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RECENT EVENTS

Better Exploration of Poverty as a Means for Poverty Reduction

CUTS Africa Resource Centre (CUTS ARC), Lusaka with the support of Finnish Embassy is implementing a project entitled, 'Better Exploration of Trade as a Means for Poverty Reduction: An Inclusive Approach to Aid for Trade and Enhanced Integrated Framework in Zambia (BETAMPOR)'. The objective of the project is to build capacity of state and non-state actors in order to strengthen and influence participation in the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) process thus helping promote the utilisation and ownership of the process.

Launch Meeting

The launch meeting of the project was held in Lusaka, Zambia, on January 16, 2011. The meeting commenced with a video footage/report of the preliminary visit to Copperbelt and Luapula provinces under the project (highlighting the poverty strings in the provinces *vis-à-vis* trade potential) which was later presented to the Finnish Ambassador by Ambassador Love Mtesa of CUTS. The meeting was attended by representatives of the media, Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry, National Implementation Unit (NIU), Finnish Embassy notably Finnish Ambassador to Zambia Sinikka Antila and Programme Officer, Emmi Mutale and CUTS team.

Provincial Workshops

The Centre organised three provincial workshops in Kitwe, on January 26, 2011; in Mansa on January 28, 2011; and in Chipata, on February 16, 2011 respectively.

The objectives of the workshops were to see the formulation of the provincial EIF charters which would interface between ARC Lusaka and the NIU; and the implementation of the EIF in general. The workshops were well attended and achieved objectives of forming charters.

Scenario Planning for EAC Agricultural Development

CUTS ARC, Nairobi with support from Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) organised a regional workshop under the project entitled, 'Scenario Planning for EAC Agricultural Development' in Nairobi, on February 22, 2011. The workshop provided a platform to senior agriculture policy makers and planners at the national and regional level, scholars, farmers, consumers and traders to discuss the current happenings in the region with regard to food security and the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The discussions were preceded by briefings on aspects of the state of agricultural development and food security conditions in the East African Community (EAC), the institutional-policy environment and constraints to agriculture development and food security, regional food trade environment, major drivers and trends influencing food security, risks and uncertainties, threats and opportunities to achieving food security.



RECENT EVENTS

Advent of Competition and Consumer Protection Act

ARC, Lusaka in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) organised a one-day workshop to build the capacity of stakeholders for the effective implementation of the Competition and Consumer Protection Act (2010) in Lusaka, Zambia, on March 07, 2011. The workshop drew participants from the media, sector regulators, academia and civil society.

World Consumer Rights Day

The World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) was commemorated in Lusaka, Zambia, on March 15, 2011. Zambia's local theme for 2011 is 'Consumer Rights and Obligations – Knowledge is Power'. On the commemoration, ARC, Lusaka Board Chair, Ambassador Love Mtesa, said that the enactment of Competition Law in Zambia is a milestone and consumers should know their rights.

A Media Workshop on AGOA

ARC, Lusaka in collaboration with Caritas Zambia and Centre for Trade Policy and Development organised a media workshop on African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in Lusaka, Zambia, on March 28, 2011. The meeting was graced by the Permanent Secretary Dr Phiri. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the opportunities and challenges surrounding the AGOA process and how media could help raise awareness on such issues thereby influencing policy changes.

PUBLICATIONS

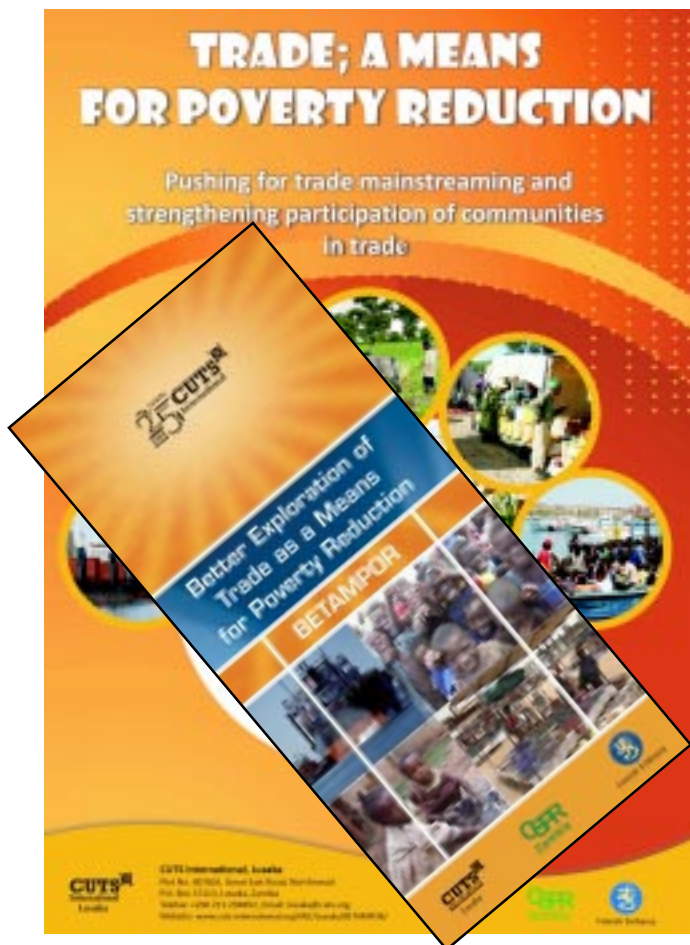
Informal African Consumer Dialogue

Four issues of Informal Africa Consumer Protection Dialogue newsletter were published and disseminated. These can be accessed at:

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/Africa_Consumer_Protection_Dialogue.htm

BETAMPOR Project

One Brochure and Poster was published.



REPRESENTATIONS

Pradeep S Mehta, Bipul Chatterjee and Fredrick Njehu attended the Global Poverty Summit at Johannesburg, South Africa, on January 17-18, 2011. The meeting discussed both the Doha Development Round and Millennium Development Goals.

Clement Onyango and Victor Ogalo attended the launch of Trade Mark East Africa held in Nairobi, Kenya, on February 02, 2011.

Amb. Mtesa and Simon N'gona attended an Organic Market Study Dissemination Workshop organised by Organic Producers and Processors Association of Zambia (OPPAZ) in Lusaka, Zambia, on February 02, 2011.

Lee Hamunji attended the Centre for Training & Project Development Strategic Planning meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, on February 17-19, 2011.

Fredrick Njehu attended a Trade Policy Training Course organised by the University of Sussex with support from Department for International Development (DFID), UK in Arusha, during February 28-March 04, 2011.

Parret Muteto attended the Teleconference meeting with the US CSOs at the American Embassy in Lusaka, Zambia, on March 24, 2011.

Daniel Asher participated in a national workshop to launch the ISO26000 on Social Responsibility organised by Kenya Bureau of Standards in partnership with Ufadhili Trust in Nairobi, Kenya, on March 30, 2011.

EA Region Needs Effective Competition Policy

Business Daily Africa, January 05, 2011

Samson Awino

The recent happenings in Kenya's telecommunication sector have given the Tenth Parliament a new food for thought in the ongoing quest for a level playground. It is now widely appreciated in the country that competition benefits consumers through lower prices, better quality and improved choice of products, and indirectly, through its impact on economic growth. However, in cases where the market is paved with varied anti-competitive practices and weak regulatory framework, it is difficult for such a market to work for the poor.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/article-EA_region_needs_effective_competition_policy.htm

Why Countries Want Doha Trade Talks Concluded?

Business Daily Africa, February 02, 2011

Frederick Njehu

The trade debate on the Doha Round of negotiations has resumed on a high gear in the 2011 calendar. There is optimism among African and other developing countries that the mantle of the negotiations remains a development round. Various complementary efforts both formal and informal have been set up by most of the parties involved and the matter has shifted from when to how the Doha Round of negotiations would be concluded.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/article-Why_countries_want_Doha_trade_talks_concluded.htm

East Africa Requires a Fair Trade Regime

Business Daily Africa, March 24, 2011

Fredrick Njehu

Free or fair trade has always been subject of debate in global economics for many decades with proponents and opponents of both ideologies arguing their cases strongly. It is essential that in an EAC common market, players ensure that fair trading is allowed to subsist if they are to reap maximum benefits. In the near future, there will be a case scenario where more resources will move across borders (capital, labour, goods and services) in terms of cross-border investments and establishment.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/article-East_Africa_requires_a_fair_trade_regime.htm

Protect Financial Service Consumers

Business Daily Africa, March 10, 2011

Daniel Asher

As the government mulls setting up an integrated commercial centre to offer a broad range of financial services to domestic and international investors and to assert its presence in sub-Saharan Africa's growing financial services market, there is little groundwork to safeguard consumers of financial services. The Banking and Central Bank Act have inadequate provisions for defending welfare of financial service consumers who continue to bear the consequences of financial sector regulatory capture.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/article-Protect_financial_service_consumers_to_make_sense_of_proposed_hub.htm

Zambia not Benefiting from Copper

The Post Online, January 13, 2011

The current regime should replace 'windfall tax' if they don't like the term but the concept of allowing Zambia benefit from current high copper prices should not be dismissed, says Ambassador Love Mtesa. The surge in copper prices has prompted strong calls on the government to re-introduce the windfall tax to enable the country tap into current 'abnormal profits' being enjoyed by the mines.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/media-Zambia_not_benefiting_from_copper%E2%80%93Mtesa.htm

BoZ Move on FBZ Will Hurt Customers

The Post Online, January 07, 2011

The justification by Bank of Zambia to temporarily cede Finance Bank to managers from owners of First National Bank is against competitiveness and will hurt consumers, says CUTS International. The head of the Zambian branch of CUTS said the government should not have given the running of Finance Bank to managers from First Rand National Bank of South Africa. First Rand National Bank is the parent company of First National Bank, which is one of the 17 commercial banks operating in the country.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/media-BoZ_move_on_FBZ_will_hurt_customers-CUTS.htm

Improving Business Skills Vital for AGOA

All Africa.com, March 31, 2011

CUTS said improving business skills will help entrepreneurs to penetrate the US markets under the AGOA. Acting Centre Coordinator Simon Ng'ona said promoting international business linkages would enhance the export base of Zambia's products entering the US markets. He said Zambia should try to create an awareness of opportunities that exist under such initiatives to truly benefit from AGOA, Zambia needs to move away from traditional exports of primary commodities and diversify into value added products.

www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/media-Zambia-Improving_Business_Skills_Vital_for_Agoa-CUTS.htm