

## **OVERVIEW OF THE ORGANISATION**

In 1983, CUTS began its journey with a rural development communication initiative, a wall newspaper Gram Gadar (Village Revolution). It is published regularly and reaches every nook and corner of Rajasthan, even remote villages where radio is the only medium of communication. It has been instrumental in providing a forum for the oppressed classes to get justice. A non-profit, non-governmental organisation with its headquarters in Jaipur, India, two resource centres in Calcutta and Delhi in India and five resource centres outside India: Nairobi, Kenya; Lusaka, Zambia; Hanoi, Vietnam; London, UK, Geneva, Switzerland.

In 2000, CUTS-Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment (CUTS), was registered as a local NGO under the NGO Co-ordination Act of Kenya in the year 2000 and started operations in the year 2003. Owing to its work and involvement in multi-country projects in Africa it has come to be commonly referred as, Consumer Unity & Trust Society, Africa Resource Centre (CUTS ARC), Nairobi. The Organisation is affiliated to CUTS International, India; however, it remains an independent entity in programme direction and management being guided by its advisory body. At inception CUTS ARC, Nairobi (referred to as the 'Centre' hereafter) was mandated to work in Kenya, addressing national policy issues, however, the centre was at the same time working in other select countries in Eastern, Southern and Horn of Africa.

The centre's programme areas include:

- Trade and Development
- Investment, Competition and Economic Regulation
- Consumer Protection and Governance

### **Vision**

'Consumer sovereignty in the framework of social justice and equality, within and across borders'

### **Mission**

The mission of the Centre is to function as a resource, coordination as well as networking Centre to promote South-South cooperation for sustainable people-centred economic development.

### **Centre's Objectives**

- To act as resource centre for information on trade and development, competition, investment and regulatory issues.
- To build local, national capacities on areas of trade and sustainable development through advocacy and dissemination of information in south-south partnership.
- To promote civil society co-operation on trade and sustainable development by creating and building long term capacity of civil society representatives in the region to address the issues of equity and accountability in the economic systems.
- To undertake research on regional and international agreements those that have impact on trade and sustainable development within the global and national context.

## **Approach to work**

Three pillars

1. Research
2. Advocacy
3. Networking
4. Capacity building

### Main Features of Research

- Emphasising on fieldwork-based research involving stakeholders
- Quantitative and qualitative research
- Political and socio-economic analysis
- In-house, network-based and outsourced research

### Main Features of Advocacy

- Sensitisation of CSOs
- Advocacy with other stakeholders – business chambers, farmers’ organisations, trade unions, etc
- Advocacy with policy-makers – trade negotiators, trade policy-makers, parliamentarians, sub-national governments, etc
- Partnerships at different levels

### Main Features of Networking

- Ranging from grassroots CSOs to international NGOs to policy-makers and other stakeholders at national and international levels
- Dynamic information dissemination and outreach
- Organising multi-stakeholder events
- In partnership with Brussels-based EIAS and Sussex University formed EU-India Network on Trade and Development

## **PROGRAMMES**

### **Trade and Development**

#### ***Objective of the programme***

To promote better trade policies through carrying-out research, capacity-building, advocacy, and networking with both state and non-state actors to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction in East Africa.

#### ***Present projects***

The Centre presently focuses on research and capacity-building activities at the national and multi-country levels, these include:

- Agriculture and Market Linkages: a project themed Fostering Equity and Accountability in the Trading Systems (FEATS) funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation through the CUTS Geneva office. <http://www.cuts-grc.org/FEATS-Projects.htm>
- Regional Integration: Formulating a Joint African Trade Strategy (JATS) Project. A project funded by FES, Kenya (2008 ongoing). Formulating African Trade Strategy.” The conference, jointly organized by the Nairobi office of Consumer Unity Trust Society (CUTS) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), discussed the status and challenges of Africa’s integration and provided insights on how African countries could in concert, formulate a joint

African Trade Strategy (ATS) to accelerate their integration and help tackle common trade policy issues emerging from the current globalization process.

- a. Capacity-building for the EAC regional integration around the objectives of regional integration enshrined in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in the ongoing East African integration funded by CIDA and DfID
  - b. Analysis of Performance of EAC Customs Union, supported by FES
  - c. Building the capacity of civil society organisation in East Africa to respond to policy challenges in integration of the EAC vis-à-vis external bilateral, regional and multilateral trade arrangements like EPAs and WTO, a 2008-2010 project funded by German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the CUTS Geneva Resource Centre [www.cuts-grc.org/](http://www.cuts-grc.org/)
- Linkages between Trade, Development and Poverty Reduction (TDP) (January 2005 to December 2008) with support from the Royal Netherlands Embassy and DFID, UK. The Centre coordinated research, advocacy and networking aspects of the project in the East African region with partner organisations in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. (2005-2008)
    - a. TDP Research in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania
    - b. International conference on linkages on Trade, Development and Poverty-Aid for Trade and Roles of CSOs. This provided a discussion forum to deliberate on various aspects of the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) in implementing aid for trade programmes. (March 2007)
    - c. Pre-UNCTAD XII, March 2008
    - d. Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA): a research, advocacy and capacity building project for Civil Society Organizations in six countries viz. Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Ethiopia and Malawi supported by Royal Danish Embassy.
    - e. Training workshop on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) The objective of the Workshop was to enable participants (who represent a wide range of Kenyan CSOs and private sector representatives with interests in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations between their government and the EU) to assess the costs and benefits of alternative goods trade regimes with support from Overseas Development Institute, London;
    - f. Training workshop on Benchmarking for Pro-Development Monitoring of the Negotiation and Implementation of an ESA-EU Economic Partnership Agreement. This was a multi-sectoral workshop jointly organised by CUTS-Nairobi Resource Centre (CUTS-NRC), the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES Kenya) in cooperation with APRODEV under the support of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The workshop attracted 45 participants including the organisers
  - Developing Benchmarks for EPAs, supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Kenya.
    - a. SPS by GTZ
    - b. EAC and Services in EPAs by GTZ
    - c. Research on EPA and Services in 2008 and Beyond, supported by Commonwealth secretariat

## **Investment, Competition and Economic Regulation Objectives and Activities**

- To enhance understanding and harmonize national and regional competition policies for integration of market economies.
- To develop policy proposals for competition and regulatory reforms based on research findings.
- Capacity building (including training) to national stakeholders on competition policy and law issues through an evidence-based advocacy.
- Undertaking research study on competition issues in specific sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, utilities, services, etc.) and assessing its impact on consumers.

### *Present projects*

- Involvement in Competition Policy and Law of CUTS International project (2008-2010) in select seven west African countries: Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo funded by IDRC and DfID through the CUTS India office.
- Research Project on the Competition policy and regulations in the energy sector in Kenya Supported by **Trust Africa** [2008-2009].

### *Past projects*

- **A multi country study on trade on services and domestic regulation: background paper for Kenya, 2007.** The Kenya study provided background information on the country's services sector over the last two decades. It outlined and analysed the evolution of the sector in Kenya since two decades and its contribution to the country's Gross Domestic product, employment, exports and imports, investment flows and sectoral linkages. The study also analysed the competitiveness of the different sub-sectors in the service sector with the particular reference to inter -industry trade and intra- industry trade. This research project was funded by the Commonwealth Fund.
- **Investment for Development (IFD Project, 2002-03)** – a two-year research and advocacy project aimed at supporting pro-development foreign direct investment (FDI) in seven select developing countries: South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia in Africa and four other countries.

## **Consumer Protection and Governance**

### **Objective of the programme**

- To empower consumers to participate in voicing their concerns and demanding accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of public utilities and other service providers using Social Accountability (SAc) tools.
- Address the demand side concerns (consumers) and supply side concerns (government and local authorities) in provision of public goods and services.
- Policy Research on the imbalance in the distribution of national resources with recommendations and lobby for their implementation to the relevant authorities.
- Consumers awareness on governments' planned and on going projects and their responsibilities as consumers to ensure that governments' expenditure is in line with their priority needs and to ensure sound financial management.
- Organise forums to educate and sensitise consumers on their roles in the preparation and implementation of local authority service delivery action plans and on the redress procedure to perceived misallocation or misappropriation of funds.

## **Present projects and activities**

- **Economic Roundtables/Public forums.**

These are periodic informal national dialoguing, either in focused groups or through public debates, on various socio-economic issues of the time. Each series brings different sets of (though not always) experts drawn from a wide range of the Kenyan civil society, private sector, government representatives, media, parliament, and academia. The aim is to discuss and propose solutions to emerging challenges to economic development; increasing stakeholder awareness and participation in matters that impact their wellbeing and development as well as their effective participation in the implementation of targeted policies and monitoring of policy outcomes.

- **Informal Africa Dialogue** on current issues on exchange of best practices for consumer protection. This project is being supported by U.S Federal Trade Commission (**March 2009-To date**)

## **Future Plans**

During the ARC Nairobi strategic planning workshop held on September 20, 2007, key stakeholders and staff members initiated this plan and reviewed the context and internal/external environment by taking stock of what had already been achieved. The draft plan was later reviewed at a Retreat on March 29-30, 2008. Main conclusions of this internal exercise that helped in shaping the SBP 2009-2013 are the following:

- CUTS ARC, Nairobi will continue to work with national level organisations including NGOs and government officials, particularly in Eastern Africa with whom it has established a robust working relationship in the past few years.
- It will involve in its activities all stakeholders who are crucial components of the policy formulation to ensure that topical and relevant issues are taken up for policy research, advocacy and networking in a timely manner.
- ARC, Nairobi will plan and execute advocacy exercises that aid Kenya and other Eastern African countries in making their presence felt and their viewpoints considered in the ongoing work relating to consumer protection, poverty reduction, economic and regulatory policy.
- ARC will be in a position to work on issues of direct relevance to domestic policy makers because of its long association with national stakeholders in Eastern African countries and its ability to bring to the fore the needs and aspirations of developing countries.
- ARC, Nairobi has a vigorous plan to monitor performance of international policy and practice impacts in the countries through regular interactions (meetings and brainstorming) with stakeholders and funding agencies and inter-governmental agencies active in Kenya and in other parts of Eastern Africa.
- ARC will aim at long-term impact of its activities and assistance to developing countries in Eastern Africa so that its focus remains on outcomes and not just outputs.
- ARC intends to make use of the latest frameworks in improved use of research-based evidence in policy and practice. This it will do through strategic engagements with policy makers, researchers, and policy influencers. More importantly it will focus on understanding and improving the contour of their interaction – especially to evolve a participatory policy-making process.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The organization has a well-structured system ensuring flow of information as well as openness among the employees to facilitate communication for proper functioning of the center. The structure also puts a lot of emphasis on the need to engage experts and professionals in the advisory board to benefit from their experience and expertise in the general programmatic directions in tandem with the vision and mission. The structure comprises of the Executive and the Advisory Committees and the administrative and program staff.