

# Bridging the Gap

“Encouraging dialogue between North and South”



CUTS International London Resource Centre, Year 1, No 3/2005

## No Will...No Way: The EU as a Development Actor

On July 19, 2005, CUTS London Resource Centre (CUTS-LRC) hosted a conference in London entitled ‘UK and European Union (EU) Trade Policy: Searching for a Development Perspective,’ in partnership with the UK’s leading development think tank, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

The aim of the conference was to launch the UK part of CUTS’ project ‘Linkages between trade, development and poverty (TDP),’ the objective of which is to highlight the implications for development of UK and EU trade policies and to advocate a more development sensitive approach to trade policy-making.

Presenters and attendees included representatives from Department for International Development (DFID), ODI, universities, consumer groups and a variety of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from the UK and across Europe.

### Political Will?

Discussions focused on the development impact of Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the role for UK aid in supporting adjustment, the development impact of Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) standards and role of the EU as a trade and development actor. A theme recurring throughout the day was the need for greater political will from the UK and other EU member states to turn general commitments in terms of policies and finance into genuine pro-poor reforms to make the international trade system work for development.

### Aid for Trade

This theme was most keenly expressed during the session on NAMA, which opened with a presentation from DFID’s Economic Adviser on NAMA, Jean-Christophe Maur. He outlined the adjustment needs of developing countries and provided an optimistic outlook for



Phil Evans, Principal Policy Officer at Which?, and Peter Holmes, Reader in Economics, Sussex University, during the presentation on SPS standards

financing this process. In response, the participants questioned whether developed countries were willing to provide the financial support that such proposals require to make a sustainable impact. The attendees also expressed their concern that aid to build trade capacity should not be used to bribe developing countries to liberalise their markets and that it should, in contrast, involve proper commitments to work with developing countries to support every step of the capacity building process.

### Health and Food Standards

The need for commitment to development at all levels of policy-making from EU member states was given a clear illustration during the session on SPS standards. In his presentation, Phil Evans from Which? highlighted a myriad of ways through which SPS standards are frequently abused by corporations and their lawyers to block the exports of developing countries from entering into the EU rather than to protect EU consumers from threats to their health.

He called on attendees to support the work of consumer groups in helping

to root out these practices in the EU, so that developing countries could benefit from the market access they have fought so hard to gain through the WTO.

In the final session, CUTS-LRC and ODI, the partners for the TDP project in the UK, discussed with the participants strategies for taking forward the objectives of the project and ideas expressed at the conference. The TDP project will proceed with a perception survey, which will be used as the guide for a series of public meetings and informal advocacy activities to engage with decision-makers in the UK and EU in support of the project’s objectives. The project is supported by DFID and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

by Gideon Rabinowitz, CUTS-LRC

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## Advocacy/Campaigning



Setting up early in the morning – the LRC team arrived at the Meadows at 6 a.m. to be ready for the opening of the campaigns zone at 10 a.m.



Throughout the day people crowded around the stall to browse through CUTS' wide range of publications, and to talk to the LRC staff



Families, students and pensioners alike were very keen to hear about the grassroots awareness-raising work CUTS is doing in India and Africa on the links between trade policies and development

## A Southern Voice for Trade Justice

To make the global economy and the international trade system work for development, CUTS-LRC campaigned with more than 500 NGOs to **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** in Edinburgh, on July 01, 2005.

The LRC stall attracted a lot of attention as one of the few Southern organisations present.



One of the main attractions at the LRC stall was our unique world trade game – many people tried their luck and did their best to knock down as many 'trade concessions' (i.e. bottles) as possible and secure a good deal for their favourite country at the WTO



Of course, this was a lot easier for players who had chosen big powerful countries like England or the US and got a football, than for players who had chosen small developing countries like Uganda or Bolivia and got a ping pong ball



## Sugar Disputes at the WTO: Will it change trade in agriculture?

Extract from CUTS-CITEE Rapid Briefing

**B**razil, one of the major players in agricultural trade, fought and won disputes at the WTO on cotton and sugar subsidies in the US and EU, respectively. In each case, it was argued that the US and EU illegally subsidised over-production of these commodities.

These decisions are expected to create a major impact on global trade in agriculture. The current phase of negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda, and the July 2004 Framework Agreement will surely be influenced.

This extract from a CITEE Rapid Briefing attempts to provide a brief outline of the major issues covered in the case of sugar and the possible implications of the ruling.

### EU Subsidies on Sugar

Sugar is one of the most heavily subsidised crops produced by European farmers. Government support has helped the European sugar producers to become the second largest exporters in the world, behind Brazil.

In early 2003, Brazil (as well as Australia and Thailand) requested for consultations with the European Commission (EC) on certain subsidies that EU sugar producers receive. It was alleged that the EU sugar regime guaranteed high prices within the EU and producers were, therefore, able to export surplus sugar at prices below their cost of production.

Two types of subsidies were challenged. The first related to the export of so-called 'C' sugar (low-grade raw sugar). It was alleged that the export of such 'sugar' was cross-subsidised with revenue earned through the production of higher quality sugar. The second related to the refund on 1.6 million tonnes of sugar that EU producers received, and which was approximately equivalent to preferential import of sugar to the EU countries from Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries and India.

Studies done by Oxfam show that EU taxpayers pay close to US\$1.7bn every year to subsidise the EU sugar industry. On account of such subsidies, there is an artificial depression in the price of sugar in the world market by about 17 percent. It also led to foreign exchange losses in the region of US\$494mn for Brazil, US\$151mn for Thailand, and US\$60mn each for South Africa and India in 2002.

The WTO panel ruled that the EU sugar export regime decreased sugar prices in the world market, making it impossible for producers of other countries to compete. As per the Uruguay Round Agreement, the EU committed to reduce its subsidised sugar exports to a maximum of 1.3 million tonnes per year. But in 2000-01, such exports from EU countries amounted to 4.1 million tonnes.

The panel also recommended that the EU should honour its obligation to maintain ACP countries' current preferential access to the EU sugar market.

It is expected that adhering to this ruling with a resultant change in the EU sugar regime would not only remove the current depression in world sugar prices (and improve the livelihood of many poor farmers), but also help European consumers as they will pay less for their sugar.

### In Lieu of Conclusions

The message is clear: developing countries can obtain redress at the WTO's dispute settlement system provided they prepare well. Admittedly, access to this is costly, but the system does function. Access to the system at an affordable price is another issue, which should be taken up by WTO members while proposing changes to the system itself. Other innovative avenues could be explored.

Secondly, many countries provide subsidies to agriculture (often illegal as per the WTO rules) by taking advantage of loopholes in the existing system.

Settlements of disputes like these would help to plug them, and reduce distortion in agricultural trade.

However, more battles lie ahead. According to one school of thought, even when developing countries win disputes at the WTO, it will be difficult for many of them to take retaliatory action against rich countries, which breach rulings. Upholding a rules-based world trading system is a challenge.

*The full version of this and other CUTS-CITEE's Rapid Briefings can be found at [www.cuts-citee.org](http://www.cuts-citee.org)*

### Subsidies: Livelihood Implications

US and EU lawyers do not dispute that their Governments provide massive taxpayer support for their agricultural sector – they hardly could, given the figures.

Every year, American and European Governments provide about US\$110bn in payments to their farm sectors. Support to the sugar regime alone costs European taxpayers and consumers US\$9.7bn annually.

Although these WTO rulings seem technical, they matter enormously to hundreds of millions of impoverished farmers in poor countries. European sugar subsidies have a serious impact.

The sugar sector is the single largest source of formal employment in Mozambique, a country where the average annual income in 1999 was US\$230. The sugar industry in Mozambique is among the most efficient in the world, producing refined sugar at approximately US\$280 per tonne, far less than the average cost of production in Europe.

But Mozambique has been unable to expand sugar production due to limited access to the EU market and unfair competition from dumped European sugar in Africa.

## Globalisation and the Poor\*

Does globalisation, the attendant privatisation and liberalisation, help the poor or make their condition worse? This question has been looming large over the last two decades as globalisation has intensified.

Recently, the debate got a fresh impetus following a Christian Aid report entitled: “The damage done: aid, death and dogma.” The report claims that the unfettered liberalisation policies in India, backed by the British Government, have led to a crisis in agriculture, spiralling rural debt and an epidemic of suicides among the poor farmers. According to the report, devaluation of the Indian currency and privatisation of public enterprises were the key reasons for the crisis in the State of Andhra Pradesh (that witnessed a large number of farmers’ suicides) and elsewhere in India.

However, the report is more rhetorical than analytical. It does not provide any analysis of how devaluation of the Indian currency percolated down to the farmers and made them change their cropping pattern. There is no information on which crops farmers were induced to shift to. Farmers are too practical to change their usual practices unless they sense a potential increase in their incomes. The issues discussed are general in nature with no direct connection to the sufferings of farmers.

On the contrary, it can be argued that there are several instances where trade liberalisation and the transfer from

subsistence agriculture to cash crops have brought benefits to farmers. One such case is that of the cultivation of export-quality grapes in the Nasik district of Maharashtra state in India, which is facilitating radical and positive changes in the rural economy (Box below).

In the context of privatisation, the Christian Aid report claims that several state-run corporations that provided valuable support to the farmers were all privatised. This led to the emergence of entrepreneurs who do not prioritise the interests of the farmers, resulting in increased hardship. However, there are several cases, which suggest that privatisation has in fact brought benefits to the farmers. For instance, Hanuman Junction Cooperative Sugar Mill in the State of Andhra Pradesh was privatised in 2001. Today, after privatisation, farmers receive the price at the rate of Rs 868/tonne of sugarcane supplied, as compared to Rs 738/tonne earlier. Moreover, there are no delays in payment, which is made within a 14-day period!

Prof Jagdish Bhagwati, in his recent book: *In Defense of Globalisation*, insists that globalisation is the most powerful force for social good in the world today. But as the grapes case study shows, sensible policies/practices need to be implemented in order to take advantage of the opportunities globalisation provides.

By Manish Agarwal, CUTS C-CIER

(\* based on inputs received from Milind Murugkar; Critique of Christian Aid’s report, which can be accessed at: [http://www.didaweb.net/mediatori/articolo.php?id\\_vol=1003](http://www.didaweb.net/mediatori/articolo.php?id_vol=1003))

### Export-oriented Grape Cultivation: A Win-Win Situation!

Grape cultivation in the Nasik district, Maharashtra, India dates back to the late seventies and export of grapes to European countries began some fifteen years ago. Initially, only a few big well-to-do farmers cultivated export quality grapes. But over the last seven to eight years many small farmers with as little as two acres of irrigated land have switched over to export oriented grape cultivation.

The high quality standard for grapes (big size, green colour, low pesticide residue) demanded by European consumers is a huge challenge, but the farmers in the district have adapted their cultivation practices to meet it. This has created

vast employment opportunities and induced environmentally benign cultivation practices, belying all myths.

To attain bigger size grapes, the thin stems of the plant need to be cut off – a labour-intensive activity that has resulted in an increased demand for labour. The size of the grapes also depends on adequate supply of sunlight, which is ensured by spreading the branches – another labour-intensive operation. In addition, the size depends on the pH value of the soil that can be maintained at the required level by shifting to organic farming. Since farmers receive much higher prices in international markets for organic

produce, they can afford the initial lower productivity that results from a switch to organic farming. To ensure adequate nutrient supply, the number of berries per bunch of grapes has to be less. This increases the demand for labour to pluck off unwanted berries from the plant. The greenish colour of grapes requires wrapping up each bunch by paper to protect from sunlight during a certain part of the season. This is again a labour-intensive operation.

Furthermore, packaging of grapes for export has given a boost to the packaging industry, creating additional employment opportunities there too.

## Promoting a Pro Development Agenda: What can the UK do with its EU Presidency?



by Trudi Hartzenberg, TRALAC

Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (TRALAC) was established in 2002 to build trade law capacity in the Southern African region; in governments, the private sector and civil society.

A profound debate is in process within the EU on its future. At the same time, the developing world, especially Africa, looks to the EU, and very specifically the UK to take a lead in addressing the fundamental challenges of globalisation and poverty. The UK's role is under a revealing spotlight, as it took up the EU Presidency on July 1, 2005 while chairing the G8 for 2005. These two key positions provide significant opportunities to advance key issues on both the EU and the broader international agenda. The links between the two agendas may provide the acid test for the EU.

The EU Presidency rotates among member states, with each taking a six-month stint. The UK will hold the Presidency from July 1 to December 31, 2005, during which time the UK will take forward the agenda jointly agreed with Luxembourg, which held the Presidency until June 30, 2005.

On the G8 front, the UK has the opportunity to provide a fresh impetus to tackle the real issues on the global development agenda, by addressing the extreme challenge of poverty through debt relief, appropriate aid, and improved political, administrative and economic governance for a fairer global trading environment. The UK's recent lead on debt relief is important – the legacy of the previous aid era needs, however, to be heeded. Debt relief is important but much more is needed. By itself, it will undermine the development of sound governance and an incentive-driven environment, which are prerequisites for the effective absorption of future aid, and the development of the capacity to produce goods and services to consume and to trade.

Can the UK promote a pro-development agenda within the EU, while it negotiates its way through the challenges of its own daunting agenda including enlargement, the budget, climate change and environment policy, asylum and immigration policy, the Lisbon agenda and more...? The EU is looking for clear political leadership, which it seems could be provided by Tony Blair provided he can move out of, at least to a notable degree, the shadow of Iraq.

The EU's track record, and its ability to meet challenges through internal policy reform, provide important lessons

for developing countries, and also for the EU's engagement with the developing world. Now is the time for the EU to adopt a more outward-looking approach to underpin its growth strategy. This could serve the developing world well too, specifically if the EU provides new impetus to the current Doha Round of trade negotiations, and ensures that its bilateral relations with developing countries provide significant and real opportunities to both parties.

On the trade front, there are important opportunities to make a real development difference, and the UK has advanced discussions on some of the most serious trade barriers into EU markets, including rules of origin (RoO) within the EU and internationally. The EU has recently begun negotiations with the ACP countries to conclude Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to replace the asymmetric preferences enjoyed by these countries since the mid-1970s. There is ample evidence that long-term preferential market access did not address the key challenges of these countries; it did not support them in developing their capacity to produce tradeable goods and to trade them.

The UK's term at the helm of the EU includes the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting in December 2005 – an opportunity to close this term on a strong development note. The differences between the UK and what has become known as the 'old Europe' on agriculture may be key in this regard. This has as much to do with internal reform, as with external relations. And the recent responses to the EU's announcement on sugar reform indicates that this is likely to be a complex challenge, with splits in the ranks of the developing countries too.

The UK is well positioned to play an important role in moving both the EU and the G8 agenda forward on a fundamental development path. The question is; will it be able to succeed in winning the political hearts of the EU and its G8 partners? The UK has shown commitment to addressing the real challenges of development. Tony Blair is politically astute and persuasive; and despite his mistakes, the UK with Blair is perhaps as good as it gets in the foreseeable future for the EU and for development.

### Project on Child Domestic Workers launched in Jaipur, India

On July 27, 2005, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CART) in partnership with Save the Children (UK) launched a project *Hum Bhi Bachche Hain* (We too are children), which will focus on child domestic workers (i.e. children engaged to perform domestic tasks outside their families in the home of a third party).

Using a child-to-child approach in 35 schools in Jaipur, the project will raise awareness on the issue and advocate to make it compulsory for schools to check and to the Government to prevent child domestic work. Every third household in India employs a child but as the Indian Child Labour Act does not cover domestic work, this group of children is very vulnerable to exploitation.



Ms Alka Kala, Department of Women & Children Development, Government of Rajasthan, lighting a lamp to mark the formal launch of the project

### African Civil Society Calls on LDC Governments to Stay Firm in Trade Negotiations

On the eve of the LDC trade ministers' meeting in Livingstone, Zambia, on June 25-27, 2005, 75 representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs) from 14 different countries in Africa met at a fringe meeting to debate key least developed country (LDC) trade issues. The meeting was organised by CUTS Africa Resource Centre (CUTS-ARC), Lusaka; Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia (CSTNZ) and Organisation Development and Community Management Trust (ODCMT).

At the meeting, the participants discussed their views on the concerns of LDCs around the on-going trade negotiations at the WTO and with the EU in relation to EPAs.

The civil society participants agreed that the experience so far has shown that free-market principles tied to development have been fundamentally flawed for the majority of LDCs. There is a need to change the focus to a domestic demand driven structure, which favours local entrepreneurs. Reliance on market mechanisms alone is insufficient to meet the challenge of development in a globalising world economy and to achieve national, regional and the international development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In the four years since the adoption of the Doha Work Programme, there is little evidence of progress in tackling the developmental concerns of LDCs and other developing countries, which were proclaimed as pivotal to the success of the Doha agenda. On the contrary, the rich and powerful industrialised countries of the WTO continue to pressurise for deeper commitments to further liberalisation in crucial sectors, such as agriculture, services, and binding industrial tariffs. In addition, the lack of progress on Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) and implementation issues manifests the absence of commitment by the major trading partners to promote development within the multilateral trading regime.

The civil society participants, therefore, urged the LDC Governments to remain firm in articulating and sustaining positions, which promote the interests of their people as well as their economies, and to continue efforts to strengthen unity and solidarity among countries of the South.

A number of specific recommendations were presented to the LDC trade ministers. A full version of this document can be downloaded from [www.cuts-international.org](http://www.cuts-international.org)

by Sajeev K S Nair, CUTS-ARC

### CUTS Competition, Regulation and Development Research Forum:

#### First call for papers

Papers are invited for the first CUTS Competition, Regulation and Development Research Forum to be organised by CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (C-CIER) during 2005-2006. This is the first cycle of a long-term research programme on competition and regulatory regimes. The project will act as an important platform for generating substantive knowledge to improve the implementation of competition and regulatory policies and laws in developing countries.

Each of the biennial research cycles will focus on specific problem areas. The following areas have been identified for the first round:

- \* **Political economy problems, including governance vis-à-vis implementing competition and regulatory laws**
- \* **Institutional independence as a crucial element in the autonomy and functioning of a regulatory/competition authority**
- \* **Prioritisation for competition and regulatory authorities**

Papers will be considered on the basis of originality and quality.

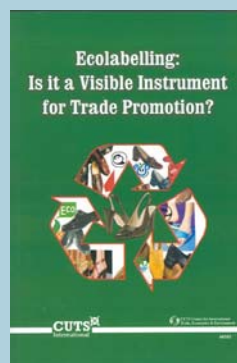
The deadline for submission of abstracts is October 31, 2005. Full guidelines can be found at [www.cuts-international.org](http://www.cuts-international.org)



## New CITEE Policy Brief Trilateral Development Cooperation

Overseas aid given by rich countries to poor countries to further their development is a well-established mechanism. There are controversies, of which the failure by rich countries to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of the gross national product given to development aid is perhaps the most prominent. However, the MDGs and the Monterrey Consensus, among other international covenants, have reinforced the need for enhanced and targeted delivery of overseas aid to developing countries. Most aid goes via bilateral routes with a large amount being channelled through inter-governmental organisations. An alternative new route is through 'trilateral development cooperation' where aid is channeled through institutions in third countries in the developing world to be applied to development projects in other developing countries. There are two major advantages to this approach. Firstly, it is cheaper. Secondly, experiences from one developing country are more directly relevant to another developing country than experiences from a rich country. However, trilateral development cooperation has not received the attention that it deserves. This paper makes such an effort, with the hope that rich countries realise its value and make it a part of their aid strategy.

## Ecolabelling: A Visible Instrument for Trade Promotion?



Ecolabels are regarded as important market-based instruments to influence the behaviour of consumers and industry in favour of environment-friendly products. India has introduced an ecolabelling scheme, called Ecomark, but it has not been a success so far. Its failure has been a serious cause of concern for both environmentalists and governmental agencies. It is important to study the causes of the scheme's low acceptability and to suggest ways to increase its popularity.

This study focuses on the impact of ecolabels on India's leather industry. This is for two main reasons: the production of leather is a highly polluting process, which impacts very negatively on the environment; and leather and its products account for a large proportion of India's exports.

Research Report

Suggested Contribution: Rs. 100/US\$ 15

## Don't Miss Out - Upcoming opportunities



### DFID:

#### Development Awareness Fund

*Eligible Organisations:* UK-based organisations or networks

*Funding Criteria:* The activities of the project should be aimed at promoting public knowledge and understanding of development issues, in particular poverty eradication, in the UK.

*Funding available per activity:* £10 000 up to £100 000 (limit of 3 years)

*Deadline:* October 31, 2005 for activities starting on/after April 1, 2006

For more information, go to <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/>

#### Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Research Call

*Eligible organisations:* UK-based organisations

*Funding Criteria:* Joseph Rowntree Foundation supports research aimed to explore key issues of local governance including the most effective ways for

citizens and communities, especially, in disadvantaged areas, to engage in the processes of governance for the planning and delivery of key services'

*Funding available per activity:* Up to £75,000

*Deadline:* October 6, 2005

For more information, go to <http://www.jrf.org.uk/default.asp>

#### Commonwealth Foundation

*Eligible Organisations:* Applications can only be considered from organisations based in a developing country, and from organisations with an annual income of less than £250,000/US\$500,000 in the previous financial year.

*Funding Criteria:* Priority is given to activities promoting democracy and good governance in developing countries, which are members of Commonwealth

*Funding available per activity:* Up to £20,000.

*Deadline:* August 31, 2005 for activities in November, December, January 2005

For more information, go to

<http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/about/grantseekers/>

#### The European Commission: The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

*Eligible Organisations:* NGOs, which have their headquarters in Tajikistan or are a local independent division of NGOs with its headquarters in one of the EU Member States

*Funding Criteria:* Support is given to initiatives aimed to promote and protect human rights as well as strengthening democracy and governance in Tajikistan

*Funding available per activity:*

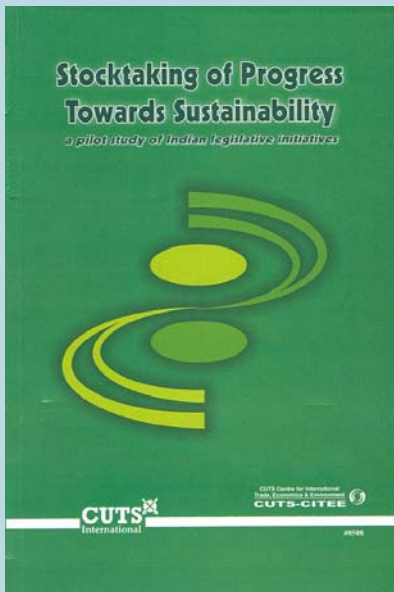
• 5 000 up to • 25 000

*Deadline:* September 15, 2005

For more information, go to <http://www.delkaz.cec.eu.int/>

## PUBLICATIONS

### Stocktaking of Progress Towards Sustainability: a pilot study of Indian legislative initiatives



For a country like India, with its growing population of over one billion and huge disparities in income, lifestyle, and the distribution of entitlements, the need to develop sustainability takes on an added urgency. Over the last few years, the country has formulated numerous laws that have a bearing on sustainable development, in general, and sustainable production and consumption, in particular. Yet serious gaps remain, and the implementation process has so far been flawed.

This pilot study addresses these issues by focusing on five laws, their implementation and stakeholder involvement. Firstly, it assesses the extent to which these laws match Section G of the United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection (UNGCP) and the relevant sections the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPol). Secondly, it presents findings on the implementation of laws and the degree to which stakeholders have been involved. These studies set the

stage for an overall analysis of the progress towards sustainability, or more accurately, how far India is from adopting and implementing the avowed objectives of UNGCP and JPol. The study uses analytical techniques, a specialised literature review as well as interviews with implementing agencies and stakeholders. The overall findings are presented with recommendations for policies and future work.

Research Report

Suggested Contribution: Rs.350/US\$50

### In the coming issue...

- Aid for trade: The key to integrating LDCs into the world economy?
- Viewpoints from the South: The UN Millennium Summit – getting the MDGs back on track?
- Latest news and updates from CUTS projects
- News from LRC's campaigning and advocacy activities in the UK and Europe
- Update on CUTS' publications, briefing papers and rapid briefings

**The next issue of  
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