

CUTS CITEE in Action

April-June 2013

Events

COENCOSA Phase II - Final Meeting

CUTS with support from The Asia Foundation organised the final meeting of COENCOSA Phase-II in New Delhi on April 11, 2013.

Considering the need for institutionalising an effective system of public-private-people dialogues to address non-tariff barriers (NTBs) affecting regional trade in South Asia, the objective was to endorse a business plan which has been formulated to advocate for an interventionist and participatory role of the private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders in identification and removal/harmonisation of NTBs and to launch a network of policy champions to take forward the agenda.



Participatory Approaches to South Asian Regional Integration and Connectivity

CUTS in partnership with Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) organised a stakeholder consultation on Participatory Approaches to South Asian Regional Integration and Connectivity in New Delhi on April 12, 2013.

Realising that an inclusive and participatory approach is necessary to achieve progress on development issues in South Asia, the meeting has two objectives:

1. To gain civil society inputs on AusAID's strategy supporting South Asian regional integration and connectivity; and
2. To develop a shared understanding of the big issues affecting progress towards regional economic integration and identify priority actions.



Promoting Participatory Approaches for Removing Regional Trade Barriers in South Asia



CUTS International with support from The Asia Foundation and Federation of Indian Export Organisations, organised a half-day consultation meeting on Promoting Participatory Approaches for Removing Regional Trade Barriers in South Asia in Kolkata, West Bengal on May 24, 2013.

The objective of the meeting was to present the issues relating to NTBs in South Asia as well as to present proposals for enhancing the process of NTB reforms in the region through a participatory approach and to elicit the views and concerns of multiple set of stakeholders, particularly those of the private sector, on the said proposals.

Addressing Barriers to Rice Seeds Trade between India and Bangladesh

CUTS International with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation organised the launch meeting of a project entitled 'Addressing Barriers to Rice Seeds Trade between India and Bangladesh' in Kolkata, West Bengal on April 19, 2013.

The main objective of the meeting was to ensure that members of the project team, Project Advisory Committee and other experts including key participants/informants and project partners are on to the same footing/page as far as project activities, outputs and outcomes are concerned. Additionally, it is also for validation of activities, outputs and outcomes; and discussion on activities, outputs and desired/expected outcomes.



Environmental Standards and their Trade Impact on Indian Textiles & Clothing Sector

CUTS International with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through Royal Norwegian Embassy, Delhi, organised a dissemination meeting of the project entitled, 'A Study of Environmental Standards and its Trade Impacts on Indian Textile and Clothing Sector' (SESTI) in Oslo, Norway on June 14, 2013.

In the meeting, key findings from the study were presented. Three presentations were made: a) Barriers to the Success of Eco-Labels for Textiles & Clothing: A Stakeholder Approach by Eivind Sto, Director SIFO; b) Indian Stakeholder Perspectives Towards Sustainable Textile Standards by Archana Jatkar; and c) Consumer Perspective on Eco-Labeling of Textiles & Clothing: Results from 5 European Countries by Marthe Austgulen, SIFO.

The study was well taken by the participants and discussions pointed out to a great level of attention being paid to T&C sector. A cross section of stakeholders – about 20 participants – from the Ministry of Consumer Welfare, Ministry of Environment, Eco-label Norway, Verner Group and other relevant organisations attended the meeting.



Deadlock on global trade deal needs to be resolved

Business Daily, May 16, 2013

Faced with the conundrum of a deadlocked Doha Round at the WTO, fragmentation due to multiplying preferential trade agreements and the global financial crises, Pascal Lamy, outgoing WTO Director General, established a high level panel of stakeholders to ideate on the future of the international trading system. It was expectedly controversial because it articulated several subjects that had otherwise been contentious, such as investment and competition.
www.cuts-citee.org/article-Deadlock_on_global_trade_deal_needs_to_be_resolved.htm

Whither, global trading system?

The Hindu Business Line, May 14, 2013

The new Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Roberto Carvalho de Azevedo, will face a Sisyphean task in breathing life into the comatose Doha Round that has been under negotiations since its official launch in November 2011. The talks have failed to make much progress, made worse by fragmentation due to a spaghetti bowl of preferential trade agreements (PTA), many of which have been signed or are under construction.
www.cuts-citee.org/article-Whither_global_trading_system.htm

Growth cannot be chased at the cost of equity

OneWorld South Asia, May 02, 2013

Growth is extremely important because that is the basis on which infrastructure is build, but we cannot forget equity. If we forget equity, social tensions will surface,” said C Rangarajan, chief economic adviser to India’s Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh. Rangarajan was speaking at the launch of Growth and Equity. The book is a collection of essays written in the honour of Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General of the Jaipur-based Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS International).

www.pradeepsmehta.com/Media-Growth_cannot_be_chased_at_the_cost_of_equity-C_Rangarajan.htm

WTO Launches a Report on the Future of Trade

Geneva, Switzerland, April 24, 2013

The WTO Director General’s Panel on Defining the Future of Trade made public its conclusions today in a report titled “The Future of Trade: The Challenges of Convergence”. The launch event held at the WTO headquarters today in Geneva saw intense debate over some of the recommendations of the panel pertaining to issues like competition and investment rules. These have been controversial issues among some NGOs who thought other issues of specific interest to least developed countries should have been better upfronted in the report.

www.cuts-geneva.org/Press_Release-WTO_Launches_a_Report_on_the_Future_of_Trade_amidst_come_controversies.htm

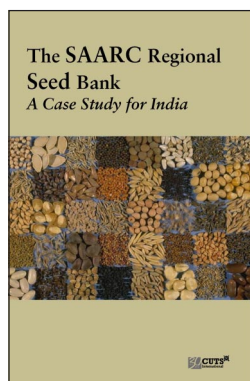
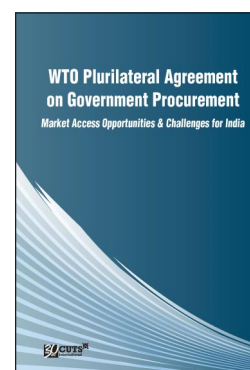
Participation

- Vinitha Johnson attended the WTO-FES Conference on ‘Challenges Confronting the Multilateral Trading System’ jointly organised by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the WTO (External Relations Committee in the WTO) in Jakarta, Indonesia on June 24-26, 2013.
- Asheesh Shah participated in a conference on ‘Green Economy and Sustainable Development’ organised by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment and International Development Research Centre SAWTEE & IDRC in Kathmandu, Nepal on June 23-24, 2013.
- Archana Jatkar participated in the 16th Conference of the European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP) and 7th Conference of the Environmental Management for Sustainable Universities (EMSU) held in Istanbul, Turkey during June, 04-07, 2013.

WTO Plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement Market Access Opportunities & Challenges for India

The study undertakes an assessment of opportunities and challenges which India is expected to encounter if it decides to negotiate to accede to the GPA. It presents factors which could inform decision makers and sectoral stakeholders while making the crucial decision on when accession should be undertaken, if at all, and the manner in which welfare objectives can be imbued in the negotiations. Further, an anatomisation of the commitments concluded by member-countries to the GPA presents insights on nuances in negotiating GPA commitments which can add value to an acceding country.

www.cuts-citee.org/GP/pdf/WTO_Plurilateral_Agreement_on_Government_Procurement_Market_Access_Opportunities_Challenges_for_India.pdf



The SAARC Regional Seed Bank: A Case Study for India

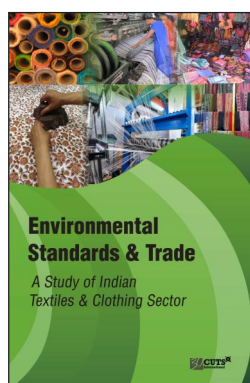
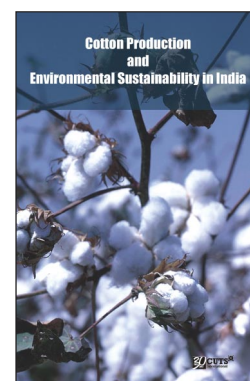
The study attempts to understand what role can the proposed regional seed bank play in the current scenario and tries to give an overview of seed dynamics in India in the context of realising the effectiveness of the SAARC Regional Seed Bank's efforts. The study has relied on primary literature survey and multi-stakeholder consultations. It supports India as one of the largest national agricultural research system in the world.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/The_SAARC_Regional_Seed_Bank-A_Case_Study_for_India.pdf

Cotton Production and Environmental Sustainability in India

The objective of this study is to understand issues of environmental sustainability in cotton production in India and in its value chain, and analyse related regulations. It aims to ascertain stakeholders' awareness towards environmentally sustainable practices. It seeks to examine how domestic policies have contributed and strengthened the environmental sustainability aspects of cotton production and its consumption in India.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Research-Report-Cotton_Production_and_Environmental_Sustainability_in_India.pdf



Environmental Standards & Trade A Study of Indian Textiles & Clothing Sector

The study was restricted to T&C sector as it plays a very significant role in India in terms of foreign exchange earnings and employment. Moreover, with the dismantling of quotas in 2004 under mandate from the Agreement in Textiles & Clothing of the WTO, the focus has now clearly shifted to the future of the Indian T&C exports. This study generates a better understanding of how standards and quality attributes related to environmental concerns in the T&C sector are defined, developed and managed both in the Northern and Southern hemisphere.

www.cuts-citee.org/SESTI/pdf/Report-Environmental_Standards_Trade-A_Study_of_Indian_Textiles_and_Clothing_Sector.pdf

Unlocking the Doha Impasse Imperative of a Balanced Bali Package

This Briefing Paper presents a brief analysis of the current state of affairs of the Doha Development Round. While the Doha Round is 'deadlocked' and, inter alia, exogenous circumstances have contributed to the current impasse, there is still a possibility that the WTO members will be able to reach an agreement on specific issues at the next Ministerial Conference in Bali in December 2013. The Paper discusses three possible areas of convergence that could be taken up in the run up to and at the Bali meeting.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Briefing_Paper13-Unlocking_the_Doha_Impasse_Imperative_of_a_Balanced_Bali_Package.pdf