


EVENTS

National Consultation on 'Services Trade and Domestic Regulation in India'

The National Consultation on 'Services Trade and Domestic Regulation in India' under the project entitled, 'Services Trade and Domestic Regulation: A Multi-Country Study in Commonwealth Asia, Africa and the Caribbean' with the support of Commonwealth Secretariat, London was held in New Delhi, on November 29, 2007.

This seminar also played the dual role of serving as the national consultation for both, Services Trade and Domestic Regulation and the South Asia Forum for International Trade (SAFIT) projects, which focuses on 'Domestic Preparedness' of the five South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and India to face the challenges of trade liberalisation and globalisation in service sector.

Its objectives were to deliberate and invite comments from various stakeholders on the research done, with a view to incorporate the comments into the synthesis paper which will act as a policy advocacy document for future. About 15 participants comprising policy makers, civil society representatives, inter-governmental agencies, academicians, research institutes, development practitioners and media attended the seminar.

For a detailed report of the event, please visit:

http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Report-Services_Trade_NationalConsultation.pdf

Institutions and Pro-Poor Growth Meeting

A two-day meeting for the Institutions and Pro-Poor Growth (IPPG) second phase researchers was held in Jaipur, on December 18-19, 2007, spearheaded by the University of Manchester to showcase the project proposals for research from all over the world.

About 14 participants, representing civil society organisations (CSOs) from all over the world attended the conference. Kunal Sen from the University of Manchester and Adrian Leftwich, Professor of Political Science from University of York, and other experts were panellists. The first day comprised of individual sessions wherein each project was presented, discussed and debated. The second day was more focussed towards fine-tuning research methodology through further comments and discussion.

Workshop on 'Gender and Trade'

A workshop on 'Gender and Trade: How to Engender the National Foreign Trade Policy of India?' in collaboration with Network for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (NEED) was held in Lucknow, on November 30, 2007.

This workshop looked at the National Foreign Trade Policy of India, 2004-09 from a gender perspective in order to better understand the human development aspects of international trade. Presenters included Anil Singh, Chief Executive Officer, NEED; R S Ratna, Director, Regional & Multilateral Trade Relations, Department of Commerce; R M Nair, General Manager, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI); Dr Pam Rajput, Executive Director, Women's Resource and Advocacy Centre; and Rebecca Band, CUTS CITEE.

For a detailed report of the event, please visit: <http://www.cuts-citee.org/PDF/nationaldialogue/india07-2.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS

CUTS, in association with South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM) and Commonwealth Secretariat, London will be organising a regional conference on 'Services Trade Liberalisation in South Asia' in Dhaka, on January 23-24, 2008.

The conference intends to analyse service sector liberalisation so far undertaken in the region, as well as highlight the opportunities and risks present from the liberalisation process. It will also explore the potential implications of South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) for the Member countries.

It is expected that the conference would provide an open forum for discussion and debate on these issues amongst policy makers, researchers, private sector participants as well as South Asian CSOs.

PARTICIPATION

Simi Thirumburathy Balakrishnan

participated and presented a paper on 'Indian Textiles – Trade, Environment, Policies, Ecolabels' in the start-up workshop of the project entitled, 'Enabling Developing Countries to Seize Eco-labeling Opportunities' organised by InWEnt in Bonn, Germany, during December 03-05, 2007.

This four-year project is being implemented by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in association with local national partners and co-funded by the European Commission (EC) Programme on Environment in Developing Countries and the Federal Ministry for the Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany. Target countries are Brazil, China, India, Kenya, Mexico and South Africa.

Simi also participated in the 'Second India Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)' in New Delhi on December 19-20, 2007. The Roundtable, co-hosted by the Ministry



A view of the workshop

of Environment and Forests, Government of India and UNEP and supported by the EC, tried to draw on the lessons learned from the previous meeting and exchange ideas and experiences on developing 'key sector' action plans as well as integrated national programmes on SCP. The Roundtable focussed on the following key sectors/themes: water efficiency and utilisation; integrated waste management; and creating awareness for sustainable goods and services.

IN MEDIA

Benefits from SEZs far outweigh fiscal concessions

The Indian Express, November 12, 2007

By Vikas Dhoot

A study commissioned by the Department of Commerce to assess the potential costs and benefits of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) has dismissed the entire debate over revenue losses due to the fiscal sops extended to SEZs by the Departments of Revenue and Commerce.

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/media-archive-nov07.htm>

This article can also be viewed at: <http://www.indianexpress.com/>

Opening of services sector betters living standards

Business Standard, December 03, 2007

By Rituparna Bhuyan

India has been unilaterally opening its services sector over the past decade, and the liberalisation in the sector is in the excess of the offers it made in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Experts say that even though services sector reforms carried out by India have not been reciprocated to a great extent at the international level, but it is helping its citizens access better quality of life.

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/media-archive-dec07.htm>

Rebecca Band attended the WTO Global Aid-for-Trade (AfT) Review, in Geneva, during November 19-21 2007, which aimed to provide an overview of the delivery of AfT. Its main objectives were to take stock of what is happening on AfT; identify what should happen next; and improve WTO monitoring and evaluation.

She additionally attended the consultation on 'EU Bilateral and Regional Free Trade Agreements – Bringing Women to the Centre of the Debate', organised by the Women in Development Europe Network (WIDE) and sponsored by European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, on November 22, 2007. This one-day consultation aimed to provide space for critical reflection and debate on opportunities, challenges, strategies and diverse policy options related to gender and EU trade liberalisation.