

About the CUTS-Commonwealth Commercial Diplomacy Event

CUTS International in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat conducted a training programme in Nairobi between 15th-17th June 2009 to impart skills to government officials from selected Commonwealth countries in the Sub-Saharan African region with the following objectives.

- The directional objective was to meet the imperative of having trained government officials at various levels who are involved in commercial diplomacy and related trade policy matters.
- The development objective was to ensure coherence between a country's domestic policy on trade and investment-related issues with international commitments.
- The programme objective was to enhance skills by developing/strengthening capacity for taking effective part in trade and investment negotiations and implementation aspects of related international agreements.

This program was conducted by a team of eminent and experienced resource persons (former diplomats and trade policy experts) to a set of government officials (dealing with trade and investment matters) in selected Commonwealth countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. This covered the following areas:

- International diplomatic environment
- A Practical approach to negotiations
- Trade policy issues in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Trade promotion activities: A field perspective
- Simulation exercise on trade negotiations

A set of study materials were prepared by the resource persons and others provided to the participants. Briefly speaking, the content of the study materials covered the following:

- International diplomatic environment: Diplomacy (Narrow definition vis-à-vis broad definition); difference between commercial and economic diplomacy; understanding of international diplomatic environment; integrated relationships among issues; trade-offs and leverage across sectors; evolving 'whole of government' approaches; optimal management of human resources; networking skills, motivation and understanding intercultural management
- A practical approach to negotiations: An examination of the broad issues in negotiations and possible improvements in external negotiation process
- Trade policy issues in Sub-Saharan Africa: Overall direction of trade policies of these countries will be presented; changes in trade policies in the context of bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements/negotiations will be discussed
- Trade promotion activities: What are the practical methods for trade promotion? the methods of market share analysis (for products and target markets); a proactive promotional mindset by embassies abroad; support measures from the Trade Ministry; visits by business delegations; participation in trade shows; the method of 'challenge funds'; spreading awareness of best practices, etc
- Simulation exercise on trade negotiations: A negotiation simulation involving four issues involved in a free trade agreement, aimed at exploring the manner in which a bilateral negotiation unfolds, and the possibilities of trade-offs, based on the mutual and shared interests of the two sides, which may lie beneath the surface

Besides one from the Commonwealth Secretariat, there were five resource persons from among the Commonwealth countries. Participants were invited from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In total, there were 21 persons inclusive of four staff from CUTS Africa Resource Centre, Nairobi. **Read More**.....