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PRESS RELEASE

04 January 2013

“Reasonable dealing for Bangladesh in the US-GSP”- Congressman Levin expresses hope at a meeting with Ambassador Akramul Qader

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Mr. Akramul Qader today met with Congressman Sander Martin Levin, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, to discuss outstanding issues in Bangladesh-US trade. At the meeting Ambassador Qader stressed that though readymade garments (RMG), Bangladesh's principal export item in the USA, is not covered under the US-GSP (Generalized System of Preferences), retention of this benefit is absolutely critical for Bangladesh's future trade promotion.

While handing over a paper on “Bangladesh in the US-GSP” he recently disseminated to different US Congressmen Ambassador Qader referred to the recent fire at Tazreen Fashions, a Bangladeshi garment in Ashulia, that unfortunately killed 112 workers and also briefed the Congressman on the series of government and industry level initiatives to compensate the victims. He noted that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed over Taka six lac to each family of the lost workers and garments manufacturing association (BGMEA) has taken the full responsibility of their families for ten years from the date of fire. Ambassador Qader pointed out that Bangladesh's exclusion from the US-GSP on the ground of labour compliance would create a serious dislocation in garments business costing the jobs of millions of poor women. Ambassador Qader sought support of the Congressman's good offices to retain Bangladesh's GSP rights.

Congressman Levin told the Bangladesh envoy that he expects the USTR to deal the Bangladesh case reasonably. He also expected that Bangladesh would use the tragic fire incident as an opportunity to overhaul factory safety measures and shall fairly investigate into the killing of labour organizer Aminul Islam. He noted that such negative developments can spread a wrong message to the global buyer's communities and campaign groups. The Congressman also suggested that Bangladesh can study good compliance practices in various countries and consult with particularly those who improved factory conditions.

Ambassador Akramul Qader congratulated the Congressman on his swearing-in the previous night. Deputy Chief of Mission Mr. Muhammad A. Muhith accompanied the ambassador at the meeting.

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