

CA seeks WTO support for Bangladesh's smooth LDC graduation

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Online Desk : Chief Adviser (CA) Professor Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday called on the World Trade Organization (WTO) to extend full support to Bangladesh in ensuring a smooth transition from its Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

Yunus raised the issue during a meeting with WTO Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on the sidelines of the 80th United Nations General Assembly at the UN Headquarters in New York. He urged the WTO to play a proactive role in the upcoming Ministerial Conference, securing meaningful outcomes that would safeguard graduating LDCs from adverse impacts caused by the loss of trade concessions and preferential market access in developed economies.

In response, the WTO chief assured Bangladesh of her “all-out support.” Bangladesh is set to graduate from the LDC category in late 2026, a milestone that poses both opportunities and challenges for its economy. Their discussion also addressed the long-debated WTO reforms and global trade uncertainties amid rising protectionism. Despite concerns, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala stressed that global trade remains resilient, with nearly 75 percent of all trade still regulated under WTO rules.

Calling for Dhaka's active engagement, she said: “The WTO must reform. I need your active engagement. I want your leadership here.” Professor Yunus echoed the urgency of reform, noting the WTO must evolve to remain effective in a rapidly changing global environment. “It is time to take up the challenge,” he said, adding that Bangladesh is prepared to raise its voice in favor of meaningful change. Energy and Transport Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan, Special Envoy of the Chief Adviser Lutfey Siddiqi, and SDG Coordinator and Senior Secretary Lamiya Morshed were also present at the meeting.