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## **INAUGURATION OF TRADE CAPACITY BUILDING FOR AFGHANISTAN UNDER CWS-ITC PROJECT**

The Introductory Training Programme of the Trade Capacity Building for Afghanistan, organized by the Centre for WTO Studies (**CWS**), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (**IIFT**) under a project with the Geneva-based International Trade Centre (**ITC**) was inaugurated today in New Delhi at the IIFT. The Inaugural Function was attended by Afghanistan's Dy. Minister of Commerce and Industries H.E. Kamila Sidiqi; India's Commerce Secretary M. Rita Teatota; Dy. Chief of Mission of Afghanistan's Embassy to India Mr. Mirwais Balkhi. Also present were Director of the IIFT, Dr. Manoj Pant, Prof. Mukesh Bhatnagar of the Centre for WTO Studies, among others.

A total of twenty participants consisting of Afghan government officials, Kabul University academics, and research officials, will be attending the training programme, which is scheduled to last till the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 2017 (Friday). The programme will cover a host of subjects such as Trade and IPR, Trade in Services, Non-Tariff Measures, Trade Disputes, Trade Remedies, and Trade Data. The Introductory Programme will lay the foundations for the Advanced Training Programmes to be held in the coming months, said Prof. Bhatnagar.

The project's purpose was in recognition of the importance of building Afghanistan's trade-related capacity for its effective and meaningful participation in world trade. The selection of the CWS as ITC's partner institution was done keeping in mind the vast experience of the CWS in organizing such training programmes, and the access to a wealth of knowledge resources. HE Sidiqi stated that the training the participants would receive at this programme would be instrumental in familiarizing them with the international trade regulations and the world trading system, and build their capacity to help them discharge their functions better. Ms. Teatota stressed upon the crucial importance of providing a developmental perspective in the training programme, and emphasized that the WTO would continue to remain the primary trade organization in spite of attempts to develop regional trade arrangements as alternatives.

This partnership, which was announced in late March this year, is expected to last till 2019. Dr. Pant stated that the long duration of this capacity building programme would

assist the participants in their grasp of the technical aspects of the various trade agreements, and make them knowledge leaders in their various domains. The inauguration of this programme also marks another important milestone in India-Afghanistan relations. Mr. Balkhi highlighted the importance of realizing Afghanistan's economic potential for peaceful coexistence in the region.





