

*UGANDA*

**KAMPALA DIALOGUE REPORT**

on

**Uganda's Trade in 2035**

under

**TDP PROJECT**

held at

Shanghai Restaurant, Kampala

**organized by**

Consumer Education Trust (CONSENT)

gpo box 1433 kampala, uganda

tel: +256 41 4268687, +256 41 4384557

mob: +256 75 1502441, +256 77 2502441

and

CUTS International

Centre for International Trade, Economics & Trade (CUTS-CITEE)

D-217 Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park

Jaipur 302 016, India

Tel: +91.141.2282821/2282591

Fax: +91.141.2282485

**supported by**

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## Introduction

Uganda's Trade 2035 was the first in the series of dialogues in 2008 on trade, development and poverty reduction under the project, titled: **Linkages between Trade, Development and Poverty Reduction**. It was held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at Shangai Restaurant – Kampala Club. Consumer Education Trust (CONSENT), the project local advocacy partner, organized the dialogue in collaboration from CUTS International – CITEE, Jaipur, India with support from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands and Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom.

The dialogue attracted 35 stakeholders from different sectors who included policy makers, civil society organizations, consumers, private sector, business support organizations, academia, researchers and the media.

## The Dialogue

### Session Opening

The session was chaired by Mr. Kimera Henry Richard, Chief Executive, CONSENT, who also gave the welcoming remarks on behalf of the TDP partners (CONSENT and DENIVA) in Uganda. Gave highlights of the TDP project background, objectives, component activities and desired outputs at the end of the project in December 2008 in collaboration with CUTS International with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands and Department for International Department, United Kingdom (DFID).

Observed that the challenge stakeholders faced, was to work and realize benefits of trade and development to societies especially the resource poor in Uganda.

### Dialogue Proceedings

The dialogue had three presentations followed by discussions. The major discussion point was "Take Trade Debates to The People".

### Major questions:

- Is Uganda opening its gates too wide in an attempt to fully liberalize trade?
- Should the country open up selectively in trading with the external world?
- Can trade and politics ever be separated, particularly for developing countries in Africa?

These are some of the burning questions that begged to be answered at a half day brainstorming event centered on Uganda Trade's 2035 – trade policies. Stakeholders engaged in lively exchange of the issues that they said were detrimental to fair trade in a global economy.

"There is no country that has developed without protecting the home industries and their domestic economy. Even the emerging giants like China and India first protected their economies until they were strong enough to compete, then they are now opening up gradually," argued Jane Nalunga of the CSO movement.

She passionately explained that the policies that are being developed should be inclined towards making trade for human development rather than human exploitation.

“Trade should be about access to human basic rights that foster human development. The core objectives should include education and the welfare of the people,” said Nalunga.

Emmanuel Atwine, Commercial officer with the Ministry of Trade and Industry in a paper he presented said that by 2035: “There are ongoing negotiations that will lead to effective trade and gains into the country with a lot of income boosting social and economic welfare,” he said.

John Ssempebwa, Director Trade Development with the Private Sector Foundation was of the view that politics was intertwined with economics in developing countries, making it complicated to have free trade.

“The truth is that in our countries politics is still driving economics. In more stable developed economies politics and trade drive the politics of those nations. But I must also say that the times of tariffs and protectionism are gone,” said Mr. Ssempebwa.

Pressing his point home, he said that with integration of the global economies it meant that the walls are coming down and there is no way that we can survive in isolation.

However before yearning for the huge markets abroad, many developing countries including Uganda should seriously consider expanding internal markets in order to support local production.

“The developed economies have a large market for their products at home. We should think of addressing the market access of our products to the export trade by also developing internal markets here. That way we will be able to handle the supply side constraints as well,” said Nalunga.

As the discussions entered into the lunch hour, it was agreed that politics should allow institutions and systems to independently function in order to flourish. It was also suggested that there are trade opportunities in expanding into the service provision sectors as this is paying more returns than the original export of bulky goods.

The meeting agreed that in future, the discussions regarding trade policies should go out to the countryside and interact with the public. “We need people like farmers and traders from the grassroots to participate and be at the center of trade negotiations and liberalization,” suggested a participant.

Stressing the growing role of the Civil Society Organizations in the future decision making on behalf the public, Jane Nalunga called for identifying the challenges that are faced by the ordinary people including rural farmers and incorporate the concerns in the negotiations for people centered policies.

**ANNEX I:**

**TDP Dialogue Program**

May 13 2008

Time: 1000-1300 HRS

Perspectives:

1000 HRS	Opening Remarks
1010 HRS	Private Sector
1025 HRS	Policymaker – Trade Expert
1040 HRS	Civil Society
1055 HRS	Discussions
1250 HRS	Rap-up
1300 HRS	Lunch and departure

**Annex II:**

**TDP Dialogue List of Participants**

<b>Name &amp; Designation</b>		<b>Name of organization, physical postal, telephone, email, fax &amp; cell contacts</b>
1.	Mr. John Ssempebwa, Director Trade Development	Private Sector Foundation Uganda, PO Box 7683 Kampala, 43 Nakasero Road, 0414230956, 0414342163,
2.	Mr. Ssemwogerere David Program Director	Agency for Environment and Wetlands AEW PO Box 26618, Kampala, 077 351736, Ssemwogerered@yahoo.com, info_aew@yahoo.com
3.	Ms. Jane Nalunga, Country Director	SEATINI-Uganda, Plot 101 Kira Rd 041 540856, 041 540857 seatini@infocom.co.ug, www.seatini.org
4.	Ms. Rose Adokorach	VECO Uganda, 0772 930820 rose.adokorach@veco.uganda.org
5.	Ms. Peninah Kyarimpa	VECO Uganda, 0772 930820 peninah.kyarimpa@veco.uganda.org
6.	Mr. George Walusimbi Mpanga, Executive Secretary	Uganda Service Exporters Association (USEA) PO Box 7203, Kampala, 0752 436380 georgew@servicexport.com www.servicexport.com.uganda
7.	Ms. Mawemuko Betty Legal Officer	Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association (UWEAL), 0782 358477, mawemukobetty@yahoo.co.uk
8.	Ntale Yonnus, Business Reporter	CBS FM, 0752 462223, 0712 462223 ntalecbs@yahoo.com, ntaleyonnus@yahoo.com
9.	Madinah Tebajjukira, Reporter	New Vision Newspaper, 0712 123368 madinajat@yahoo.co.uk
10.	Moses Ssemakula, Business Report	Red Pepper, 0712 946001 mosesv2000@yahoo.com
11.	Kimera Henry Richard, Chief Executive	Consumer Education Trust (CONSENT), GPO Box 1433, Kampala, Uganda, 0772502441, 0751502441, consentug@yahoo.com
12.	Shaban R. Sserunkuma, Programs Director	Consumer Education Trust (CONSENT), GPO Box 1433, Kampala, Uganda, 0772 473170, shabanmail@yahoo.com
13.	Andrew Benon Kibuuka President	Federation of Artist of Uganda, PO Box 1075, Kampala, 0772423863, abkibuka@hotmail
14.	Happy James Coordinator	INS-suswatch, PO Box 11777kla, 0712267210 happyjames@suswatch.org
15.	Mwebesa P Kahiga, Policy & Legal Officer	Uganda Law Reform Commission, PO Box 566 Kampala, 0772829296 mpkahiga@yahoo.com
16.	Emmanuel Atwine, Commercial officer	Ministry of Tourism, Trade & Industry, PO Box 7103, Kampala
17.	Elizabeth Tamale, Principal Commercial Officer	Ministry of Tourism, Trade & Industry, PO Box 7103, Kampala, 0752995663 etamale@mtti.go.ug

18.	Okilangole Patrick, Principal Commercial Officer	Ministry of Tourism, Trade & Industry, PO Box 7103, Kampala, 0712803206, pokilangole@mtti-go.ug
19.	Luzze Andrew Policy officer	Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) PO Box 6996 Kampala, 0772602874 Policy@uma.org.ug
20.	Butesi Annette Intern	National Association of Women Organizations of Uganda (NAWOU), PO Box 1663 Kampala, 041258463, nawou@uoi.co.ug
21.	Opio Len Speaker	Makarere University, PO Box 7062 Kampala, & Youth Plus Uganda, 0782059262, opiolen@yahoo.com
22.	Kugonza N Robert Project officer	Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development, PO Box 27551, Kampala, 0772626987, rnkugoza@yahoo.com
23.	Lubega Faroua Intern	Ministry of Tourism, Trade & Industry, PO Box 7103kla, 0772362246 Kaddu-lubega@yahoo.com
24.	Nalugya Prossy, Program coordinator	DENIVA, PO Box 11224 Kampala, 0712622932 pra@deniva.or.ug
25.	Michael Olupot-Tukei Assistant Commissioner	Ministry of Finance, PO Box 8147, Kampala, 0752650481, micheal.tukei@finance.go.ug
26.	Otegera J P Kadima Accountant	Friends Consult, PO Box 36569 Kampala, 0772920570, jpkadima@friendsconsult.co.ug
27.	Edmund Kamugisha Projects Assistant	Friends Consult, 0782631236 Ekamugisha@friendsconsult.co.ug
28.	Nambuya Carol	Bahai, PO Box 2662 Kampala, 0712531164
29.	George Olinga, Director	Bahai, PO Box 2662 Kampala, 0772531164
30.	Patrick Luganda	Farmer Voice Network, 0752488371
31.	Omar Kassim Vice President	Uganda National Chambers of Commerce & Industry, 0712670370, alliancefr@yahoo.com
32.	Kakeeto James Student	Makerere University, 0782711202 kakeetojames@lycos.com
33.	Norita katumba, Student	Makerere University, 0782711202, noritahk@yahoo.com
34.	Sansa Ambrose Program officer	Environmental Alert, 0752654321 asansa@envalert.org