Tradequity

A Newsletter of CUTS Africa

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African Countries Short-changed in WTO Negotiations

For the first time, the 2015 World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference would be held in Africa, in Kenya, in December 2015.

WTO Director General Roberto Azevêdo stated that the WTO has helped to boost trade growth, resolve trade disputes and support developing countries to integrate into the trading system.

But most African countries question that if the multilateral trade negotiations have had any impact on African initiatives then why are trade reforms at the WTO not changing their prospects for the betterment? Why has trade boosted growth in other developing countries but only at minimal benefits in the continent despite its resource endowment?

Moreover, the WTO has also failed to clarify the ambiguous rules on concluding trade agreements that allow the poorest countries to be manipulated by the rich states. In Africa, in negotiations with the European Union (EU), countries have been forced to eliminate tariffs up to 90 percent of their trade because no clear rules exist to protect them. Besides, African countries face supply-side constraints that need to be addressed timely, although trade reforms discussed at the WTO meets, tend not to be implemented.

The WTO negotiations are usually intricate and unfortunately due to persistent brain drain, most African trade experts work for international organisations and universities abroad. Therefore, they have little influence on the multilateral trading system.

Furthermore, agriculture has been adversely affected due to domestic support programmes, export subsidies and export competition propelled by the developed countries in support of their agriculture sectors. The failure of the WTO members to agree to reduce large developed state farmer subsidies is one such example. The production levels of the developing country farmers are unmatched with those of the developed country farmers, posing a threat to the livelihoods of the developing countries.

https://matthewkavanaghx.files.wordpress.com

This further raises many more questions like: How can African countries succeed in trade negotiation reforms by asking for a level playing field? What would be the implication for the developed world conceding to Africa's ambitions? How will trade dialogue supersede the agenda of security and terrorism in most African legislative assemblies? One of the contentious issues in the multilateral trade talks is the market access for both agricultural and non-agricultural exports.

It is also being argued that in the developing world, the WTO has deliberately not clarified the ambiguous rules on concluding its trade agreements. The reason often cited for this is the space that this ambiguity creates for developed States to manipulate the global South. In Africa, negotiations with the EU under the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) have led to African States being pressurised to eliminate tariffs up to 90 percent of their trade, stemming from there being no clear rules to protect them.

Provisions on 'special and differential treatment' were created to make trade negotiation rules more precise, effective and operational and thereby support the developing countries. The WTO has failed to fill the legal vacuum with the review proposals of the EPAs yet pending with it.

The inability of the WTO to create agreements that address the realities of developing nations has, to a large extent, created harsh consequences in the global South. The ability of the African States in particular to engage in dispute settlement under the WTO is basically non-existent.

Moreover, the WTO has pledged to improve access to what many argue to be an expensive and complex legal system, but amongst the 400 cases that have been initiated for dispute settlement; no African country has acted as a complainant yet. This emphasises on the failure of the WTO to create space for African States to engage in legal processes.

Likewise, for Africa to be successful in the multilateral trade talks, the developed world has to recognise African aspirations. But at the same time, Africa has to carry out more research to assess the impact of trade negotiations proposals and thereby take action in liberalising instead of depending on 'fairness' to every rule.

(http://www.businessdailyafrica.com, 10.02.15)

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Ghana Gets IMF Aid

Ghana has reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a three-year economic aid programme deal of US$940mn to help the country turn its ailing economy around. The priorities of the aid are to restore debt sustainability through a sustained fiscal consolidation, support growth with adequate capital spending and reduce financing costs.

A statement issued by the IMF mission indicated that the aid rested on three pillars comprising: restraining and prioritising public expenditure with transparent budget process; increasing tax collection; and strengthening the effectiveness of the central bank monetary policy.

Furthermore, the statement also revealed that the aid as stated by the IMF mission after meeting the Ghana Government representatives was subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board.

(DG, 27.02.15)

Aid to Boost Edible Oil Sector

There is a need for a coherent programme to support smallholder farmers in the edible oil sector in Zambia to enhance their farming efficiency and access to markets, indicated the Edible Oil Refiners Association Consultant Aubrey Chibumba.

Oilseed crops could increase the farmers' revenues only if the smallholder farmers' scheme is efficiently implemented and thereby resulting in obtaining fair market prices. Moreover, it was quite doubtful that acquiring both farm efficiencies and fair market prices could be feasible for the smallholder farmers if the primary driver for oil seed processing was vulnerable.

Chibumba also stated that animal husbandry sub-sector was the biggest beneficiary from edible oil by-products like stock feed, which if increased would result in possibilities for protein exports besides generating employment opportunities. Furthermore, agriculture contributed 20 percent to Zambia's Gross Domestic product (GDP). *(DN, 31.03.15)*

SME's Need Access to Finance

The private sector is expected to play a key role in Ethiopia's journey to become a middle income country in the following decade. However, Ethiopian firms face significant financial constraints, because financial institutions do not accommodate their needs, a new World Bank Group (WBG) study indicated.

The report reveals that without adequate support from financial institutions, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were not able to grow or create more job opportunities. The study used both supply and demand research to offer a complete picture of small and medium enterprises' finance practices in Ethiopia.

While there was already anecdotal evidence that small firms were lacking suitable access to finance, the study was able to provide empirical evidences of the existence of a 'missing middle phenomenon'. The study also offered recommendations to help reduce financial challenges and promote the growth of small and medium enterprises.

(Tralac, 27.02.15)

Boosting Investment Climate in Africa

According to a recent Deloitte report the development in capital intensive infrastructure in Africa emphasising on transportation, energy, power and oil and gas has been highlighted. The report observes that despite uncertain regulatory environment at times in parts of Africa, companies could not ignore the substantial growth prospects that the continent offers.

Africa is expected to grow by 5.7 percent in 2015 driven greatly by increased output in the natural resources sector, underpinning rising fiscal expenditure, especially in infrastructure projects and an expected increase in Africa's trade and investment, which also ties with emerging and developing economies. As a country, it has to be ensured that generally the regulatory environment is supportive of private sector and investment.

(BD, 15.03.15)

Africa Gets Quinoa

Ghana and 13 other countries in West and East Africa are to be benefitted from an US$800,000 fund from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for the cultivation of *quinoa*, a cereal of South American origin. The assistance, which is a technical cooperation programme is to help ascertain the agro-ecological adaptability of the crop in the beneficiary countries.

The FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Africa, Lamourdia Thiombiano noted that the cultivation of the crop was challenged by the availability of suitable seeds and most importantly, lack of technical know-how.

It is in the light of these challenges that a training workshop was organised to build the capacity at the country level, to develop and support *quinoa* initiatives in selected countries in West Africa.

(DG, 11.03.15)

Copper Price Soars

The price of copper in international markets has risen by US$147.75 and is currently trading at US$5,804.75 a tonne. It has also been predicted that copper prices might rise to US$10,000 a tonne by year-end. However, after a brief boom there are fears that copper prices would decline and might even plunge below the US$2,000 a tonne level by the year 2017.

On the local scene, the Cavmont bank reports that the Zambian Kwacha has tracked a basket of currencies, which have generally performed well against the world's reserve currency in recent days amidst improved dollar supply from corporate sellers. As at the close of market, the Kwacha was trading at K6.930/K6.950 and this was K0.06 stronger when compared to the previous day's closing rate. Commercial banks' aggregate current account balance increased by K77.17mn to K1,024.85mn while the cost for interbank borrowing and lending increased by 0.03 percent to 12.46 percent. *(CB, 28.02.15)*

Enhancing Fish Trade in Africa

A new pan-African project has been launched to strengthen the continent's great potential for enhancing trade in fish. 'Fish Trade for a Better Future' an European Commission funded project implemented by World Fish, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) would strengthen value chains.

In addition, the project focusses on sustainability which would further give better access to intra-regional markets and subsequently improve food and nutritional security and income in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Ahmed El Sawalhy, Director for AU-IBAR, many AU member States currently face several constraints in improving their fish trade and marketing sector.

(B & FT, 04.03.15 & 05.03.15)

Move against Illegal Trade

The COMESA Business Council (CBC) in partnership with the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) hosted a business dialogue to provide a key platform for the private sector in the region.

It was revealed that unlawful trade in East Africa alone has led to the community losing more than US$330mn annually. It has greatly undermined the viability of local manufacturing industries. Fair competition and a business-friendly environment are essential for the growth of business, and about 70 percent of the market share was lost annually because of counterfeit products.

Various factors that have been attributed to illegal trade, such as porous borders, corruption, high tax regimes, poor transit controls, forbidden distribution networks and a high demand for cheap goods. There is, however, need to have a framework on combating such trade in the region. *(DN, 20.03.15)*

Maersk to Invest in Tema Port

The Chief Executive Officer of the multinational transport and energy giant Maersk Group, Nils Smedegaard Andersen, has expressed the company's readiness to inject US$1.5bn to boost the on-going expansion works at the Tema Port.

Andersen, who disclosed this in a meeting with President John Mahama said that funding arrangements for the project have been secured pending the signing of a concession agreement between Maersk's key partner Meridian Ports Services (MPS) and the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA).

The proposed project is expected to increase by four times the current capacity of Tema Port, the country's busiest sea-port, and also improve road access to the port, including developing the Accra-Tema motorway into a six-lane one.

(B & FT, 17.02.15)

Fall in Pump Fuel Prices

The reduction of pump prices of fuel has not been a welcome move by many Kenyans as it would be a threat to jobs and livelihoods. The recent announcement by European Research Council (ERC), while resulting in increase in the fuel and travel budgets, might be signs of recovery of the sector, an occurrence that could not come sooner for the already threatened jobs and livelihoods.

It is out of realisation that the extractive sector might be recovering after the shocks of the previous few months. There is a need to have a much broader outlook on the sector beyond monthly changes in fuel prices. *(BD, 22.03.15)*

Call for Agro Transformation

United Nations Economic Commission for Southern Africa (UNECA-SA) has urged the regional governments to transform the agriculture sector to become food secure and enhance nutritional security. Agricultural transformation through agro industry development could be a reality in Southern Africa to sustain itself.

Africa's agricultural transformation is not possible without the State; not for the State to be a producer, but to actively support and if required subsidise the agricultural sector. Agro-industrial development could not be effective without State support and a need was realised to take on board the interests and values of vulnerable groups and classes.

There is also a need to design remedies and promote agro-industry development. Poverty, inequality, food and nutritional insecurity have a demographic face with women, children and poor households, the hardest hit. *(ZDM, 11.03.15)*

Africa in Global Trade

The World Economic Forum in Davos focussed on the potential of Africa in the global trade. This is hinged on its resilience shown during the 2008-09 financial crises and the high yields to countries like Kenya in access to global financial markets in an unprecedented manner.

However, despite the potential, there is still significant anxiety and concern about the conditions and environment for business and for personal safety including 'Ebola' in West Africa and terrorism in Kenya and Nigeria. There is some indication that basic differentiation is beginning to emerge, with some foreign investors distinguishing between the East and West Africa or oil importing versus oil exporting economies. *(BD, 01.02.15)*

Barriers at Mombasa Port

Despite East African Countries (EAC) State Head's endeavour to advocate for the removal of all trade barriers on the so-called Northern Corridor, Rwandan importers are still worried what they consider as trade barrier at Mombasa port.

Goods clearance at the Mombasa port is creating a big problem and requires urgent interventions if the free movement of goods on Northern corridor is to become a reality, stated the importers. Experts indicated that trade barriers along this route lead to high trading costs indicating high prices for traders and consumers.

Despite the implementation of Single Customs Territory at the port where Rwandan clearing agents and customs are based there are still challenges that require immediate solutions.

(Allafrica.com 17.03.15)

CEG Reviews Global Trade

Considering the trade challenges faced by most countries the newly-established Commonwealth Expert Group (CEG) on Trade has reviewed recent developments in global trade, including the changing dynamics of trade as a result of the rise of emerging economies; the increasing share of South-South trade; and the growing prominence of mega-trading blocs.

The research on trade growth in small states particularly indicated that there was weakening relationship between growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and trade growth raising serious concerns about the external competitiveness and effective participation in global trade for the 31 small states of the Commonwealth.

Furthermore, it was also recommended to mobilise more aid for trade and exploring opportunities for value-added export items to improve the trading position of small states.

(Tralac, 31.03.15)

Boosting NTEs to China

Zambian entrepreneurs should forge partnerships with their Chinese counterparts to increase non-traditional exports (NTEs) to China, Commerce, Trade and Industry Permanent Secretary Siazongo Sikalenge stated.

In 2014, Zambia exported about US$3.2bn into China with copper being the major export product hence the need to diversify exports to that country looking at the massive potential. Zambian entrepreneurs should forge business linkages with their Chinese counterparts to increase exports to that country.

"This is the reason why the Government under the industrialisation and job strategy policy is encouraging value addition to initiate the country to manufacture products for export as the way of diversifying the export market", added Siazongo. *(ToZ, 18.3.15)*

Raising Intra-African Trade

Finland has contributed to Zambia's new product and packaging standards through the international trade centre, which was signed with COMESA to boost intra-African trade. Finland appreciates enormously the possibilities and potential regional integration could have in boosting a country's economy and well-being.

It is supporting ITC and promoting intra-regional trade with a project that is focussing in mango, honey and spice produce. In Zambia, the project has contributed to new product and packaging standards.

Moreover, Africa has the potential for a stronger economic growth through a closer regional cooperation and integration, since intra-African trade still remains small in comparison to overall trade figures. Finland wants to be part of the cooperation, both as a governmental partner and through partnership in the private sector. *(ZDM, 20.03.15)*

Kenya Gains from Uganda

Great potential in lowering the production and transport costs for the partner East African States, especially after oil and gas discoveries, lies with the Uganda refinery. The estimated cost of the refinery is, US$2.5bn (Sh229bn) with a target completion date in the year 2018.

The package includes the refinery, a crude oil pipeline from Uganda through Kenya and a matrix of product pipelines. The most immediate and direct impact to Kenya is reduced transit petroleum trade through Kenya to the Great Lakes, reduced use of Kenya petroleum logistics capacity and reduction of logistics usage in Kenya. *(BD, 10.03.15)*

SADC to Protect Local Trade

Southern African countries have moved to protect their local businesses by amending the competition laws that are deemed to have loopholes and vulnerable to exploitation by international companies, resulting in the closure of local businesses in the process.

Among the countries who have already amended their competition law is South Africa, to introduce prohibitions on anti-competitive conduct and restrictive practices. Botswana and Namibia, two other South African Development Community (SADC) countries, did not have competition law for many years in place until 2009 and 2003 respectively.

Namibia's competition regulations complement the development of recently enacted industrial policy, the Foreign Investment Act and the enactment of a SME policy, as well as the Transformation Economic and Social Framework (TESEF) that outlines local empowerment provisions in Namibia. There is a need for all the countries to amend their competition law policies to enhance competitiveness and trade.

(TST, 05.03.15)

Anxiety Deepens

Anxiety is rife among Anglophone ECOWAS nations' leaders of missing again the 2020 timeline for the introduction of a single ECOWAS currency, *Eco*, and the establishment of a Monetary Union. Introduction of the *Eco* has been postponed more than five times, and ECOWAS leaders are beginning to arrive at the conclusion that excuses are starting to build up, which would affect the new Eco deadline.

ECOWAS's French speaking countries already have a common currency, the CFA, and the plan is that the English speaking will first introduce the *Eco*, by 2020, before being joined by Francophone neighbours. However, none of the six countries in the largely English speaking West Africa Monetary Zone (WAMZ) has been able to meet the four primary and six secondary convergence criteria required for its introduction.

(B&FT, 10.02.15)

COMESA to Sort Illegal Trade

The CBC in partnership with the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA) hosted a business dialogue to provide a key platform for the private sector in the region.

It was revealed that illegal trade in East Africa alone has led to the community losing more than US$330mn annually. It has greatly undermined the viability of local manufacturing industries. Enhancing collaboration between the public and private sectors and implementing the proposed COMESA anti-unlawful trade protocol are crucial to fighting such crimes. Moreover, such a trade was a complex debate that had been a major 'handicap' of private sector development and competitiveness in the region.

Fair competition and a business-friendly environment are essential for the growth of business, adding that about 70 percent of the market share was lost annually because of counterfeit products. Various factors that have been said to contribute to forbidden trade, which are porous borders, corruption, high tax regimes, poor transit controls, illegal distribution networks and a high demand for cheap goods. There is, however, need to have a framework on combating illicit trade in the region. *(DN, 20.03.15)*

Maritime Boundary Dispute

Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are currently at the Tribunal for the International Law of the Sea (ITLOS) to battle out their maritime boundary dispute. Oral argument for a motion, filed by Cote d'Ivoire in February 2015, on whether or not all activities should be stopped in the disputed maritime area have begun.

Ghana filed arbitration processes in September 2014, after 10 failed negotiation attempts with Cote d'Ivoire over the maritime boundary dispute. At the tribunal's hearing in Hamburg on March 30, 2015, a team of Ivorian lawyers advanced arguments about why all activities on the area should be suspended. However, Ghana's legal team is praying the tribunal to dismiss Cote d'Ivoire's application on the grounds that it was not founded on law and facts and was thus without merit. *(DG, 30.03. 15)*

EAC Needs Sh760m

East Africa Community member States will be required to contribute Sh762.4mn to fund the bloc's activities for the next financial year which starts in July. The priorities will include implementation of East African Monetary Union Protocol; consolidation of the Single Customs Territory; enhanced Implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol, Constitution-making process for the EAC political federation, development of cross-border infrastructure and implementation of the regional industrialisation policy, implementation of the EAC Food Security Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy; transformation of the EAC into a common higher education area and establishment of an East African examination body.

Furthermore, the Secretariat also has plans to implement the tripartite free trade area encompassing EAC-COMESA-SADC, which would result in the establishment of an integrated market of the 26 countries. *(DN, 17.03.15)*

Pledge to Draft EA Law

Heads of state from the East African Community (EAC) said that the process of drafting the Constitution for East African Political Federation is likely to be initiated before the end of the current year. The member states indicated that they had discussed the admission of South Sudan and Somalia into the community. At the same time, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta handed over the mantle of EAC leadership to his Tanzanian counterpart Jakaya Kikwete. Jakaya called on the community partner states to eliminate all barriers to integration to fast-track the Momentary Union Protocol and Political Federal of the member states.

Furthermore, EAC aims at widening and deepening co-operation among partner States, in among others political, economic and social fields for the mutual benefits", stated the EAC Secretary General Richard Sezibera. *(SD, 21.02.15)*

Call for Agro-sector Reforms

UNECA-SA has called on governments in the region to transform the agriculture sector to become food secure and enhance nutritional security. Agricultural transformation through agro-industry development could be a reality in Southern Africa to feed itself.

Africa's agricultural transformation could not take place without the State; not for the State to be a producer, but to actively support and if there is a need, subsidise the agricultural sector. Without state support Agro-industrial development could not be effective and there is need to take on board the interests and values of vulnerable groups and classes.

Furthermore, remedies should be designed and agro-industry should be promoted. Poverty, inequality, food and nutritional insecurity have a demographic face, with women, children and poor households, the hardest hit. *(ZDM, 11.03.15)*

Wages Revised Upwards

The National Minimum Wage (MNW) for has been increased from GHC6 to GHC7 in Ghana. The implementation of the new wage, which represents a 16.7 percent increase over the old one, took effect from January 01, 2015.

The Minister for Employment and Labour Relations of Ghana, Haruna Iddrisu has announced the minimum wage at a joint news conference in Accra. Iddrisu said that it was the first time in many years that concerned parties had concluded negotiations on the daily minimum wage and the base pay in the first month of the year.

The announcement puts to rest speculations to the effect that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned the government not to increase salaries by 15 percent because of the effect of the wage bill on the national kitty.

(DG, 21.01.15)

More Power to Kenyan Courts

The Kenyan Parliament has passed the Environment and Land Court Act in 2012, which gives the Court the responsibility of dealing with almost all aspects of land and environmental disputes ranging from environmental planning, compulsory acquisition, land administration, land contracts, public, private and community land.

In essence by creation of these courts, the High Court has been divested of the powers to listen to land and environmental disputes. Owing to the importance of land and environmental issues to the extractive industry, it is clear therefore that these courts are in the forefront of handling issues relating to the extractive industry. A robust and effective justice system is good for business and development of a country. *(BD, 18.01.15)*

LWSSD for Sewerage Systems

Lusaka water and sewerage company has embarked upon a Lusaka Water Supply, Sanitation and Drainage (LWSSD) project aiming at improving sewerage systems in Lusaka. According to the Public Relations Manager, Topsy Sikalinda, the project was meant to enhance the sewerage system by extending existing conventional sewers and facilities to unserviced compounds in the city. In addition, the project, which at procurement stage would benefit about 1.2mn people in Lusaka.

Most communities were susceptible to water-borne diseases and the project would critically address those issues and would lessen the time and money spent on caring for patients suffering from diarrheal illnesses. Furthermore, the project would also result into extension of secondary and tertiary networks, reduction of non-revenue water and the construction of water kiosks in some peri-urban areas. *(DN, 24.03.15)*

Real Estate Sector Regulator

The umbrella body of real estate and construction companies, the Ghana Real Estate Developers Association (GREDA) has welcomed the proposed establishment of a regulatory body for the real estate sector, explaining that the move, if executed, would represent a dream come true for players in the industry.

While stressing that a regulator for the sector was long overdue, the National President of GREDA Kwakye Dopoah-Dei said that its establishment would help weed out the unscrupulous and shoddy service providers in the real estate business. The real estate and construction sector has been battling with the emergence of unprofessional and shoddy developers, who mostly use inferior materials and techniques for their construction work resulting in the collapse of buildings or destruction of properties. *(DG, 09.03.15)*

DSTV Price Hikes Opposed

The cost of DSTV subscription in Zambia has come with a lot of mixed feelings from consumers who have decided create a face book page called 'Zambians against High DSTV Rates' to protest over the new development. MultiChoice Africa's subsidiary company, DSTC Zambia has hiked subscription fees for the Compact, Compact Plus and Premium bouquets to be priced at K330, K495, and K631 respectively with an additional K79 PVR access fee.

The upward adjustment has been made in response to the depreciating kwacha, which the company uses as a benchmark to determine their local unit prices. This has subsequently left the subscribers to launch a campaign to boycott the service, which has been deemed to be very high in the region.

(TP, 14.03.15)

Network for Women Leaders

Women ministers and leaders at the Africa Ministerial Conference of the Environment (AMCEN) have launched a new network in early March, 2015. The newly established African Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment would lead the development of an AMCEN policy on gender and the environment designed to mainstream gender and environment considerations into development planning, legislation, and financial policies at the regional, national and community levels.

The network is co-chaired by Madame Zanou Armande, Director of Environmental Law, Ministry of Environment, Benin and Madame Hadijatou Jallow, Executive Director, Environment Protection Agency, Sierra Leone. The African Network is a chapter of the Global Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, established in Helsinki in March 2002.

The Network would develop recommendations at the national and regional levels; build network partnerships with appropriate civil society, non-governmental and intergovernmental agencies.

(http://en.starafrica.com, 05.03.15)

World Consumer Rights Day: Snippets from Africa

The 'World Consumer Rights Day' or WCRD is a day of immense significance on the world calendar to highlight the rights of the consumers in any business transaction. The day aims at promoting the interests of the consumers against any form of exploitation or malpractice in the market.

CUTS observed the WCRD in Accra (**Ghana**) on March 11, 2015. An event was organised on the theme entitled 'It is Time to Pass the Consumer Protection Law'. It brought together representatives of various regulatory agencies of Ghana, producers of various goods and services as well as the media persons.

Justice Samuel Kofi Date-Bah, Board Chair, CUTS Accra, Ghana said that over the years, CUTS has been emphasising on consumer sovereignty and thus celebrates the WCRD every year, although it is yet to acquire recognition by the UN. Realising the consumer as sovereign was not only important in ensuring an improvement in the quality of goods and services, but also was good for a county's economy, he added.

Speaking on the theme 'The Current State of the Consumer Protection Policy and Law', Irene Aborchie-Nyahe from the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Ghana, mentioned that because the sovereignty of the Ghanaian consumer was of great concern and priority, the Cabinet has approved a Consumer Protection Policy. This policy was developed taking into consideration the UN Guidelines. She also stated that the Ministry has set up a Committee to work on the Consumer Protection Law.

Zambia has been retaining its tradition of organising public events on the WCRD. In 2015, the topic was aligned to the global theme, 'Helping Consumers Choose Healthy Diets'. The WCRD National Organising Committee celebrated the day and urged members of the public to turn up in large number and participate in the commemorations held in cities across the country on March 16, 2015.

According to the Ministry of Health, Zambia, "The health sector stands as the key segment that contributes to the well-being of the nation. It should be noted that health is not just absence of disease but also encompasses the overall well-being of an individual, which is determined by a number of issues, important of which is good nutrition. The rise in diet related diseases is a major international issue of public health crisis". A number of facts and issues were raised during the discussions comprising diet related issues, non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity and various types of cancer. These diseases have been on the rise in Zambia and are currently contributing to the mortality rates of the country.

> ***The consumer is the supreme mover of economic order... for whom all goods are made and towards whom all economic activity is directed.***
>
> – Kenneth Boulding

Furthermore, to mark the WCRD 2015 a road show was organised in **Kenya**, by the Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK), Consumer Protection Division, in one of the Kenyan Counties (Machakos County) on March 13, 2015 on the theme 'Better Health for Consumers'. On March 14, 2015 another small road show was organised where announcement of the event to be celebrated at Machakos People's Park in Machakos County on March 15, 2015 was made. In addition, CAK provided the facility of free medical check-up and healthy diet counselling to over 2000 people, in collaboration with 30 experts including staff from hospitals and personnel from consumer bodies.

Research Reports

Accelerating Implementation of EAC Competition Policy and Law

CUTS Nairobi with support from Trade Mark East Africa implemented a project entitled 'Accelerating Implementation of EAC Competition Policy and Law'. The project assessed the challenges in the implementation of EAC Competition Policy and Law in each of the five EAC countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda); documented evidence on anticompetitive practices and their negative impacts in the economies of the region; and used such evidences to promote an enabling environment to support the effective implementation of various competition legislations at national and regional level through multi-stakeholder engagement.

Five evidence-based country research studies were published which laid the baseline information about competition policy issues and challenges therein. These highlighted necessary issues for awareness-generation and advocacy conducted in each of the project countries in partnership with ministries and responsible stakeholders responsible for EAC integration process.

http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Nairobi/EACCOMP/research_reports.htm

The Impact of the Competition Reforms on Businesses in Zambia: *An Evaluation of the Zambian Governance Reform Programme*

CUTS International Lusaka has undertaken a project aimed at evaluating the impact of the Business Licensing Reform Programme (BLRP) with specific focus on the impact of the Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 (CCPA), also a product of the BLRP, in promoting business growth in Zambia. The Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 (CCPA) repealed the earlier Act of 1994, the Competition and Fair Trading Act (CFTA) due to its inadequacies. With the new law, there were seen the inclusion of new provisions in the CCPA and the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) being conferred with more powers to address competition related issues that tend to affect business development.

http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/pdf/The_Impact_of_the_Competition_Reforms_on_Business_in_Zambia.pdf

ReguLetter

The January-March 2015 issue of ReguLetter encapsulates 'The Debate Around Net Neutrality' in its cover story which states that the release of the consultation paper on regulation of Over the Top services by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India coincides with the US Federal Communications Commission's recent adoption of Open Internet rules. Commentators view this development as just another chapter in the raging net neutrality debate, one that is both apt and inevitable as the internet becomes increasingly important in our lives.

A special feature by Amine Mansour states that in the literature dealing with competition law and policy in developing countries, there appears to be a consensus according to which competition law cannot contribute to development unless it wins its battle against what is called the concentration of economic and political power.

Another article by Don Reisinger opines that US Federal Trade Commission investigators issued a sharp rebuke of some of Google's search and advertising practices in a 160-page document handed to their bosses in 2012.

This newsletter can be accessed at: www.cuts-ccier.org/reguletter.htm

We want to hear from you...

Please e-mail your comments and suggestions to **cuts@cuts.org**

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- Number of pages devoted to news stories
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Sources

BD: Business Daily; B&FT: Business & Financial Times; CB: Cavmont Bank; DG: Daily Graphic; DN: Daily Nation; SD: Standard Digital; TP: The Post; ToZ: Times of Zambia; TST: The Southern Times; ZDM: Zambia Daily Mail

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