BUILD/12/2020/338 Date: January 1, 2021

Attn: News Editor/ Chief Reporter/ Assignment Editor /Business Page-in-Charge:

**Equal treatment of the non-RMG export industries urged at T&I Working Committee Meeting of BUILD**

After graduation of Bangladesh a number of DFQF(Duty-Free Quota-Free) facilities will be eroded, the country will need to proceed for bilateral FTA with potential partner countries for which we need to have  deeper studies, research and understanding  for offsetting revenue loss in order to make the country competitive in export, said Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin Secretary, Ministry of Commerce.

While co-chairing the 8th meeting of Trade & Investment (T&I) Working Committee of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) on December 31, 2020 at the Ministry of Commerce, Dr. Md. Jafar Uddin said that export diversification is one of the priorities of our government for which our Government is working actively.

Having welcomed the representatives from different public and private sector entities, the Secretary of Ministry of Commerce assured for implementation of the proposed reform of BUILD for export diversification and supportive policies for Non-RMG sectors.

He also requested BUILD to send all proposals coming out of the Trade and Investment Working Committee meeting and they will be actively considered but we need the recommendations with action matrix so that we can coordinate with different ministries accordingly to see a better implementation of our reforms.

Barrister Nihad Kabir, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) who is the Co-chair of the Trade and Investment Working Committee from the private sector said that the government should come forward to provide equal fiscal monetary assistance to all the potentials export oriented sectors as like the RMG.

Having appreciated BUILD for presenting data driven and research-based policy advocacy papers on such two important issues, she underscored the need for private private dialogue before formulating policies that matter most to private sector development .

To resolve the constraints to avail trade licenses for e-commerce business, Ministry of Commerce may consult with LGRD to ensure simplified policies, said she.

She stressed on the need to increase the frequency of organizing the meeting of Trade & Investment Working Committee. She emphasized on the implementations of the recommendations through regular meeting.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD presented two key presentations in the meeting such as Export Diversification Need- Policy Discrimination of Bonded Ware House Facilities for Non-RMG Sector and WTO SPS Agreement and Introducing e-Phytosanitary Certification for Agro & Agro Processing Sector in Bangladesh.

She informed that out of proposed 13 reforms proposals in the last committee meeting, seven were approved. The major implemented reforms include digital e-commerce cell in the MOC, 100% FDI in the e-Commerce sector, training of entrepreneurs for e-banijjo, and individual ETP by the Ministry of Industries.

In the presentation, she referred some policy differences for non-RMG sectors, specifically in availing the benefits of Bonded Ware House(BWH) facilities in respect of new entitlement, UD, coefficient, automatic renewal of BWH, audit, sub-contracting, sample import etc. and suggested simplification of policies that benefit all sectors such as leather and leather goods, plastic, electrical and electronic goods and agro-processing sector.

It was found in a study of IFC that equal access on Non-RMG sector to only BWH policy could have fetched US$4.2-US$8.4 billion additional export. In the second policy paper highlighting the requirement of SPS measures and the concerned agreement of WTO and policy options included in the Export policy of 2018-2021 for e-Phytosanitary(e-PC) certification, she recommended a fully automated e-PC, online payment, registration of the applicant in such a way so that repeated requirement of submitting the same documents are not required, establishment of a national plant quarantine authority etc.

Md. Hafizur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Export Wing, MOC conducted the discussion session and said that export sectors apart from RMG should get the equal treatment in case of export. COVID-19 has made us to changes in policies related to export, he said.

While responding to the proposal of difference of policies in providing Utilization Declaration( UD) by RMG sector while other concerned sectoral association cannot give UD for their members, Md. Zakir Hossain Additional Commissioner, Customs Bond Commissionerate informed that as the requirement of importing raw materials are very diverse, in case of other sector it becomes quite difficult for them to allow providing UD for other sectors.

Md. Abdur Rahim Khan, Joint Secretary, Export-2, Ministry of Commerce informed that Ministry of Commerce has already taken initiatives to establish Health Certification Agency in Bangladesh to facilitate the export of agro-processing products. He also informed that Export Promotion Bureau has a guideline in that respect to follow.

In reply to the implementation of e-banijjo platform, Md. Hafizur Rahman, Director General (Additional Secretary), WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce said that Ministry of Commerce initially planned to train 5000 e-commerce entrepreneurs through e-banijyo platform and they have already trained 2500 entrepreneurs. Presently, MOC has sent a new proposal to Ministry of Planning to upgrade the numbers to 12000.

Sincerely



Ferdaus Ara Begum∣ CEO ∣ BUILD ∣ Mob: 01714102994∣ Email: ceo@buildbd.org∣ www.buildbd.org