

CUTS CITEE in Action

October-December 2014

Events

Technical Barriers to Trade between India and Bangladesh

CUTS International, in collaboration with Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh organised a Focussed Group Discussion at Dhaka on December 30, 2014 to verify and substantiate the identified technical barriers to trade (TBT) to selected product categories between India and Bangladesh.

During January 2015, similar activity will be carried out in Kolkata, India to discuss prevalent TBT on Indian side and facilitate consensus building in arriving at mutually agreed solutions/policy change that will help promote trade between the two countries, which can be expanded to South Asia.

http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/TBT-Project_Brief.pdf



National Foreign Trade Policy of India

CUTS International in collaboration with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and IPE Global Private Limited (IPE Global) facilitated a 'Roundtable Discussion on India's Foreign Trade Policy' at New Delhi on November 29, 2014. It provided a platform for exchange of views between Indian business and concerned policymakers to discuss various critical aspects of India's trade policy. More than 70 participants representing various industry bodies and other stakeholders participated.

Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS International delivered a presentation on its publication: 'Development Dimensions of India's National Foreign Trade Policy'. He highlighted the findings of a pan-India project that was undertaken by CUTS earlier this year.



The keynote address was delivered by Pravir Kumar, Director General of Foreign Trade, Department of Commerce, Government of India. He noted that the previous policy had been extended due to a number of extenuating circumstances. In preparing the new trade policy there had been extensive consultations with all stakeholders and to the extent possible, these suggestions have been included in the draft.

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/NFTP>

National Public Procurement Policy of India

CUTS is implementing a project on 'National Public Procurement Policy of India' with support from the British High Commission, New Delhi, India. The objective of the project is to explore necessary elements of a National Public Policy of India and their interfaces with other major macro-economic policies so as to frame a draft policy and advocate for its adoption and implementation. It will be implemented from July 01, 2013 to March 31, 2015.

A stakeholder consultation meeting was held under the project at Ranchi on November 21, 2014. The objective of the consultation was to understand the stakeholders' experience in public procurement system and obtain their inputs to advocate for promulgation of National Public Procurement Policy to be put in place in India.

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/NPPPI>



Training Programme on Economic Diplomacy

CUTS International organised second Training Programme on Economic Diplomacy for middle/entry level officials at Jaipur during November 24-26, 2014. With support from the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India through the Centre for WTO Studies, these programmes seek to fill the lack of an institutional base that exists in economic diplomacy.

The programme brought experts and resource persons together to explore and deliberate various aspects of economic diplomacy with special focus on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement of the WTO. Over the three-day period, participants were able to sharpen their skills on economic diplomacy through lectures, simulation exercises and group discussions. Towards the end of the programme, participants acknowledged that the learning they obtained from the programme was extremely valuable.

http://www.cuts-citee.org/Economic_Diplomacy



Mega Regionals and the Indian Economy

CUTS with support from UK's Department for International Development, under its Knowledge Partnership Programme, is implementing a project on 'External PTAs and Indian Economy' (EPTA). The overall aim of the project is to generate research results on the impacts of the three selected external PTAs on the Indian economy and use the same for informed trade policy decisions.

A stakeholder consultation meeting was held at Ranchi on November 21, 2014. The objective was to generate awareness among relevant stakeholders (exporters, importers, merchant exporters and trading houses) on mega regional trade agreements – EU-ASEAN FTA, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP); and seek their inputs on how to countervail their potential impact on the Indian economy.

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/EPTAs>

Trade, Transport and Transit Facilitation in South Asia

CUTS International, in partnership with FICCI, organised a high level conference on 'Trade, Transport and Transit Facilitation in South Asia: Imperative of Bridging Macro-Meso-Micro Gaps' at Kolkata on October 29-30, 2014. The conference was organised with a view to find solutions to challenges and deliberate on how to avail opportunities to trade facilitation in South Asia, particularly in the context of India's role and responsibilities and taking into account relevant and related reflections from grassroots in order to take forward a broader regional agenda for trade facilitation.

The deliberations took into consideration the results of activities of CUTS and a number of other like-minded organisations from among the South Asian countries. The purpose was to find solutions as against rounds of discussion. A number of relevant policymakers and other stakeholders from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal participated.

<http://www.cuts-citee.org/TTFA>



WTO Public Forum: Why Trade Matters to Everyone

CUTS International organised a session on 'Why Trade Matters to Everyone' during WTO Public Forum 2014 at Geneva on October 02, 2014. The purpose was to identify various policy issues in international trade that impact consumer welfare and discuss the status of discussions on these topics to understand how both consumer and producer welfare can be enhanced by greater economic cooperation. Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS spoke in two sessions: 'BRICS and Africa: Partnership for development' and 'Why WTO matters for emerging countries'.

http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Backgrounder-WTO_Public_Forum_2014-Why_trade_matters_to_everyone.pdf

Pakistan and India must talk despite negative mood

Business Recorder, December 19, 2014

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International, was interviewed by Business Recorder, Pakistan. The issues discussed during the interview were: regional trade, consumer gains, and the contentious Indo-Pak relations these days.

<http://www.brecorder.com/company-news/235/1254039/>

Depth of India's Free Trade Agreements

Business World, December 12, 2014

By Bipul Chatterjee and Surendar Singh

Domestic reforms for regulatory convergence among key trading partners are fast emerging as facilitators of export competitiveness. In the recent past, India has shown a keen interest in bilateral/regional trade negotiations, which are known as free trade agreements. It has signed 13 FTAs with different countries/regions having varying depths of engagement across different sectors and is negotiating more comprehensive trade pacts such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement of Asia and the Pacific (RCEP).

<http://www.businessworld.in/news/india/depth-of-india-s-free-trade-agreements/1661305/page-0.html>

Participation

- Kyle Cote participated in an international conference on 'Mega Trading Blocs: Implications for Developing Countries' jointly organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Centre for WTO Studies at New Delhi on December 16, 2014.
- Archana Jatkar participated in an event entitled, 'India's Growth Trajectory in a Fractured World Economy: *Opportunities and Challenges*', organised by FICCI at New Delhi, on December 12, 2014.
- Surendar Singh attended a Conference on 'Banks of the Developing World: Regional Roles, Governance and Sustainability' organised by South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town at South Africa on November 24, 2014. He also participated in Regional Economic Integration programme organised by SAIIA and *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* on November 25-26, 2014.
- Archana Jatkar participated in 'Further Together We Go: Remarks by US Trade Representative Michael Froman on the US-India Trade and Investment Relationship', organised by FICCI at New Delhi, on November 24, 2014.
- Bipul Chatterjee spoke in two sessions: '*The Issue of Public Stockholding in the WTO*' and '*Plurilaterals, Systemic Concerns and the Interests of the LDCs at a Roundtable on Post-Bali Issues*', organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue of Bangladesh, Dhaka, on November 22-24, 2014.
- Bipul Chatterjee spoke in a session entitled '*South Asia-ASEAN Connectivity, Transit and Trade Facilitation and Development of Border Regions*' at 'Regional Policy Dialogue on Transport Connectivity in Southern Asia' organised by the South West Asia Office of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at New Delhi, on November 19-20, 2014.
- Surendar Singh participated in Annual Conference of Shanghai Centre for WTO Consultation, at China on November 05, 2014.
- Bipul Chatterjee spoke in a session entitled '*Regional Energy Security*' at the 7th South Asia Economic Summit organised by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries, at New Delhi, on November 05-07, 2014.
- Suresh P Singh and Saurabh Kumar attended 4th International Rice Congress, organised by the International Rice Research Institute at Bangkok during October 27-31, 2014.
- Saurabh Kumar presented a paper entitled 'Agriculture Input and Output Trade in South Asia: Opportunities and Challenges' in 8th International Conference of Asian Society of Agricultural Economists at Dhaka, during October 15-17, 2014.
- Chenai C Mukumba and Arundhati Kulshreshtha attended the CII Global SME Summit, at New Delhi on October 08-09, 2014. The objective of this summit was to connect Global SMEs for mutual business development and explore emerging markets.