

Joint Press Statement of the Commerce Ministers of India and Pakistan

At the invitation of the Commerce & Industry Minister of India, Shri Anand Sharma, the Commerce & Textile Industry Minister of Pakistan Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan visited India from 16th to 18th January, 2014 to attend the 5th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave.

2. The Ministerial meeting on the margins of the Conclave was preceded by consultations at the level of the Secretaries Commerce of the two countries on matters related to economic and trade relations between Pakistan and India.

3. Both Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of their Governments to expeditiously establish normal trading relations and in this context to provide Non-Discriminatory Market Access (NDMA), on a reciprocal basis. They decided to intensify and accelerate the process of trade normalization, liberalization and facilitation and to implement the agreed measures before the end of February, 2014.

4. The Ministers noted with satisfaction that arrangements have been implemented by both sides to keep the Wagah – Attari Land Customs Station operational on all seven days of each week. The Ministers emphasized the importance of trade facilitation measures and directed their respective Ministries to work out modalities for containerization of cargo, allowing all trade-able items by land route at Wagah, liberalization of business visa regime and enhancing operational hours at Wagha / Attari and to consider such other measures as deemed necessary by the business communities of the two countries.

5. The Ministers agreed that both sides will convene the meetings of the technical working groups of Customs,

Railways, Banking, Standards organizations and Energy to devise the modalities for effective implementation of all requisite measures.

6. The Ministers noted with satisfaction that there has been enhanced interaction between the business communities of both countries. Several trade delegations have been received on either side. A Joint Business Forum of Chief Executive Officers in different sectors has also met twice after the formation of the present Pakistani Government. Several sub-groups have been formed by this Joint Business Forum to enhance trade cooperation in diverse sector such as textiles, tourism, energy, light engineering, pharmaceuticals and others. The third meeting of this Joint Business Forum is scheduled in Pakistan for mid-February, 2014.

7. With the objective of enhancing bilateral trade opportunities, FICCI and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan are also coordinating an "India Show" in Lahore in mid-February, 2014. This will build upon the success that was achieved on the business front through the similar India Show in Lahore in February, 2012. It is envisaged that as part of the India Show activities, artists on both sides of the border will jointly create paintings to express the common heritage of the people of both countries. With the objective of promoting greater people to people contact, both sides have also agreed to organize a joint Vintage Car Rally between Amritsar and Lahore, to coincide with the coming 'India Show'.

8. Minister of Commerce Mr. Anand Sharma accepted the invitation extended by Minister of Commerce Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan to visit Pakistan in February 2014.
