

CUTS CITEE in Action

July-September 2017



Events

Expanding Tradable Benefits of Trans-boundary Water

CUTS organised Ganga and Brahmaputra basins Policy Dialogues at Kathmandu, Nepal on July 14, 2017 and at Dhaka, Bangladesh on August 10, 2017 respectively. The objective of these meetings were to:

- present findings from the country-specific diagnostic studies conducted in Ganga and Brahmaputra basins;
- facilitate knowledge sharing on waterways governance within and across borders; and
- promote alternative policy discourses for bringing in the upper and lower riparian (including trans-boundary) concerns for enabling reform measures on management and governance of inland waterway.

These dialogues were part of the project entitled 'Expanding tradable benefits of trans-boundary water: Promoting navigational usage of inland waterways in Ganga and Brahmaputra basins' being implemented in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.



www.cuts-citee.org/IW/Events.htm





Understanding the Dynamics of Informal Cross-border Trade in Agricultural Products in Eastern South Asia

CUTS organised a stakeholder consultation meeting on 'Understanding the Dynamics of Informal Cross-border Trade in Agricultural Input Products in Eastern South Asia' with support from Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and Department for International Development (DFID), at New Delhi, India on August 04, 2017.

The objective of the event was to present the key findings of the diagnostic study on informal cross-border trade in agricultural inputs across borders of India-Bangladesh and India-Nepal, and its impact on livelihoods of local farmers. It also aims to propose policy reforms on informal cross-border trade in agricultural inputs in the Eastern South Asia region.

www.cuts-citee.org/LITA/



Reduce NTBs in Agricultural Trade between Bangladesh-India

CUTS along with Unnayan Shamnay, Bangladesh organised an Advocacy Dialogue to Reduce NTBs in Agricultural Trade between Bangladesh-India at Dhaka, Bangladesh on August 08, 2017 and at New Delhi, India on August 17, 2017. These dialogues were supported by Chemonics International Inc.

The objectives of these two events were to establish cross-border bilateral partnerships to address non-tariff barriers (NTBs) for a specific set of agricultural commodities, such as potato, green chilli, tomato, and *brinjal* (eggplant), and create a framework for continued bilateral dialogues to address NTBs.

The aim was to bring together relevant regulators, government agencies, private players, researchers and experts to address

NTBs in trade of these identified four products, in particular, and for agricultural commodities, in general.



www.cuts-citee.org/events.htm



Participation

- Kyle R Cote attended a workshop on 'International Training on Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning' organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute's Centre for Capacity Building, in collaboration with International Development Research Centre at Bangkok, Thailand on July 18-20, 2017. The workshop aimed to enable participants with dynamic MEAL methodology.
- Bipul Chatterjee attended and spoke at the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade, organised by the World Trade Organisation in Geneva during July 11-13, 2017. He spoke at an event organised by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on '*Enhancing the Contribution of Preferential Trade Agreements to Inclusive and Equitable Trade*' on July 14, 2017.
- Kyle R Cote attended a regional workshop on 'Least developed countries and leveraging trade as a means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda' organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Bhutan at Thimphu, Bhutan on August 02-04, 2017. The objectives of the workshop were to identify relevant and feasible policy options that can help address the current challenges in the global and regional trade environment; discuss future capacity development needs for putting in place relevant policy responses; and review the state of data availability with respect to trade-related targets and indicators.
- Jill Juma participated in the African Bar Association (Africa Lawyers Association) Annual Conference in Port, Harcourt Nigeria, during August 06-10, 2017. She chaired a session on Continental Free Trade Area and Ease of Doing Business in Africa and also received an Honorary Appointment as Special Adviser on International Trade, Investment and Business Migration.
- Rahul Arora and Sarbjit Singh attended 10th South Asian Training Programme on CGE Modelling organised by South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM), Dhaka, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE), Kathmandu and the Centre for WTO Studies at Dhaka Bangladesh during August 12-16, 2017. The objective of the programme was to impart knowledge of theory and applications of CGE modelling to the South Asian researchers.
- Susan Mathew participated in a training session on 'Benefit Sharing Water Governance Programme' organised by the India Chapter of Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) at Leh, Ladakh during August 21-28, 2017.
- Veena Vidyadharan participated in the final GBM CSO Vision Validation Workshop organised by International Union for Conservation of Nature at New Delhi on August 23-24, 2017 to finalise and validate the joint vision of CSOs on the management of the natural resources of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna Basins. She also delivered a presentation on '*Post-Harvest Technology*' at "Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Science, Technology and Innovation in Agriculture organised at MNIT, Jaipur by ASSOCHAM and Department of Science and Technology on September 01, 2017.
- Veena Vidyadharan participated in Rajasthan Sector Expert Consultation on Environment and Climate' organised by Copenhagen Consensus Centre in partnership with Tata Trusts and CEOEDECON at Jaipur on September 20, 2017. The consultation focussed on issues concerning environment and climate change in states of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- Sanjay Kumar Mangla attended 'Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum' 2017 and presented a case study on Custom Clearance Facilitation Committee in Yogyakarta (Indonesia) during September 05-08, 2017. During this conference, CUTS received Trade Facilitation Innovation Award.
- Pradeep S Mehta, Sanjay Kumar Mangla and Subhanil Banerjee participated at FICCI North East Connect Summit 2017 at Kohima (Nagaland) on September 22-23, 2017. He delivered a theme presentation on '*Cross-Border Trade in North East: Status and Way Forward*' and also attended FICCI's Core Group on BIMSTEC Consultation Meet. During that summit, a knowledge paper was released entitled '*Harnessing potential for cross-border trade between North-East India and Neighbouring countries.*'
- Susan Mathew participated and presented CUTS work at the 'Brahmaputra River Symposium: Knowledge Beyond Boundaries' organised by South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies (SaciWATERS) and partners at New Delhi on September 25-26, 2017.
- Prashant Sharma participated in a session '*Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Cross-Border Linkages*' organised by Ananta Aspen Centre at New Delhi on September 26, 2017.
- Bipul Chatterjee attended and spoke at the WTO Public Forum 2017 at Geneva during September 26-28, 2017.



In Media

Revitalising connectivity through inland waterways

World Commerce Review, August 02, 2017 (By Bipul Chatterjee and Saurabh Kumar)

A major concern about South Asia's economic development and its limited share in the global economy through trade and investment has been the lack of investment in infrastructure, including that of a regional nature. Lately the imperative of addressing such an infrastructure deficit has resulted in a boost in connectivity projects in the region, which have long-term geopolitical implications. For instance: the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement (BBIN MVA) or the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC).

www.worldcommercereview.com/html/chatterjee-and-kumar-revitalising-connectivity-through-inland-waterways.html

India's Lacklustre Approach Towards International Trade is Hurting its Foreign and Economic Interests

The Wire, August 13, 2017 (By Pradeep S Mehta)

Recently, during a round of 'candid' talks with the Chinese, Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sought greater market access and a level playing field for Indian information technology, pharmaceutical and agricultural products in China. China, on its part, was ready with its complaints of India abusing trade remedy measures and launching anti-dumping investigations against imports of photovoltaic products from China.

<https://thewire.in/167438/indias-lacklustre-approach-towards-international-trade-hurting-foreign-economic-interests/>

A Promising Trilateral: India-Myanmar-Thailand

The Diplomat, September 14, 2017 (By Roshan Iyer)

India and Myanmar released a joint statement after a visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Naypyidaw, Myanmar. Connectivity was highlighted with eight mentions of road construction projects, bridge restorations and work on port infrastructure. The statement also contained six mentions of joint India-Myanmar technical and capacity building initiatives in the sectors of industry, agriculture, English language and Information and Technology (IT).

<https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/a-promising-trilateral-india-myanmar-thailand/>

It's Crash Intervention Time for Suresh Prabhu

The Wire, September 18, 2017 (By Pradeep S Mehta and Bipul Chatterjee)

India's newly appointed Commerce & Industry Minister, Suresh Prabhu, has his task cut out. While he has little time to firm-up India's positions in various bilateral, regional and multilateral negotiations such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the forthcoming Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation members is his biggest challenge is to revive our exports and associated sectors for large-scale job creation.

<https://thewire.in/178329/suresh-prabhu-commerce-industry-exports/>



Publication

Harnessing the Potential for Cross-border Trade between North East India and its Neighbouring Countries

The North East India is one of the least developed regions of the country. It shares a long international border with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Nepal. All these countries are important trading partners of India and that opens huge trade potential for the North East India. However, more than 5,000 km of international border that lies along the North East India were recently more in news for cross-country contentions. Collaborative economic action through cross-border trade was revived at the wake of India's Act East Policy.

Off late, it has been realised that the region has all the potential to emerge as the missing link between India and South East Asia. However, such transition from an economically backward and security sensitive region to a trade hub and a bridge to the South East Asia is yet to be realised despite significant government-led attempts. Therefore, at this juncture it becomes important to understand the specific problems of the region and extend precise policy prescription towards the same including greater private sector participation to realise this goal.

www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Harnessing_the_Potential_for_Cross-border_Trade_between_North_East_India_and_its_Neighbouring_Countries.pdf