

***Project Stakeholder Consultation on
“Study to identify hurdles for independent Indian health service personnel in selected countries
under GATS Mode 4”
New Delhi, July 16, 2007***

OBJECTIVE *The objective of the meeting is to bring together the stakeholders e.g. Regulatory Authorities/Government Agencies, Health Professionals, Councils, Indian Medical Association, Other Experts and Practitioners in the field and Placement/Facilitating agencies and to discuss the draft research paper prepared under the project. It also aims to elicit views/perceptions of the various stakeholders, which will help in finalising the draft research paper. In addition, the consultation aims to make the study more practically viable by taking into account diverse views of a wider set of stakeholders.*

BACKGROUND

CUTS Centre for International Trade Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE), Jaipur, India is implementing the project entitled, *"Study to Identify Hurdles for Independent Indian Health Service Personnel in Selected Countries under GATS Mode IV"* with support from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and World Health Organisation (WHO). This is widely known that movement of natural persons is highly constrained by a variety of border and on border measures falling under immigration and labour market policies. These restrictions are largely motivated by concerns such as security, displacement of local labour, and problems in enforcing temporary stay. However, these barriers affect initial entry into the host country as well as the scope and conditions of operation once market access is obtained. Due to such extensive restrictions on movement of natural persons, the potential for labour flows remains untapped. This fact is evident from the relatively small share of temporary workers in the labour market for most countries and the small share of trade in services represented by temporary workers within overall trade in services.

This is a serious concern particularly with regard to the movement of health professionals from India under Mode 4 who are subject to a range of restrictions, which include: wage parity requirement; strict visa procedures; Economic Needs Tests (ENT); non-recognition of professional qualifications; imposition of discriminatory standards or burdensome licensing requirements; payment of social security without corresponding benefits; and requirements of registration with or membership of professional organisations.

Given the scenario, this study aims to achieve two main objectives. First, the research is intended to examine the policy, administrative and implementation mechanisms employed by various governments at the national, bilateral and regional level to manage temporary migration of independent health service providers in India. It aims to simultaneously focus on experiences acquired by Indian professionals to draw lessons that can facilitate in managing the temporary movement effectively.

Second, it aims to identify the barriers faced by Indian independent health service providers (namely, Medical and Dental Service providers and Services provided by midwives, nurses, physiotherapists & paramedical personnel) under Mode 4 of General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and appropriately give recommendation to strategise to ensure access of Indian health professionals to opportunities for employment abroad through authorised channels. The study intends to highlight how the ongoing GATS negotiations can be used to generate a stronger liberalising momentum in health sector.

CONTEXT

CUTS CITEE researchers have come out with a draft research paper (literature survey) after critically evaluating the current policy, administrative and implementation mechanisms employed by various governments at the national, bilateral and regional level to manage temporary migration of independent health service providers in India. Along side while preparing the draft paper the researchers examined the approach adopted by the various countries (favoured destinations) as regards their commitments on health services *vis-à-vis* potential for trade in services under GATS negotiations.

Draft paper has also incorporated the views and data collected during the personal interview/field survey carried out in India in the following states viz. Delhi, Kerala, Chennai and Mumbai. Thus the draft research study presents some key messages and lessons learnt from the feedback process by government officials, and other stakeholders.

Given this context, this Project Stakeholder Consultation is being organised to bring together the project stakeholders to discuss the draft research paper prepared under the project and elicit their views to help in finalising the draft papers. The contribution of all invited participants would be of great value in providing an opportunity to exchange views on draft research paper and create positive momentum in mobilising the participation of all the key stakeholders.

THE EVENT

Design: The event is designed to involve representatives of relevant project stakeholders from all four states (Delhi, Kerala, Chennai and Mumbai) in this half-day consultation. It will start in the morning of 16 July 2007. The deliberations will be organised in a structured form so that there will be ample time for debate and discussions.

VENUE

Lecture Hall, India International Centre Annexe
40, Max Muller Marg, New Delhi-110003