

CUTS CITEE in Action

April-June 2016

Events

Fostering Agricultural Value Chains in Eastern South Asia

CUTS International in collaboration with *Rashtriya Grameen Vikas Nidhi* (RGVN, Guwahati), SNV (Bhutan) and Unnayan Shamannay (Dhaka) organised a Sub-Regional Policy Dialogue on 'Fostering Agricultural Value Chains in Eastern South Asia' at Guwahati, Assam on June 25, 2016. This event was organised under the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia.

The objectives of the workshop were to discuss the possibilities and hurdles associated with the trading of agriculture products within and across borders; and seek solutions to address those hurdles.

It brought together government agencies, regulators, private institutions and private players engaged in the agriculture sector to understand and deliberate on how to best harness agriculture value chains and its potential in the sub-region comprising of the North Eastern states of India and its neighbours in the Brahmaputra basin.

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Sub_Regional_Policy_Dialogue_on_Fostering_Agricultural_Value_Chains_in_Eastern_South_Asia.pdf



Impact Assessment of EU-India Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement

CUTS International, in collaboration with, World Trade Institute (WTI), University of Bern, Switzerland organised the EU-India Bilateral Broad Based Trade and Investment Agreement Impact Assessment meeting at New Delhi on April 22, 2016. The objective was to present findings of socio, economic & environmental impact assessment study undertaken by WTI, with support from the Centre for Economic Policy Research, London, UK. Stakeholders from various industry associations, business chambers, civil society, export promotion councils, think tanks and universities, among others gathered to reflect upon the findings, share their concerns and recommendations.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Agenda-Impact_Assessment_of_EU-India_Bilateral_Trade_and_Investment_Agreement.pdf



Roundtable Discussion on Development of Inland Waterways for Trade and Transit

CUTS International with the support of DFAT, Government of Australia organised a roundtable discussion entitled 'Development of Inland Waterways for Trade and Transit' under the SDIP programme for South Asia at Patna on June 13, 2016. The workshop aimed to create a base of discussion for the SDIP Advocacy Brief entitled, '*Development of Inland Waterways (IWWs) for Trade and Transit in BBIN*'.

The objectives of the workshop were to discuss the recent developments and issues in National Waterway – 1; and possibilities to boost trade through greater public-private dialogues.

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Roundtable_Discussion_on_Development_of_Inland_Waterways_for_Trade_and_Transit.pdf

Participation

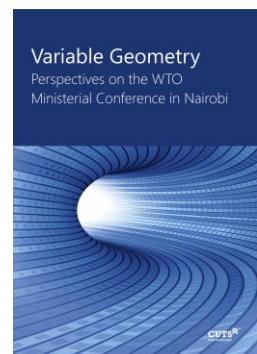
- Smriti Bahety participated in 'The Impact of FTAs and BITs on Access to Medicines' organised by Lawyers Collective at New Delhi on April 09-10, 2016. She also participated in 'Sustainability Standards in Global Value Chains: Challenges and Opportunities for Emerging Economies' organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at New Delhi on April 07, 2016; and '3rd Standards Conclave 2016: Challenges of Standards and Technical Regulations' by CII and Ministry of Commerce, Government of India at New Delhi on June 23-24, 2016.
- Susan Mathew presented a paper entitled 'Agriculture knowledge sharing in the Ganges, Indus and Brahmaputra River Basins' based on SDIP work in an event '2nd Symposium on Transformation for Rural Development: Collaboration & Coproduction of Knowledge' organised by Charles Sturt University (Australia), Ambedkar University (Delhi) and PRADAN at New Delhi on April 19-21, 2016.
- Bipul Chatterjee delivered a lecture on the 'Role of BIMSTEC Countries in Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor' at the BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka on April 04, 2016.
- Bipul Chatterjee attended a meeting on 'Regional Integration in South Asia', organised by the Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce, Dhaka, The Asia Foundation, and SAARC Chambers of Commerce & Industry in Dhaka, Bangladesh on April 02-03, 2016. He made a presentation on '*Non-Tariff Measures Affecting Food Imports into India from Other SAARC Countries*'.

Variable Geometry

Perspectives on the WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi

Overall, the Nairobi Ministerial witnessed the continuation of the battle on various fronts of the international trading system. Given the compromise language in the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration, it will be interesting to see how negotiations will intensify or not in Geneva. This collection of articles and analysis, in a sense, reflects on these contemporary as well as long standing debates surrounding the WTO, Doha Round, and the international trading system as a whole. While work continues in Geneva, it is critical to reflect and understand where we came from and what challenges lie ahead of us. This compendium attempts to provide such a reflective source.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Variable_Geometry.pdf



A Proposed Agenda for the South Asian Regional Standards Organisation: Lessons from Regional Standardisation Organisations

This Discussion Paper reviews specific examples of regional standardisation organisations from the Americas, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa to identify good practices. Also, considerations regarding adopting international standards or focusing on improving SAARC level standards are made. Suggestions for SARSO based on the experiences of other relevant organisations are thus provided as a potential agenda for South Asian countries to grow their economies and social wellbeing.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/A_Proposed_Agenda_for_the_South_Asian_Regional_Standards_Organisation.pdf

Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio - Advocacy Briefs

Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) is a portfolio investment approach which has been adopted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia to address the issues of water, food and energy security in South Asia.

Based on CUTS' involvement in SDIP, six Advocacy Briefs have been formulated to carry forward the discourse on food-water-energy security nexus in South Asia. They are based on grassroots insights and policy research at regional level. These Advocacy Briefs are meant to inform, educate and present the advocacy strategies of CUTS on these subjects and provoke debates on specific issues. These are as follows:

1. Promoting Efficient Use of Resources through Regulations and Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Agricultural Practices in South Asia

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Promoting_Efficient_Use_of_Resources_through_Regulations_and_Knowledge_Sharing_on_Sustainable_Agricultural_Practices_in_South_Asia.pdf

2. Enhancing Farm Incomes and Economic Growth in BBIN Countries through Better Linkages and Stronger Value Chains

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Enhancing_Farm_Incomes_and_Economic_Growth_in_BBIN_Countries_through_Better_Linkages_and_Stronger_Value_Chains.pdf

3. Integrated Approach to Groundwater Regulation, Management and Conservation

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Integrated_Approach_to_Groundwater_Regulation_Management_and_Conversation.pdf

4. Development of Inland Waterways for Trade and Transit in BBIN

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Development_of_Inland_Waterways_for_Trade_and_Transit_in_BBIN.pdf

5. Promoting Energy Cooperation among South Asian Countries

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Promoting_Energy_Cooperation_among_South_Asian_Countries.pdf

6. Promoting Renewable Energy Technology Transfer, Trade and Knowledge Sharing in South Asia

www.cuts-citee.org/SDIP/pdf/Advocacy-Promoting_Renewable_Energy_Technology_Transfer_Trade_and_Knowledge_sharing_in_South_Asia.pdf

Time has come for ‘Move India’

The Hindu Business Line, June 29, 2016
By Pradeep S Mehta

In the monsoon session of Parliament, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is likely to see the light of the day. That would be one of the most significant competition reforms India would adopt in recent times to create an internal market.

[www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/time-has-come-for-move-india/
article8788729.ece](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/time-has-come-for-move-india/article8788729.ece)

Bureaucracy has had it too easy

The Hindu Business Line, April 14, 2016
By Pradeep S Mehta

This seems to be a season of some good news as far as administrative reforms for economic growth is concerned. The commerce department at the nudge of the Prime Minister’s Office is considering setting up a large specialised team to negotiate international trade deals. Such a team would comprise specialists drawn from the Indian Trade Service, Indian Foreign Service and trade lawyers.

[www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/bureaucracy-has-had-it-too-easy/
article8476290.ece](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/bureaucracy-has-had-it-too-easy/article8476290.ece)

Don’t blame global crisis for exports slide

The Hindu Business Line, April 01, 2016
By Pradeep S Mehta

Last year on this day, the government of India had released the new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2015-20. It was, by no means, a Fools’ Day prank. It laid a foolproof plan to enhance India’s trade ecosystem and competitiveness.

[www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/dont-blame-global-crisis-for-exports-
slide/article8419781.ece](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/dont-blame-global-crisis-for-exports-slide/article8419781.ece)