



**Regional Conference on
“Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in Deepening EAC
Regional Integration: *Perspectives from the BIEAC Project*”**

2nd November, 2010

Snow Crest Hotel, Arusha, Tanzania.

1.0 Background Information

CUTS Geneva Resource Centre (CUTS GRC) in collaboration with CUTS Africa Resource Centre, Nairobi (CUTS ARC) has been implementing a 2 year regional project entitled *Building an Inclusive East Africa Community (BIEAC)* since December 2008 with the support from Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). The general aim of the project is to empower Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the EAC to identify their roles and engage proactively in the EAC integration process. Specifically, the project was initiated to empower CSOs to be able to identify challenges relating to effective implementation of the EAC regional integration policies. The project has been implemented through various trade policy researches, where various studies on the implications of trade policies including the ongoing EAC-EU EPA and the EAC regional integration process have been undertaken and disseminated in various national and regional awareness workshops.

In the BIEAC project several key lessons and experiences have been identified that are of great importance to an effective EAC integration process. CUTS has organised a regional conference on “Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in Deepening EAC Regional Integration: *Perspectives from the BIEAC Project* to discuss and disseminate these lessons and experiences. Successfully tackling the challenges of regional integration will require a wide range of actions and cooperation across the EAC. Engaging citizens in the policy dialogue and implementation process, so as to ensure action responds to their needs and attracts the ownership required to be politically sustainable is prominent in this context. The Building an Inclusive East African Community (BIEAC) project proposes to address these challenges.

2.0: The BIEAC Project – Aims and Expectations

The BIEAC-project covers all the five EAC members: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The project supports a range of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the EAC member countries for two years to examine the implications of external trade policies on the welfare and livelihood of people and provide a better understanding of both challenges and opportunities of trade integration. The aim is to support these CSOs in their effort to raise the awareness of the general public on relevant issues, gather their concerns and carry out advocacy to highlight them to the policy makers. This is to be done through research, awareness raising and advocacy in two one yearly cycles.

The project approach is to study potential implications of the proposed intra-EAC and external trade policies for the poor and marginalised in the region; identify interventions and policies required to support economic and social adjustment to trade reforms; and

measures required to support the poor and marginalised to better access opportunities provided by the intra-EAC and external trade integration. Briefing Papers and easy-to-read Trade Guides have been produced based on this research. Civil Society Position papers are being submitted to the policy makers to contribute the lessons and experiences of the civil society to policy making processes.

3.1 Phase-I of the Project

Diverse research themes under the first phase focused on the EAC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations in each of the EAC project countries. The resulting research papers and policy briefs have been extensively used during the ongoing negotiations by civil society, media and governments alike. The topics chosen are:

- Leveraging the Agriculture Sector through Trade: Opportunities and Challenges in the EC-EAC EPA (see the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC_Leveraging_The_Agriculture_Sector_Through_Trade.pdf
- The Most Favoured-Nation Provision in the EC-EAC EPA and its Implications see the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-Most_Favoured-Nation_provision_in_the_EC_EAC_Economic_Partnership_Agreement.pdf.
- Export taxes and EPAs-Another Policy Tool under Threat from the EC? http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/Export_Taxes_and_EPAs_Another_Policy_Tool_Under_Threat_From_the_EC.pdf.
- Trade in Services and EPAs: The way forward for the EAC see http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC_Standards_and_Market_Access_Under_EPAs.pdf.
- Standards and Market Access under EPAs: Implications and Way Forward for EAC see the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-Standards_and_Market_Access_Under_EPAs.pdf.
- Revenue Implications of the EC-EAC EPA: the Case of Tanzania: See the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-Revenue_Implications_of_the_EC-EAC_EPA.pdf.

3.2 Phase-II of the Project

In this phase on research was conducted on diverse themes relevant to the EAC regional integration initiative in each of the EAC project countries. The resulting research is again been used extensively by the civil society, media and the governments in the region. The topics chosen are:

- Socio-economic Implications of the Uganda's Draft Competition Law: *Addressing Challenges at National and Regional Level. See (http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-Socio_economic_Implications_of_the_Ugandas_Draft_Competition_Law.pdf).*
- A Case for Trade in the Resurgent EAC: *Policy Challenges and Opportunities See the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-A_Case_for_Trade_in_the_Resurgent_EAC.pdf.*
- The Non-Tariff Barriers in Trading Within the East African Community (EAC) see the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-The_Non-Tariff_Barriers_in_Trading_Within_the_EAC.pdf.
- Integrating Migration with Development in EAC: *Policy Challenges and Recommendations See the link http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-Integrating_Migration_with_Development_in_EAC.pdf.*

- Harmonisation of EAC Tax Policies and Laws: *Proposals for Taxation Regime for Fostering Small Business Development and Regional Economic Growth* See the link [http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-Harmonisation of EAC Tax Policies and Laws.pdf](http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-Harmonisation%20of%20EAC%20Tax%20Policies%20and%20Laws.pdf).
- Accession of Burundi and Rwanda to the EAC: *Implication for Private Sector Development* see the link [http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-Accession of Burundi and Rwanda to the EAC.pdf](http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-Accession%20of%20Burundi%20and%20Rwanda%20to%20the%20EAC.pdf).
- How Might EAC Reduce Negative Implications of Informal Cross-Border Trade to Support Regional Trade Integration and Development? See the link [http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-How Might EAC Reduce Negative Implications.pdf](http://www.cuts-grc.org/pdf/BIEAC-RP10-How%20Might%20EAC%20Reduce%20Negative%20Implications.pdf)

4.0 Project Partners:

1. Kenya

- a. CUTS Africa Resource Centre, Nairobi.

2. Uganda

- a. Southern and East African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI),
- b. Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA) and
- c. African Centre for Trade and Development (ACTADE).

3. Tanzania

- a. Tanzania Association of NGOs (TANGO)
- b. Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF).

4. Rwanda

- a. Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD)
- b. Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR), Rwanda

5. Burundi

- a. Partner: Conseil de consolidation des ONG de Développement
- b. The Most Favoured-Nation provision in the EC-EAC Economic Partnership Agreement and its implication.

6. CUTS London and Geneva Resource Centres

5.0 Objectives of the Regional Conference:

Having spread awareness through national and awareness workshops in each EAC member state, project partners are now gathering together with a number of other civil society organisations and other stakeholders at Arusha, the headquarters of the EAC Secretariat, to discuss the key lessons and challenges of regional integration based on a synthesis paper prepared from the research conducted during the project period. The key objectives of the regional conference are;

- To present and discuss the synthesised findings emanating from the CUTS BIEAC Project.
- To present and deliberate on the key outcomes of the BIEAC Regional Conference.
- To discuss and deliberate on the way forward for the project.