It is my privilege and pleasure to greet Pradeep on his 65th birth day and recognise his signal contribution in founding CUTS and building it into perhaps the most influential non-governmental organisation in the world on matters relating to global trade, multilateral trading system and the WTO. The outstanding success of Pradeep as head of CUTS in organising internet debates, no less, on growth and poverty, editing and publishing the outcome of such debates with same title as the debate itself, is remarkable.

The debate was sparked by the forceful assertion by Pradeep’s friend, Jagdish Bhagwati, of the importance of accelerating aggregate growth in poor countries for the achievement of their objective of rapid reduction in their poverty. The dust cover of the book from the debate, edited by Pradeep with his long term associate Bipul Chatterjee describes the debate participants generously as renowned experts and realistically as from across the world.

The diversity of the opinions expressed around a near unanimous concurrence with Bhagwati’s assertion is indeed impressive. In particular it and its concomitant, an agreement on the need for an open, liberal and rules-based multilateral global trading system stand in sharp contrast to arguably the most conspicuous among many failures of the G-20 to make credible their commitments at their summits, in not acting on their commitment at more than one summit to conclude the Doha Round Multilateral Negotiations by the end of 2010. As of the end of October 2012, Doha is not concluded. Pradeep and CUTS continue to be in the forefront of the movement to push global leaders to conclude Doha.
Without any hesitation I would attribute CUTS’ success in large part to Pradeep’s understanding of the importance and absolute necessity of organising the theoretical and empirical research on the political economy of the emerging issues in the global trading environment and trade negotiations and getting them done before articulating and advocating specific recommendations of reform. I have no doubt that in this Pradeep’s ability to persuade others to contribute to the research effort using any means at his disposal, including flattery if necessary, was crucial. I believe that his success in persuasion originated from his willingness to listen to others patiently if they did not agree with him, without diluting his principles. I have observed Pradeep in action at conferences and admired his willingness to listen even if doing so required him to suffer fools, if not gladly, at least willingly and patiently!

The multilateral trading system and its overwhelming majority of participants, namely, the developing countries need Pradeep and CUTS now more than ever. I wish Pradeep a long, healthy and active life.