

**Regional Dialogue on  
Sustainable Development in South Asia**  
*Exploring Trans-boundary Cooperation in Agriculture, Water and Energy*  
**Venue: Hotel Metropolitan, Delhi, Friday, July 29, 2016**

**BACKGROUND NOTE**

**Objectives**

- To disseminate key advocacy messages on issues related to food, water and energy security in South Asia
- To discuss opportunities and challenges of regional/sub-regional cooperation for sustainable agricultural practices, agricultural value chains, water resource management, and scope for intra-regional trade and investment opportunities in the energy sector in South Asia

The mighty rivers of Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra have sustained the food production systems, supported several hundred millions of people residing in these basins and have played a prominent role in defining the political economy of the region. Increase in economic growth, urbanisation and population explosion has resulted in depletion of natural resources, mainly land and water. Degraded natural resources and the advent of climate change have raised threats to food, water and energy security of the region.

To study this scenario, CUTS International, along with its partners in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, had undertaken the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) project, which is a regional programme in South Asia supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia.

The project has been successful in focusing on six major issues for regional cooperation and development in agriculture, water and energy in South Asia. Key advocacy messages are as follows:

- Promoting efficient use of resources through regulations and knowledge sharing on sustainable agricultural practices in South Asia
- Enhancing farm incomes and economic growth in BBIN countries through better linkages and stronger value chains
- Integrated approach to groundwater regulation, management and conservation
- Development of inland waterways for trade and transit in BBIN
- Promoting energy cooperation among South Asian countries
- Promoting renewable energy technology transfer, trade and knowledge sharing in South Asia

The focus of this regional dialogue is to present these advocacy messages and deliberate on them to understand stakeholders' perceptions on food, water and energy security in South Asia and how regional/sub-regional cooperation can be explored to align ground realities on the nexus between food-water-energy security with the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Sustainable Development in South Asia**  
*Exploring Trans-boundary Cooperation in Agriculture, Water and Energy*  
**Friday, July 29, 2016, Hotel Metropolitan, New Delhi,**

**Agenda**

- 08:45 – 09:15**      **Registration**
- 09:15 – 10:00**      **Opening**
- 09:15 – 09:25**      **Welcome Remarks**  
  
Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International
- 09:25 – 09:40**      **Opening Address**  
  
Chris Elstof, Deputy High Commissioner, Australian High Commission, New Delhi
- 09:40 - 10:00**      **Keynote Address – Relationship between Food-Water-Energy Security Nexus in South Asia and the Sustainable Development Goals**  
  
Nitin Desai, Former Under Secretary-General of the United Nations
- 10:00 – 10:30**      **Tea/Coffee**
- 10:30 – 12:00**      **Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Exploration of Regional/Sub-regional Agricultural Value Chains**  
  
**Chair:** Sanjeev Chopra, Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture), Government of West Bengal  
  
**Presentation:** Veena Vidyadharan, Policy Analyst, CUTS International
- Speakers**  
R K Singh, Executive Director, Nand Educational Foundation for Rural Development, Lucknow  
Binai Lama, Senior Advisor, SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation), Bhutan  
Usman Mustafa, Professor/Head, Department of Business Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Pakistan

**12:00 – 13:30**      **Opportunities and Challenges of Trans-boundary Cooperation in Water Resource Management**

**Chair:** Joydeep Gupta, South Asia Director, The Thirdpole

**Presentation:** Aneeta Dutta, Assistant Director, Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi, Assam

**Speakers**

Archana Chatterjee, National Coordinator, International Union for Conservation of Nature, New Delhi

Mandakini Surie, Senior Program Officer, The Asia Foundation

Dhrubesh Chandra Regmi, Programme Director, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, Nepal

Enamul Haque, Professor, East-West University, Bangladesh

**13:30 – 14:30**      **Lunch**

**14:30 – 16:00**      **Scope for Intra-regional Trade and Investment Opportunities in the Energy Sector**

**Chair:** Syamal Kumar Sarkar, Distinguished Fellow and Director (Water Resources Division), The Energy and Resource Institute, New Delhi

**Presentation:** Prithviraj Nath, Policy Analyst, CUTS International

**Speakers**

Mahendra P Lama, Pro Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University

Mollah Amzad Hossain, Editor, Energy & Power, Bangladesh

Sucha Singh Gill, Professor, South Asia, Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh

Barun Barpujari, Former Executive Director, Digboi Refinery, Assam

**16:00 – 16:30**      **Tea/Coffee**

**16:30 – 17:15**      **Way Forward**

**Presentation:** Kyle Cote, Policy Analyst, CUTS International

**Speakers**

Ryan Thew, First Secretary (Development), Australian High Commission, New Delhi

Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International