

Agenda
Conference on
Looking at Future Challenges of the International Trade Regime from South Asian Perspectives
Country Inn, Jaipur, India, Monday 22 June, 2009

0830 – 0900	Registration
0900 – 0930	Introduction and Welcome
0930 – 1030	Session 1: Trade, Climate Change and Food Security The session intends to discuss the linkages of trade, climate change and food security, and will explore potential impact of climate change on food security vis-à-vis South Asia.
1030 – 1100hrs	Tea/Coffee
11.00 – 1300 hrs	Session 2: Trade and Energy Security This session seeks to explore relationship between trade and energy security and will discuss best trade policy approach for South Asia to overcome perennial problem of energy security.
1300 – 1400 hrs	Lunch
1400 – 1500 hrs	Session 3: Trade, Capital and Financial Security The session intends to discuss the issue of trade finance in wake of current financial crisis and its likely impact on the South Asian countries Vote of Thanks
1500 – 1530 hrs	Tea/Coffee

Backgrounder

Conference: ‘Looking at Future Challenges of the International Trade Regime from South Asian Perspectives’

Jaipur, India, June 22, 2009

Objective

To discuss future challenges of South Asian countries in trade policy and associated research needs.

Background

In an effort to better inform the negotiating positions of South Asian countries on core trading issues, CUTS International, with support from Oxfam Novib of the Netherlands, implemented a project, “WTO Doha Round & South Asia–Linking Civil Society with Trade Negotiations”, in association with other research partners, in five South Asian countries --. India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Under the first phase of this project, research on five key issues of the July 2004 Framework Agreement --- Agriculture, Non-Agriculture Market Access, Trade in Services, Trade Facilitation and Development Dimensions ---, was undertaken. The novelty of the project’s approach lay in seeking country positions on these issues to identify common ground for a common South Asian position for the Hong Kong Ministerial and beyond.

The Doha Round of negotiations was expected to conclude by December 2005 at the sixth Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Hong Kong, China. However, given the realpolitik of negotiations, this was not to be. The Ministerial Conference, however, highlighted some more pertinent issues for future research and advocacy -- Duty Free Quota Free Market (DFQF) Access for LDCs, Aid for Trade (Aft), Preference Erosion, LDC Service Modalities and Special Products & Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) in Agriculture. These were selected for research under the second phase of the mentioned project.

Context

In order to complement the work done till date in the mentioned project, CUTS has decided to launch a similar initiative focusing on issues emerging as candidates for incorporation into the WTO agenda -- climate change and food, financial and energy security. The research agenda underlying this initiative would include a perception study of different stakeholders (NGOs, trade bodies, industry bodies, trade unions, WTO experts, women’s groups etc)

The above issues are of common concern to South Asian countries, and are severely impacting their poor. The speakers will analyse the implications of climate change and food, financial and energy security, for trade policy and negotiating stances of South Asian countries.

The Event

The objective would be to give direction to research on the mentioned issues through a one day workshop of South Asian experts and stakeholders.

Experts would present country background studies on the mentioned issues on the basis of a thorough review of the relevant academic/policy literature. These would be followed by comments from discussants in the form of brief presentations.

Subsequently, researchers would present an overall research methodology on the mentioned issues, elaborating on the hypotheses to be tested. A discussion would follow on lines similar to that of the previous session on country background studies.

Venue Country Inn & Suites, Jaipur-302 016

Date and Time: Monday 22nd June 2009; 0830hrs to 1530 hrs