

CUTS IN ACTION

 कट्स CUTS
1984 to 2003
Twenty Years of Social Change

April-June 2003

Enhancing South-north Cooperation



This quarter represents another golden milestone in our history, when we inaugurated our London Resource Centre. Probably, we are the first Southern non-governmental public interest group to have an office in London. This centre will enhance South-North dialogue and cooperation, and assist the organisation as a whole to achieve its objectives.

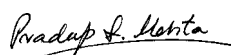
As the first such South-North cooperation, this quarter also saw another important event under the aegis of EINTAD: three outreach meetings were held in this period—in Washington DC, Brussels and New Delhi. We had launched EINTAD or EU India Network on Trade and Development, last year, which had undertaken five joint research projects with the aim of preparing policy inputs for the WTO Ministerial in Cancun in coming September. The project was a collaborative venture with the University of Sussex as the research coordinator and the research projects shared between Indian and European researchers comprised issues, like investment policy; competition policy; textiles and clothing; anti-dumping; and movement of natural persons. The research findings are likely to be published as a compiled volume by July-end.

Under our Linkages programme—another South-North project—we organised a fresh series of events in Washington DC, USA. This quarter also saw a new partner at a new location that witnessed an outreach event on our Investment for Development project. In association with OECD, we conducted a seminar in Istanbul, Turkey just before the project mid-term review seminar in Geneva.

As usual about CUTS' philosophy of working simultaneously at the grassroots, this quarter also witnessed launch of one more network-based project: "Globalisation, Economic Liberalisation and Indian Informal Sector" (GELIS) in India in collaboration with Oxfam GB, India. This project will help the informal sector understand the pains of transition and also reach its voice up to the policy-makers.

Commemorating the 21st anniversary of *Gram Gadar*, a seminar on the role of media in rural development was organised, along with best prizes for three good stories published in the local press. Our work in empowering rural communities continued at the same level and enthusiasm as before, when we succeeded in highlighting the issues of environment, health and biodiversity — the issues already drawing the contemporary global attention.

As in the last two issues, I take great pleasure in carrying an important message (received for "20 Years of CUTS" souvenir) on the cover page of this issue. The message, coming from none other than Mr. Muchkund Dubey, former foreign secretary of India, is as heartening as others, which have been carried and will be carried in future as well.


Pradeep S. Mehta, Editor



My association with CUTS dates back to 1995, when I was invited by Mr. Pradeep S. Mehta to a regional training seminar on international trade issues in Kathmandu. I was very much impressed by the professionalism and thoroughness, which were brought to bear on the preparations for the seminar. That association was

cemented when I participated in a series of preparatory seminars and conferences organised by CUTS for the Singapore Ministerial Conference of the WTO in December 1996. Later, CUTS persuaded me to become the Vice-Chairman of the International Advisory Board of CUTS-CITEE (CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment) that was launched the same year.

CUTS-CITEE has emerged as one of the three leading intellectual centres of the country on international trade issues, the other two being the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and the Research & Information System of the Non-aligned and other Developing Countries (RIS). CUTS, however, has its own distinctive profile by virtue of being basically a civil society organisation. CUTS has been able to use the civil society for getting inputs from the micro-level and as a forum for disseminating its output. This has enabled CUTS to carve out a special niche in the areas of advocacy, training and networking.

The activities of CUTS are not confined to international trade and development alone. It has also been doing remarkably good work in grassroots mobilisation for development and in consumer protection. It has emerged as one of the most prominent organisations in India active in these fields.

For its work in the area of international trade and development, CUTS has admirably succeeded in networking and forging active relationship with a large number of think-tanks from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. It has been successfully drawing upon their resources for its own research work. In the process, it has acquired an international character and has now offices in Nepal, Zambia, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

CUTS thinks and acts both locally and globally. The case studies carried out by it bring out the implications of policies and regimes at the global level, especially for the general conditions of the marginalised groups of the population.

Based on the experience it has accumulated over the last 20 years, CUTS is poised for taking new initiatives and blazing new trails in furtherance of its objectives of "pursuing economic equity and social justice within and across borders by persuading governments and empowering people". I take this opportunity to send my greetings on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary Celebrations of CUTS and convey my best wishes and assurances of full cooperation for the success of its endeavours.

Muchkund Dubey
President, Council for Social Development,
New Delhi.

Linkages Update

"Who would make the decision that labour standards have been violated and what is to be decided on?" This is the primary question that needs to be addressed, said Prof. T. N. Srinivasan of Yale University, while speaking at a two-day conference on "Linkages: How do we bridge the gap?", jointly organised by CUTS and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC, USA on 22-23rd April.

Through intensive discussions and debates, participants from different countries addressed the polarisation of views of the North and the South on issues of linkages between trade and non-trade concerns, like labour and environmental standards.

Media in Rural Development

To commemorate the 21st year of the publication of CUTS' rural wall newspaper 'Gram Gadar', a seminar entitled 'Role of Media in Rural Development' was organised on 13th April at Jaipur. While inaugurating the programme, the Rajasthan Government's Information and Public Relations Director, Amar Singh Rathore, said market economy, consumerism and declining sensitivity has resulted in the failure of the media to highlight the problems of rural areas. The newspapers can create a better understanding about progress in rural areas by spreading vital information, but they have failed to do much, as they are quite restricted in giving impartial news.

Protecting Environment

There is a need at the government and non-governmental levels to work in cooperation for environment protection, said the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Virat Nagar, Ramjilal Verma, at a workshop on the occasion of the 'World Environment Day' on 5th June. The workshop was jointly organised by CUTS and a local voluntary organisation 'Jagriti Sansthan' at Jaipur.

Discussions were held on various aspects of environment protection and a

work-plan was also designed. It was decided to encourage people's participation in environment protection and use communication media in creating awareness towards environment.

FDI Policies and Prescriptions

A Regional Roundtable with the theme "Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Transition Economies: Challenges, Policies and Good Practices" was co-organised by CUTS and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on 5-6 May in Istanbul, Turkey.

Following this, a review seminar of the seven-country Project of CUTS on 'Investment for Development' (IFD) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 9-10 May. Speaking at the inaugural session, Roderick Abbot, the Deputy Director-General of the WTO, said, "While some members believe that a multilateral framework on investment will help the developing countries, other WTO members point to the success that countries such as China have had in attracting FDI, without any multilateral investment framework and they do not believe that a WTO agreement would lead to increased flows of FDI to developing countries".

Deliberations took place on FDI policies and performance, perception of FDI among civil society, hurdles to FDI and privatisation.

World Health Day

The World Health Organisation (WHO) selected the theme 'Children and Healthy Environment' for celebrating the "World Health Day" on 7th April. With this theme in view, nearly 600 children of 45 *Bal Panchayats*, formed by CUTS under the 'Rural Girls Empowerment Project' in the Chittorgarh district, took part in the celebrations.

Various health awareness campaigns and environment-related programmes, including wall slogan-writings, rallies, discussions and cultural activities were organised.

Reproduction and Child Health Under the Rural Girl Child Empowerment Project, a reproductive and child health camp was organised in Kareriya village of Bhadesar Panchayat Samiti in Chittorgarh.

The purpose of the camp was to educate and bring awareness in females about their reproductive rights, importance of reproductive and child health programme, proper nutrition and prevention of sexual and other infectious diseases. Other important issues discussed included: traditional treatment techniques, safe motherhood, the ill effects of galloping population.

Biodiversity Day

Under the ambit of "Land and Water Management Leading towards Biodiversity Conservation Project", supported by the 'United Nations Development Programme - Global Environment Facility-Small Grants Programme (UNDP-GEF-SGP)', the 'Biodiversity Day' was celebrated on 22nd May 2003 in Pemadiya Khera village of Nimbahera Block of Chittorgarh District.

GELIS in India

"Ninety-two percent of total employment in India is in the informal sector," said Prof. T. P. Bhat of the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi, while speaking at a seminar entitled 'The Competitiveness of Indian Informal Sector and Cottage Industries in the Era of Globalisation and Economic Liberalisation', organised on 9-10 June. The seminar marked the launch of the Globalisation, Economic Liberalisation and Indian Informal Sector (GELIS), a network-based project, being implemented by CUTS and Oxfam GB in India.

The extensive dialogue not only brought together experts from various states but also key persons from the informal sector engaged in agricultural, fisheries, home-based crafts and handloom activities. Other grass-roots organisations closely associated with these sectors, through their involvement in women entrepreneurship, environment, education and social development, also participated.

EINTAD Outreach Meetings

Two consecutive outreach meetings of the first phase of the EU-India Network on Trade and Development (EINTAD) were organised in Washington DC on 21st April and in New Delhi on 30th April by CUTS, in association with the University of Sussex and the European Institute for Asian Studies, Brussels. The Network was launched at Brussels in May 2002. The purpose was to reach out to policy-makers in the US, with the research results of five key WTO issues, which show the insides of the multilateral trading system. The research findings will be provided as inputs to trade negotiators before the next WTO Ministerial Conference at Cancun, Mexico, during September 10-14, 2003.



National Consultation on FDI

The Third National Reference Group (NRG) meeting of the Investment for Development (IFD) Project of CUTS was organised at Lusaka on 16th April. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the following documents, "Investment Policy, Performance and Perceptions in Zambia", "National Advocacy Document for Zambia" and "Co-ordination among Sector Regulators for a Sustainable FDI Environment".

The meeting called for the adoption of a National Investment Policy for Zambia, which would harmonise operations of conflicting investment regulations to enhance the inflow of FDI.

WIR 2003 Seminar

Sanchita Chatterjee attended an experts group meeting on the World Investment Report (WIR) 2003 on 12-13 May in Geneva, Switzerland, organised by the UNCTAD. The theme of the meeting was 'National FDI Policies and International Investment Agreements'.

Some of the important points raised by her include: a) corporate social responsibility (CSR) is important, whether it is in the form of soft laws or mandatory codes. Both home and host countries have important role in enforcing it; b) it should be recognised that there are costs and benefits associated with competition for FDI through providing incentives and relocation of investment; and c) the fact that developing countries, as a whole, lack the capacity to negotiate international investment agreements.

Infrastructure Deregulation

Vinayak Pandey participated in a training seminar on 'Infrastructure Deregulation', organised by the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi, and the Ministry of Personnel and Training, Government of India, on 28th May. He made a presentation on 'Infrastructure Deregulation: Consumer Concerns', which focused on three issues, namely, contemporary consumer issues in infrastructure deregulation, role of consumer organisations in regulatory decision-making and consumer's expectation from independent regulators.

WTO Public Symposium



Mita Dutta, Olivia Jensen and Pradeep Mehta participated in a WTO Public Symposium during 16-18 June at Geneva.

Various issues related to the Doha Development Agenda were discussed. The aim of the programme was to take stock of the world international trade regime and developmental agenda before the Cancun Ministerial Conference

to be held in September. CUTS also organised a parallel session on the Role of Civil Society Organisations in Promoting Competition, at the symposium.

Seminar on Competition Policy

Eric Kalimukwa represented CUTS-ARC at the consultative and awareness creation seminar organised by the Zambia Consumers Association (ZACA), in association with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat, on 29th April at Lusaka. The purpose of the seminar was to gather inputs from the stakeholders on the proposed COMESA Competition Policy and Law.

Meeting on Cotonou Agreement

K. S. Sajeew participated in a regional meeting on Cotonou Agreement, jointly organised by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Secretariat of the COMESA, on 28-29 April at Lusaka. The major outcomes of the meeting were the establishment of Eastern and Southern African Non-State Actors Forum (ESANAF) and the adoption of a plan of action for the non-state actors.

CUTS-ARC has been nominated by the meeting as the focal point of ESANAF's contacts with the COMESA Secretariat.

Sajeew also participated in the review meeting of Investment for Development Project of CUTS, organised at Geneva on 9-10 May 2003.

Conference McPlanet.com

Pranav Kumar was invited by Heinrich-Boll-Foundation, Germany, to speak in a Panel Discussion entitled "Free Trade or Trade Justice" and a Forum entitled "International Eco- and Social-Labels on Global Markets", organised jointly by Attac, BUND, Greenpeace and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. These two meetings were held during the McPlanet.Com Conference, which took place from 22-29 June in Berlin.

Mehta in High Level WTO Body



Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS, has been appointed as a member of the informal NGO advisory body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) by its

Director-General, Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi. The Board consists of twelve members from around the globe and aims to add structure to the dialogue between WTO and its stakeholders.

Wait and Watch CAS

A panel discussion entitled 'Cable TV Fiasco: the Way Out' was organised by CUTS at Calcutta on 2nd June. The discussion brought together representatives of local cable operators, consumer organisations and Multi-System Operators (MSOs) to throw light on the confusion over the implementation of Conditional System Access (CAS) that would come into force in India from 14th July. The idea to adopt a 'Wait and Watch' policy emerged at the above discussion.



Trucker's Strike Nationwide

Selvi Roy of CUTS was invited by the Star News Channel for a programme on Trucker's Strike Nationwide on 22nd April. She answered the following three questions during the show:

- Whether the nationwide trucker's strike for the last 13 days was justified?
- Why consumer groups had not been proactive on the issue?
- Whether government stand was justified and its impact on the economy?

TRAI Registration

CUTS has been registered as a non-government organisation by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for a period of two years, as per its notification number 108-4/8 TRAI (Tech.) dated 15th January, 2001, and its first amendment dated 20th March, 2001.

SNIPPETS

- Manleen Dugal participated in an International Dialogue on "Making Special and Differential Treatment More Effective and Responsive to Development Needs", organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the UNCTAD-UNDP Global Programme on Globalisation, Liberalisation and Sustainable Human Development near Geneva on 6-7 May.
- Garima Joshi attended a training programme on "Event Management", organised by Rajasthan Patrika, under its summer school 2003 programme from 16-29 May at Seedling Public School, Jaipur. Under the same programme, Archana Sharma participated in a training workshop on "Front Office Management" from 26th May to 2nd June at Maharani Gayatri Devi School, Jaipur.
- Nitya Nanda visited Delhi on 2-3 June to discuss issues of organisational structure of the soon-to-be-established Competition Commission of India (CCI) and its capacity-building with Neerabh K. Prasad, Director, Department of Company Affairs (DCA), Government of India.
- Srinivas Krishnaswamy and Vinayak Pandey presented papers on 'Involvement of Consumers in Power Sector Reforms' and 'Deregulation Vs. Regulation', respectively, at the seminar on "Electricity Bill 2003: Opportunities and Challenges" on 13th June, organised at Harish Chandra Mathur Institute of Public Administration (OTS), Jaipur.
- Madan Giri Goswami and Ganga Dadhich represented CUTS at the state level meeting on women issues, jointly organised by the National Women Commission and Rajasthan State Women Commission on 17th June at Jaipur.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

I have been overwhelmed by CUTS' huge ambitions for the event (Conclave) when planning started many months ago: 20 plenaries, 20 workshops and participants from every continent! But, the end result was a great success, which had tied micro and macro issues under the over-arching theme of governance and poverty reduction and has succeeded in delivering interesting and high-quality debates throughout the event.

Muchkund Dubey
President
Council for Social Development
India

I convey my sincere best wishes on the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of CUTS in March 2003, which I came to know from the January-March, 2003, issue of "CUTS in Action". Many congratulations to Pradeep Mehta for the tremendous dedication, sincerity and foresightedness shown by him in bringing CUTS to this high pedestal. Congratulations to his excellent team of dedicated professionals in various fields.

I am interested in studies connected with impact of economic developments in the context of WTO and how the environmental laws of countries like India and other South Asian countries can counter the adverse impact of free trade and lopsided economic development.

Delep Goswami, FCS
Advocate, New Delhi

VISITORS

Excerpts from the Visitors Book at the formal inauguration of CUTS' Delhi Office on 17 April, 2003

Name	Comments
 Dr. Sanjay Paswan, Union Minister of State, Social Justice & Empowerment, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi	An extended office of CUTS in Delhi shall immensely help the activists to deal with many issues. Being a parliamentarian, I get much guidance from papers and activities of CUTS.
 Wajahat Habibullah, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi	Congratulations on the new premises.
 Charlotte Seymour Smith, Head, DFID, India, British High Commission, New Delhi	Congratulations to CUTS on your new office in Delhi. May you do the good work here.
 Dr. George B. Assaf, Regional Director, UNIDO, New Delhi	Congratulations on your excellent work and provocative writing!
Ajay Mehta, National Foundation of India, New Delhi	Wonderful to see this institution break all barriers to well-being and growth.
 Veena Jha, UNCTAD, New Delhi	Hope your stakeholders grow in stature and importance, as well as their ability to influence public opinion. All the best.
Subir Gokaran, CRISIL, K.G. Marg, New Delhi	CUTS Delhi Centre should significantly increase its impact on government, media and academia.
Excerpts from the Visitors Book at Jaipur Office	
Dr. Keshab Das, Associate Professor, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad	I came here to consult the experts and the library in connection with the policy process in WTO-TRIPs in the pharmaceutical sector. It was a great privilege to be here, as I had excellent discussions with scholars. Their own work and the collection of materials in the library was superb. A very special word of thanks to the documentation officer, Mr. Ibrarul Haque, whose support in looking for useful material and pleasant disposition impressed me very much. I am sure with such organised and motivated staff, CUTS will have a great future.

Appreciative Inquiry

A three-day workshop on 'Appreciative Inquiry', with a constructive approach to organisational development and social change, was organised for some of the CUTS staff members from 14-16 April at the Head Office at Jaipur. Its main focus was on enhancing positive capacity or attitudes through large group methods, highly participatory at all levels, transforming the inner dialogue of individuals and stimulating vision and creativity.

The workshops were implemented through a cycle of four phases that together comprise the 4-D cycle, i.e., Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny. The workshops involved training sessions, interviews, breakthrough exercises, group work, etc. The whole idea of the sessions and exercises was to infuse a positive outlook among the staff members so as to make them work for the best of the organisation.

No End to Learning at CUTS.....

"A very co-operative, systematic and encouraging working environment at CUTS simply rejuvenates one's spirit to work more and reach higher and higher goals", Kalyani Ghosh, a new member of the CUTS team expressed her views in this way on the completion of her orientation at CUTS, Jaipur.

During her training sessions, she got acquainted with the procedure of maintenance of records, with the current and future projects, their objectives, plan of action, etc. She also learnt the procedures that CUTS follows for writing and editing of publications and how one can make these publications more reader friendly, compact and comprehensive. She also learnt about the layout process of briefing papers and other publications.

According to her, the most interesting, encouraging and remarkable experience that she had was the 'Appreciative Inquiry' workshop.