



National Dialogue on **Integration of the Consumers' Voice in Trade Policy Process in Nigeria**

**19-20 May, 2015
Abuja, Nigeria**

Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Issued at the end of a two-day Public Policy Dialogue organised by CUTS International on 'Integrating the Consumer's Voice into the Trade Policy process in Nigeria' on 19-20, May 2015, at Chelsea Hotel Central Area in Abuja

1. Introduction

This first-of-its-kind dialogue was organised by CUTS International with the support of the European Union (EU) and Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It brought together the Government, private sector and, for the first time, the consumer organisations to explore the various interests, need and feasible methods of introducing the consumer voice into the trade policy debate and decision-making in Nigeria. This Dialogue drew a wide range of stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, civil society and consumer advocacy organisations as well as the media, academia and development partners.

A series of presentations were made by experts on issues like the impact of trade policy on consumer welfare and the scope for integrating the consumers' voice in the trade policy process in Nigeria, consumer participation and interest in some major government policies, such as the Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan, the draft Nigeria Trade Policy and Strategy, the Automobile Policy, Cement Policy, Textile Policy, Sugar Policy, Rice Policy etc. Presentations were also made on the impact of regional integration processes, such as the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), Common External Tariffs (CET) and the Economic Partnership for Africa (EPA) on consumer welfare and how Nigerian consumers can assert their interests in these processes. ECOWAS refers to the Economic Community of West African States. The participants of the event contributed beneficially in the brainstorming session held on the issues specified with a view to charting a way forward.

Participating Organisations

The participating organisations comprised:

- Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMTI) – Minister represented by the Director of Trade
- National Planning Commission (NPC)
- Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF)
- Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC)
- Consumer Protection Council (CPC)
- Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)
- Nigeria Customs Service (NCS)
- Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN)
- Consumer Advocacy Forum of Nigeria (CAFON)
- ECOWAS Commission (Represented by its Director of Trade)
- Nigerian Economic Summit Group NESG – Represented by its Director General
- Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth and Advocacy (YIAGA)
- Consumers Empowerment Organisation of Nigeria (CEON)
- Consumers Parliament
- Civil Society Coalition for Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE)
- National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS)
- All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN)

- National Automotive Council (NAC)
- National Association of Chambers of Commerce Industry Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA)
- National Association of Small Scale Industrialists (NASSI)
- European Union (EU)
- Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Department of International Development (DFID)
- DFID Funded Business Advocacy Programme (DFID ENABLE2) and
- United States Agency for International Development-Nigeria Expanded Trade and Transport (USAID-NEXTT)

Inuagural Session

The workshop started at about 9:50 AM with a video presentation from CUTS International highlighting the growth path of the organisation from a local pro-poor advocacy group based in India to an international organisation advocating on a broad base economic and consumer welfare issues. The video clip ended by highlighting some of the achievements of CUTS International and its outreach to several countries such as, Ghana, Geneva and a resident Representative in Nigeria.

In his welcome address, the Resident Representative of CUTS International in Nigeria, *Leonard Ugbajah* welcomed all the participants and thanked them for sparing their valuable time to be a part of this important Dialogue. He noted that the ‘Dialogue’ is a landmark because, according to him, even though the consumers’ voice is the missing link in trade discourse, no effort has been made earlier to address this issue. He emphasised on the need to balance the interests of the consumers with that of the manufacturers and the Government in the trade policy process and decisions. According to Ugbajah, this could be best achieved by having the consumers on the decision-making forum. He also informed that the house that CUTS is committed to promote sound policy processes and outcomes in its thematic areas of work and that the interests and welfare of the consumers is a major focus of CUTS’ endeavour. He expressed the hope that the outcome of the ‘Dialogue’ would promote a better understanding of the dynamics of trade policy and the need to take the interests of all the stakeholders along. He also indicated that this such a ‘Dialogue’ would set an agenda for the incoming Government to adopt a different approach to trade policy formulation in the country.

CUTS’ Welcome Speech

In his opening remarks, CUTS International Deputy Executive Director, Bipul Chatterjee, welcomed all the participants in the workshop. He thanked the representative of the Honourable Minister of Industry Trade and Investment, and all other participants for their benign presence in the event. He declared that the rationale behind trade is the exchange of goods and services for the purpose of maximising consumers’ welfare in the form of better access, choice, quality goods and affordable prices. He, however, observed that since after

World Trade Organisation (WTO), everyone at present look at trade with the prism of negotiations. He also declared that trade is not not only about product protection, but also about consumer welfare.

He analysed the emerging global and regional trends in trade and economic cooperation, including regional initiatives in Asia and the Pacific and the ongoing mega-Free Trade agreements (FTAs) – Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). He concluded that developing countries are going to be immensely affected by these mega-regional agreements. He then added that the only remedy would be carry out great intra-regional trade bulks among themselves for African regions to also and to come up with a longer term programme for consumer empowerment as well as to retain the delicate balance between consumer and producer welfare in the trade policy formulation process.

Opening Remarks

The Minister of Trade and Investment represented by the Director of trade Philip Ashikpata recounted many programmes and measures put in place by the Ministry to ensure that the interests of the consumers is protected, over the years. He cited that apart from the Ministry's efforts at achieving growth through non-oil revenue development, the Ministry has also endeavoured to provide an enabling environment for the private sector to thrive in both local and international trade. He said that the Ministry has always also striven to enhance consumer protection through improved product quality.

The Minister also stated that though sharp practices, such as smuggling and violation of manipulation of standards might dilute these efforts, the Ministry would still be committed towards consumer protection. He then assured that the acquiring the same in the new trade policy, consumer protection would be given a pride of place in the scheme of things. He also observed that broadening the stakeholder engagement has also heightened the quality of policy output.

Juan Casla

Juan Casla, Head, Economic Governance and Trade Cooperation, informed that the participants that the EU is sponsoring the 'Dialogue' as a part of EU's wider programme, 'Nigeria Competitiveness Support Programme' aimed at stimulating, diversifying and enhancing the competitiveness of the non-oil sector of the Nigerian economy, which is funded under the 10th EDF. He highlighted some of the components of the programme, which include the following:

- Strengthening Nigeria Trade Support Institutions comprising the relevant MDAs like the federal Ministry of Industry Trade and Investment, Federal Ministry of Finance, the Nigerian Customs Services, etc. as well as the private sector and civil society
- The National Quality infrastructure Programme (NIQP), which is aimed at improving the quality of goods produced in Nigeria to meet the international standards and

- Support for the improvement of investment climates and competition policy

Furthermore, Casla also assured the commitment of the EU in fostering close economic ties with Nigeria and for the progress of the country.

Alexander Werth

Delivering opening remarks, Werth, Manager, Trade Policy and Facilitation, GIZ-SEDIN stated that GIZ is funding this activity as part of the EU and German Government's co-funded 'Strengthening Nigerian Trade Support Institutions' (SNTSI) programme. The objective of this intervention was to provide support to the MDAs, private sector and civil society organisations (CSOs) involved in trade policy-making and implementation in Nigeria for improving policy processes and outcome. He also believed that previous discussions and workshops always had the government agents and organised private sector in attendance but never consumer advocacy groups. He expressed optimism that the idea of this Dialogue would further help in improving the trade policy environment.

The representative of the Director General of the Consumer Protection Council in her remarks noted that the essence of trade is all about consumption. Therefore, consumer interests and participation should be paramount. She concluded her presentation by directing the organisers of the workshop to ensure that the voices and opinion of the consumers is reflected in the new trade policy that will be effective after the incoming Government is sworn in, to ensure consumers remain relevant in the trade policy space.

The Director of Trade in the ECOWAS Commission, Gbenga Obideyi observed that the workshop could not have come at a better time. He announced that the Commission had been implementing a number of regional trade programmes including the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), Customs Union (CET) and Common Market. He also mentioned that the recently concluded Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU as an important regional process. He further announced that a regional common trade policy was in the making, which would benefit from inputs by all stakeholders, including the consumers.

Technical Session

Presentation I

Professor Oyejide

In the first presentation, Oyejide recounted the story of the major tariff overhaul of the SAP era in 1987, which led to the formation of several groups to help monitor consumer welfare. Some of the agencies and bodies that were born as a consequence of that tariff change included the Consumer Protection Council (CPC), Nigerian Tariff Review Board, and the Technical Tariff Committee. These agencies and bodies were saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that trade policy was more inclusive and evidence-based. He stated that the word 'consumer' not only encapsulates end users but also the manufacturers who used raw materials produced from other sources as a production input in their production processes.

He stated that though these institutions exist presently, they are, however, weakened and seriously lacking in technical expertise to carry out the duties for which they were created *ab-initio*. He went on to show that if perfect competition is established in any market it has the ability to enhance consumer welfare, lead to lower prices, better quality goods, and wider choices. He also stated that in a market setting that some degree of regulation is always required as market left on its own will never efficiently allocate resources (no perfect markets anywhere in the world).

While considering regulation and competitive markets, he stated that the first step in setting up a competitive market that guarantees consumer welfare was to first set up a regulatory framework. This framework would automatically lead to the creation of enforcement, rule of law, property rights, and contract laws, which ensures that agreements and contracts of all forms are adhered to. He pointed out that Competition and Consumer Protection Law forms a critical part of the regulatory framework needed to safeguard the interests of the consumers. According to him, a Competition Law would guard against anti-competitive agreements between players in a market, guard against market distortions and restrict mergers, which could lead to lessened competition in the market place. Similarly, a consumer protection law would protect consumers from scams, frauds and other abusive market practices; set out consumers' rights in relation to the firms they deal with and ensure that traders act fairly and honestly towards their customers.

He noted that while the Government might intervene in the market to achieve some political, social or economic development objectives where the Government assumes those objectives could not be achieved by a competitive market, such interventions, however, come with costs and benefits. For example, distortion to competition in the market could be very costly to consumers. Therefore, the government should apply only such intervention tools that achieve its objective with minimal effect on competition. He recommended that the interventions that are likely to distort competition should be preceded by competition assessment.

Proceeding further, Oyejide pointed out that the Government interventions could be classified according to their impacts on competition in the market. He opined that horizontal measures that do not discriminate by location, industry or firm type are less likely to distort competition than those aimed at specific markets or firms; just as long-term effects on competition tend to be lower for interventions that are easily removed or are explicitly time-bound.

On the impact of trade policy measures on consumer welfare in Nigeria, the Presenter identified three trade policy measures that impact consumer welfare, viz: import tariff, import ban/ quota and production subsidy. According to him, import tariff and import ban/quota raise product prices and cause consumption and production distortions while production subsidy imposes production distortion. All three policy measures reduce market competitiveness. He also indicated that the gainers and losers from trade policy measures as follows: on the one hand, the producers gain from selling more at higher price per unit and Government gains from increased tariff revenue. On the other hand, consumers lose from buying a reduced quantity of the product at a higher price per unit and the economy as a whole, loses from the consumption and production distortions,

He cited the examples of cement, rice and textiles to elucidate the point. According to him, domestic production of cement received protection through high import tariffs (1986-1989) as well as import prohibition (1999-date). Studies have also shown that during 1986-1998, consumers suffered an average loss of N 0.22bn per year and during 1999-2010, consumers absorbed an average loss of N 19.63bn per year. Similarly, in the case of rice, during 1986-1995, domestic production of rice, the Government supported its production by low tariff and sporadic import prohibition as well as import quota licensing. During 1996-2010, high tariffs were combined with import quota licensing. Studies have shown that during 1986-1995, consumers suffered an average loss of N 17.62bn per year and during 1996-2010, consumers' average loss was N 100.02bn per year. In the textile industry, domestic production of fabrics was supported with high tariffs and import ban during 1981-2008 and 2009-2011. However, during 1981-2008, consumers of cotton fabrics suffered an average loss of N 8.02bn per year and during 2009-2011, consumers of cotton fabrics suffered an average loss of N 28.52bn per year

Speaking on the scope on consumer participation in the trade policy process in Nigeria, Oyejidde outlined the need for consumer participation to include: to enhance inclusiveness of trade policy making, to receive critical inputs from those who bear the burden of the impact of competition-distorting trade policy measures, to ensure that producer interest groups do not monopolise the process and capture the outcome. He further recommended that consumers should get involved through direct actions, through organised bodies (which he noted comes with its own challenges of ego and leadership tussle), organise consultative forums, etc. He, however, noted that the major challenge militating against effective consumer participation is lack of knowledge, expertise, organisational capacity, and personal interest. He also highlighted the institutional arrangements where the consumers can participate to take account of: Tariff Review Board, Technical Tariff Review Committee and National Focal Point on Trade Matters.

He concluded by pointing out that the participants to the fact of the migration from national to regional trade policy-making framework and queried whether there exists a regional consumer participation framework modality.

Panel Discussions

After an excellent presentation, the workshop there was panel discussion to discuss the presentation and to deal with issues arising from the same. Some of the issues are as following:

- *Zainab Pisigah* from the Department of Trade and Investment in the National Planning Commission agreed with most of the stances put forward by the presentation, adding that the work of the National Planning Commission begins where function of the trade policy processes ends. She also stated that the job of the NPC is to incorporate these policies in the broader national development plan. She also stressed that beyond glowing policies that a robust monitoring and evaluation

system should also be set in place to ensure and guarantee the implementation of these policies timely.

- *Demitta Gyang* another Panelist from the Department of Trade in the FMITI stated that policies should also be a living dynamic instrument which should always reflect the current realities on the ground. She stated that it is for this reason that in the FMITI, the National Focal Point had been extended to contain 53 members covering all stakeholders in trade. She also observed that consumer advocacy groups were conspicuously absent and suggested that the absence of consumers from such fora might be due to their inability to articulate their views, as she underscored the need for evidence based analysis in their engagement and for consistency in the representation.
- Then *Adedeji* from the Consumer Empowerment Organisation of Nigeria agreed with issues raised by Oyejide's Presentation but disagreed that the absence of consumer groups from trade policy analysis because they could not be found. He informed the participants that the CPC has a database of all registered consumer groups in the country. He asked that for equity and justice to be observed and achieved, all forms of protection should be abolished until there is a convergence of views from all stakeholders including and especially the consumers.
- *Godswill Ayuyi* from NANTS, next Panelist stated that trade liberalisation has not worked for Africa due to a lack of capacity to produce. If liberalisation is not working in Africa then what? He asked if it is right for large monopolistic companies to be allowed to muscle out smaller players in the economy. He was also keen to know the Professor's view on subsidy and he stated that though it has worked in other developed clime, the idea of subsidy does not seem to be gaining traction here in Nigeria and that though the policy is Pro-poor, the elites have always favoured its removal.
- *Boladale, Adeyinka*, from CPC wanted to know how could one reach the state where consumer and producer welfare balance could be achieved.
- A representative from the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) queried that it was not about the time invented in our the home-grown economic theories seeing that the ones imported from Western climes have not, particularly having worked in Nigeria.

Responding to the query, Oyejide clarified the fact to the participants that it was not the theories that are defective but the application. He also cited the example of the infant industry argument. According to him, the fundamental reason for infant industry protection was that industries had a cost disadvantage due to infrastructure deficit, it then means that the best way to solve the problem would be to target its source, which is infrastructure provisioning and not an arbitrary and endless protection of the sector.

On fuel subsidy, he said that if the Government intervention creates distortions in the market then the intervention should be discontinued. After all the presentations and responses of the participants the workshop broke off for lunch.

Presentation II

Leonard Ugbajah

Leonard Ugbajah, Resident Representative of CUTS International in Nigeria made a presentation after a short lunch break on the highlights of the findings from the Discussion Paper prepared for the Dialogue entitled ‘Consumers in the Trade Policy Process in Nigeria: Participating to be Protected’. The theme of his presentation was ‘Highlights of the Findings of the Study on Consumer Participation in Major Trade Policy Initiatives in Nigeria’. He reminded the participants the fact that democracy is all about participation. He added that the process of arriving at a decision is often times more important than the decision itself. He also stated that the participants that citizens are first of all consumers and observed that despite the establishment of numerous committees and consumer related measures in various policy documents, the consumers have hardly featured themselves anywhere in the whole system. This trend, he opined should change if our trade policy processes were to become more inclusive. He therefore urged the participants to keep this aspect in mind and to act accordingly.

Furthermore, he outlined Nigeria’s trade policy architecture and then went on to x-ray the role accorded to the consumers in governance framework, under the major trade policy initiatives. He also mentioned about trade and industrial policy initiative in Nigeria and their impact on consumer welfare. The presentation ended by analysing the regional trade policy initiatives of ECOWAS and the agenda for integrating consumer voices in the trade policy process. The findings revealed that the Government had taken major trade and industrial policy initiatives on overall industrial development as encompassed in the National Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP), the automobile industry as included in the National Automobile Industry Development Plan (NAIDP), in the Cement industry through the Cement industry’s Backward Integration programme; in the sugar industry through the National Sugar Development Master Plan; in rice production through the Agricultural Transformation Agenda and in the textile sector by means of various initiatives.

Besides, Ugbajah also pointed out that all these interventions, adopted one form of trade policy measure or the other, or a combination of measures. Such measures comprised high tariffs and levies, quota restrictions, or outright prohibitions. He debated saying that these measures have serious impact on consumer welfare without any clear mechanism on how the losses suffered by the consumers can be compensated by the producers in the medium to long-term.

According to him, findings from the various policy documents reveal that while the government and private sectors are accorded a central role in the formulation and implementation of these policies, the consumers are hardly recognised having any role to play or best to be mentioned in passing.

In addition, Ugbajah expressed regrets on the regional trade policy initiatives and stated that the Nigerian Government is hardly proactive in engaging these processes but would always turn around to ask for special considerations and exemptions, which do not always augur well with the interests of the consumers. Using evidences from a recent study conducted by CUTS in Ghana and Senegal, he conveyed the fact that due to lack of implementation of the formulated policies, consumer welfare often gets ignored.

In setting an agenda for integrating the consumers' voice into the trade policy process in Nigeria, he opined that the consumers should be accorded more active roles in the formulation and implementation of trade and industrial policies. According to him this would serve as a check on the often unhealthy relationship between big businesses and politicians, which often results in poorly thought out policy decisions or the roll back of sound policies, ensure that policy goals and measures are subjected to robust debates where all alternative views are taken into account and a compromise position reached, and finally, guard against market failure. On what the consumer must do, he suggested research-based policy advocacy, strategic litigation, and legislative lobby/advocacy. He recommended bridging the capacity gap on the part of the consumer organisations, immediate demand for inclusion in the identified platforms and initiatives, especially the ENFP, consumer groups must coalesce and speak with one voice, so that immediate steps that could be taken soon.

He articulated the trade policy outcomes to keep into consideration consumers interests: availability of goods and services, affordability of goods and services, adequacy of quality and standards – health, safety and accessibility of redress mechanisms – administrative or legal.

In conclusion, he submitted that restrictive policies have continued to fail for various reasons. Hence, a need for taking hard decisions and moving away from failed policies was realised. In this regard, more informed engagement in regional, continental, bilateral and multilateral agreements is imperative.

Panel Discussion

CAFON

Sola Salako from the Consumer Advocacy Foundation of Nigeria (CAFON) stated that low participation of consumers in trade policy process was due to the Government's inability to recognise the importance of consumer input into the policy making process. She expressed her optimism that starting with this dialogue, the situation would change. She raised the issue of funding as a major challenge to the consumer organisations she called for active government intervention to protect the consumers proactively as against the current reactive nature of government interventions in consumer affairs. She suggested that government can use 1 percent of VAT revenue to empower the consumers.

James Salako from the Cement Manufacturers Association of Nigeria argued that what Nigerian industries are asking for is not strange as even the developed countries required protection at different stages in their development. He suggested an alternative way of

looking at the gains of protection in terms of increased local production, jobs, security of supply and savings in foreign exchange. He said that as a country all we need to do is to balance consumer and producer welfare needs and should be very clear with regards to policy targets and duration for achieving them, citing that if China could do it so could we.

Felicia Monye (UNN) was quite impressed that consumer advocacy has graduated from just seeking to implement the law to really getting involved in the process of making the policies and the laws. She took a look at the history of consumer representation in the country with CPC, NAFDAC, and SON and observed that historically their intervention have had no specific provisions for consumer representation in policy processes. She added that funding is also an issue as it has yet to be resolved as to whose responsibility it is to fund consumer rights movements. Citing the example of ISO she demonstrated that in other countries that use the ISO model non state actors, NGOs, and consumers are usually treated as different groups. She argued that since Nigeria became a signatory to the ISO charter in 2010 it should therefore adopt this model also and ensure that all stakeholders have elaborate representation in its policy processes. She ended by reiterating the need for consumer groups to form a coalition to have one voice and not necessarily forming several big consumer groups.

Olarenwaju, DG, Nigerian Textile Manufacturers Association (NTMA) expressed joy and said that the consumers are finally being considered but cautioned against forgetting producers. He suggested that if the government could fix the infrastructural challenges in the country it will lower production costs and make the industry more competitive. He said though the consumers should be integrated into the policy processes producers should also not be thrown away and both parties should be carried along for a robust trade policy process.

Bipul Chatterjee, CUTS International, added his voice to the discussion by emphasizing that balance is the bigger issue as the gains of industrialisation, such as employment cannot be overemphasized. Trade is about competition and the reason our producers are not competitive should be targeted, issues like cost of land, funds, and energy. He added that tariff protection alone will not solve the problem as there would be a need to make the countries industries competitive, in the long run.

Eng Nwaoma Olugie from the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) congratulated CUTS for the good work being done and urged that emphasis should be on the non-tariff barriers, such as the standards considered as barriers by some countries. She also added that the consumer associations also need to be integrated into policy processes at the regional levels as well as in the process of determining and defining standards.

Godswill from The National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS) also was keen to know if consumer protection ends with local and imported goods and services. He asked who protects consumers from inadequate services from utilities, such as PHCN and the public water corporation

Adenike from DFID – ENABLE2 programme added that consumers are often ignored by the Government because they do not have a credible voice and their demands to be funded to join the process cast doubts on their seriousness. Beyond their lack of proper organisation, she

also believes that consumers are incapable of the rigorous study require to put forward empirical evidence based requests. They could only achieve this if they come together in a network or coalition. Besides, she convinced that her programme will support such an initiative.

Moreover, Civil Society Coalition for Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE) representative urged every participant to pass the message of the nuggets they have gotten from the workshop to other affected stakeholders who have not had the opportunity to be in attendance so as to achieve a more serious band wagon response.

Sunday Okpe from MAN pointed out that the reason things are not working in certain sectors is because of policy somersaults by the Government.

Presentation III

The Cost of Non Cooperation

Bipul Chatterjee

Deputy Executive Director of CUTS International, *Bipul Chatterjee*, revealed the fact in his presentation that inter-regional trade between India and her regional partners is only about 5 percent. He informed that trade within the region is dominated by manufactures and consumer welfare is generally missing from the trade liberalisation narrative. He also pointed out a need for a shift from consumer protection to consumer welfare including not just manufactured goods and services but should also include utilities. Bipul also stated that CUTS has been trying hard to get the Indian Government to increase intra-regional trade by shifting imports from trading partner countries outside the region to those within the region so as to boost intra-regional trade between India and her regional neighbours. He also observed that costs of production is also quite high in the region due to infrastructural deficits and that Government has been responding positively to CUTS' initiatives for betterment. He cited the case of China who instead of protection adopted several domestic reforms, targeted at making them competitive such that when they opened up to liberalisation they became the country to beat instead of losers to trade liberalisation. He then advised that we should see these issues as challenges and craft way of working around them.

Presentation Remarks

The first question was 'Why should Nigeria be interested in liberalisation in the ECOWAS region given that it makes up more than 50 percent of the regional market share and most of the negotiated agreements are clearly not in the favour of Nigeria's interests?. Chatterjee responded by saying that there is more to be gained from a regional market than a national market. Moreover, the issue of regional integration for a large country like Nigeria has some strategic geopolitical implications beyond its economics.

The second question raised was 'Protocols and agreements notwithstanding countries in the region regularly defaulting on such protocols'. The question, therefore, arises who enforces these protocols to guard against flagrant abuses? The GIZ representative responded to the

second question by recommending that the issue of abuse of processes and deliberate defaulting on agreements and protocols could be solved through litigation. He suggested setting up of regional trade courts to enforce protocols. He also canvassed the liberalisation of the capital markets, banking reform policies, which will actually impact trade. This session wrapped up the workshop for day one.

Day Two Proceedings

Day two of the workshop started by 9:00 AM and the moderator welcomed the participants back to the second round of the workshop and charged them to also make second day as interesting as the first by brainstorming fully on issues as they arise. Following that Kshitiz Sharma was called for the first presentation of the day.

Presentation IV

Consumer Welfare Interface with Trade and Regional Integration

Kshitiz Sharma

Kshitiz Sharma from CUTS International, Africa Programme Centre in his presentation spoke on the interface between consumer welfare trade and regional integration. Drawing extensively from experiences from East African Countries (EAC), Zambia, Ghana and Senegal, he was able to establish that generally, trade policy implication on consumer interest is an area that has largely been unexplored. He re-echoed the need for consumer interests to be accorded more attention in the trade policy space. According to Kshitiz this could only be achieved if there is a coherent push and representation through consumer groups in the trade policy cycle.

He added that consumer concerns with the quality, accessibility, price and safety and the choice of goods and services available to them can only be achieved through perfect market competition. He, however, observed that competition does not occur naturally, since markets are fraught with distortions and competition will need to be nurtured by the government intervention. After Kshitiz's presentation, the workshop there was a tea break and reconvened after 15 minutes.

Presentation V

Scope for Consumer Participation in Regional Integration Processes in West Africa

Gbenga Obideyi, Director of Trade at the ECOWAS Commission Abuja, Nigeria, made the last presentation of the day on the theme 'Scope for Consumer Participation in Regional Integration Processes in West Africa'. He started his presentation by giving a brief background about the formation of ECOWAS and the underlying treaties. He informed the workshop that the strategic plan and vision 2020 of ECOWAS advocates a movement from ECOWAS states to that of the people and the drive to become a single economic region with a single currency, central bank, and legislative community. He cited some of initiatives that emerged because of the regional integration issues, such as the ECOWAS Trade

Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), Common External Tariff (CET), Proposed Common Trade Policy (CTP), and the Economic Partnership Agreement WA-EU-EPA, ECOWAS Competition Policy and Competition Authority, and the Interstate Road Transit (ISRT) initiative. He also listed the advantages of regional integration comprising: competition, efficiency, fair prices and consumer welfare.

Obideyi ended his presentation by concluding that the consumers participate in cross border trades on a daily basis as they buy and sell goods and service across the border. His presentation then debated that the consumers should, therefore, be carried along in regional trade policy processes so as to guarantee that consumer welfare is properly considered and insured in the trade policy that proceed from such processes.

Panel Discussion

After the panel discussions and question and answer sessions, the Resident Representative (Nigeria) of CUTS International Leonard Ugbajah presented the Draft Communiqué to the participants for adoption. The house deliberated on the Communiqué extensively, the errors and omissions were rectified and the house then adopted the final document as a true representation of the activities, processes, and final outcome of the workshop. The Dialogue came to a close with a Press Briefing. Finally, the Communiqué was read to the members of the press assembled at the venue for the scheduled post-workshop Press Briefing.

Kindly find the ‘Communique’ enclosed with this Report