

## Afghan delegation in town to learn Nepal's experience on WTO accession

South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) organised an interaction programme for an official delegation of Afghanistan to share Nepal's experiences on accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Sunday.

The delegation led by Deputy Minister for Commerce Mozammil Shinwari including high-level government officials and representatives from the private sector among others are here in Nepal for a week-long visit with an aim to study Nepal's experience on WTO accession and utilise the knowledge during their ongoing accession negotiations at the WTO.

"Since Afghanistan and Nepal share a number of similarities in terms of geographic location, development status, and political transition, we chose to visit Nepal to learn from its experiences in WTO accession," a press statement from SAWTEE quoted Deputy Minister Shinwari as saying.

"We came to know that Nepal has achieved the best deal in terms of securing policy space at the time of WTO accession and hence we are interested to learn from Nepal", he added.

"WTO membership is not an end in itself. It should be viewed as a means to help the country achieve its development objectives." said Posh Raj Pandey, executive chairman of SAWTEE.

Making a presentation on "Nepal's Accession to WTO: Nepal's Experiences", Pandey highlighted how Nepal achieved a balanced accession package by safeguarding Nepal's developmental interests.

Similarly, Ratnakar Adhikari, general secretary of SAWTEE, highlighted the role played by the civil society in Nepal during the process of WTO accession, particularly in the area of maintaining policy space to protect the interest of consumers, farmers and small and medium enterprises.

He also said that the protecting "food security" interest of the country was of paramount significance throughout the process of accession. [nepalnews.com](http://nepalnews.com)