

EVENTS

Seminar on “Services Trade Liberalisation in South Asia”

In collaboration with Commonwealth Secretariat, London and CUTS International Jaipur, India, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), Dhaka organised a two-day regional seminar on “SAFTA and its implications for the Member Countries” at BRAC Centre Inn, Dhaka on January 23-24, 2008. In the first working session on SAFTA, papers were presented by experts from India (Why SAFTA & India and Success of SAFTA), while government officials from India and Bangladesh made comments. In the second working session on the first day, in which Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS International was the chairperson, presentations were made by experts from Sri Lanka (India-Sri Lanka FTA: Lesson for SAFTA), Pakistan (SAFTA: Implications for Pakistan) and Nepal (SAFTA: Implications for Nepal).

The theme of second day seminar was “Services Trade Liberalisation in South Asia”, and in the first session the topic of discussion and presentations was: “Services Trade

Liberalisation and Domestic Regulation in Bangladesh and India”, while the second session was focused on “Domestic Preparedness for Services Trade Liberalisation in South Asian Countries”. A book “Global Rice and Agricultural Trade Liberalisation: Poverty and Welfare Implications for South Asian Countries”, Edited by M. A. Razzaque and Edwin Laurent was launched on the occasion. A close interaction and sharing of research findings on trade liberalisation and services with policy makers, civil society representatives, academics, media, and government officials, etc., was an encouraging experience. Moreover, the seminar played the dual role of serving as national consultation for CUTS programmes on ‘Service Trade and Domestic Regulation’; and SAFIT and regional seminar for SAFTA and its member countries. Participants included representatives from the civil society; Commonwealth Secretariat, London, South Asia, garment industry, research institutes, delegate academicians, and students.

PARTICIPATION

Shashi Shikha participated in the National Consultation on Agricultural Livelihoods organised by Oxfam-International at India Islamic Cultural Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, on January 15-16, 2008. The workshop was aimed at consulting the Oxfam International’s back ground paper on agriculture, which was mainly to develop ideas on the issues which need to be addressed at the regional, national and international level concerning the agriculture sector as a part of their Economic Justice Campaign. The consultation witnessed the participation of the experts from across the country hailing from the NGOs, Planning Commission, Government of India, and research institutes.

Sonja Blasig attended an International seminar held under UNCTAD India programme on “Moving towards Gender Sensitisation of Trade Policy” on February 25-27, 2008.

The seminar served to provide a forum to discuss gender concerns in the context of trade liberalisation by international trade and gender experts, policy makers, academia and civil society. The seminar discussed the studies under a project conducted by UNCTAD and DFID in collaboration with UNDP focused on mapping and assessing the relationship between gender and trade in India at sectoral and regional levels to draw up nation-wide implications

Shashi Shikha attended a training programme on People Centered Advocacy organised by National Centre for Advocacy Studies, New Delhi on February 26-28, 2008 for the partners of Oxfam-Novib. The programme was a need assessment workshop and aimed at educating the participants of the basics of advocacy and how it can be best used to effect policy change. The Phase-II and Phase-III of the programme would seek to build the capacity of the participants on how to go about doing advocacy and how to plan a campaign respectively.

Conference on Preferential Trade Agreements

CUTS International organised a panel discussion on “Preferential Trade Agreements and India: Where are we and where to go?” at the India International Centre, New Delhi on January 29-30, 2008. The panel took stock of the progress in PTAs, both bilateral and regional, signed so far and likely to be signed in near future by India and to assess the likely effects of such arrangements and also those by other countries than India on the domestic economy. The objectives of this panel discussion were to look into: the role of PTAs in promoting trade: political economy of PTAs; the impact of proliferation of PTAs on world trade: multilateralising regionalism; the structure of PTAs: shallow *vis-à-vis* deep integration processes; India’s approach towards PTAs – political and economic aspects; and possible impact of other PTAs (than those with which India is engaged) on India

The panellists were: Rahul Khullar, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce; T N Srinivasan, Professor of Economics, Yale University; Rajiv Kumar, Director, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi and N C Pahariya, Fellow, CUTS International, Jaipur. More than 40 participants ranging from government officials, business representatives, diplomats, academics, civil society representatives, development agencies and media participated in this meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pre-UNCTAD XII Civil Society Forum in Africa

On the occasion of the forthcoming quadrennial meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII) to be held in Accra, Ghana on 20-25 April 2008, the CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE) organises a two-day international conference in Nairobi, Kenya, on March 13-14, 2008, within the framework of its project on Linkages between Trade, Development and Poverty Reduction (TDP). The conference seeks to formulate a set of key messages to be fed into the Civil Society Forum, which will be held during the UNCTAD XII. Towards such objective, the conference will discuss the four sub-themes of the UNCTAD XII, which are:

- Enhancing coherence at all levels for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in global policy making, including the contribution of regional approaches;
- Key trade and development issues and the new realities in the geography of the world economy;
- Enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment: mobilising resources and harnessing knowledge for development; and
- Strengthening UNCTAD – enhancing its development role, impact, and institutional effectiveness.

Participants will include civil society organisations (CSOs), business associations, media, academics, government officials, representatives from international and inter-governmental organisations and the donor community. <http://www.cuts-citee.org/events.htm>

Pre-UNCTAD XII Civil Society Forum in Asia

On the occasion of the forthcoming quadrennial meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII) to be held in Accra, Ghana on 20-25 April 2008, CUTS CITEE organises a two-day international conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, on March 06-07, 2008, within the framework of its TDP project. The conference seeks to formulate a set of key messages to be fed into the Civil Society Forum, which will be held during the UNCTAD XII.

Participants will include CSOs, business associations, media, academics, government officials, representatives from international and inter-governmental organisations and the donor community from around the Asian region, with special priority given to developing and least developed economies. This is in continuation of another similar event, to be organised in Gaborone, Botswana on February 21-22, 2008 for Africa. <http://www.cuts-citee.org/events.htm>

PUBLICATION

Trade-Development-Poverty Linkages-Reflections from selected Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries

By undertaking multi-country case studies and drawing relevant lessons, this particular volume from CUTS-CITEE seeks to make valuable contributions to arguably the most important discourse for the world's poor by examining the Asian and sub-sahara african country experiences on trade and development closely. The country cases chosen make this volume particularly interesting. There are countries that have now become regular references for success stories, while there are others that continue to struggle to put in place trade-led development processes. By juxtaposing the varying country cases in the same volume, the CUTS-TDP project exposes the complex nature of interactions between policies, institutions and other country characteristics that result in widely different outcomes. <http://www.cuts-citee.org/>

IN MEDIA

India-EU Trade Pact Hangs on Non-tariff Barriers The Financial Express, January 30, 2008

A conference was organised by CUTS International on the various issues confronting the Preferential Trade Agreements between India and European Union. The conference invited intellectual debates from the experts on the various non-tariff barriers on the proposed India-EU free trade agreements. For more log on to:

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/media-archive-jan08.htm>

<http://www.financialexpress.com/>;

<http://finance.indiainfo.com/>

Let Us Take a Leaf Out of China's Book in WTO' The Hindu Business Line, February 05, 2008 By G. Srinivasan

In a comprehensive interview G Srinivasan, professor of Yale university, expressed his concerns on the impact of US slowdown in India. He said that as compared to China we are still unexposed to the world market in terms of trade, which is why there may not be a significant slowdown in the Indian economy in the short-term. For a detail interview please log on to:

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/media-archive-feb08.htm>