

Press Release, Dhaka, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2013



Bureaucrat-led Delegation achieved little in WTO Bali Ministerial

## Visionary Political Leadership is a must to achieve in WTO Trade Multilateralism

Dhaka, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2013. Today twelve right based civil society organizations organized a press conference titled “Hype and Hypocrisy in WTO: Was Bangladesh Ready?” at the National Press Club to provide feedback on the WTO 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial held in Bali, Indonesia during last 3 to 6<sup>th</sup> December. Speakers urged for active political leaders to lead in the WTO trade talk and develop their position for post-Bali issue as the Bangladesh delegation led by the bureaucrats in Bali achieved very little.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of EquityBD moderated the press conference while Barkat Ullah Maruf of EquityBD read out the position paper. Introductory speech was given by Mustafa Kamal Akanda of EquityBD. Other speakers were Badrul Alam and Zaid Iqbal Khan of Bangladesh Krishok Federation and Jibonananda Jayanta of SOAF.

On behalf of the group, while reading out the written statement, Barkat Ullah Maruf mentioned that, Bangladesh should have supported the issue of food security to include in the AoA (Agreement on Agriculture) raised by India. The role of Bangladesh delegation was, therefore, criticized by other participants in this regard.

He also mentioned, there were misconceptions on achievement of LDC Package, in fact, which is still vague without any legal bindings. Bangladesh and other LDC has to work it out in next 12 months in the WTO Trade Negotiation Committee. In respect of Trade Facilitation agreement, Bangladesh needs to invest money to develop customs and other import infrastructures to basically facilitate importing the commodities of multinational companies. But a county like Bangladesh has its own priority to investment in the basic services related to poverty alleviation.

The group mentioned in their written position paper that the LDC package is a weaker package as it didn't included mode 4 of DDA (Doha Development Agenda) i.e. movement of natural person. The group strongly mentioned that the presence of the Minister in the WTO delegation could have given different image and it could be helpful for important diplomatic negotiations by taking the opportunity was created by this WTO conference.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury the moderator of the press conference, mentioned that WTO i.e. trade multilateralism will get importance in future. Political leadership of the country must take interest and lead in this process, as nowadays, somehow the policy decision is being taken in such international level. He also mentioned that there will be post Bali issues, i.e., government procurements, foreign investments etc. and these are very important. Bangladesh should be pioneer in raising climate related issues like, subsidies in clean energy and also raise demand to reduce subsidies in fossil fuel which is the major cause of carbon emissions.

Badrul Alam of Bangladesh Krihsok Federation said that WTO must be out of Agriculture as it is related to right to food. Jibonananda Jayanta said that, political leadership must take interest on futuristic issues and national institutions should go for research in this regard.

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