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Press Release

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Bangladesh seeks equal treatment in trade from the USA

Bangladesh, on behalf of all Least Developed Countries, sought equal treatment of duty free quota free (DFQF) access to the US market as Bangladesh Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin met Republican Senator Cory Gardner in Washington D.C. Thursday.

Senator Cory Gardener (Colorado) is a member on the Foreign Relations Committee and Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee of the U.S. Senate.

This was Ambassador Ziauddin's third meeting with the US senators since President Donald Trump took office on January 20.

Earlier, President Trump nominated billionaire Wilbur Ross as the new Secretary of Commerce and Robert Lighthizer as the new US Trade Representative to deal with international trade.

Currently, only 34 LDCs enjoys DFQF market access under AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act) enacted by the US Government in 2000. The purpose is to assist the economies of sub-Saharan Africa and to improve economic relations between the United States and the region. The AGOA was extended in June 2015 by a further 10 years to 2025.

Ambassador Ziauddin informed the Colorado Senator that out of the 14 other LDCs which are left out of this DFQF market arrangement by the USA, nine are Asian countries including Bangladesh, four Oceanic countries and Haiti. Therefore, he said these countries feel discriminated and thus seek equal treatment from the USA on the basis of justice and fair play.

The European Union provides DFQF access to all the LDCs on an arrangement called 'Everything But Arms' (EBA).

The Ambassador also briefed the Senator on various development activities of the Bangladesh Government including Counter Terrorism cooperation, Women Empowerment and relations with the neighboring countries. The Ambassador highlighted that more than four million garment workers of Bangladesh are women who are contributing to the economy as well as to the society by alleviating poverty and containing the menace of terrorism. Therefore, he pointed out that if the Bangladesh economy could grow further with the help of US market access, then there would be more women empowerment and societal change by which Bangladesh could control and ultimately eliminate the roots of terrorism and violent extremism by its own resources.

Senator Gardner thanked the Ambassador for the briefing and said he would look into the matter of the DFQF access.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Toufique Hasan, Minister (Political) of the Embassy and Mr. Igor Khrestin, National Security Advisor and SFRC Asia Subcommittee Staff Director of the Senator's office.

