BANGLADESH
Address by Mr. Asif Ibrahim, President, DCCI at the Meeting with UN organization and ITC
Date: June 30, 2011

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Hon’ble Director General of WTO Mr. Pascal Lamy
Respected Director General, WIPO Mr. Francis Gurry
Distinguished Executive Director, ITC, Ms Patricia Francis,
Senior Trade promotion Officer, ITC, Ms Lilia Naas;
Mr. Mahboob Anam, President, BASIS
Mr. Paul Tija, Consultant, ITV(UN, WTO)
Mr. Martin Labbe, NTF II Project Manager, ITC-UNTAD/WTO
Distinguished Guests and Participants;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon

On behalf of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) and on my own behalf I am delighted to be with you here to say a few words in this august gathering and at the same time the launching of Netherlands Trust Fund(NTF) II project.

I am very happy to be a part of the Project as one of the Trade Supporting Organization(TSI) jointly with BASIS in Bangladesh. We are also very happy to be associated with ITC and CBI with whom DCCI has been maintaining a long-standing relationship of implementing several business–supportive projects. I do like to acknowledge with great respect that all
these projects have helped us a lot to extend specialized services to the business community of Bangladesh at the same time added values to improve the quality of DCCI services to the business community of Bangladesh. Some of the activities of DCCI implemented jointly with ITC even has enhanced reputation of the Chamber and established a **Benchmark** to the history of Chamber activities in the country, one of them is the MLS-SCM Training Programme conducted by the DCCI Business Institute.

DCCI has been selected for the **Best Network Partner Institution** and Best Success Story Winner 2010 Award organized by ITC, UNCTAD/WTO, Geneva in Malaysia in its MLS-SCM Global Network Roundtable. It is an extreme honour for DCCI which would not have been possible at all without the close cooperation of ITC.

I do like to acknowledge gratefully the cooperation of CBI for supporting DCCI in training its officials and functionaries in several important areas which also helped up in bringing efficiencies of Secretarial jobs and specialized activities of its members.

DCCI is also maintaining a very close cooperation with WTO and WIPO by providing inputs and having close cooperation with two important Ministries in Bangladesh namely Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Industries. DCCI would also like to send their representatives to the seventh WTO Ministerial Meeting. The Chamber is very closely working with Ministry of Industries on IP issues.

**Distinguished Gathering**

I also believe that three year long NTFII project(2011-2013) will be able to contribute a lot to give a big boost to make better the IT and ITES sector of Bangladesh which is one of the important Thrust sectors through
which the government of Bangladesh wants to implement Vision 2021. You are perhaps aware that **Digital Bangladesh** is the main vehicle of implementing the targets of Vision 2021.

The vision of Bangladesh is to graduate into a middle income country by 2021, the Golden Jubilee Year of national independence. The government has set up some objectives of eliminating illiteracy, enhance contribution of industrial sector, reduction of unemployment and poverty level, increase energy consumption and raising per capita income at least to US$ 2000.

**Distinguished Guests**

Bangladesh during the last 40 years of independence continuously proved its resilience to grow and graduate to a new growth trajectory from LIC to MIC. Vision 2021 announced by the Government through its **Digital Bangladesh** as the key ingredients has invigorated its desire and willingness to achieve the high growth trajectory.

Bangladesh score card during the last forty years has been appreciated by several international communities and research organization. The country presently is the 44th largest economy (as per IMF 2010) and secured 43rd position as per CIA World Fact Book 2010 (PPP). These indicators has made Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)-the prime representative body of the private sector more excited and enthusiastic to work extra on its research done in the year 2010 on Bangladesh 2030: Strategy for Growth where DCCI predicted that Bangladesh can be one of the 30th largest economies in the world if a coordinated effort between public and private sector can be re-energized in a practical manner. DCCI identified some important growth Drivers to achieve their goals, one of the important Growth Drivers is ICT. In this respect I believe that the Project would be able to help us a lot to achieve our targets.

DCCI would like take an effort to **Brand Bangladesh** by strengthening IT and ITES towards Digital Bangladesh considering ICT as the **Cross Cutting** factor towards improving its all related social and economic
sectors. Bangladesh government is also very keen to embrace ICT for improving Governance and improve service delivery.

**Hon’ble Guests**

The main objective of the Project is to enhance exporters competitiveness in the IT and IT-Enabled Services (ITES) in Bangladesh in order to build **commercial relationships between Bangladeshi suppliers and EU buyers** with a view to increase export income from IT and ITES sector. We believe that the Launching of the Project will contribute to the achievement of strategic development of strong marketing, promotion and **branding for Bangladeshi** IT and ITES product in global market which will further support to achieve the **Vision of Digital Bangladesh** announced by the government.

Netherlands Trust Fund II (NFTII) project has been proposed by International Trade Centre (ITC) and Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI), the Netherlands. Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) have been implementing the Project as partner organizations.

You all aware that there is a number of development partners that are providing similar support to the IT and ITES sector like DANIDA, WB, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands etc. The NFT II project contributes most clearly to the Programme Delivery Responses identified in the ITC Strategic Plan 2010-2013 focused on building export capacity through integrated country solutions where ICT complements partner organizations to achieve holistic response leading to long-term sustainable impact.
Estimates for global IT and ITES sales volumes vary significantly, even among the main consultancies involved in servicing the market. India has emerged as the global leader among developing countries on this market. The Indian IT & ITES export revenues were estimated to grow over 16% in 2009, to reach a total of USD 47 billion. There is higher growth in European and Asian markets. **Global IT and ITES potential annual market is around $500 billion in which only $100 billion or 20% of the total are actually being addressed.** India has fundamental advantages - abundant talent and cost- are sustainable over the long term. Bangladesh has also potentials to exploit these huge market as it has a growing skilled manpower.

**Dear Participants**

The IT & ITES exports from Bangladesh have grown to USD 35.36 million 2009-10. Despite this growth, exports are still comparatively low. The IT and ITES exports of Pakistan exceed 1 billion USD; the exports of Vietnam are more than 600 million USD. Sri Lanka exports for more than 200 million USD.

Bangladesh is competing with other emerging countries such as China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam and Philippines. A significant growth in related export will require the development of a positive Bangladesh Brand. We must be known as a potential outsourcing destination in the World. In this respect NTF II will contribute a lot. I appreciate willingness and cooperation of ITC and CBI for their sincerity for supporting Bangladesh. I can assure that both DCCI and BASIS will engage their full strength to make the project a full success and contribute towards implementing Digital Bangladesh.
We have a strong ICT policy and PPP guidelines. Government is very sincere to work in parallel with the private sector to extend several on-line Business services with an eventual goal to reduce cost of business. As per World Bank **Cost of Doing Business 2011** Bangladesh’s overall ranking lifted by four places to 107th among 183 countries. Reforms in two major areas—starting business and registering property have helped the country to achieve such success. On an average now it takes 19 days to start a business, while it took 44 days a year ago. Human Development Index(HDI) of Bangladesh has been increased by 81% in the last 30 years. Now the country is considered as one of the countries that has made greatest progress.

In line with this I would like to take an opportunity that DCCI organized a Conference titled **Bangladesh 2030: Strategy for Growth**, in which DCCI identified seven strategic priorities to graduate the country to one of the 30th largest economies by 2030. Among these growth Drivers IT is one of the important sector. We understand and believe that IT and ITES can work for Bangladesh in both ways, it can emerge as one of potential Business Sector at the same time IT as a Business Tool can help bringing competitiveness of other sector.

I would also like to announce that DCCI is working to be a **E-Chamber** and would like to establish a Paperless office with an eventual goal to provide efficient and on-line services to its members. It would be appreciated much if the Chamber get any sort of suggestion from the Project. It is my privilege to inform that DCCI is the first ever Chamber of the country have got ISO Certification. DCCI is also seeking cooperation from WIPO to establish a **Technology Information Promotion Service Centre(TISC)** in the Chamber to provide different services to create awareness in the field of Intellectual Property(IP).
I would once again like to thank the distinguished Guests for your kind presence and bear with me with my speech. Your invitation for me to be with you in the programme has inspired us a lot for moving ahead with IT and ITES sector and we believe you all will remain with us throughout this Journey towards Digital Bangladesh.

I would not prolong my speech. Before concluding I would like to thank you for your willingness to give me an opportunity for sharing our views at the very good beginning of the Journey of NTFII project.

I on behalf of my colleague in the DCCI and the Secretariat are committed to extend our full strength for the all success of the project.

**I would once again extend my sincere thanks for extending your all cooperation for such an important project.**

Allah Hafez

Asif Ibrahim  
President, DCCI  
June 30, 2011