



EVENTS

World Consumer Rights Day Celebrations

CUTS Lusaka joined other organisations and individual consumers in celebrating the ‘World Consumer Rights Day’ on March 15, 2014. The theme for Zambia was “Good phone service my right”. CUTS was given an opportunity to speak on behalf of the other consumer organisations and individual consumers.

Policy Roundtable Discussion on “Consumer Welfare through Effective Regulatory Action”

CUTS Accra organised the second Policy Roundtable discussion on March 13, 2014, to discuss the welfare of the Ghanaian consumers as well as explore opportunities through which CUTS Accra can partner with the Regulatory and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in the country to help in improving consumer welfare in the Ghanaian community.

CUTS’ 30th Anniversary Lecture in Zambia

The 30th Anniversary Lecture was held in Zambia on March 10, 2014. The topic of the lecture was “Regional Trade a Catalyst for Growth and Sustainability of Small Businesses in the Southern African Region”. The main speaker was the Former Bank of Zambia Governor, Caleb Fundanga. Other participants included, World Bank Country Representative, Kundhavi Kadiresan, Former Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Felix Mutati MP, Coordinator – Zambia-COMESA SME Toolkit Project Edwin Zulu, Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry representative and Dorothy Tembo in Chair.

Promoting Agriculture-Climate-Trade Linkages in the Eastern African Community (PACT EAC)

Promoting Agriculture-Climate-Trade linkages in the Eastern African Community (PACT EAC) the 5th NRG meeting was held at the Safari Club Hotel, Nairobi on March 04, 2014. The overall objective of the meeting was to present the advocacy campaign outputs for informing and generating more views on the way forward from stakeholders.

EIF sPokes Capacity Building Workshop

The workshop held on the February 12-13, 2014 was attended by CUTS Lusaka and Geneva team. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) sPokes aims at enhancing the capacity of EIF National Implementation Units (NIAs), particularly the EIF National Steering Committee (NSC), to drive forward a country-owned and sustainable EIF delivery through achieving inclusive participatory engagement of Non-state Actors, particularly the private sector. In this context, the workshop adopted an action plan comprising some of the key challenges faced by the Non-state actors in participating in trade processes. A short refresher course on trade and development issues was also provided.

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EVENTS

Meeting with the Parliamentarians

CUTS Lusaka team met with the Parliamentarians to present the findings of the “Leveraging Consumer and Producers’ Voices in Policy Reforms (LECOP)” Project. The Project aimed to shed light on the impact of the subsidy removal on fuel in Zambia. The findings were presented to the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Committee on Economics and Labour. The key members present included Geoffrey Mwamba, former Minister of Defence (Zambia), Gary Nkombo, Opposition United Party for National Development (UPND) and others. It was evident from the meeting that the report was appreciated and would lead to subsequent debates on the issue. It was pledged that this issue will be put up for debate in the next sitting of the Parliament in line with other emerging policy concerns.

Promoting Agriculture-Climate-Trade Linkages in the Eastern African Community

A stakeholder meeting was held with the stakeholders, under “Promoting Agriculture-Climate-Trade Linkages in the Eastern African Community (PACT EAC)” Project on January 28, 2014. The objective of the meeting was to share the Project findings so far and get the stakeholders’ inputs.

CSO Meeting for Medium Term Review

CUTS Nairobi facilitated the civil society organisation (CSO) meeting for Africa Development Bank (AfDB) for its Medium Term Review, which took place on the January 16, 2014

REPRESENTATIONS

Daniel Asher and **Micheal Wauda** attended the World Consumer Rights Day on March 15, 2014 at Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Nairobi organised by Competition Authority of Kenya, where Daniel Asher was representing CUTS Nairobi as a Panellist during the Roundtable discussions.

Daniel Asher attended the Pre-world Consumer Rights Day (Consumer Roundtable) on March 14, 2014 at Hilton Hotel, Nairobi organised by Consumer Information Network.

CUTS Lusaka team made a presentation on 06 March, 2014 on the role of Energy Regulation Board (ERB) in promoting consumer protection. ERB is in the process of reviewing its consumer complaints procedure and, hence, had requested inputs from CUTS.

Appiah Adomako attended a conference organised by Friedrich Ebert Stifting (FES) in February 2014 at Akosombo, Ghana. The conference discussed taxation and expanding vocational and technical education in the country.

Leonard Ugbajah attended the Annual Borderless Alliance Conference, which was held in Lagos, Nigeria, on February 2014. The theme of the conference was “Enabling Growth”.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CREW 2nd National Reference Group Meeting

CUTS Lusaka and CUTS Accra team representatives will meet with the members of the CREW country specific NRGs for the second time in a meeting to be held on June 27 in Lusaka and July 25 in Accra respectively. The objective of the meeting will be to present the findings from Draft Diagnostic country reports for the CREW Programme.

CUTS Accra Policy Roundtable Discussion, “Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA): What should Ghana’s Response be”?

CUTS Accra will organise its third Roundtable discussion on June 17, 2014, to discuss the ongoing debate on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs) between Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries and the European Union (EU). The objective of this Policy Roundtable discussion will be to explore innovative ways for Ghana to gain immensely from the EPAs. Ghana is yet to sign the EPAs, however, there are on-going discussions on the advantages and disadvantages that the EPAs could have on the Ghanaian economy. This policy discussion will enable policy makers re-visit this economic agreement to ensure Ghana is making a good economic decision.

Launch of the Impact Assessment of the Business Licensing Reform on the Public Transport Sector Project

CUTS International Lusaka will be launching the Project Impact Assessment of the Business Licensing Reform on the “Public Transport Sector” in July. The objective of the launch is to give a brief background of the Project and present the methodology. The Project web page will also be launched at the event.

CUTS Lusaka team participated in the NGO Act Press Briefing held on the February 03, 2014 and was organised by the Non-Governmental Organisation Council (NGOCC). The briefing resolved that NGOs should not get registered, under the Punitive Act, which gave NGOs little or no space to operate freely.

CUTS Lusaka team attended a meeting on Commercial, Trade and Industrial (CTI) Policy Review. The meeting was held on January 31, 2014. The purpose of this meeting was for the Civil Society to come up with a collective position that can be incorporated in the review of CTI policy by the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry

CUTS Lusaka attended a “Public Discussion on Establishment of an Industrial Development Cooperation (IDC)” on January 28, 2014. The public discussion was organised by Economics Association of Zambia. The meeting was convened to discuss the recently created IDC by the government as a tool for industrialisation.

Cuts Lusaka team held a Meeting with Yvonne Chileshe, Director, Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry (MCTI) January 15, 2014. The meeting was convened to discuss the Ministry’s present position on civil society engagement.

NEW PROJECTS

Impact Assessment of the Business Licensing Reform on the Public Transport Sector

The Project "Impact Assessment of the Business Licensing Reform on The Public Transport Sector" is a 6 months Project being funded by GIZ (Germany). The overall objective of the research under the Project will be to assess the impact of the business licensing reforms (BLRP) on the public (passenger) transport sector from the point of view of welfare gains or losses to service providers and consumers/commuters. Zambia's business licensing reform, under the Private Sector Development Programme (PSDRP) has sought to reduce the number of unnecessary licensing requirements, and to make the licensing regime simpler and easy to comply with, especially for Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs).

Understanding the Impact of Excessive Sugar Pricing on the Downstream Market Players

CUTS International Lusaka is implementing a Project "Understanding the Impact of Excessive Sugar Pricing on the Downstream Market Players and House hold Consumers". The Project is being funded by Zambia Economic Advocacy Programme (ZEAP) and CUTS Nairobi. The objective of this Project is to bring out better clarity on modes of price inflation of sugar occurs and the actual impact on household in terms of the monthly expenditure.

Critical Dimensions of Indian Investment in Africa

CUTS CCIER through CUTS Lusaka is currently implementing a Research Project entitled "The Critical Dimensions of Indian Investments in Africa (IIA)". The Project seeks to analyse the impact that current Indian investments have had on the sustainability of local communities, as a lesson for future policy making and implementation at the national levels in select 'host' African countries.

Advocating for a Functional Competition Regime/ Framework - COMPAD-Ghana

CUTS Accra with funding support from the Business Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC) Fund will be carrying out a Project entitled, "Advocating for a Functional Competition Regime/Framework", referred to as the (COMPAD-Ghana Project). The main objective of the Project is to advocate for a well-enforced competition regime in Ghana.

Ghanaian Banking Tariffs and Customer Awareness

CUTS Accra is implementing a Project to effectively communicate and provide Ghanaian consumers with information on various bank charges and lending rates as well as quarterly reports to enable the customers making informed decisions in the banking sector. The Project will be implemented over a period of 5 months.

PUBLICATIONS

Unshackling the Growth of Kenyan SMEs

The report gives an understanding of the current and past regulatory and institutional framework inclined to SMEs and evaluates their effectiveness in supporting local development of SMEs at the country level. It also provides evidence for the development of policy choices to support the development of an SME strategy for country governments and gives some understanding on mechanisms through which the developed government systems will contribute to innovation and value addition activities at the country level.

The study considered the sub-sectors with the most signified economic activity in one country per region in Kenya and analysed economic activities that are comparable across any two countries.

http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/pdf/Unshackling_the_Growth_of_Kenyan_SMEs.pdf



Tradequity

The newsletter carries a cover story focusing on consumer protection issues and the measures to strengthen the consumer movement for mobilising citizen action and solidarity. It covers news on Economics and Development, Trade and Environment and Consumer Issues.

http://www.cuts-international.org/arc/pdf/Tradequity14-African_Consumers-Rise_up_for_your_rights.pdf

Africa's Publication Digest (2013)

This is a compilation of the publications of all Africa Resource Centres' publications (Lusaka, Nairobi and Accra) for the year 2013. The publications mainly comprises Research Reports, Monographs and Briefing Papers published in the mentioned year.

Civil society groups take fight against Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to the Presidency.

Business and Financial Times, March 27, 2014

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and private sector groups have increased pressure on government not to sign the ECOWAS-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), warning that the agreement will permanently lock the country's economy deeper into a primary commodity dependence trap and derail regional integration.

The argument is that Ghana has a "weak" manufacturing sector, which stands the chance of dying off, should the nation sign the EPAs, since the nation undeniably cannot compete with the EU production market. Furthermore, CSOs argue that the government will miss out on revenues from import duties on goods coming in from the EU.

<http://www.modernghana.com/news/531276/1/civil-society-groups-take-fight-agai.html>

New Law makes the Kenyan consumer king

Daily Nation, March 26, 2013

The Central Bank of Kenya will be required to reconstitute its board before the expiry of the current members' term to comply with a new law.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2012, which came into effect two weeks ago, provides that all regulators must appoint a representative of consumer rights bodies to their Board of Directors.

This requirement has been the subject of a running battle between the Consumer Federation of Kenya (Cofek) and the Communications Commission of Kenya, the regulatory authority for the communications industry in Kenya, with the federation suing to have the court compel the Commission to appoint its representative to its board. It now has legal backing.

"There shall be consumer representation on all regulatory bodies and the respective appointing authorities shall have due regard to accredited consumer organisations and the Advisory Committee in making such appointments", reads the Act

<http://www.nation.co.ke/>

Ghana Maps Out Strategy on Climate Change

Daily Graphic, March 24 2014.

A national policy implementation strategy document is being developed in Ghana to guide the implementation of the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP). The document is at the draft stage, as disclosed by the Deputy Director in charge of the Climate Change at the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). A workshop has been organised for development partners to make contributions to the document as well as familiarise themselves with it.

<http://graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/20016-ghana-maps-out-strategy-on-climate-change.html>

Engage consumers on regular basis to know their concerns - Justice Date-Bah

Ghana News Agency, March 18, 2014

Accra, March 18, GNA Justice Samuel Date-Bah, a retired Justice of Supreme Court and Chairman of University of Ghana Council, has urged regulatory authorities to engage consumers on regular basis to know their concerns.

He said the regulatory authorities needed to develop a robust communication strategy to reach out to consumers and to educate them on how to file complaints and seek redress.

He was speaking at a Policy Roundtable on Consumer Welfare through effective Regulation organised by CUTS International and appealed to CUTS to engage civil society, academia and the media so as to address the pressing consumer concerns in the country.

<http://www.ghananewsagency.org/>

Deeper trade reforms can drive diversification, inclusive growth and job creation in Zambia

Lusaka, February 06, 2014.

On February 6, the World Bank, in collaboration with the National Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry hosted a validation workshop to share findings and proposed targeted areas of trade reforms for Zambia. This event is related to the World Bank report on trade and regional integration – the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) for Zambia.

Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) Lusaka, a member of the National Steering Committee (NSC) of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), which commissioned DTIS review process through the National Implementation Unit (NIU) at the Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry (MCTI) said it is contented with the review process and encourages the bank to swiftly finalise the document after taking into account some of the comments raised during the validation meeting.

http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/press_release-Deeper_trade_reforms_can_drive_diversification.html