

Can Trade Help Fight Climate-related Hunger in East Africa? Stakeholders will Debate in Kigali

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From 17 to 18 September, leaders of all East African Community (EAC) governments and the business, farming, civil society and academic communities will review on-going policy efforts to address climate-related hunger through trade in the region. They will gather at Hotel des Mille Collines in Kigali, Rwanda, at the initiative of the think-tank CUTS International. The EAC Secretariat and other international organisations will also participate in the discussions, along with EAC country negotiators to the World Trade Organization in Geneva.

Climate change is altering agricultural and trade patterns, and causing additional large-scale hunger in the East African Community countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. If appropriate policies are in place, trade can help in lifting these countries out of poverty and in mitigating the negative impacts climate change has on their citizens, particularly on small-scale farmers. But such policies that take into account equally agriculture, climate and trade hardly exist, neither in individual countries nor at the EAC level.

The pro-trade, Geneva-based think-tank CUTS International, Geneva and its civil society partners in Burundi (ADIR), Kenya (CUTS ARC, Nairobi), Rwanda (ACORD), Tanzania (ESRF) and Uganda (SEATINI) have taken up this challenge since last year, through the implementation of a 3-year project titled "Promoting Agriculture-Climate-Trade Linkages in the EAC" (PACT EAC Project). During the past few months, collaborative research and several rounds of consultations have been undertaken in each country of the common market, coming up with policy recommendations to mitigate climate-induced food insecurity through trade.

From the need to increase the use of weather forecasting technology in Tanzania to the imperative of improving local-level planning in Uganda, these recommendations and the findings of the five research studies will be examined in Kigali by representatives of international organisations (FAO, UNFCCC), regional bodies (EAC Secretariat, East African Legislative Assembly), and national stakeholders from the government, farmers' associations, civil society, academia, the media and the business community.

Besides the stated objective to feed policy making and implementation with evidence-based recommendations, the five research studies will also be the basis for training modules to be developed by TRAPCA and delivered next year.

Another highlight will be the participation of Geneva-based WTO negotiators of the five EAC countries who will explain the trade-related priorities of their countries in the WTO and how they hold consultations with other stakeholders. These trade negotiators gather in Geneva once every two months at the "EAC Geneva Forum" meetings organised by CUTS under the same project.

For more information about the event, please visit: <http://bit.ly/P8i46T>

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