



Media Workshop
**WTO Trade Rules and
LDC Graduation of Bangladesh**



ERF Auditorium, Dhaka

29 August 2024

 **ECONOMIC REPORTERS' FORUM**



Barkat Ullah Maruf

Director- Partnerships and Development Communication

COAST Foundation

Overall WTO Issues

- Profit over people
- No major outcome in MC13, particularly on Agriculture (PSH, SSM & Cotton) and Fisheries Subsidy (Grossly unfair text)
- Renewal of E-commerce Moratorium till 2026
- Potential unity of LDC to demand in future
- Forcing some countries to agree on Fisheries Subsidies in MC13 and in Geneva
- Shrinking space for Civil Society in WTO Space (detention in MC13, Visa obstacles of important participants)



Fisheries Subsidy

- 0.8% Threshold of global marine capture in the name of conserving global fish stock vs Fisheries Subsidy
- Information problem in Bangladesh on Marine Fishing
- Poor fisherfolk vs fishing ban in Bangladesh
- Increasing capacity and efficiency in marine fishing
- Corporate Fishing, foreign trawlers in the Bay of Bengal: Coordination



AoA (Agreement on Agriculture)

- Commercial agriculture and non-commercial agriculture under same agreement, undermining culture, religion.
- Unfair obligation (Subsidy cut requirement: Import restraint 36%, domestic subsidy 20%)
- A country must import its agricultural products from those countries that produce them more cheaply than its own production.
- No concrete decision for net food importing countries
- Public Stockholding, Food security overlooked



TRIPS and Pharmaceuticals

- What is TRIPS?
- Patent vs LDC waiver for Pharmaceutical
- Commercial medicine vs public health:
People's access to medicine
- COVID-19 vaccine waiver didn't work (LDC vaccine rate 28% while USA vaccination reached 28% on 23 March 2021)
- Example: No LDC was allowed to produce COVID vaccines against the vaccines of USA, China, Russia & Europe.



LDC Graduation of Bangladesh

- Three criteria (Per capita income, Human Asset Index and Environmental vulnerability) of graduation don't include **per capita debt** (BDT 125,000)
- The main challenge is the fluffy National Statistics
- Premature Graduation: Statistics vs Reality
 - Not calculated the poverty after COVID19
 - Sylhet-Sunamganj flood/ Cumilla-Feni flood?
- Amendment of laws protecting the poor
- Lost opportunities (e.g., TRIPS waiver & Pharmaceutical Industry)
 - trade preferences, development financing, including Official Development Assistance, debt relief, technical assistance and other forms of support.

Q&A

Thank you