

CUTS CITEE Advocacy Profile

January 2007

CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE) believes that advocacy backed up by research is crucial for making changes happen. It is our policy to conduct collective advocacy with like-minded organisations. Our advocacy is anchored with the mission of the Centre: “Pursuing economic equity and social justice within and across borders by persuading governments and empowering people”. Being a non-profit, non-governmental organisation having its headquarters in India, our advocacy is directed more towards making changes happen in India.

Main Features of Advocacy

- Sensitisation of CSOs
- Advocacy with other stakeholders – business chambers, farmers’ organisations, trade unions, etc
- Advocacy with policy-makers – trade negotiators, trade policy-makers, parliamentarians, sub-national governments, etc
- Partnerships at different levels

Objectives

- Aim to analyse and influence various legislation or policies or its implementation as to how it could be improved or could be implemented in a better manner
- Help NGOs to have a clear understanding of what advocacy is and how it might support the work of NGOs and to provide practical assistance in how to actually undertake advocacy work.
- Encourage decision-makers to work more closely with NGOs in future.
- Help to build grassroots organisations in urban and rural areas that will directly interact with people and help them out.

NGOs like CUTS have had an important influence on the New Round of multilateral trade negotiations, as one can easily see from the Doha Ministerial Declaration. In Doha all WTO Members pledged that the needs and interests of developing countries would be placed at the heart of our Work Programme, which became known as the Doha Development Agenda. In the era of WTO and economic globalisation, CUTS needs to play a very active role in protecting the interests of Indian consumers. Pascal Lamy, Director-General, World Trade Organisation

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 1993, as part of our work under the Ecomark Technical Committee. Over the years, CUTS has emerged as a premier organisation on issues relating to consumer interest and trade-related subjects. The advocacy efforts made by CUTS have indeed made a mark. Dilip Biswas, Former Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, Government of India

Indian Ecomark Scheme

To operate on a national basis and provide accreditation and labelling for household and other consumer products that would meet certain environmental criteria along with the quality requirements of Indian standards for that product. CUTS lobbied for an enabling environment for sustainable production and consumption in India and to include ecolabelling as one of the important tools in this regard.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide an incentive for manufacturers and companies to reduce adverse environmental impact of their products To assist consumers to take into account environmental factors in their purchasing decisions 	<p>In 1991 the Ecomark Scheme was launched in India.</p> <p><i>CUTS has analysed the factors explaining why the Indian Ecomark Scheme is not so successful and advocating for making necessary changes.</i></p>

Campaign on Environment-friendly Refrigerators

It was found that four multinational refrigerator-manufacturing companies (Electrolux, LG, Samsung and Whirlpool) were practising double standards. In India, they were trying to promote refrigerators as environment friendly under the pretext of using ozone depleting substances-free technology whereas in the rich world they were using ozone-friendly technologies. Given this context, CUTS campaigned for environment-friendly refrigerators for Indian consumers. During the implementation of the Ecofrig project, a series of events were held to educate the Indian people on issues of ozone depletion and global warming in the quest (as a consumer right and responsibility) for a better environment.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable awareness building and lobbying with the consumers, industry and the Government of India on issues of sustainable production and consumption 	<p>Godrej Appliances Ltd., one of the largest Indian manufacturers of consumer durables, gave Indian consumers their first Ecofrig on January 9, 2001. Others followed subsequently.</p> <p><i>The United Nations Guidelines was amended in 1999 to extend a comprehensive work programme on consumer protection by adding the Guidelines for Sustainable Consumption.</i></p>

Third World Intellectuals and NGOs' Statement Against Linkages (TWIN-SAL)

Overloading the WTO's agenda (World Trade Organisation) with non-trade concerns would distort and strain the multilateral trading system. It is for this purpose CUTS prepared this Statement drafted by a group of eminent persons led by Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati of Columbia University, USA and supported by a large number of organisations and individuals.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To generate better understanding of the protagonists and antagonists of the debate on trade and non-trade issues on why non-trade issues should not be included in the WTO agenda 	<p>Labour standards were not included in the Doha Round of negotiation by the WTO Members.</p>

Inclusion of NGOs in the Official Indian Delegation to WTO Ministerial Conferences

In the past non-official business interests were adequately represented in the Indian delegations to WTO Ministerial Conferences. It was unfair that public interest was not given due recognition and hence, CUTS advocated with the Department of Commerce, Government of India to include NGOs to its official delegation to the Ministerial Conferences of the WTO to contribute constructively towards judicious and informed decision-making.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To involve different interest groups in the process of policy formulation and for comprehending the intricacies and ramifications of international trade matters	<p>In 2005, Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General of CUTS International was invited to join the official Indian delegation to the 6th Ministerial Conference of the WTO Members held in Hong Kong, China.</p>

Peace Building in South Asia through Economic Cooperation

Along with network partners in South Asia, CUTS is conducting Track 2 advocacy to bring peace through economic cooperation and development. A series of advocacy dialogues was conducted at national and regional, which acted as a platform to exchange information and views among different stakeholders: government officials, business representatives, civil society actors, media, etc.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To assess the present status of this regional bloc and analyse the future prospects of economic cooperation in South AsiaTo inform about the overall dynamics of the South Asian countries in terms of commonalities and differences that they countries have	<p>Governments, business community and civil society organisations in South Asian region are better able to understand the linkages between economic cooperation, peace and development in South Asia.</p> <p><i>It has also initiated dialogues between trade communities of South Asian countries for better business-to-business engagements and information flow, and thereby augmenting trade and investment within the region.</i></p>

Formation of the Inter-State Trade Council

The formation of Inter-State Trade Council of India would enable better coordination between the Central and State Governments on trade policy matters. CUTS has advocated with the trade and industry ministers at the Centre and in States for the formation of this body.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To enable the State Governments of India to take more effective part in the country's trade policy and its implementation	<p>The Inter-State Trade Council has been formed.</p> <p><i>Most State Governments have formed WTO Cells to take more effective part in the deliberations of this body.</i></p>

National Foreign Trade Policy of India

In 2004, the National Foreign Trade Policy of India 2004-09 was adopted, replacing the earlier annual Export-Import Policy. Through its work on Agenda for India at the WTO, in association with its partners of the GRANITE (Grassroots Reachout & Networking in India on Trade & Economics) project, CUTS has been advocating for adopting such a long-term policy with specific objectives, which are pro-development and pro-poor.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable grassroots NGOs working in different parts of India to convey their views and concerns with regard to trade and human development to policy-makers 	The National Foreign Trade Policy of India 2004-09 has specific pro-development and pro-poor objectives, which have been further strengthened through specific measures taken as under the annual supplements to this Policy.

Trade Policy Making in India

CUTS has been advocating for the creation of a separate Department for International Trade and Trade Diplomacy in India.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable India to generate more benefits from its increasing integration with the global economy in an environment of policy coherence and implementation 	The Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce in its 35 th Report on “India and the WTO” (December 1998) recommended the establishment of a separate Department of International Trade and Trade Diplomacy under the umbrella of the Ministry of Commerce with a substantial contingent of professionally competent personnel on its staff. <i>CUTS is pursuing the matter through writing in media and other advocacy efforts.</i>

Amendment of the Indian Patent Act

CUTS has advocated that the third amendment of the Indian Patent Act 1970 should utilise all flexibilities provided in the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and the Paragraph 6 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration (of the WTO Members) on TRIPs and Public Health.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the Government of India to adopt a TRIPs-compliant and development-friendly patent law To generate awareness among the Indian parliamentarians about the importance of the relevant issues by producing a brief for them 	The Parliament of India enacted the Indian Patent (Amendment) Act 2005, which is TRIPs-compliant and at the same time having provisions for ensuring better public health.

Trilateral Development Cooperation

CUTS has been advocating that in order to make developmental aid more effective, governments and donors should establish a model of trilateral development cooperation (between Northern donors, Southern recipients of resources and Southern providers of knowledge in other Southern countries) and institutionalise it for better political buy-in through the involvement of civil society organisations.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To enable the poor countries to better utilise developmental aid• To enable the rich countries to become better accountable in regard to aid utilisation and its effectiveness	The Task Force on Aid for Trade appointed by the WTO Director-General in its report submitted to the WTO Members in July 2006 has recommended that this model be taken into consideration for operationalising aid for trade.

Trade Preferences to Least Developed Countries

Even before the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of the WTO Members has called for the developed countries and advanced developing countries like India to provide duty-free, quota-free access to products from least developed countries to their markets, CUTS has been advocating that India should offer such a preferential trade policy to LDCs.

Purpose	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To enable LDCs to better access the Indian market• To enable India in fostering a more robust South-South trade cooperation	Department of Commerce, Government of India has, in principle, decided to adopt and implement this policy and it is expected to be operationalised from July 2007.