

PRGMEA Press Release

(Karachi, November 19, 2011): Zonal Chairman, Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA), Mr. Atiq A. Kochra has reacted sharply to the recently published news report that the Ministry of Commerce has accepted the European Union's new package of trade concessions for Pakistan, which offers lower tariffs on only seven items and will have a financial impact of less than \$30 million.

Mr. Kochra said that it is hard for industry to digest that Ministry of Commerce can take such a step unilaterally without prior consultation from the stakeholders. This new package is totally unacceptable to the industry and it would be better to refuse the same. It is better for us to save ourselves the embarrassment of being offered peanuts over the plight of millions of flood affected Pakistani people, he said.

Ministry of Commerce should stick to its guns over the original package of 75 products without any ceilings, quotas or strings attached, as nothing short of the same would be acceptable to us after one-and-a-half year of hectic negotiations in which the Ministry played a key role.

Passing of EU this concessions package is of utmost importance as it will have an impact on Pakistan's bid for GSP-plus in 2014. Ministry of Commerce should realize that it needs to do its homework well in advance for this bid. How can we qualify for GSP+ if we are unable to pass a package of 75 products having a limited impact on our export performance?