

Doha Round negotiations

In the GATT/WTO system, negotiations usually take place under rounds of negotiations. During GATT period, several rounds of negotiations took place. The last one was the Uruguay Round through which the WTO itself has been created.

After establishment of the WTO, the first round of negotiations has been started in 2001 during the Ministerial Conference held in Doha. This round of negotiations is known as Doha Round negotiations. It is also called Development Round as its main focus is on development oriented issues. Though it was originally scheduled to conclude the Round by 01 January 2005, several deadlines have been missed. Though negotiations are at the final stage, few issues are yet to be resolved. The main areas of negotiations are:

- NAMA (Non Agricultural Market Access)
- Agriculture
- Services.

NAMA Negotiations are actually going on with a view to reducing tariffs of industrial (non-agricultural) products. A formula, known as "Swiss formula", has already been agreed upon as the tool of reducing tariffs. Various flexibility options for different groups of countries are also under consideration. Other issues relating to tariff reductions are also in the negotiating package.

Agriculture negotiations have been going on with a view to reducing trade-distorting domestic supports, phasing out all forms of export subsidies and improving market access conditions. The ultimate objective of agriculture negotiations is to reduce all sorts of trade distorting elements and maintain fair and rational system in trade in agriculture products.

Negotiations on trade in services are going on in the following areas :

- Market access through request-offer approach
- Domestic regulations
- Rules

The objective of the negotiations is to have more openings in different modes and sectors of services for better market access and to have better disciplines and predictability in domestic regulations and rules relating to trade in services.

While NAMA, Agriculture and Trade in Services are the main negotiating issues, other issues like, trade facilitation, TRIPS, etc are also in the negotiating package.

Important issues for Bangladesh

As an LDC, Bangladesh has been exempted from making all sorts of reduction commitments (such as reduction of tariffs, domestic supports, etc). Bangladesh has also no obligation to open up any mode or sectors relating to trade in services in this round. As a result, Bangladesh has very little defensive interest in this round of negotiations.

However, Bangladesh has many offensive interests for which Bangladesh has been negotiating hard from the very beginning of the round. Particularly following issues are important for Bangladesh in this round –

- Duty-free & quota-free (DFQF) market access
- Preference erosion
- Services negotiations
- Trade Facilitation
- Rules

For more details on Doha Declaration Please [Click here....](#)