

# CUTS CITEE in Action

April-June 2017



## Events

### Facilitating Connectivity in the Bay of Bengal Region

CUTS in partnership with the East-West Center (EWC) is implementing a project entitled, 'Emerging Markets Summit to Promote Trade Connectivity', which is being supported by the US State Department. The project aims to strengthen the connections between the US and South and Southeast Asian countries in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance trade and other forms of connectivity between South and Southeast Asian countries, particularly between BBIN and BIMSTEC, while including other critical players such as Australia, Japan, and South Korea in the discourse.



A conference was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on April 11, 2017 which reflected on issues pertinent to connectivity in the Bay of Bengal region with particular emphasis on physical, energy and investment connectivity. It brought together policymakers, experts, private sector, academia, think-tanks and media representatives from the region to discuss key issues and come up with a forward-looking roadmap for overall connectivity in the Bay of Bengal region.

[www.cuts-citee.org/Conference\\_on\\_Facilitating\\_Connectivity\\_in\\_the\\_Bay\\_of\\_Bengal\\_Region.htm](http://www.cuts-citee.org/Conference_on_Facilitating_Connectivity_in_the_Bay_of_Bengal_Region.htm)

### Creating an Enabling and Inclusive Policy and Political Economy Discourse for Trade, Transport and Transit Facilitation

CUTS organised a Partners' Workshop under the project in Dhaka, Bangladesh on May 18-19, 2017. The event discussed connectivity issues in the BBIN region with focus on facilitating the implementation of the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement (BBIN MVA). It also looked to fine tune strategies and approaches for the project aimed at facilitation implementation of the BBIN MVA with inputs from experts and stakeholders.



### Expanding Tradable Benefits of Trans-Boundary Water

CUTS organised a National Policy Dialogue in New Delhi on May 23, 2017. The policy dialogue was part of the project entitled 'Expanding tradable benefits of trans-boundary water: Promoting navigational usage of inland waterways in Ganga and Brahmaputra basins' being implemented in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.

The objective of the dialogue was to share the key findings of diagnostic study on national institutions and governance of inland waterways, knowledge sharing within and across borders on waterways governance, as also the trans-boundary aspects of waterways governance and promote alternative policy discourses for enabling reform measures on better governance of inland waterways in India.

Sub-national policy dialogues were also organised in West Bengal on April 17, 2017 in Assam on April 21, 2017 in Uttar Pradesh on April 27, 2017 and in Bihar on April 28, 2017; respectively.

[www.cuts-citee.org/IW/](http://www.cuts-citee.org/IW/)



### Linkages and Impacts of Cross-Border Informal Trade in Agricultural Inputs in Eastern South Asia

CUTS in association with South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE) organised a Stakeholder Consultation meeting on 'Linkages and Impacts of Cross-Border Informal Trade in Agricultural Inputs in Eastern South Asia' in Kathmandu on May 02, 2017.

This study has been conducted to assess informal cross-border trade in agricultural inputs across specific locations along India-Bangladesh and India-Nepal border in partnership between CUTS from India, Bangladesh-based Unnayan Shamannay and Nepal's SAWTEE. The project aims to assess the extent of informal cross-border trade in agricultural inputs across specific locations along the India-Bangladesh and the India-Nepal border and figure out the drivers of such informal trade.





## Participation

- Kyle Cote attended 'President Trump and India's New Imperatives' organised by Carnegie India at New Delhi, on April 04, 2017. He also attended the '1<sup>st</sup> Act East Dialogue' organised by Brookings India on April 05, 2017 that explored ways in which India can deepen its cooperation and involvement to its east, in particular with the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- Taramani Agarwal participated in Policy Dialogue on 'Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Stronger Connectivity, Enhancing Ties', organised by Research and Information System for Developing Countries, at New Delhi on April 08, 2017. The objective of the dialogue was to learn through the experiences of India and Mekong countries (CLMV+T), generate new ideas and initiatives which would help articulate actionable policy points for strengthening Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, through connectivity.
- Jill Juma participated in a conference on 'Taxation and Sustainable Development' at Norway on April 25, 2017. The conference was convened under the auspices of Sustainable Market Actors for Responsible Trade programme, coordinated by the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo and sponsored by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme.
- Taramani Agarwal participated in a workshop on 'Trade Facilitation Measures that Support Cross-border Trade by Women in BBIN', organised by Indian Council for Research and International Economic Relations, The Asia Foundation, Australian Aid, Australian Government – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and supported by the World Bank, at New Delhi on April 27-28, 2017. The objective of the workshop was to stimulate women participation in trade in BBIN region through trade facilitation.
- Rahul Arora attended 4<sup>th</sup> National Standards Conclave on 'Evolving a Comprehensive National Strategy for Standards: Sectoral and Regional Inclusiveness' organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in collaboration with Export Inspection Council of India, the Bureau of Indian Standards, the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies, and the Centre for WTO Studies at New Delhi on May 01-02, 2017. The objective was to generate awareness amongst industry members and other stakeholders about the importance of 'Standards' in the changing scenario of global trade and get their expert inputs for the preparation of a national strategy for standards.
- Prashant Sharma participated in All India Smart Move High Level Group Workshop at New Delhi on May 08-09, 2017. The workshop aimed at contributing to a global vision on mobility for achieving the SDGs 2030 and implementing the New Urban Agenda.
- Prashant Sharma participated in a FES organised third Economy Seed Community Meeting at Kathmandu, Nepal on May 21, 2017 for contributing to a Long-Term Transformation Vision for India and Pakistan. The overall objective was to normalise and further enhance economic co-operation by identifying structural issues, game changers and thereby creating an 'alliance for change'.
- Veena Vidyadharan participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bangladesh-India Joint Consultation organised by International Union for Conservation of Nature, at Kolkata on May 30-31, 2017. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the outcomes of the research activities and community consultations facilitated under 'Building River Dialogue and Governance for the Civil Society Organisations in the Ganges Brahmaputra-Meghna' project.
- Susan Mathew participated in the Second India Think Tank Forum entitled 'The Potential and Power of National, Regional and Global Partnerships' at New Delhi on June 19-21, 2017. The forum was organised by Observer Research Foundation in collaboration with The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Programme at the Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania, and McKinsey Global Institute.



## The Trump Presidency and the Future of Indo-US Relations

Huffington Post, April 25, 2017 (By Pradeep S Mehta and Kyle Cote)

Indian observers are contemplating the future of bilateral relations with the global leader, not to mention the regional implications of the new administration. Questions arise whether to take Mr Trump’s “America First” rhetoric seriously, or to believe that dealing with a businessman persona will ultimately benefit India’s diplomats, businesses, and citizens.

[www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-trump-presidency-and-the-future-of-indo-us-relations\\_us\\_58ffe5f0e4b06fec8ac91ab](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-trump-presidency-and-the-future-of-indo-us-relations_us_58ffe5f0e4b06fec8ac91ab)

## Getting GST right

Tribune India, June 19, 2017 (By Pradeep S Mehta, Amol Kulkarni and Sanjay Kumar Mangla)

A few days remain for the adoption of the first-ever competition reform — since Independence — to create a seamless national market without any distortions. As India awaits the introduction of its historic GST regime with bated breath, it will be prudent to take a look at the experiences of other countries on the introduction of GST and tackling related challenges.

[www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/getting-gst-right/424273.html](http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/getting-gst-right/424273.html)



## Publications

### Sustainable Economic Development of India and the role of biodiversity: Policy challenges and opportunities

With inclusion of environmental concerns, major shifts in development narratives have taken place in recent years. Thus, in order to sustain economic growth, it is important to preserve biodiversity through integrating actions related to conservation and promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity in cross-sectoral policies.

Moreover, it is important to develop multi-sectoral policy frames and strategies for preservation. This Paper reviews how biodiversity is treated in different cross-sectoral policies, challenges in mainstreaming biodiversity, and the probable economic opportunities.

[www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Discussion\\_Paper-Sustainable\\_Economic\\_Development\\_of\\_India\\_and\\_the\\_Role\\_of\\_Biodiversity.pdf](http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Discussion_Paper-Sustainable_Economic_Development_of_India_and_the_Role_of_Biodiversity.pdf)

April 2017 Discussion Paper CUTS <sup>RI</sup>	
Sustainable Economic Development of India and the Role of Biodiversity: Policy Challenges and Opportunities	
Sujeet Datta, Assistant Director, CUTS International; Shashi Singh, Chairman, CUTS International	
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April 2017 Discussion Paper CUTS <sup>RI</sup>	
Consumer Gains from Trade: A Case Study on Promoting Trade between Bangladesh and Tripura, India in Specific Agricultural Commodities	
Transect Inghate, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS International; Sumanta Bhowmik, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS International; Deepankar Chatterjee, Research Associate, CUTS International; Poojita Nath, Associate Director, CUTS International	
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### Consumer Gains from Trade: A Case Study on Promoting Trade between Bangladesh and India (Tripura State in North Eastern Region of India) in Specific Agricultural Commodities

India and Bangladesh have natural and cultural complementarities in terms of producing and exchanging goods for everyday consumption. However, in addition to infrastructure bottlenecks, non-tariff barriers negatively affect trans-boundary trade and exchange.

Therefore, this study aimed to facilitate trade in specific agricultural commodities between Bangladesh and Tripura, India through knowledge generation on legal and regulatory framework for cross-border trade in such commodities, identification of solutions to promote market access and evidence-based advocacy to ultimately lead to trade and hence consumer gains.

[www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Discussion\\_Paper-A\\_Case\\_Study\\_on\\_Promoting\\_Trade\\_between\\_Bangladesh\\_and\\_Tripura\\_India\\_in\\_Specific\\_Agricultural\\_Commodities.pdf](http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Discussion_Paper-A_Case_Study_on_Promoting_Trade_between_Bangladesh_and_Tripura_India_in_Specific_Agricultural_Commodities.pdf)