



# SMALL STEPS...GIANT LEAP

## *CUTS Initiatives in South Asia*

Since mid 90s CUTS has been working for fostering peace and prosperity in South Asia through better economic cooperation. Through policy research, advocacy, networking and partnership with non-governmental organisations, CUTS is advocating that consumers in South Asian countries are suffering most on account of cost of economic non-cooperation. In 1995, CUTS was instrumental in gathering a number of like-minded organisations from five South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) into a common platform to form a network: South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE) for conducting joint activities on various aspects of trade and regulatory issues.

The mission of SAWTEE is 'To network and build capacities in South Asia in the context of trade and liberalisation with enhanced regional and economic cooperation'. The overall objective of SAWTEE is to build the capacity of the concerned stakeholders in South Asia, by equipping them with knowledge, information and skills to voice their concerns, particularly in the context of liberalisation and globalisation. Since 1998, SAWTEE is operating out of Kathmandu, Nepal, with an independent secretariat and programme. Since the year 2000, CUTS has successfully taken the SAWTEE model forward as an instrument of South-South cooperation\* between and among the state and non-state actors in and out of Africa.

### Objectives

- **Awareness Generation:** Informing, educating and provoking actions from the readers of its publications on various issues related to liberalisation, globalisation, multilateral trading system, regional cooperation, environment and economics
- **Advocacy:** Influencing policy making at the national and regional level on issues relating to trade, environment, economics, liberalisation, globalisation and multilateral trading system
- **Policy Research:** To conduct research on specific issues identified by the network members and disseminate findings to a large audience, including policy makers and international communities
- **Networking and Capacity building:** To build capacity of NGOs, media and academia on issues relating to liberalisation and globalisation including the functioning of the multilateral trading system, environment and economics

### Achievements

Over the years, CUTS has developed a formidable reputation for conducting policy research and networking with NGOs, government officials, academia, research institutions, media, etc. All these efforts are aimed at direct and indirect advocacy for fostering peace and prosperity in South Asia through better economic cooperation. For instance, CUTS and its partners are advocating with trade and other economic ministries and political leadership of these countries highlighting peace dividends that better economic cooperation can generate and articles are regularly written in popular press in the region to generate greater awareness about positive externalities of better economic cooperation.

A study entitled, 'Liberalisation and Poverty: Is there a Virtuos Circle?' was done at the South Asian level (in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) for Department for International Development (DFID), UK and used as an input for the World Bank's World Development Report 2000-01 whose focus was on poverty.

*Jeff Atkinson, Advocacy Coordinator, Oxfam, Australia said, "Oxfam is aware of very good work which SAWTEE does in the South Asian context and it was therefore with considerable interest that we learnt of a similar initiative being launched in Africa. We do believe that the SAWTEE model is a good and useful one and if the African model is modeled on that, it should prove successful".*

\* To promote South-South cooperation, CUTS has also established resource centres at Lusaka and Nairobi (Africa), Geneva and Hanoi which are pursuing similar activities.

## PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

- Progressive Regional Organisation, Action & Cooperation on Trade (PROACT)**  
 Aimed to create a set of young GATT practitioners in the South Asian region who could comprehend and make interventions at different levels and create a network of organisations in the region to generate a common action plan for its economic development
- Field Study Research in South Asia: Conditions Necessary for the Liberalisation of Trade and Investment to Reduce Poverty**  
 Identified a set of conditions, which if, satisfied, would help in creating a system that would transmit benefits of trade and liberalisation to the poor  
<http://www.cuts-international.org/no-7-99.pdf>
- A Comparative Study of Competition Regimes in Seven Selected Countries of the Commonwealth (7Up1)**  
 Examined the national and regional understanding of competition regimes, which involved both research and advocacy on competition policy and consumer protection  
<http://www.cuts-ccier.org/7up1/index.htm>
- Investment for Development (IFD)**  
 Provided information and understanding to policy-making bodies for designing and implementing investment policies that facilitate development among others India and Bangladesh in South Asia  
<http://www.cuts-ccier.org/ifd-overview.htm>
- Advocacy and Capacity Building on Competition Policy and Law in Asia (7Up2)**  
 Accelerated the process towards a functional competition policy and law for selected countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam in Southeast Asia, and Bangladesh, Nepal and India in South Asia), and advanced an enabling environment for the law and policy to be better enforced  
<http://www.cuts-ccier.org/7Up2/7up2-overview.htm>
- South Asian Civil Society Network on International Trade Issues (SACSNIIT)**  
 Undertook comprehensive analysis of trade policy issues of interest to South Asian countries and created a network of research institutions and CSOs to respond to emerging issues on the multilateral trading platform  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/SACSNIIT>
- Linkages between Trade, Development & Poverty Reduction (TDP)**  
 Explored linkages between trade, development and poverty reduction by conducting perception analysis of relevant stakeholders and lobbying for enabling policy and practice changes  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/tdp>
- Trade Facilitation Needs Assessment in South Asia**  
 Aimed at exploring and analysing the trade related issues other than the tariff related barriers that impact export and import from the Eastern Sub-region of South Asia comprising select countries viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (West Bengal) and Nepal  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/tf.htm>
- Mainstreaming International Trade into National Development Strategy: A Pilot Project in Bangladesh and India (MINTDEV)**  
 Addressed a major problem of trade policy-making and its implementation in developing countries, i.e. the problem of social exclusion. Through collection of data/information from grassroots and their analysis, it addressed several questions  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/mainstreaming/index.htm>
- Farmers' Rights in Hindukush Himalayan Region**  
 Contributed to securing farmers' rights to livelihood in the Himalayan region through strategic interventions, in the context of liberalisation, globalisation and WTO agreements  
[http://www.cuts-international.org/CRC/Farmers\\_Rights.htm](http://www.cuts-international.org/CRC/Farmers_Rights.htm)
- Capacity Building of Electricity Reforms in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (RESA)**  
 Enhances the capacity of consumers to better understand the regulatory process involved in electricity reforms – enabled them to take up action-oriented research and policy advocacy in the electricity sector  
<http://www.cuts-ccier.org/RESA/index.htm>



## ONGOING PROJECTS

- **WTO Doha Round & South Asia: *Linking Civil Society with Trade Negotiations***

Promote incisiveness in trade policy making in five select South Asian countries and provide inputs to arrive at a possible common South Asian negotiating position in regard to the Doha Development Round of the WTO. Two phases have been completed successfully and the third is in progress  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/SAFIT-III/>

- **Impact of Climate Change and Food Insecurity on Poverty**

Assess the perceptions of stakeholders, especially small and marginal farmers, about the need for financial and technological measures based on intra-regional/international cooperation for mitigating the adverse impact of climate change on food security  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/CCFS/>

- **Capacity and Skills Development on Competition Law & Policy in Bangladesh**

Aims at developing adequate capacities within the government, academia, private sector, civil society, media and other key stakeholders to analyse and address competition related issues

- **Cost of Economic Non-Cooperation to Consumers in South Asia**

Analyse reasons for economic non-cooperation among South Asian countries and assess the costs thereof in terms of loss of consumer welfare and to derive recommendations for minimising such welfare loss  
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/COENCOSA/>

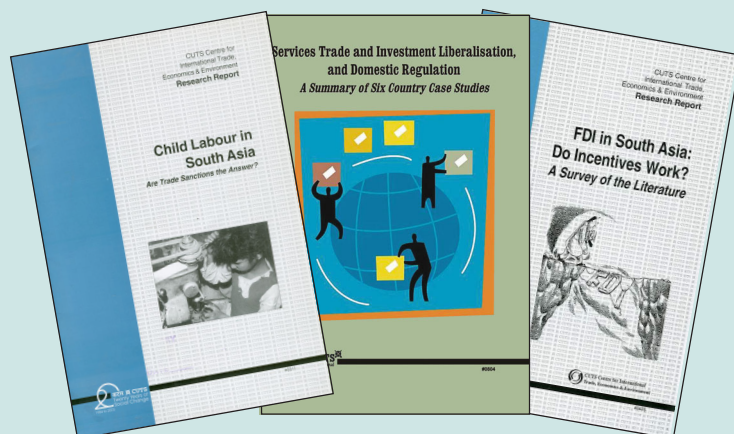
### CUTS Initiatives on Good Governance

CUTS has established its position as a major player in the South Asian region through deriving, testing and utilising social accountability (SAC) approaches and tools and is well equipped to work as a resource agency. Along with evidence-based advocacy, it has substantially contributed in setting the direction of the country in improving the demand side of service delivery with a proven ability and hands-on experience to use several SAC tools.

The organisation is partnering with several international agencies such as the World Bank, Partnership for Transparency Fund, Results for Development, Affiliated Network for Social Accountability-South Asia Region etc in the work for improving public expenditure outcomes and enhancing transparency in flagship welfare schemes/sectors and now entering in the area of public procurement.

Having associated with several networks such as South Asia Social Accountability Network, Demand for Good Governance Learning Network and International Budget Partnership, the organisation is also playing active role in developing various resource kits and curriculum on SAC.

## PUBLICATIONS



### Research Reports/Discussion Papers

- Anti-competitive Practices in Nepal
- Farmers' Rights: Lessons for Policymakers in South Asian Developing Countries
- Agriculture Liberalisation and its Impact on South Asian Countries
- SPS and TBT: Present Status and Future Concerns for South Asia
- Child Labour in South Asia: Are Trade Sanctions the Answer?
- TRIPs and Public Health: Ways Forward for South Asia
- Competitiveness of Service Sectors in South Asia: Role and Implications of GATS
- FDI in South Asia: Do Incentives Work? A Survey of the Literature
- The WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin: Implications for South Asia
- WTO Agriculture Negotiations and South Asian Countries
- Movement of Natural Persons and South Asian Countries

### Monographs

- Globalisation: South Asian Perspective
- Services Trade and Investment Liberalisation, and Domestic Regulation: A Summary of Six Country Case Studies

### Briefing Papers

- Competition Policy in Small Economies
- Labour Standards & WTO: A New Form of Protectionism
- Trade, Environment and Sustainable Development in South Asia
- Liberalisation and Regulatory Reforms in South Asia.
- Services Trade Liberalisation in South Asia
- Economic Cooperation in South Asia: Current State and Prospects
- What Makes Regional Integration Work?: Lessons for South Asia
- Informal Trade in South Asia: How to channelise to a formal route?
- Cost of Non-Cooperation in South Asia

For more information, please visit: [www.cuts-international.org](http://www.cuts-international.org)



A successful integration can make South Asia a magnet for vastly enhanced foreign investment and lead to a restructuring of the economies, making the region one of the fastest growing and most competitive economic blocs. CUTS has its own distinctive profile by virtue of being basically a CSO. This has enabled it to carve out a special niche in the areas of advocacy and networking.

*Muchkund Dubey  
Former Foreign Secretary of India*



On CUTS activities, I would like to make a special mention of the 7Up project. I found the goals of interactive research, advocacy, taking developing country competition policy/ consumer protection issues to international forum/level via informal and formal channels most impressive. CUTS strength lies in cross-country network and research capability.

*Saman Kelegama  
Executive Director  
Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka*



CUTS had developed from a small consumer group to an international organisation, addressing and dealing issues related to trade policy, sustainable development, North-South cooperation and conflicts, among others. CUTS has emerged as a leader in these areas in the developing world. On the international front, it has received recognition as an effective research and advocacy group.

*Ratnakar Adhikari  
Executive Chairman, SAWTEE, Kathmandu*



Since its establishment, CUTS has been able to graduate itself into a strong voice, in India, and also globally, in support of the cause for poor countries and poor people. CUTS continuing efforts towards promoting constructive engagement between the developing and the developed world, to democratise the global trading system and to make globalisation work for the poor, has received wide appreciation from all people of good heart.

*Mustafizur Rehman  
Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh*



CUTS is among the pioneers of regional collaboration of policy think-tanks in South Asia. SDPI and CUTS partnership is a practical example of promoting peace between Pakistan and India through research on challenges facing both countries. When it comes to future challenges, CUTS is competing with itself and self competition is always difficult.

*Abid Qaiyum Suleri  
Executive Director, Sustainable Development  
Policy Institute, Pakistan*

### Six Decades after Separation

*The News, Pakistan, June 13, 2010*

A lowering of barriers to formal trade will not only result in formalisation of current informal trade but also encourage hitherto unengaged players. The lethargy and animosity of the past six decades calls for sustained efforts by business leaders to continue building interest alliance

### Once opportunities arise

*The Financial Express, Bangladesh, October 03, 2007*

At a recent seminar in Kathmandu on trade in South Asia, the issue of regional trade cooperation figured prominently.

meeting resolved to focus on supply-side issues, which include a rationalisation of standards and implementation of an effective competition policy and law.

### Region wise: Should SAFTA be any different?

*The News on Sunday, May 28, 2006*

Regional trade agreements have historically played a positive role in reducing conflicts and hostilities among their member countries. Should South Asia Free Trade Agreement be any

### Indo-Pak trade: Cutting the Gordian knot

*Economic Times, August 06, 2008*

Pakistani press is crying foul on the new trade policy. India and Pakistan are natural trading partners. Recent developments indicate that all is not lost and there might be lasting peace and much more trade between these nations.

### Why should trade await a final settlement?

*Daily Times, Pakistan, March 27, 2005*

Cricket seems to be a far greater force uniting nations and sentiments than war. If commonality of purpose can exist on the sports field it can also be a part of trade processes. If one can play cricket, one can also undertake trade.

## Partners in Development



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