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## BANGLADESH

Statement by the Honourable Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, MP  
Minister for Commerce

On behalf of LDCs, we warmly welcome Cambodia and Nepal in our midst as full Members. Today is certainly an important day for Cambodia, for Nepal, for the LDCs, as well as for the WTO. No LDC has been able to join this body for the past eight years. We are delighted that two new Members from among the LDCs have joined today. Accession of LDCs is a priority for our membership, and this day marks a stepping-stone to accelerate the process for other LDCs. With Cambodia and Nepal among us, the participation of LDCs in the multilateral trading system will be further strengthened.

Many who follow accession negotiations are aware of its arduous, difficult and painful process. Cambodia and Nepal have embarked on a comprehensive programme of economic and trade policy reform to meet the requirements of accession. No doubt, this process of reforms has been very difficult for them. Yet they have shown their full commitment to the multilateral trading system. Cambodia and Nepal have earned their rightful place in this organization. We hope the WTO membership will appreciate the concessions made by the two countries, in their commitment to the cause of the multilateral trading regime.

LDCs are the weakest members in the world trading system. Since 1995, we have been urging the accession of LDCs on a simplified and fast-track basis. Last year, in December, the membership adopted the Guidelines to facilitate the accession of LDCs desiring membership. These guidelines reflected the commitment of the membership to the cause of the LDCs. Although much of the negotiations for the accession of Cambodia and Nepal may have taken place prior to implementation of the Guidelines, we hope that the LDCs waiting in the queue will be able to conclude their negotiations within the framework of the Guidelines.

Cancún will be remembered for ending the stagnation of the process of LDC accession. This is certainly a significant encouragement for our Group. We believe that, in the coming years, more LDCs will earn their rightful place in the multilateral trading system and become Members of the WTO. The world will be a better place with more members of our Group within the fold of the WTO membership.

We look forward to Cambodia and Nepal integrating into the multilateral trading system, and thereby hastening the process of growth and development in their respective countries.

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