor

#### August 2005

- 1 Establishment of the Forum Secretariat at CPD.
- 1 Registration of participants
- 1 Meeting of the NAC to discuss the draft declaration (Zero Draft) prepared by the CPD

#### September 2005

- 1 Sending the zero draft to the co-organisers and the NAC members, and its posting on the CPD website for comments and suggestions
- 1 NAC meeting with the development partners with a view to pursue them to take up the interests of the LDCs with their national governments
- 1 Press Briefing on the Civil Society Forum for wider dissemination of the activities being undertaken in connection with the Forum

#### October 2005

- 1 Holding of the International Civil Society Forum

## Ensure Developmentness of the Doha Round

Speakers urged at the Plenary Session



Plenary Session: (from left to right) Mr Tofail Ahmed, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Dr Sothi Rachagan, and Ambassador Dr Toufiq Ali

The Plenary, titled *State of the Doha Round*, was the first formal session of the Forum. Held on 04 October 2005, the Plenary was divided into two parts. The first part of the Plenary was jointly co-chaired by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director, CPD and Dr Sothi Rachagan, Vice President of Nilai International College, Malaysia while the second part was co-chaired by Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Research Director, CPD and Ms Ann Weston, Vice President and Research Coordinator, North South Institute, Ottawa, Canada.

A distinguished panel of speakers spoke at the two sessions of the Plenary. Speaking at the Plenary, Mr Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, MP, Former Commerce Minister of Bangladesh, observed that in recent times rising price of oil has become a major concern as most LDCs are compelled to allocate a substantial amount of financial resources on purchase of oil. Such price hikes will contribute to further weakening of LDC economies, he cautioned. Mr Chowdhury also criticised the international financial institutions for imposing conditions which were not compatible with the WTO agreements.

Mr Tofail Ahmed, Former Commerce Minister, maintained that it was the developed countries that reaped the real benefit from the WTO negotiations. Both developed and developing countries made commitments to give special and preferential treatment to the LDCs but they have not kept their promises. He felt that LDCs should pose a united front in Hong Kong to impress upon the developed countries the need to pay more attention to the LDC concerns.

Ambassador Dr Toufiq Ali, while presenting his views, noted, "We are facing a lot of pressure from the developed and developing countries in the WTO negotiations, but some important discussions are also going on outside of the WTO." He cited the example of China which has agreed, in principle, to give duty-free market access to 39 LDCs. Dr Ali also highlighted and hailed the sense of solidarity among the LDCs which was epitomised by the Livingstone Declaration. He cautioned that the negotiations are going to be tough and LDCs should be clear about the trade-offs.

Other panelists who spoke on the occasion were Mr Chien Yen Goh, Representative, Third World Network, Switzerland; Ms Annet Blank, Counsellor and Head, Least Developed Countries Unit, WTO, Switzerland; Dr David Luke, Senior Trade Advisor, UNDP, Switzerland; Ambassador Love Mtesa, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the WTO; Mr Ricardo Melendez-Ortiz, Executive Director, ICTSD, Switzerland; Mr Kasote Singogo, Research Advisor, Trade and Investment Association, Zambia Research for Development; and Mr Pradeep S Mehta, Chairperson, SAWTEE, Nepal; and Secretary General, CUTS, India. The panelists focused on (a) major emerging differences on the various issues under discussion in Geneva, (b) strategies LDCs should pursue in this context, (c) possible outcomes, and (d) coalitions of interests which could best serve the interests of LDCs. Panelists also responded to questions raised by the participants.

## SPECIAL MESSAGES

The CPD had earlier invited Mr Pascal Lamy, Director General of the WTO; Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary General of UNCTAD; and Mr Dipak Patel, Minister for Trade and Industry, Government of Zambia and spokesperson for the LDCs at the WTO. Dr Panitchpakdi, who had earlier accepted CPD's invitation, could not come to the Forum because of last minute change of schedule. He sent a message to the Forum which was read out by Ambassador Dr Toufiq Ali. The message of Mr Pascal Lamy was read out by Ms Annet Blank while Ambassador Love Mtesa read out the message of Mr Dipak Patel.

### Message from the Zambian Trade Minister

In his message to the Forum, Mr Dipak Patel observed that since Cancun, not much has happened to make the LDCs feel that the Doha Round will be crowned with success. "LDCs are determined that Hong Kong succeeds. We do not want another Cancun because it is not in our interest to fail. Since Cancun, not much has happened in dealing with development issues. Instead, we have witnessed the end of preferences and the requests that some countries are making for 'trade offs'... Unless the developed countries move substantially towards addressing issues of concern to developing countries, I am afraid we might witness another Cancun in Hong Kong," he cautioned in his message.

### Message from the WTO Director General

In his message, Mr Pascal Lamy stated that he would pay special attention to the needs of the LDCs. He considered it his duty to rebalance the system by facilitating and promoting the interests of weaker countries. "We cannot allow the Hong Kong conference to represent a 'standstill', or worse to bring us backwards. It is our last chance to move this round to a successful conclusion by the end of 2006," he observed. The negotiating process must be all-inclusive and transparent, the message mentioned. In his message, Mr Lamy stated that he would also explore all avenues to create opportunities for the LDCs to comment and be part of the process.

### Message from the UNCTAD Secretary General

Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi's message noted that civil societies in the various countries had an important responsibility in their advocacy role to reverse the trend of marginalisation of the LDCs in the global economic system. In his message, Dr Supachai noted that ensuring active participation of the LDCs in the negotiations at all stages was of critical importance. There is no substitute for this if LDCs were to articulate and defend their interests. "But we also need to look beyond trade negotiations and improve the productive capacity in Least Developed Countries," underscored the UNCTAD Secretary General in his message.

# Ensure Duty-Free Market Access for LDC Products

## LDC Forum called upon developed and advanced-developing countries



Session on Agriculture: (from left to right) Dr Uttam Kumar Deb, Mr AKM Masud Ali, Mr Mouhamet Lamine Ndiaye, Mr Mahfuz Ullah, Mr Demba Moussa Dembele, Mr Cheikh Tidiane Dieye and Mr Buba Khan.

Mr AKM Masud Ali of INCIDIN Bangladesh opined that excessive level of support and subsidies allow the West to dump their products in the name of export and harm farmers in the LDCs. "Developed countries are playing a deadly box-game which the small farmers of the LDCs and developing countries are witnessing at the costs of their livelihoods," he cautioned. He further cautioned that the developed countries may switch their existing support level to Blue and Green boxes rather than actually reducing it.

Dr Uttam Kumar Deb, Senior Research Fellow of CPD, presented the Draft Declaration on Agriculture. The following demands were put forward in the Draft Declaration: duty-free market access for all agricultural products of LDCs in the developed country markets and in the advanced developing countries; rapid phase out of all forms of export subsidies; adequate disciplines to be put on different types of domestic support provided under various boxes, including the Green Box; phasing out of all types of subsidies given to the cotton growers in the developed countries; ensuring WTO compliance and transparent evaluation criteria for NTBs; adequate technical and financial assistance to the LDCs to improve agricultural productivity and infrastructure, and for development of facilities and systems for compliance with SPS and various certification requirements.

During the floor discussion, discussants called upon the LDC governments to take advantage of national capacity, comprising of public, private, NGO and civil society expertise, rather than relying only on the government capacity.

### Agriculture

The working session on Agriculture was co-chaired by Mr Mahfuz Ullah, Secretary General of Centre for Sustainable Development, Bangladesh and Mr Demba Moussa Dembele, Director of African Forum on Alternatives, Senegal. Five presentations were made in this session.

Mr Mahfuz Ullah informed the audience that effective market access for agricultural products originating in LDCs required reduction of domestic support in the developed countries. In this context, he also underscored the need for technical assistance and trade related capacity building support for LDCs as promised under the Doha Declaration.

Mr Ndiaye, Regional Trade Campaign Officer of Oxfam GB, Senegal, presented a paper on *West Africa's Road Map Towards Hong Kong 2005*. He called for immediate elimination of cotton subsidies provided in the developed countries and maintained that such subsidies violated WTO rules. He also opined that flexible tariff regime is required for West African countries to promote their food security and develop their agricultural sector.

In his presentation, Mr Buba Khan, Food Rights Campaign Coordinator of ActionAid International, Gambia, observed that the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is biased towards the right to export rather than food as a human right. He added that AoA does not guarantee improvements in peoples' livelihoods and it benefits the privileged minority that have access to resources, infrastructure, credit and foreign markets.

He argued that without an integration of concrete development ingredients in the current trade talks, including recognition of past reforms undertaken by poor developing countries and, a practical commitment to eliminate trade distorting subsidies by a given end date, poor developing countries must not agree to undertake any further commitments whether in Agriculture, NAMA or Services.

Mr Cheikh Tidiane Dieye, Trade Programme Officer of Enda Tiers Monde, Senegal, made a presentation on *Trade Policy and Agricultural Development in Senegal: Do the SPs and SSM work?* Regarding Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), he suggested simplification of current protection mechanisms to adapt them to developing countries' needs.



Participants at the Plenary Session

### Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA)

Mr Annisul Huq, President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Ms Janet Mbene, Programme Specialist, Joint Oxfam Livelihoods Initiatives for Tanzania were the Co-Chairs at the session on NAMA.

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Research Director, CPD and Ms Moushumi Mahapatra, Coordinator, ActionAid, Bangladesh presented the keynote papers at the working session. Mr Chien Yen Goh, Representative, Third World Network, Switzerland, also spoke on the occasion.

While presenting the keynote paper on *NAMA Negotiations in the WTO and Preference Erosion: Concerns from LDC Perspective*, Professor Rahman mentioned that LDCs are likely to suffer substantive tariff preference erosion as a consequence of NAMA negotiations since any tariff reduction by the developed countries will result in a fall in the preferential margins currently enjoyed by the LDCs under the various GSP schemes operated by the developed countries. He further noted that NAMA negotiations and consequent preference erosion will also reduce the magnitude of any positive impact resulting from a possible global zero-tariff market access initiative in the WTO favouring the LDCs. In view of this, Professor Rahman said that the Hong Kong Ministerial should seriously consider the proposal that the developed countries (and also middle-and high-income developing countries) accord zero-tariff market access for all LDC products to offset the negative consequences of current NAMA negotiations. Professor Rahman stated that the manner in which the issue of preference erosion is treated will be a litmus test as to whether the so-called Doha Development Round will actually turn out to be a development round at all.

In her presentation, Ms Mahapatra urged that the sectoral should be dropped from NAMA negotiations. She expressed her apprehension by noting that there is an attempt in the current negotiations to try to link agriculture with NAMA, and that the developed countries are giving the impression that they will commit to give something in agriculture only if their offensive demands on NAMA are met. Ms Mahapatra also highlighted the domestic homework that the LDCs will need to do if they are to make trade work towards poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor.



Mr Chien Yen Goh presents a paper on NAMA. Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Ms Janet Mbene, Mr Annisul Huq and Ms Moushumi Mahapatra are also in the picture.

In the Draft Declaration, presented by Mr Gideon T Mwenifumbo, Deputy Director, National Association of Business Women, Malawi, the Forum demanded binding commitment for duty-free market access in developed and advanced developing countries, flexible rules of origin, removal of non-tariff barriers, flexibility in binding of unbound tariff lines, trade remedy measures, strengthening of the IF initiative, and acceptance of an LDC-friendly definition of environmental goods.

### Special and Differential Treatment, Implementation Issues

The second working session of the first day of the International Civil Society Forum discussed about the issue of Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) and Implementation Issues in the WTO. The session was jointly chaired by Dr Qazi Faruque Ahmed, President, Proshika, Bangladesh and Ms Bernice Lee, Policy Analysis and Strategy Advisor, ICTSD, Geneva, Switzerland.

Four keynote presentations were made by distinguished speakers who included Mr Kazi Mahmudur Rahman, Senior Research Associate, CPD, Dr Samar Verma, Policy Advisor of Oxfam GB, India, Mr Manzur Ahmed, Advisor, FBCCI, Bangladesh and Mr Onesmus Mugenyi, Research Fellow and Programme Manager, ACODE, Uganda. The speakers emphasised on resolving all agreement-specific proposals, and effective and meaningful implementation of technical assistance in this respect. They also urged to make S&DT measures operational by making these mandatory and legally binding within the WTO. A number of suggestions including the establishment of monitoring mechanism for the S&D provisions and the need to develop an effective absorption/utilisation capacity of technical assistance were put forward during the course of the open floor discussion.



Dr Qazi Faruque Ahmed facilitates the session on S&DT. Also in the picture are (from left) Mr Onesmus Mugenyi, Mr Navin Dahal, Kazi Mahmudur Rahman, Ms Bernice Lee, Dr Samar Verma and Mr Manzur Ahmed.

Mr Navin Dahal, Executive Director, SAWTEE, Nepal, read out the Draft Declaration on S&DT. Six core demands were raised in this context including recognition of LDCs needs in S&D related areas, full implementation of S&DT provisions, addressing the concerns of newly acceded members, binding commitment and mandatory provisions, technical assistance that catered to felt needs of LDCs, and agreement-specific versus cross-cutting proposals.

### TRIPS

The session on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) was jointly chaired by Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, President, Consumers Association of Bangladesh and Ms Emma Harrison, Global Trade Campaign Manager, Consumers International, United Kingdom. The session was initiated with a presentation by Dr Sachin Chaturvedi's *Intellectual Property and Biodiversity: Concerns of LDCs and Developing Countries*. Dr Chaturvedi pointed out the emerging trends in Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). He highlighted some of the key issues that were discussed in the context of CBD and WIPO, and the current status of play both in case of CBD and TRIPS. While making his presentation, Dr Chaturvedi cited examples of TRIPS protections in various FTAs. He also addressed issues related to biodiversity and patents.

Dr Chaturvedi concluded his presentation with a number of policy suggestions which, he thought, should be reflected in the Demands. Mr Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman, Programme Coordinator, The Network for Consumers Protection, Pakistan, in his paper on *TRIPS and Consumer Priorities for the Sixth WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong* focused on the impact of poor treatment of diseases, mainly in Africa, and importance of access to knowledge by the poor. He maintained that there is an apprehension that TRIPS has to be designed in a manner so that it is development tailored and poor friendly.

During the open floor discussion, a number of suggestions came forward as regards access to knowledge. The discussants argued that TRIPS, in its present form, often acts as an obstacle to sharing knowledge. The *Forum* also suggested for relaxation of rules in case of national emergency. The participants made a number of critical observations as regards patents of life-forms and demanded clear definition of life-forms. Civil society organisations were urged to play a more proactive role in updating the common people regarding the possible consequences of TRIPS.



Mr Hafiz Aziz-ur Rehman makes a note at the session on TRIPS while Ms Emma Harrison, Dr Sachin Chaturvedi and Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury pay attention.

Dr Fahmida Khatun, Senior Research Fellow of CPD, presented the demands of the *Forum*. The major demands as regards the TRIPS were permanent solution to the problem faced by the LDCs having no or inadequate capacity for manufacturing drugs, extension of transition period under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement, evidence of fair and equitable benefit sharing, inclusion of prior consent as a condition for patentability, and additional protection to products that are economically important for the LDCs.

### General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

The session on GATS was jointly chaired by Mr Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, Executive Director, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and Mr Kibre Moges, Head, Trade and Industry Division, Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute.

Distinguished speakers who presented papers during the session were Ms Emma

Harrison, Global Trade Campaign Manager, Consumers International, UK; Ms Sabrina Varma, Team Leader, Trade in Services, South Centre, Geneva; Mr Ziaul Hoque Mukta, Director, Karmojibi Nari; Mr Swarnim Wagle, Programme Specialist, UNDP Asia Pacific Trade Initiative, Regional Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka; Mr Amanur Rahman, Associate Coordinator, ActionAid Bangladesh; and Mr Shamsuddoha from Shushashoner Jonno Procharavijan. While presenting their views on the current state of negotiations on GATS under the WTO, all the speakers expressed their concerns on the lack of any tangible movement as regards demands of the LDCs in GATS Mode-4, particularly in the area of movement of less skilled persons.

Following the presentations and deliberations, the demands of the Forum articulated in the Draft Declaration were read out by Dr Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net, Bangladesh. The demands were related to recognition of



Mr Swarnim Wagle makes his presentation at the session on GATS. Also in the picture are (from right) Dr Ananya Raihan, Mr Amanur Rahman, Mr Kibre Moges, Mr Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, and Mr Shamsuddoha.



Mr Mir Nasir Hossain presides over the session on WTO Rules while Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Mr Sayed Alamgir Farrouk Chowdhury, Dr Chandrakant Patel and Mr Prabhask Ranjan pay attention.

progress in addressing LDCs' concerns, adoption of measures to facilitate Temporary Movement of Natural Persons (TMNP), emergency safeguard measures, autonomous liberalisation, rule making negotiations, negotiations schedule, and improvement of language in the LDC modalities.

#### WTO Rules

The session on WTO Rules was jointly chaired by Mr Mir Nasir Hossain, President of FBCCI, Bangladesh and Dr Chandrakant Patel, representative of SEATINI. In his introductory statement Mr Hossain stated that in view of the narrow export base, low export capacity and lack of export diversification, LDCs were in need of adequate support in the area of application of anti-dumping duties, subsidies and countervailing measures. If LDCs are to maintain sustainable fisheries, they would require more assistance and subsidies.

Two papers were presented in this session by Mr Sayed Alamgir Farrouk Chowdhury, Advisor, BEI and Former Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh and by Mr Prabhask Ranjan, Research Officer, Centre for Trade and Development (Centad), India. In his paper Mr Chowdhury pointed out that not much was said about WTO Rules in the July Package. In the ongoing negotiations in the WTO, most of the proposals submitted related to anti-dumping, subsidies and countervailing measures, which imply their importance in respect of overall rules. Referring to the issue of implementation, Mr Chowdhury mentioned that apart from developed countries, advanced developing countries should seriously consider the adverse impact of imposing anti-dumping duties on LDC products before taking any such measures against LDCs. In his paper Mr Ranjan mentioned that countries were

extensively using anti-dumping duties as a protectionist tool. Although anti-dumping duties should be temporary in nature, it has been found that developing and developed countries applied these for political and economic reasons.

During the discussion a number of participants reiterated their concern as regards safeguard measures and anti-dumping actions against LDCs. It was also demanded that in the RTAs, involving both developed countries and LDCs, S&D provisions for LDCs should be included as built-in measures.

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Fellow of CPD, read out the demands on WTO Rules from the Draft Declaration. Major demands of the *Forum* with respect to WTO rules were: moratorium on safeguard measures and anti-dumping actions against LDCs, subsidies for upgradation of technology

and diversification of industrial base, subsidies for import-substituting activities, and greater assistance towards sustainable fisheries. A number of suggestions and clarifications were put forward during the course of discussion and these were incorporated in the final declaration.

#### Trade Facilitation

The working session on Trade Facilitation was jointly chaired by Mr Kutubuddin Ahmed, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Bangladesh and Mr Ahmed Naseem, Former Director General of Foreign Investment, Ministry of Trade and Industries, Maldives.

Three presentations were made at this session. Mr Syed Saifuddin Hossain, Research Associate, CPD made the first one on WTO Negotiations on Trade Facilitation: Where Do the LDCs Stand? Dr Mostafa Abid Khan, Deputy Chief of Bangladesh Tariff Commission, made a presentation titled WTO Negotiations on Trade Facilitation: Issues and Concerns. The third and final presentation was made by Mr Farooq Ahmed, Secretary, MCCI. In their presentations, the three speakers focused on the various proposals in the area of trade facilitation which were being discussed in the course of current negotiations. They highlighted the concerns of Bangladesh and LDCs in this regard. They pointed out that although LDCs are not required to undertake any obligations as regards trade facilitation, they will need capacity building support in various areas if they are to take advantage of the opportunities in the global market.



Session on Trade Facilitation: (from left to right) Ms Yeshy Chen Chen Lham, Mr Syed Saifuddin Hossain, Mr Ahmed Naseem, Mr Kutubuddin Ahmed, Dr Mostafa Abid Khan and Mr Farooq Ahmed.



Former Commerce Secretary Mr Suhel Ahmed Choudhury makes his note at the session on TRCB while Ms Christabel Phiri, Dr Manuel F Montes, Mr Nathan Irumba and Ms Indah Suksmaningsih look on.

Ms Yeshy Chen Chen Lham, Trade Officer, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, read out the Draft Declaration on Trade Facilitation. The major demands that were put forward related to identification of needs and priorities, operationalisation of S&D provisions, technical assistance and capacity building support, flexibility in implementing commitments, simplification of documentation requirements, assessment of cost implications prior to negotiations, assessment of proposals related to legal obligations, facilitation of improved cooperation among landlocked countries, and special attention to the needs of the Small Island Developing States (SIDs).

This was followed by open floor discussion which generated a number of suggestions and recommendations as regards both the issues of LDC governments' position in view of the upcoming Hong Kong Ministerial and amendments to the draft declaration.

#### Trade Related Capacity Building (TRCB), Trade, Finance and Debt

The session on Trade Related Capacity Building was jointly chaired by Mr Suhel Ahmed Choudhury, Former Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh and Mr Nathan Irumba, Advisor, SEATINI, Uganda.

The first presentation was made by Dr Manuel F Montes, Regional Programme

Coordinator, UNDP Asia Pacific Trade Initiative, Regional Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He focused on the financing of various TRCB initiatives in support of the LDCs. He put particular emphasis on the sources of funding required for TRCB projects and the nature of requirements by the LDCs in this regard.

The second presenter was Ms Indah Suksmaningsih, Chairperson, Board of Directors, Indonesian Consumers Organisation. Suksmaningsih presented the perspectives of common consumers and underscored their concerns and expectations in the context of Trade, Development and Aid.

Ms Christabel Phiri, Trade Programme Officer, Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia, read out the four-point draft declaration on Aid, Trade and Development. These were: support for trade capacity building, policy coherence, support for MDG-8 (making trade, aid and debt relief work for poverty alleviation), and additional allocation of resources.

The presentations were then followed by open floor discussion. A number of suggestions and clarifications emanating from the floor discussion were taken into record for incorporation in the process of finalisation of the *Forum* declaration.

#### Co-organisers

- ▮ ActionAid International
- ▮ Consumers International
- ▮ ENDA Tiers Monde
- ▮ EU-LDC Network
- ▮ International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD)
- ▮ Oxfam International
- ▮ South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE)
- ▮ Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI)

#### National Advisory Committee (NAC)

**Convenor:** Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

**Members:**

1. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)
2. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)
3. Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)
4. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
5. Nijera Kori
6. International Chamber of Commerce - Bangladesh (ICC-B)
7. Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI)
8. Nari Uddug Kendra
9. ActionAid - Bangladesh
10. Kormajibi Nari
11. Oxfam GB, Bangladesh
12. Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)
13. Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB)
14. Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI)
15. Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
16. Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD)
17. Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)
18. Proshika
19. Women Entrepreneurs Association of Bangladesh (WEAB)
20. Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry
21. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI)
22. Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)
23. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)
24. Integrated Community and Industrial Development in Bangladesh (INCIDIN Bangladesh)
25. SUPRO ( Shushashoner Jonno Procharavijan )

## Government and Civil Societies are Mutually Strengthening

Speakers emphasised at the Closing Session



Mr Reaz Rahman, Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs addresses the closing session of the Forum

The closing session of the three-day International Civil Society Forum took place in the Ball Room of Hotel Sheraton, Dhaka on 05 October 2005. Mr Reaz Rahman, Hon'ble Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh (GoB) attended the session as the Chief Guest; Mr Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, Commerce Secretary, GoB was the Special Guest. The session was co-chaired by Mr Mahbubur Rahman, Chairman of the NAC and President of ICC-B, and Ms Khushi Kabir, co-chairperson of the NAC and Coordinator of Nijera Kori.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of CPD, read out the Declaration which was finalised by the Drafting Committee. Acknowledging the multidimensional interests of different stakeholders, Dr Bhattacharya reiterated the importance of developing a common position of the Forum on various issues. Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Chair of the Drafting Committee, and Research Director, CPD explained how the Draft Declaration was prepared and how the Declaration received its final shape. Elaborating on the preparation of the Forum Declaration, Dr Bhattacharya stated that this was a collaborative process in the truest sense of the term. He thanked all those who came up with suggestions both in the course of deliberations of the various sessions and also gave their views through website postings. He also thanked the participants for the large number of proposals put in the Suggestion Box. He informed the audience that the Drafting Committee has taken account of the suggestions and incorporated those to the extent possible. He invited comments from the floor on the Draft Declaration presented at the closing session and

informed the audience that these will be considered by the Drafting Committee whilst giving shape to the Final Dhaka Civil Society Declaration.

In the process of adoption, a good number of suggestions were proposed from the floor. Out of which 24 were accepted to be incorporated in the final version of the Declaration. Finally, with enormous applause and support from the audience, the *Dhaka Declaration* was adopted.

Both the Chief Guest and the Special Guest spoke highly of the CPD initiative and maintained that civil society support was crucial in strengthening the hands of LDC governments in the context of the WTO negotiations. In their speeches, both Mr Reaz Rahman and Mr Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi assured the *Forum* that the government of Bangladesh would consider all the suggestions in the Dhaka

Declaration with due importance and Forum's proposals will inform Bangladesh's stance in the WTO Ministerial on various issues. The closing session was also addressed by representatives from the eight co-organisers who spoke very highly of the achievements of the Forum and thanked all the local and international participants for making the event a success. They particularly appreciated CPD's organisational effort and intellectual inputs in making the *Forum* such a resounding success.

While delivering his closing remarks at the end of the session, Dr Bhattacharya called upon the international civil society to think about organising such Forums as a regular event which would take place prior to all WTO Ministerial Meetings to periodically review the positions of the LDCs in the WTO. He also volunteered that CPD will be happy to collaborate with any other institutions taking such initiatives.

The co-chair in her remarks noted that the various proposals in the *Forum* Declaration will have to be followed up by the respective government of the LDCs. In his closing remarks, the Chair of the NAC Mr Mahbubur Rahman profusely thanked all overseas and national participants for their active participation. He noted in this regard the pivotal role of the CPD in organising the *Forum* and hoped that the CPD, with support from the collaborating institutions, will continue to work in future to promote and pursue LDC interests in the context of the WTO negotiations.

As recognition of their contribution to the successful holding of the Forum, all the co-organisers, guests, and overseas and national participants were presented with special crests and commemorative cups.

### Follow-up Activities

#### October 2005

- Finalisation of the Forum Declaration in view of the suggestions at the Concluding Session
- Posting of the Dhaka Declaration (Final Version) on the CPD website ([www.cpd-bangladesh.org](http://www.cpd-bangladesh.org))

#### November 2005

- Sending of letters to LDC Trade Ministers

#### December 2005

- Participating in the Hong Kong Ministerial during 13-18 December 2005
- Organisation of a symposium as a side-event during the Hong Kong Ministerial
- Press briefing on Post-Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting
- Advocacy and dissemination

## Moments from the Dhaka LDC Forum 2005



Meeting of the Drafting Committee



Ms Sharifa Khanam from the Ministry of Commerce comments on the Draft Declaration



A section of the Forum participants



NAC Chair presents special crest to Ambassador Love Mtesa



ICTSD Executive Director Mr Ricardo Melendez-Ortiz (in the centre) in conversation with Ms Bernice Lee and Mr Chien Yen Goh



Three of the African delegates exchange views with each other



Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya responds to queries from the media



The CPD Family

