



**General Council Meeting: 31 July 2002**  
**Agenda item 14: Paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 of the Doha Implementation**  
**Decisions**

**Statement by Bangladesh**

Mr. Chairman,

We fully associate ourselves with the statement of Ambassador Stuart Harbinson of Hong Kong China. We would also like to record our appreciation for the manner in which Ambassador Supermaniam has conducted the negotiations in the CTG.

As a member of Least Developed Country group, Bangladesh deeply appreciates the goodwill that exists in the membership of the WTO for issues that concern us. Embedded in the WTO agreements are special provisions designed to enable us to develop more rapidly. Our partners, both developed and developing recognize that we have problems that demand special attention and treatment till we are able to engage in this phase of globalization as equal partners

We were gratified when, in their Declaration in Doha, Ministers articulated that “we shall continue to make positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, and especially the least-developed among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development.” This was clearly a reaffirmation of the will of the international community that has also been articulated earlier, within the context of the WTO.

Mr. Chairman, the Doha Declaration reflected a compromise. Each country accepted the decisions in a spirit of cooperation and accommodation. Members may recall that we have asked for much more in the area of textiles, but accepted whatever emerged out of the process of negotiations. Perhaps we were not unjustified in hoping that what was agreed upon would be taken seriously with a desire for faithfully implementation, in letter and spirit.

Consequently we have been extremely hopeful of a positive outcome from the mandate given by ministers in regard to the two outstanding proposals relating to textiles and clothing. Members are aware of the key role that export-led growth now plays in our economies. And, textiles comprise the thrust sector for our growth, for exports, and also for the relative ease with which it is able to provide employment. Many countries that are now developed have relied on the textile industry in the early stages of development, and may appreciate our concerns.

Indeed, we have been eagerly anticipating a successful result, especially as our quota entitlements for some of our major export items to the largest single import market are already close to being fully utilized. For example, as of last week, i.e., barely 7 months into the quota year, 75% of our quota for this year for cotton knit shirts has already been filled. Likewise, 76% of our quota for cotton and MMF skirts, 95% for cotton trousers, and 70% for MMF trousers have also been already consumed. Although not directly related to the two tirets, we must point

out that our products face the highest tariff barriers, as compared to other products from developed countries. The point we wish to stress is that these restrictions are a severe barrier to our export possibilities. This comes at a time when, for the first time in two decades, Bangladesh finds a drop in our total export earnings in the year 2001 – 2002 fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman,

We are indeed very disappointed that the CTG has not come to any conclusion with respect to the examination of the two proposals for making recommendations for action to this Council, in keeping with the mandate from the Ministers.

I wish to recall that the Ministerial decision in favour of least-developed countries, adopted at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, provided that various agreements shall be applied in a flexible and supportive manner for the least-developed countries. To this effect, sympathetic consideration shall be given to specific and motivated concerns raised by least-developed countries in the appropriate Councils in the WTO.

To our regret, two major restraining countries did not give any effect or consideration to our specific concerns or to the implementation of the relevant provision of the ATC in favour of least-developed countries.

We have therefore repeatedly raised our concern with respect to this situation, including during the entire course of the consideration of implementation-related issues prior to Doha Ministerial, the major review of ATC implementation, and in connection with the examination of the two proposals by the CTG.

Mr. Chairman, the proposals in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 of Doha Ministerial decision were designed to enhance market access opportunities for developing countries. The adoption of paragraph 4.4, in particular, could alleviate the market access constraints on our exports and be a concrete manifestation of the goodwill to which I referred earlier.

In the examination of the two proposals, we were not convinced of the reasons advanced by the restraining Members against their adoption. Contrary to subverting or disrupting the balance of the Agreement, i.e., the ATC, we believe their adoption is necessary to redress the imbalance that has been created due to the manner in which the restraining Members have been implementing the ATC. In this regard, I need not repeat the points which have repeatedly been made by many exporting countries as well as our own delegation.

Let me at this stage, recognize and express our appreciation to those countries providing us free access to their markets. Last year, the EU had given us considerable access to their markets, through the EBA initiative. Norway has announced significant market access opportunities for the LDCs, while Canada has announced its desire to eliminate all quota restrictions on exports from our group from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003. We would have hoped a similar dispensation from

the other major developed country that maintains quota restrictions on our exports.

Mr. Chairman,

In the face of the situation we find ourselves in, due to the inability of the CTG to come up with a recommendation, we believe that it is now for the General Council to step in and deal with the mandate given by Ministers in Doha. We wish to reiterate that, in our view, this issue is an important element of the Doha Work Programme and our Membership must continue its efforts to find a solution to it for the remaining years of the ATC.

I thank you.