



Union Minister welcomes Pakistan's transition from Positive List to Negative List Regime for trade with India.

India has welcomed the decision of the Government of Pakistan to transition from a Positive List Regime to a small Negative List for trade with India. This development reaffirms the commitment of both Governments for trade normalization as per the roadmap drawn During the Visit of Pakistan Commerce Minister from 26th September to 2nd October, 2011. There is reiteration of commitment that the negative list will be phased out by the end of this year. This will mark a dramatic shift in the lines that can be traded as now almost 90% items can be traded with Pakistan as opposed to 17% earlier. Welcoming the development, the Union Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles Mr Anand Sharma said "during my visit to Pakistan earlier this month, Prime Minister Gilani and Trade Minister Makhdoom Amin Fahim, had assured me that a final decision in the matter would be taken by end-February and I am happy that this has been achieved. We believe that strengthening economic engagement between India and Pakistan lies at the heart of building enduring peace and stability in this region. Flourishing trade is the biggest confidence building measure among any two nations. During my visit to Pakistan, I saw considerable enthusiasm in industry leaders and the trading community of both countries for deepening this engagement. We now need to continue the momentum of regular exchanges which we have started since mid-2011."

Mr Sharma's visit to Pakistan from 13th to 16th February 2012 was first ever visit by the Commerce Minister of India for substantive bilateral meetings. Accompanied by more than hundred high power business delegates, this visit marked a historic moment for both the countries, when political leadership and the business communities extended unequivocal support for full normalization and preferential trading arrangements between the two countries. The Joint Statement by the two Ministers at the end of the visit noted "It has been agreed that Pakistan will move from a Positive List to a small Negative List by February 2012. The negative list is to be phased out; the timing for this will be announced in February 2012 at the time the list is notified. It is expected that the phasing out will be completed before the end of 2012."