

CUTS@50

– *A Vision Document*



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From a modest beginning in 1983 with a rural development communication initiative launched through a wall newspaper 'Gram Gadar' (Village Revolution), CUTS has achieved significant growth both geographically and in terms of functional areas. Today, its work spans a multi-pronged agenda targeted to the realisation of its Vision of "Consumer Sovereignty" and its Mission of "Consumer sovereignty in the framework of social justice, economic equality and environmental balance, within and across borders".

This Vision Document was first developed in 2008, the 25th anniversary of the organisation, and attempted a roadmap for the organisation's journey over the subsequent 25 years from 2008. It has since been used by the organisation in its Senior Staff Retreats as a guiding document in its process of evolution and subsequently refined over time. It builds on the Vision Statement of the organisation and Mission Statements of its various Centres to specify a direction for the organisation's progress over time as well as the status that is targeted for achievement by its 50th Anniversary in 2034.

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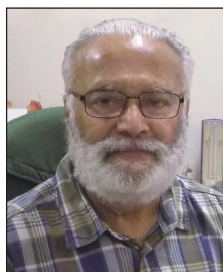
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PREFACE



Pradeep S Mehta
Secretary General

January, 2021

From a modest beginning in 1983, CUTS has achieved significant growth both geographically and in terms of functional areas. This growth is organic and evolutionary – marked by a refreshing spontaneity in responding to the need of the hour, especially in the realm of consumer welfare and public policy issues.

What started as a consumer protection organisation in the traditional mould has attained uniqueness through the realisation that the consumer needs to be economically, politically and socially empowered *via* diverse channels such as international trade, competition law and policy, economic and business regulations, economic and political governance, etc.

Its current and future activities are aligned with the five ‘Transformative Shifts’ as envisaged in the High-Level Panel Report on Post-2015 Development Agenda, which have led to the adoption of the Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations.

Therefore, our activities are being synergised with the SDGs and Indicators of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, as we make progress.

Also, CUTS has distinguished itself through its stress on consumer-producer synergies and good governance for a sustainable increase in consumer welfare, given that the ordinary consumer is not just a functional unit but an actual human being whose welfare and growth depends significantly on her/his association with economic production and the income-generating opportunities arising from such association.

This organisational expansion through geographical and functional branches by keeping in mind the basic premises of South-South, North-South and Trilateral Development Cooperation has thrown up new challenges for the leadership. While in a single office, management and staff might automatically develop an understanding to work in a coordinated manner towards a common ‘Vision’, it is not so in

Comments
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an organisation such as CUTS because of its steady geographical and functional diversification over a period of time.

A decision was, therefore, taken by the senior management under my leadership to articulate and elaborate the rationale underlying the CUTS Vision, based upon the experiences and skills developed over time, to consolidate our energies and provide guidance for their pursuit in a manner that could be followed and synergised by its diverse and geographically spread-out centres.

It was also envisaged that this Vision Document would serve an additional purpose of acquainting relevant stakeholders with the organisation's thinking, goals and operational modalities. Here, it is important to note that this Vision Document is far from a manual of processes.

The perspectives and guidance provided in this Document are translated into concrete Centre-specific Strategic Business Plans (SBPs). While it charts the horizons of the organisation over a medium-term of next two decades, the SBPs would be more short-term in nature, covering a period of five years or so.

This Vision Document is dynamic and regularly reviewed internally. Since its first publication in August 2010, it has been reviewed on three occasions – in February 2011, in May 2012 and in December 2018. Since its second revision, it has been renamed as 'CUTS@50', while the earlier one was named as 'CUTS in 2034'.

One major change and achievement from the last Vision Document was the achievement of our aspirations of launching our 6th overseas centre in Washington DC, USA. It was launched in April 2018, with an illustrious advisory panel.

However, I must say that the last year, 2020, has been the most unprecedented in human history, i.e., the pervasive attack of the COVID-19 virus across the world, debilitating many processes and us. This has clearly led to economic decline and will thus impact the achievement of the SDGs and our dream of 'leaving no one behind' would become more difficult to achieve.

1. Introduction: Linking Present and Future Agenda to CUTS Vision

This Vision Document tries to envision the evolution of the organisation over the next decade-and-half. It takes into account various developments taking place and being envisaged across the globe, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all walks of life and its aftermath as a ‘new normal’.

Significant parts of the developing world, especially India, China and regions in South and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, are growing at a rapid and unprecedented pace. That may not happen in a post-pandemic world. More importantly, such growth has been accompanied by increasing inequality.

Such increases, if extreme, can produce social tensions that can disrupt economic growth itself. Moreover, these are objectionable from a social justice point of view. Thus, efforts to make economic growth inclusive have to be mainstreamed into the development strategy of all countries.

In other words, it is imperative to ensure that growth results in an increase in availability and access of quality essential goods and services to all sections of the population, rich or poor and at affordable prices. Furthermore, it is associated with the increase in capabilities and endowments of the poor and marginalised sections of the population, at the bottom of the pyramid.

This approach ensures that growth in economic activity results in benefits for all. In this regard, ‘consumer’ is defined in a broader sense and perspective, as it includes citizens, which translates as consumers of governance, when everyone pays taxes, directly and/or indirectly.



This Vision Document tries to envision the evolution of the organisation over the next decade-and-half

While promotion of such a universal increase in consumer welfare is a worthy agenda, it is essential to realise that it is constrained by several factors, which include declining natural resources and governance deficit. The last couple of decades have witnessed many challenges to food, energy and water security – the three most basic needs of the consumer and aided by sub-optimal governance.

Inadequate availability of means and access to these needs adds to the asymmetries of a welfare state. While promotion of the universal satisfaction of basic needs and attainment of capabilities is a laudable and imperative programme, it has to be done intelligently and by addressing social, economic and environmental challenges and dimensions of 'Sustainable Development'.

Therefore, in articulating this Vision for the future, CUTS would lay greater emphasis on the promotion of sustainable development outcomes through its work on ‘*Good Governance*’, ‘*Effective Regulations*’ and ‘*Rules-based Trade*’.

vision /'vɪʒən/ n. 3 v. 1. the act or faculty of his vision), 2 a thing or person seen, 3 a supernatural or prophetic apparition, 4 a picture in the imagination (the romantic visions of Keats), 5 a imaginative insight, 6 a particular way, e.g. in politics, 7 a person present in or as in a vision. *visionary* n. English from Old French *vision*.

CUTS has come a long way over the last three-and-half decades.

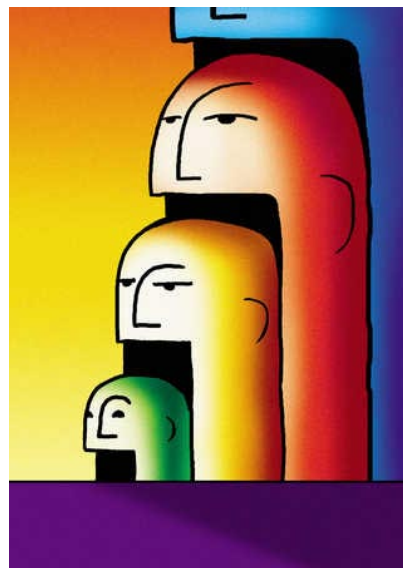
In simple language, the Vision relates to the creation of 'Value for People' in their diverse roles as consumers, producers and depositors/suppliers of human capital. As every citizen in an economy performs more than one and, sometimes, all these roles simultaneously, such creation of value should be looked upon as a single unified Vision for achieving greater 'Consumer Welfare' through 'Consumer Empowerment'.

Here, ‘Consumer Sovereignty’ refers to a situation in which consumers influence what gets produced and, therefore, consumed. While businesses steer the economy through their actions, they ultimately respond to demands from and influencing powers of consumers.

Thus, consumer preferences dictate producers’ activities, provided consumers enjoy access to accurate information on goods, services and technologies, freedom to choose among alternatives and the right to redress. The same line of thinking also applies to citizens whose taxes are used by the state to run the government and citizens also use their voting power to exercise their choice.

The mentioned pre-conditions for ‘Consumer Sovereignty’ have been formalised through the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of ‘UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection’ in April 1985 and their further amendments in 1999 and 2015. Such formalisation was sparked by the realisation that consumers often face imbalances and deficiencies in economic terms, educational levels and bargaining power. Eight rights are incorporated in these guidelines: the right to basic needs, safety, information, the choice to be heard, redress, consumer education and a healthy environment.

At CUTS, we added two more rights: boycott and opportunities to support consumer empowerment. The boycott would mean that consumers have to boycott unsafe goods or price gouging. In terms of opportunities, this would mean that citizens get a right to earn their livelihood to be able to participate in the economy as consumers.



CUTS seeks to work out of the box and act not only as an advocate and facilitator of regulation of policies and practices affecting consumer welfare but also as think and action-tank making difference to all aspects of economic governance affecting consumers as citizens – as a ‘Change Agent’



While UNCTAD works with governments as a nodal facilitator of better economic governance at the global level influencing top-down processes, CUTS has the potential to perform the same role in regard to civil society and community-based organisations

Out of these, the ‘right to basic needs’ has also been postulated through the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is important to note that this ‘Consumer Charter’ complements ‘Transformative Shifts’ as articulated in the Agenda 2030 of the SDGs by the United Nations.

It is important to note that CUTS envisaged many of these ‘Transformative Shifts’ while celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2008 by organising an International Conference entitled ‘Global Partnership for Development – Where do we stand and where to go?’

Therefore, it is important to underline that while organisations for the protection of consumer rights, viewed in the narrow sense as alleviation of the risk of the consumer being charged a price higher or provided quality of goods/services/technologies lower than what is justified under current economic conditions, are quite common, those which not only promote such access but also ways and means of changing economic governance conditions for the betterment of the consumer are rare.

It is this void that CUTS is filling. In doing so, CUTS seeks to work out of the box and act not only as an advocate and facilitator of regulation of policies and practices affecting consumer welfare but also as think and action-tank making difference to all aspects of economic governance affecting consumers as citizens – as a ‘Change Agent’.

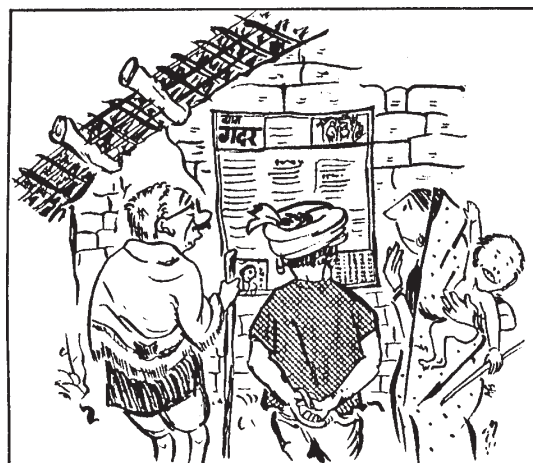
1.2 CUTS Programme Agenda: Pathways to its Vision

1.2.1 Aspirations Originating from Vision

Over the next decade-and-a-half, in partnership and association with like-minded organisations in India and internationally and by adopting a life-cycle approach to long-term, strategic partnership development, CUTS aspires to further promote its 'International NGO' status and become a premier 'Consumer Voice' from the South. The name CUTS will become synonymous with all aspects of 'Consumer Welfare' through 'Good Governance', 'Effective Regulations' and 'Rules-based Trade'.

This stress on social justice, economic equality and environmental sustainability, coupled with its 'International NGO', the status will help the organisation in its aspiration to become a civil society analogue of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which helps developing countries get benefited through better governance of global public good and, consequently, a more balanced economic development across regions.

While UNCTAD works with governments as a nodal facilitator of better economic governance at the global level influencing top-down processes, CUTS performs the same role in regard to civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), not just consumer protection groups, through bottom-up actions at local, national, regional and international levels and, in turn, with governments, particularly in the developing world.



With rural development communication initiative launched through a wall newspaper 'Gram Gadar' (Village Revolution), CUTS has achieved significant growth both geographically and in terms of functional areas



From a modest beginning out of a garage in Jaipur, India, in 1983, today the organisation has expanded to different parts of India and internationally with over 150 human resources from diverse backgrounds



CUTS has distinguished itself as a unique CSO in the world promoting South-South, North-South and Trilateral Development Cooperation between and among government and non-government actors

1.2.2 An Evolutionary History: Pointers to the Future

Consumer action is the *raison d'être* for the birth and existence of CUTS, which, along with several like-minded Indian consumer organisations, was responsible for getting the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, enacted in India.

From a modest beginning out of a garage in Jaipur, India, in 1983, today the organisation has expanded to different parts of India and internationally with over 150 human resources from diverse backgrounds.

Furthermore, CUTS has established 'Strategic Partnership' with like-minded civil society organisations (CSOs) in more than 50 countries in various regions. Over the next decade-and-a-half, CUTS envisages expanding its geographical spread by establishing Regional Centres in South America, the Middle East & North Africa, Central Asia and consolidate its activities in its International Centres in Geneva and Washington DC, which are important places of international economic governance. Besides, CUTS also envisages establishing its third International Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

In other words, CUTS has distinguished itself as a unique CSO in the world promoting South-South, North-South and Trilateral Development Cooperation between and among government and non-government actors by developing, nurturing and implementing a 'Hub & Spokes' model of a rights-based approach to development through 'Consumer Empowerment'.

Its achievements in the first three-and-a-half decades of its history have been considerable. It has emerged as a champion of the common and, often,

disadvantaged stakeholders and this agenda has naturally led to a diversification of its programmes which now span ‘Good Governance’, ‘Effective Regulations’ and ‘Rules-based Trade’, with a rights-based approach to sustainable development and human development in its traditional as well as contemporary sense as cross-cutting themes. Thus, its agenda is not just about ‘Consumer Protection’ but enhancement of ‘Consumer Welfare’.

Through its work on ‘Good Governance’, ‘Effective Regulations’ and ‘Rules-based Trade’, CUTS is not only addressing this need in India and the developing world at large but also advocating for systemic changes in various areas of international economic governance. In other words, CUTS aspires to address its Vision of ‘Consumer Sovereignty’ by reinforcing the fact that ‘Consumer Interest’ is synonymous with ‘National Interest’ to address social, economic and environmental dimensions and challenges of ‘Sustainable Development’.

One of the *modus operandi* of expanding its horizon and thinking on ‘Consumer Sovereignty’ has been forming and maintaining ‘Strategic Partnership’ with like-minded organisations, particularly in the developing world. Over the last three-and-a-half decades, CUTS has worked together with some CSOs and CBOs from across Asia, Africa, Europe and America on issues of common interest, thereby strengthening such partnerships.

This has helped the organisation to work in trenches to reach out to a large community of practitioners, policy-makers and experts beyond its direct ‘Sphere of Influence’. Over the next decade-and-a-half, CUTS not only aims to strengthen such alliances but also to multiply its effectiveness as a ‘Change Agent’ by



CUTS has developed and institutionalised a ‘Bottom-Up’ methodology for CSOs and CBOs to work together with state and non-state actors



Good Governance is characterised by three components: rule of law, accountability for results and actions, and efforts to combat corruption

facilitating/forming ‘Network of Networks’ as that would help the organisation to ‘Reach Out to the Unreached’.

Moreover, while questioning and asking for greater ‘Transparency and Accountability’ in the system of economic governance, CUTS is maintaining full transparency and accountability of its work. Not only information about sources of funding and activities is widely disseminated to the relevant stakeholders of particular activities and interventions and the public at large but also its annual financial statements and other statutory documents of operations are available on its website.



...high level of ‘Transparency and Accountability’, CUTS was accredited to Credibility Alliance, which is a network of civil society organisations in India working on governance and related aspects of NGO management and operations

Given this high level of ‘Transparency and Accountability’, CUTS has been accredited by the Credibility Alliance, which is a network of CSOs in India working on governance and related aspects of NGO management and operations, which recognises good CSOs who maintain good standards of ethics and financial management.

Furthermore, CUTS has also been instrumental in creating institutions outside its fold such as the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1996 and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 1998. Both work on a myriad range of issues of trade, economics and sustainable development with footprints across the world.

Moreover, looking at the huge demand for capacity building in the area of competition and regulation, particularly on law and economics of regulatory regimes, it has also created CUTS Institute for

Regulation & Competition in New Delhi in 2008. Its motto is to enhance knowledge and strengthen capacity.

1.2.3 Core Areas of Operation

The organisation's work on 'Good Governance' and its approach to strengthening 'Governance' are three-pronged:

- increasing people's participation at various levels of governance and implementation of policies/laws/rules;
- assessment of the effectiveness of policies/institutions/government departments, implementation of welfare schemes/programmes, etc., in achieving developmental as well as institutional outcomes; and
- holding government agencies/departments accountable in the provision of quality goods, services and technologies in social (primary healthcare, education, etc.) and utility sectors (telecommunications, electricity, water, etc.).

In implementing its activities and interventions in various programme areas in low-income countries – thus, working in trenches – CUTS has developed and institutionalised a 'Bottom-Up' methodology for CSOs and CBOs to work together with state and non-state actors.

Such an approach intrinsically induces transparency, accountability and ownership, especially by opening up the process of developing and implementing social and economic policies through the involvement of 'key stakeholders'.

Additionally, the work that is being done in partnership with local organisations helps build their capacities and there are better ownership and



International trade and its relationship with development constitute an important engine for the optimisation of consumer welfare marked by the attainment of postulated consumer rights



CUTS to roll out more effective intervention plans in geographical regions/ countries, it is imperative that the capabilities of these centres are improved further

political buy-in at various levels. One of the key achievements of CUTS' work in this area has been the use of 'Social Accountability' tools, thereby developing the capacity of local CSOs and CBOs to monitor public expenditure in specific sectors.

At the same time, the adequate choice for consumption, availability of products, services and technologies at prices low enough to facilitate adequate levels of consumption (more and better access), adherence of producers to satisfactory standards of quality, especially safety norms, and adequate information for consumers about product characteristics are pre-conditioned on the existence of sound regulatory regimes.

Therefore, optimal regulation of individual sectors should take into account technological specificities and the nature of demand and supply characterising a sector. This is because consumers are becoming more and more aware of their rights and responsibilities.

In short, the development of well-functioning markets is a pre-condition for 'Consumer Welfare' and, indeed, one of the objectives of 'Effective Regulations'. Moreover, an enabling investment regime is essential for the optimisation of competition over time.

An effective competition law and policy regime, welfare maximising sector regulations and an enabling investment regime is, therefore, all necessary for the optimisation of consumer welfare. These subjects are dealt with under the rubric of 'Effective Regulations'.

However, regulations do not only pertain to domestic producers. International trade offers a chance for domestic producers to specialise in lines of production in which these are efficient relative to producers from other countries. Surpluses of domestic consumption overproduction in these lines can be exchanged for surpluses from other countries in other lines of production. Such exchange or international trade facilitates higher levels of job creation, consumption marked by lower prices and higher quality, as well as an enhanced range of choices for consumers.

Thus, international trade and its relationship with development constitute an important engine for the optimisation of consumer welfare marked by the attainment of postulated consumer rights. The formulation of trade policies at the national, regional and international levels, through bilateral, regional and multilateral negotiations and stakeholder consultations, and the impact of trade on poverty and social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are, therefore, key aspects of CUTS' activities and interventions under the rubric of '*Rules-based Trade*'.

These core areas of '*Good Governance*', '*Effective Regulations*' and '*Rules-based Trade*' constitute the areas of specialisation of CUTS and are depicted in Figure 1. All of them are geared to address social, economic and environmental challenges and dimensions of '*Sustainable Development*' through various tools and their application for '*Consumer Empowerment*'. A dis-aggregation of these core areas is presented in Table 1.

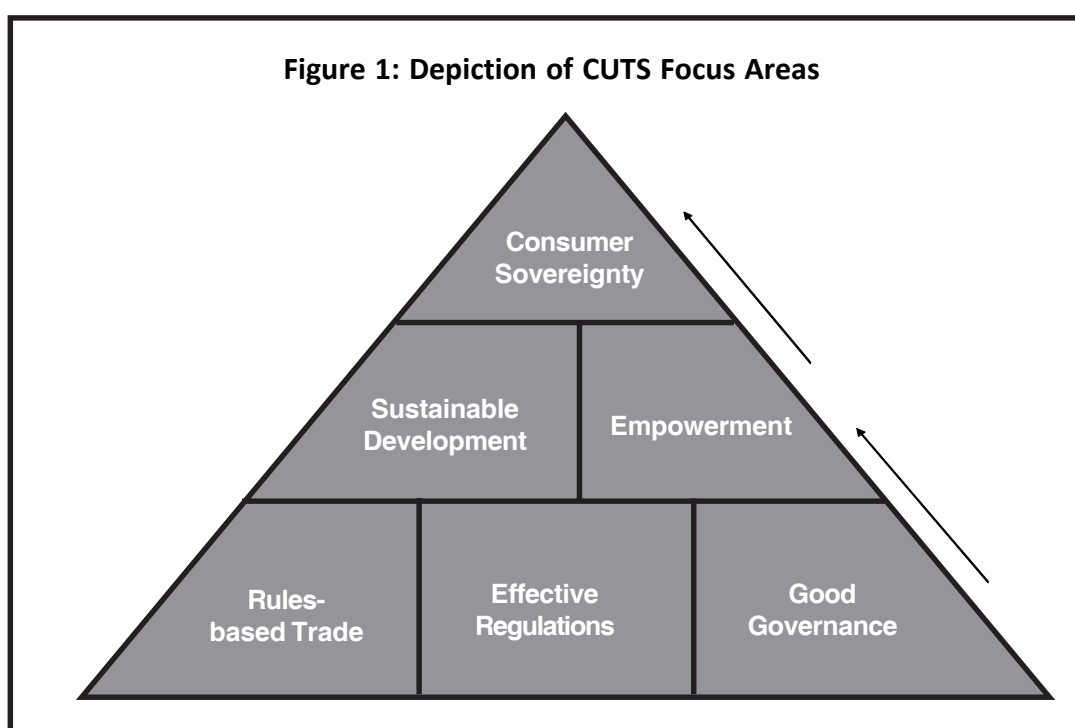


Advocacy requires a projection of views that have not been verified through research

Table 1: Dis-aggregation of CUTS' Core Areas	
<i>Programme Areas</i>	<i>Issues</i>
<i>Rules-based Trade</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WTO Issues & Free Trade Agreements • Regional Integration in South Asia • Trade and Sustainable Development
<i>Effective Regulations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition Policy and Law • Economic Regulation • Investment Climate • Consumer Protection
<i>Good Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Empowerment • Access to Information • People's Participation • Social Accountability

Furthermore, with inputs from activities and interventions in these core areas of operations, CUTS is pursuing human development in its traditional as well as contemporary sense. CUTS Centre for Human Development is working in several villages and districts of Southern Rajasthan for developing skills and capacities of local NGOs and communities through training and IEC (information, education and communication) materials.

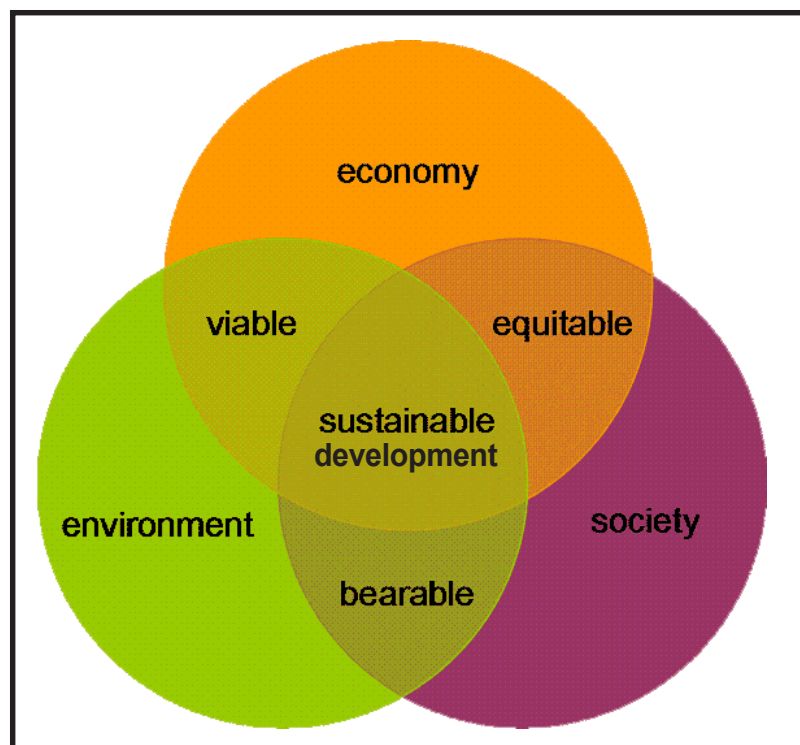
Figure 1: Depiction of CUTS Focus Areas



It is making several innovative interventions on public health, environment and development, enhancing civic and political education of people at the grassroots and building up strong networking between influencers and organisations. It has also established a number of farmer-producer organisations that are helping farmers to enhance their income by following good agricultural practices and better marketing.

1.2.4 Agenda 2030 – Sustainable Development Goals

In the future, by addressing the interplay between ‘Consumer Empowerment’ and ‘Sustainable Development’, CUTS will steer its activities and interventions in a manner to align them with and contribute towards the achievement of ‘Transformative Shifts’ as envisaged in the Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations – ‘A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development’.





‘Capacity Building’ of internal staff through exposure visits, short trainings, internships

These ‘Transformative Shifts’ and their brief descriptions are as follows:

- **Leave no one behind:** There can be no excuses. This is a universal agenda for which everyone must accept their proper share of responsibility.
- **Put sustainable development at the core:** Only by mobilising social, economic and environmental action together can we eradicate poverty irreversibly and meet the aspirations of eight billion people in 2030.
- **Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth:** We should make it easier for people to invest, start-up a business and trade. And we can do more to take advantage of the rapid urbanisation: cities are the world’s engines for business and innovation. With good management, they can provide jobs, hope and growth, while building sustainability.
- **Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all:** We need a transparency revolution, so citizens can see exactly where and how taxes, aid and revenues from extractive industries are spent. These are ends as well as means.
- **Forge a new global partnership:** We must fight climate change, champion free and fair trade, technology innovation, transfer and diffusion and promote financial stability. And since this partnership is built on principles of common humanity and mutual respect, it must also have a new spirit and be completely transparent. Everyone involved must be fully accountable.

CUTS' core areas of operations and its *modus operandi*, in particular forging and creating 'Strategic Partnership', are aligned with these 'Transformative Shifts'.



The name CUTS will become synonymous with all aspects of ‘Consumer Welfare’ through ‘Good Governance’, ‘Effective Regulations’ and ‘Rules-based Trade’

2. Characteristics of CUTS

2.1 Values

The organisation’s Vision and its underlying centrist ideology, combined with the experience of its leadership, suggest that the following values should guide the implementation of its agenda in the pursuit of its aspirations:

- Adhering to high standards of transparency and accountability
- Adoption of a ‘Centrist Approach’ in policy and action-research, advocacy, networking and capacity building
- Ensuring outcomes rather than just outputs
- Focus on the subject and geographical areas where a vacuum and need exists
- Responsibility to enhance the capacity of various stakeholders and partner organisations across the developing world
- Continuous strengthening of human resources within the organisation to ensure consistency and timely delivery of effective outcomes

2.2 Negative List

It has been CUTS’ experience that sometimes issues are taken up that are not worth allocating resources and/or related to the organisation’s ‘Vision’ or ‘track record’ or much divergent from its ‘Centrist Approach’. Therefore, the following is a ‘Negative List’ that CUTS follows:

- Work to further the interests of a single firm or conglomerate
- Work on inadequately funded assignments requiring an investment of organisation’s scarce funds that could be employed more productively elsewhere

- Work on assignments that require the explicit use of scientific and technological skills such as ascertaining the quality of roads, assessing the quality of agricultural technologies
- Assignments that require banner waving, slogan shouting, etc.
- Advocacy requires a projection of views that have not been verified through research

2.3 Geographical Expansion

In the years to come, CUTS intends to expand as well as consolidate, wherever required, in pursuance of its Vision. There are two aspects of geographical expansion: a) project implementation, and b) physical presence. Over the next decade-and-a-half, in addition to vertical consolidation (intensification) of its activities across the developing world, CUTS has the ambition of horizontal (geographical) expansion to South America, the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia and establish another International Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. Some thinking and actions have already been initiated in this regard.

In terms of project implementation, in addition to operating in five regions: South Asia, Southeast Asia, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa, CUTS intends to undertake activities and interventions in other parts of the developing world. Several factors are considered while choosing the geographical location of a project, including demand on the ground, availability of the local partner(s), familiarity with the country/region, the existence of CUTS contacts, interest among the donor community to support activities in the organisation's core areas, etc.

These factors were considered by CUTS in opening each of its overseas centres (in Lusaka, Nairobi,



An effective competition law and policy regime, welfare maximising sector regulations and an enabling investment regime is necessary for the optimisation of consumer welfare

Accra, Geneva and Washington DC) and would continue to be considered in contemplating the opening of new overseas offices in the future. The Year 2018 is a 'milestone' for CUTS on account of the establishment of its second International Centre in Washington DC.

This Centre will focus its activities in the areas of international trade, energy and strategic issues not only between India and the United States of America but also in the larger context of contemporary developments in the Indo-Pacific region.

Furthermore, it will function in partnership with the Geneva Centre and headquarters at Jaipur to interact with intergovernmental organisations, such as United Nations and its subsidiary organs, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to take forward CUTS views emanating from its work globally.



The Year 2018 is a 'milestone' for CUTS on account of the establishment of its second International Centre in Washington DC

2.4 Consolidation of Overseas Presence

The organisation's activities and interventions in various countries/regions of the developing world are in most cases implemented and/or managed in cooperation with CUTS overseas centres in those countries/regions. For CUTS to roll out more effective intervention plans in those countries/regions, the capabilities of these centres must be improved further.

Such improvement can be achieved in the following ways:

- 'Capacity Building' of internal staff through exposure visits, short trainings and internships
- Achievement of linkages between Programme and Regional Centres through experience sharing such

as ‘*short deputation*’ of specialised staff from CUTS Programme Centres at overseas centres and *vice versa*. This would help evolve cross-cultural understanding and sensitivities

- Close cooperation and synergy between Programme, Regional and International Centres in Geneva and Washington DC in regard to programme development: A concerted process of having ‘*Desk Officers*’ at the CUTS headquarters responsible for liaisoning and coordination of this process has been initiated and would be further strengthened
- Greater emphasis to develop joint-projects between the Programme, Regional and International Centres
- Effective utilisation of its strength as a ‘Southern Organisation’ having an active presence in Geneva and Washington DC
- An evolving mechanism for close interaction between CUTS headquarters and its Programme, Regional and International Centres

3. Conclusion and Way Forward

This Vision Document provides directions for the next decade-and-a-half of CUTS recommendations for continuity with change which emerges from the analysis in the previous sections. It will help the organisation in consolidating and synergising its activities and interventions in cognate subjects of ‘Good Governance’, ‘Effective Regulations’ and ‘Rules-based Trade’ for achieving ‘Consumer Sovereignty’.

While the organisation’s core areas of operations would continue and will be consolidated, there would be an increase in emphasis on issues such as social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, corporate social responsibility and transparency and accountability in the systems of economic governance.

Over the next two decades, considerable geographical expansion is anticipated – in South America, Middle East & North Africa, Central Asia and another International Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. New Regional Centres would be set up based on project funding and core/long-term support but a continuation of operations would be based on sustainability through the generation and consolidation of local demands, future opportunities, etc.

In the future, the organisation will place greater emphasis on outcomes and impact-oriented cutting-edge activities and interventions by consolidating and synergising its work across subjects and geographical regions.



This Vision Document will be revisited every third year to take stock of what the organisation had visualised and what it has been able to achieve in terms of this Vision

CUTS is an organisation striving for continuous improvement. One of the ways for achieving this would be to undertake an 'External Evaluation' of CUTS to better identify its 'Strengths, Limitations, Opportunities and Threats', which will help the organisation addressing major factors in 'External Environment' in which it will work as well as improve its 'Internal Environment' of functioning.

An Organisational Strategic Business Plan will be developed which would help CUTS operationalising this Vision Document. A Monitoring and Evaluation framework will also be developed to monitor the progress of the organisation in achieving the goals set in this Vision Document by the 50th anniversary of CUTS in 2034.

This Vision Document will be revisited every third year to take stock of what the organisation had visualised and what it has been able to achieve in terms of this Vision.

About CUTS

Established in 1983, as a rural development communication initiative, Consumer Unity & Trust Society is currently at the cutting edge of consumer movement in India as well as across the globe, and has become a leading Southern voice on Rules-Based Trade, Effective Regulations and Good Governance.

CUTS Mission is "Consumer Sovereignty in the Framework of Social Justice, Economic Equality and Environmental Balance, Within and Across Borders". In all its endeavours, CUTS follows the method of research-based advocacy and connects the grassroots with national and international policymaking processes.

Over the last three and half decades, CUTS has experienced an organic and evolutionary growth – marked by a refreshing spontaneity in responding to the need of the hour, particularly those of the developing world, by addressing contemporary and emerging economic governance issues at national, regional and international-level through exchange of ideas, evidences and experiences of state and non-state actors.

At present, CUTS operates out of:

- Three Programme Centres in Jaipur and one in Chittorgarh, India
- A Public Policy Centre in Jaipur
- An Advocacy Centre in New Delhi and a Resource Centre in Kolkata, India
- Six Affiliated Centres in Lusaka, Nairobi and Accra (Africa), Hanoi (Vietnam), Geneva (Switzerland) and Washington DC (USA).



CUTS began from a rural development initiative, a wall newspaper, Gram Gadar (Village Revolution). As the organisation's mouthpiece, Gram Gadar is published regularly and reaches every nook and corner of Rajasthan, including remote villages. It has been instrumental in providing a forum for providing justice to the oppressed classes at the grassroots.

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