

## MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DHAKA

### PRESS RELEASE

Dhaka, 28 June 2013: The Government of Bangladesh has come to know about the unfortunate development of GSP suspension in the USA. Indeed a section of people, inside both Bangladesh and the USA, had long been campaigning to this effect.

While Bangladesh is absolutely respectful of a trading partner's choice of decisions, it expresses its deep concern that this harsh measure may bring in fresh obstacles in an otherwise flourishing bilateral trade. Bangladesh believes that its partnership with the USA is founded on certain core values such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, women empowerment, freedom of expression and social justice.

It enjoys an extensive partnership with the USA in multiple areas such as democratic institutions building, empowering grass roots people, protecting economically and socially vulnerable groups, countering terrorism, contribution to global peace, and most importantly, a lasting business-to-business connectivity. It cannot be more shocking for the factory workers of Bangladesh that the decision to suspend GSP comes at a time when the Government of Bangladesh has taken concrete and visible measures to improve factory safety and protect workers' rights. Amendments in 2006 labour act, ILO-led government-employer-worker tripartite agreement to implement time-bound decisions, and formation of a ministerial committee to ensure compliance in garments factories should speak for the Bangladesh government's seriousness in the matter. Bangladesh hopes that the US administration would soon bring back Bangladesh's GSP status, a benefit a least developed country is supposed to receive in the developed countries as per the provisions of the World Trade Organization. Meanwhile, Bangladesh would remain engaged with all its trading partners to share ideas and collectively address factory safety issues.

Bangladesh hopes that despite this setback the buyers would continue their business with their long trusted partners and allow the US-Bangladesh trade to grow further. The resilient nature of the Bangladeshi people - as manifested in 1971 when they earned freedom in the face of ordeals at home and abroad - must help them improve the quality of life and earn respect as an enterprising nation.

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