



30 Years of Social Change

Souvenir

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Adapting to the Changing Global Scenario



From its modest beginnings in 1983, CUTS has grown significantly as a local and global research and advocacy group in addressing the challenges to enhance consumer welfare. From a small voluntary consumer non-governmental organisation (NGO) working locally in Rajasthan, a state in North West India, to make consumers aware of their rights and seek resolution of their grievances, CUTS has over time progressed to policy research and network-based advocacy on various public policy issues at state, national, regional and international levels. Our work now revolves around three verticals: trade, regulation and governance. This graduation happened organically because of the demands made on us to work on policy issues, which would enhance consumer welfare, with the realisation that consumers need to be protected upfront and not only *ex post*.

Furthering its Vision – *Consumer Sovereignty* and Mission – *Consumer Sovereignty in the Framework of Social Justice, Economic Equality and Environmental Balance Within and Across Borders* – CUTS has grown geographically with overseas Resource Centres in Geneva, Hanoi, Nairobi, Lusaka and Accra.

We are proud of CUTS

This phenomenon has been captured succinctly by Kailash Meghwal, Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly: “In fact, to my knowledge, it is a rare Indian NGO, which has its Centres in Geneva.....and Hanoi with emphasis on South-South cooperation. We, in Rajasthan, are proud of CUTS and convey our best wishes for many more years of evidence-based activism, so that the world becomes a better place to live in”.

A similar sentiment is expressed by Valentine Rugwabiza, former Deputy Director General, World Trade Organisation (WTO) and currently a Minister in Rwanda: “The growth of CUTS from an Indian NGO to one that supports the global South has been remarkably impressive. It is the most important platform for trade and development policy discussion through a substantial network of researchers and practitioners. Opening of regional Resource Centres is commendable for it harnesses local knowledge pools enabling it to produce informed, topical and country-specific case stories”.

It is from this considerable expansion that CUTS has become a leading voice for consumers of the South and beyond, working with numerous organisations and partners at the international, national and local levels. Many friends have expressed their admiration for our formidable networking strengths. We do this activity consciously.

...may surpass previous achievements

At a time when CUTS celebrates its 30th Anniversary, I revisit what Anwarul Hoda, a former Indian civil servant, and Deputy Director General, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the WTO, and a member of the erstwhile Planning Commission of India said: “You have achieved a lot in the past but in future, you may surpass previous achievements”. This even-handed compliment comes with an expectation of doing even better in the times to come. Therefore, I view 30 years of CUTS not merely as an achievement of a celebratory milestone but as always, also with a deep sense of challenges that come with it.

Consumer interest should be synonymous with national interest

Starting with a zero budget and an ‘office’ situated in a garage, our first break came in 1991, when our rural consumer work was boosted by establishing the first specialised Centre for Human Development (CHD). It was established at Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, with the support of HIVOS and Ford Foundation, in my vacant ancestral property that was subsequently donated to CUTS. Over time, work in this Centre expanded to cover issues, such as rural poverty, women empowerment, child rights, environmental protection etc.

How well Radheshayam Parashar, *Upbokhta Sookhna Evam Paramarsh Samiti*, Bhupal Sagar (Chittorgarh) interprets that as consumer movements in the developing countries have not grown over time in spite of consumers being the *raison d’etre* of all economic activities. Thus, he says, consumer interest should be synonymous with national interest. CUTS interventions are based on this perspective.

Furthermore, in the same year (1991), I attended the 13th World Congress of Consumers International (then known as International Organisation of Consumer Unions – IOCU), under the aegis of the GATT. A friend of mine, Ajay Kumar, Executive Editor with *The Economic Times* helped me reach out to a wider audience through my daily reporting of the four-day event and the crucial travel support. IOCU did not fund our costs, as we were very new members. The Uruguay Round of the GATT was at the peak of negotiations but most of us from the South had very little idea as to what this would mean to the developing world. Some of the consumer groups from the rich North went around throwing their knowledge at us and sounding alarmist as if some new Gattzilla will come around and devour all of us.

Working on trade and development

This is how we started working on trade and development (WTO) issues. But we had no funding support to do anything substantive. Fortunately, IOCU did give us some money to write papers for them on trade policy issues and also attend and speak at meetings in Geneva, London etc. I was elected as the Co-Convenor of the IOCU’s Global Campaigns Committee on Economic Issues as a balance to the other person who was from UK. The next World Congress was held in September 1994 in Montpellier, France by when it was clear that there would be a new trade architecture and a standing body to administer it by the name of WTO.

While returning from Montpellier I met with Heinz Bongartz of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Delhi and spoke to him about what happened at the World Congress, and what we would like to do with their support. Heinz was convinced with our need and helped us launch the South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE) in 1994. He was facing a problem that

many of his international events were being cancelled due to plague in Surat, Gujarat (June, 1994) and he did not want to reduce his expenditure levels as it would impact their next year's allocation from the German Government. However, FES in Delhi and their headquarters in Bonn were very happy with our work and have continued to support it until today. The support has varied and our work on trade was supported for long.

Subsequently, in April 1996 after attending UNCTAD IX session at Midrand, South Africa, CUTS conceptualised the CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CITEE) as its second specialised programme. I met the noted trade economist, Professor Jagdish Bhagwati at Midrand, and invited him to Chair its Advisory Board, which he readily accepted. Professor Bhagwati was delivering the Raul Prebisch Lecture there and I had queried him on environmental conditions in international trade, which he appreciated. In retrospect, he said that he was glad to be associated with us for he saw great hopes that we supported free trade. Though, we were not blind supporters of free trade.

The idea was for SAWTEE to remain as a network of South Asian NGOs, while CITEE to become a specialised research and advocacy Centre of CUTS, which could engage with the Government of India and other bodies effectively. SAWTEE could not have done a similar role, as it was an informal network of NGOs from outside India also. However, the then Commerce Secretary of India, Tejendra Khanna saw the value of our work on building capacities of young professionals on trade policy issues in South Asia and gave us huge support by nominating staff to attend as resource persons. He also encouraged us to do research and ensured that we got fair budgets. He also appointed me in the Think Tank of the Ministry to advise him on the WTO's first Ministerial at Singapore in December 1996. Among others, Khanna's name will also be written in golden letters in CUTS' history for being a visionary supporter.

Research and advocacy on consumer and environment issues

CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) was initiated as a research and advocacy Centre in 1996, so that our original agenda of consumer protection does not suffer, and to take up a new area of good governance and social accountability.

Commenting on CUTS' growth in research and advocacy, Vishnu Kumar Kumawat, from Manpura *Gram Panchayat*, believes that CUTS is presently on the frontline of research and advocacy on global trade issues and on account of its quality research and effective advocacy, the organisation has been successful in acquiring international recognition.

The head office of CUTS reverted to Jaipur in the year 1997 from Calcutta and Calcutta Resource Centre (CRC) turned into a Centre for Sustainable Consumption and focussed on issues related to eco-labelling and environment-friendly technologies.

Spreading out geographically

Furthermore, interacting with African groups, especially during the UNCTAD IX at **Midrand in April/May 1996**, the **Africa Resource Centre (ARC)** was conceived to promote South-South civil society cooperation. This is how the third Centre, first ARC was established in 2000 in Lusaka, Zambia. This was our first overseas Centre. Thanks to the help provided by George Lipimile, Executive Director of Zambia Competition Commission, who got everything done in

three months' time, which was a record. Funding for the same came out of our first ever international project on competition law & policy, the 7Up project. It was on research and advocacy in seven Commonwealth countries with seven goals, hence the name 7Up. (Nothing to do with the soft drink). These countries included India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Asia, and Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia in Africa. The 7Up model involved a bottom-up approach with all stakeholders and its success led to three more such projects (7Up2, 7Up3 and 7Up4). All were supported by Department for International Development (DFID), UK in a big or a small measure, while we leveraged their support to garner support from Switzerland, Sweden, Canada and Norway. Roger Nellist at DFID, UK was our mentor who was as convinced as we that developing countries need competition law to check market failures, which take place when economies are liberalised, and the poor suffer the most.

Extending the geographical dimension, the Nairobi Centre in Kenya was conceived in the year 2003 to promote work in East Africa. Nairobi is the Gateway to Africa, as most of the international organisations' are located there: mainly United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The genesis of CUTS' expansion to countries outside India was based on the principle of South-South where cooperation not only among the civil society organisations (CSOs) but also governments and business communities.

Focussing on competition, regulation and governance

After the successful completion of the project 'Competition Regimes in Selected Countries of the Commonwealth' called 7Up referred above, CITEE was split into two. A new Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (CCIER) was set up in 2003 to pursue focussed work on competition, investment and economic regulation.

Continuing the journey another Centre in Delhi (CUTS DRC) was launched in 2003 to act as a focal point for CUTS' advocacy, outreach and external relations in the national capital and to feed the work being done at the national-level by other Centres of CUTS, particularly at Chittorgarh, Calcutta and Jaipur into policy-level interventions.

In 2007, the Hanoi Resource Centre (CUTS HRC) came into being in Vietnam to be a catalyst in transferring objective knowledge and advocacy skills from India to countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region towards mainstreaming the civil society movement into the development process. The driver for establishing this Centre was our colleague, Alice Pham. She worked at Jaipur for three years, particularly in the 7Up2 project, and wanted to return home to Vietnam. Then she came up with the idea of establishing a new Centre to work on competition law in the country and the region, and went ahead with establishing the Centre. Funding already existed for working on regional projects so it did not burden us in any way. In fact, it was the only overseas Centre, which in its entire history never asked for any financial support from head office.

CUTS Geneva Resource Centre (GRC), was established in 2008 forming the voice of the global South on trade and economic policy issues. The Centre catalyses the pro-trade, pro-equity voices of the global South in the international trade and development discourse in Geneva.

The opening of the Centre in Geneva will be written in golden letters of our history. Because, we did not approach any donor to fund a Centre in Geneva but Ann Tutwiler, Managing Director of Hewlett Foundation of the US approached us to establish a Centre there. They were very impressed

with our trade policy work, especially coming from a pro-trade Southern NGO. The Centre was established to work on trade and agriculture issues in East Africa and linking them up with the global discourse in Geneva.

In the meanwhile, CUTS incubated and established the CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC) in 2008 in New Delhi offering research, educational and training programmes on competition policy and law and regulatory laws, with the aim of becoming a Centre of Excellence on Law and Economics. It had a luminous founding board headed by Dr C Rangarajan, Chairman of the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Economic Advisory Council.

CUTS Accra, the third Centre of CUTS in Africa (Ghana) was created in August 2013 as a Resource Centre for information on trade, regulation and governance in West Africa with sustainable development being the cross-cutting thread for building local, national and regional capacities of multiple stakeholders on issues based on trade and competition.

Lecture series to mark the occasion

To mark its 30th Anniversary, we organised a series of lectures around the world in 2013-14, including India, of eminent scholars and practitioners on topics of interest and in line with CUTS' work agenda. Earlier in 2003, when celebrating its 20th Anniversary, CUTS' Partnership Conclave took a close look at why and how governance matters in poverty reduction. An excellent set of case studies from around the world was published after the event was over, some of which were also presented at the event. Former Prime Minister of India, I K Gujral was the chief guest, while Minister Arun Jaitley also spoke on the occasion and released the CUTS 20th Anniversary Souvenir.

On its 25th Anniversary in 2008, we looked at issues relating to development of global partnerships as many of the emerging challenges were, and still are, of the nature of global public goods. It was to remind people of Goal No: 8 of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) which speaks about trade, aid and debt. The event was organised in partnership with FICCI and had a star line up comprising of Pascal Lamy, Director General, WTO; Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary General, UNCTAD and Kamal Nath, Minister for Commerce and Industry. This helped the organisation in its strategic planning for the following 25 years.

The 30th Anniversary lecture series examined whether the resources are adequate in meeting contemporary and emerging development challenges; is political will lacking and why it may be so and what are the macro-micro gaps and how these may be bridged. These were analysed in the context of the fact that the rest of this decade will experience a number of international events to shape and reshape the future direction of the global development discourse. While that will be state-led, the lecture series not only provided a much-needed platform to various actors to express their views and concerns on contemporary development discourse but also, and more importantly, to strengthen the state and civil society relationship through historical evidence, and not just views.

The aim of the lecture series was to shape CUTS' future interventions, which would help in promoting inclusive growth. A compilation of the lecture series was published in a book entitled 'Better Governance for Inclusive Growth'. This book along with a film of the lecture series are available at: http://www.cuts-international.org/30thAnniversaryLectures/pdf/Better_Governance_for_Inclusive_Growth.pdf. Whereas a film of our journey of 30 years can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSXe134sHs4>.

In this Souvenir, we are carrying messages of our friends from the grassroots to national, regional and international-levels who have known us and interacted with us over a long period of time. While their compliments are gratefully but humbly acknowledged, I would like to give more weightage to the concerns they have raised for the future.

Challenges ahead

Friends and well-wishers of CUTS in India and from across the world have been extremely generous in praising our efforts as can be perused later in this Souvenir. I would, however, like to highlight the challenges that these friends have identified. These fall into four broad categories:

- dwindling prospects of overall funding for NGOs;
- adapting to the challenging economic order;
- strengthening the core values CUTS stands for in the face of these recent developments; and
- the need for deepening the breadth by retaining and attracting staff with requisite skills.

Many friends, such as John Preston, Alan Winters, Ann Tutwiler, Shyam Khemani, and others have pointed to the fact that funding to NGOs might not continue at the same levels and would, therefore be a major challenge. Ahmed Farouk Ghoneim goes a step further to point out “in a world where politics is entangled with economics, and where financial resources are drying up”, it would be challenging for us to keep up with our excellent work. And Joerg Weber adds yet another dimension when he rightly observes:

“...the civil society arena is getting more crowded and other developing country-based NGOs are entering the state, competing for attention and funds that come with it”.

However, Bernard Hoekman is not as skeptic, when he states:

“the basic challenge is to continue to be a market leader in consumer welfare-oriented trade and competition policy arena. I do not foresee the need for this to be declining any time soon – to the contrary”.

Indeed, we shall pursue this line of work challenging the market imperfections and hopefully will remain busy with adequate support from reformers. When I type these lines, I find Bernard’s observations so true and indeed our funding has not shrunk, except the focus has shifted to very clear targeted micro projects rather than macro ones.

The other notable challenge resonated by a cross-section of the distinguished commentators pertains to adapting to rapid changes in the economic pattern closely related to the work area of CUTS. While Helen McCallum refers to the challenges posed by the digital age *vis-à-vis* rural, vulnerable and impoverished consumers, Philippe Brusick captures the “intrusion of new issues into the realm of trade and competition, as well as renewed questioning of the benefits of open and competitive markets resulting from the economic crisis”. Mark Halle adds:

“The world is moving from a system based on hard rules to one based on softer power and softer law making it necessary to move beyond the habit of focussing on inter-governmental process”.

The third broad challenge has been aptly summarised by Indrani Thuraisingham: “The challenge for CUTS will be to maintain the gains made in consumer research and advocacy and to surge ahead and further extend its work without compromising on the principles that it stands for in this global era...”. This has been echoed by Arancha Gonzalez when she mentions: “the challenge

before CUTS is to extend its boundaries and grow without shedding the basic purpose it was created for”. This resonates with what Bernard has said above.

Hari Prasad Yogi from Consumer Legal Help Society, Sawai Madhopur (Rajasthan) recommends that CUTS should empower the consumer movement for rural consumers of various districts of India and continue its channel of communication with the grassroot consumers. This probably could be one of the emerging challenges for CUTS in future, which we continue to meet. It is always a pleasure to attend a grassroot meeting sitting on a carpeted floor in a hall with clay tiled roof, or under a tree rather than an air conditioned hall.

Lastly, the challenge and the need for deepening the breadth by retaining and attracting staff with requisite skills has been referred to as an area for attention and focus in the coming years.

Shyam Khemani, Ranbir Singh and S V Divvaakar raise the issue of attracting and retaining relevant staff and manage attrition. One cannot prevent people leaving the organisation as many do want to try out newer things, and perhaps at higher salaries, but we take pride in them for they become our Ambassadors. It also helps us to engage new staff with fresh blood and build them up to become our future Ambassadors.

While others gave me knowledge, CUTS gave me the wisdom

Most of our former staff have always spoken well about the sound training that they received here and developed their personalities. In fact in one of the Appreciative Enquiry Workshops at CUTS, I was honoured with the title of Dronacharya, a mythical Guru. However, a close friend, Surendra Kanstiya, former, Chairman, Consumer Guidance Society of India, Mumbai, has put it most admirably: “While other organisations gave me knowledge, CUTS gave me the wisdom”. As a practice he donates ₹50,000 every year to CUTS for our grassroot work.

This volume also captures the testimonials of our various former colleagues, which is evidence of the human resource building that we have been able engage in. It gives me huge satisfaction. In an appendix we carry abstracts from such testimonials to satisfy the curiosity of the reader as to how we were able to develop and shape a large number of young professionals to carry their learnings onto newer pastures. Let me just quote one of them here:

“Despite my reluctance initially, I was given immense opportunities of addressing large audiences at national and international audiences only because Mehta’s thinking that a person can learn swimming faster when thrown into the deep end of the pool. And today, I know that has been the sole reason of my popularity as a speaker everywhere”, Anjali Bansal, 2000-2003.

Anjali wishes to come back to CUTS but she is now living in Lucknow where her husband is posted and her son has a good school to go to. One day, she will come back as many colleagues have also returned to CUTS, proving the point that we have always been like a home to many, which includes youngsters like Anjali for whom it was their first job.

Among other critical challenges, David On’golo writes: “the critical challenge for CUTS in the future is to deepen engagement with national stakeholders as an art of its dissemination and national engagement activities”. Edwin Laurent feels that as CUTS extends its boundaries, he would like to see it develop further deep to complement this breadth.

Way forward

Given the invaluable feedback, particularly relating to the inevitable shrinkage of funding opportunities, it would be necessary to initiate such measures, which would ensure sustainability. We have always followed a business model of working on emerging areas where there is a vacuum and no competition, so that funding does not dry up. We will be doing that consciously in future also.

Furthermore, we will strive that CUTS becomes a market-oriented organisation strictly within its mandate and areas of focus. With an experience spanning over three decades, covering diverse areas, such as training, capacity building, rural development, policy-oriented work, etc. CUTS is in a position to carve out income generating activities.

CUTS plans to address the need for a National Public Policy Centre in Jaipur with an overall mandate to provide a platform to promote dialogues, programmes, research, advocacy, networking and capacity building on public policy and related areas, such as foreign policy, regional cooperation, decentralisation, governance, rural development etc. Income generating activities are a major component of this plan.

Keeping its Vision as the guiding principle, CUTS proposes to address and adapt to the rapidly changing scenario across the globe. For example, a step has been taken in this direction by analysing the effects of climate change on trade and food security. Similar re-positioning will be examined in other areas as well.

Ability to speak to developing countries like UNCTAD

It is clear that CUTS must continue with its research-based advocacy ensuring credibility by analysing both sides of debates truthfully. Our service to development and justice for consumers should benefit more countries, a view that has also been endorsed by Edwin Laurent. While doing so, horizontal (geographical) expansion must go hand in hand with a constant reminder of what we stand for. I quote Eleanor Fox:

“... one of the strengths of CUTS is being able to speak to developing countries in a way that no organisation other than UNCTAD can do”.

We will continue to strive towards this with more vigour.

Conclusion

I have reserved for the last, an important issue raised by Taimoon Stewart that of succession planning to ensure dedication, tenacity and ability of swim against the tide. I am happy to share that CUTS, at present, has a strong line of steadfast, loyal and faithful senior staff and are ready to step in leadership positions. I am not aware of how other organisations fare, but many colleagues who left have returned. That is in my opinion a testament of our work culture etc.

I thank all those who have contributed to this Souvenir and outlined views that would engage us in our future endeavours.

Pradeep S Mehta
Secretary General



Kailash Meghwal
Speaker
Rajasthan Legislative Assembly
Rajasthan, India



Addressing Global and Grassroot Issues Effectively

The 30th Anniversary celebration of the Jaipur-based NGO, CUTS International is a testimony to the splendid work, which it has been doing over these three decades. More importantly, their spectrum of work covers a large number of issues, which impact the common man across geographies. In fact, to my knowledge, it is a rare Indian NGO, which has its centres in Geneva, Lusaka, Nairobi, Accra and Hanoi with emphasis on South-South cooperation. Kudos to its dynamic founder and Secretary General, Pradeep S Mehta.

I have known Pradeep longer than I have known CUTS. In 1984, the country was suffering from a serious coin shortage when he had just launched CUTS. He came up with a memorandum addressed to the government on the problem and got signatures of 44 MLAs, including the leader of opposition, Late Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. The problem was soon resolved.

I am referring to the above incident as a proof of CUTS' engagement on grassroot issues in Rajasthan and India. Before CUTS was launched, an innovative rural wall newspaper, *Gram Gadar* (Village Revolution) was launched in 1983, which continues to be published even at present.

CUTS is a rare Indian NGO having centres across the borders emphasising on South-South cooperation

CUTS has also been actively pursuing many global issues, such as WTO and advising Government of India on its strengths and shortcomings. Pradeep has also served as an Adviser to two Director Generals of the WTO, perhaps the only Indian.

I am sure that CUTS will continue to work on both policy issues and action locally and globally to protect the interests of poor consumers in the future. We, in Rajasthan, are proud of CUTS and convey our best wishes for many more years of evidence-based activism, so that the world becomes a better place to live in.

Kailash Meghwal
(Kailash Meghwal)

Ahmed Farouk Ghoneim

Professor of Economics (August 2011-Present)
Faculty of Economics and Political Science
Cairo University, Egypt



Influencing Global Opinion

My first interaction with CUTS dates back more than 10 years ago when I was invited to one of the organisation's event on competition in Geneva. I was so impressed to find such an NGO with capabilities, such as quality policy-oriented research, advocacy and wide network of academics, international donors and policy makers around the globe.

Since my association with CUTS, I have seen it growing in many respects including geographically and in its wide range of activities. Moreover, I watched how effective it became as a world-wide NGO from a developing country that was able to influence global public opinions and international organisations.

The strength of CUTS lies in its pragmatic and policy-oriented type of activities. CUTS has a unique ability in combining policy-oriented research in a feasible way for all its audience that I doubt any other NGO like CUTS was able to deliver. Its ability to raise funds, outreach at different stakeholders of trade policy, work on competition policy and regulation has placed it at a prominent place on the world map in such issues.

I have seen how effective CUTS became as a world-wide NGO from a developing country effectively influencing the global public opinions and international organisations

The challenge before CUTS is simply to continue its first class policy-oriented advocacy type of research and outreach. In a world where politics is entangled with economics, and where financial resources are drying up, it is expected that such new challenges will be faced by CUTS in keeping up its excellent work.

Alok Ray

Former Professor of Economics
 Indian Institute of Management (IIM)
 Calcutta, India



Providing Research-based Information and Capacity Building Services

I first came to know about CUTS in the early 1990s when I as a Professor of Economics at Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta participated in a discussion on WTO negotiations where Pradeep S Mehta was one of the speakers and I was greatly impressed by his thoughts based on adequate knowledge and good research.

CUTS then requested me to be one of their resource persons in the area of international trade and I accepted the same. Subsequently, I actively participated in several national and international conferences and seminars organised by CUTS in Delhi and elsewhere on the role of WTO, globalisation, poverty and regulatory reforms.

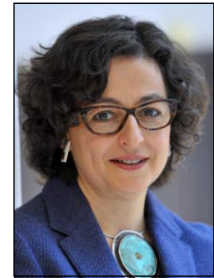
From a very humble beginning as a small consumer protection organisation, CUTS has diversified in a number of areas where it has been providing highly useful research-based information and capacity building services to people in developing countries spanning several continents. Various discussion forums, under the banner of CUTS have hosted spirited debates by experts from many countries on a number of important issues. Within a span of three decades, CUTS has grown to be one of the best known research and advocacy organisations in the developing world. This is a huge achievement for Pradeep and his dedicated team.

CUTS has grown to be one of the best known research and advocacy organisations in the developing world within a span of three decades

Only one word of caution, which is applicable to any research and advocacy organisation is that care should be taken, so that research findings are not tailored to suit the advocacy function of the organisation. In other words, for maximum credibility, both sides of a debate need to be researched and presented truthfully. This is not so easy when the research is funded by various interest groups.

Aranca Gonzalez

Executive Director (September 2013-Present)
International Trade Centre (ITC)
Geneva, Switzerland



Contributing Valuable Research and Advocacy

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 2003 when I was working in the European Commission (EC) as a spokeswoman for trade in the European Union (EU). I met Pradeep S Mehta on a trip to India accompanying the then EU Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy. I was deeply impressed by the innovative approach that CUTS offered, i.e. providing the views of the too often forgotten ‘consumer’.

Since my first interaction with CUTS, I have been greatly impressed by the manner in which CUTS has expanded beyond India to aspire to a more global role, establishing an office in Geneva and looking at issues in Africa and around in many other developing countries. CUTS has provided a constructive voice to the South not only on trade but also on other related areas, such as competition and aid for trade.

CUTS has not only provided a constructive voice to the South on trade but also on other related areas like competition and aid for trade

The strength of CUTS lies in its balanced and consistent approach – it is intellectually honest in addressing many trade issues, which affect consumers. I also appreciate the manner in which it has proficiently blended serious research with effective advocacy and shown that both can go hand in hand.

The challenge before CUTS is to extend its boundaries and grow without shedding the basic purpose it was created for. The world is growing and progressing at a much rapid pace. This calls for a change in the attitude of CUTS in viewing things in order to follow the maxim ‘Survival of the Fittest’. CUTS will be the fittest when it focusses on matters, which are close to its *being*, i.e. when they remain focussed and adjust to new realities of world trade.

Atiur Rahman

Governor (May 2009-March 2016)
 Bangladesh Bank
 Bangladesh



CUTS – A Pro-people Institution

I am not able to recollect about my first interaction with CUTS. This must have been in the mid-nineties. I was then working in Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies. Protection of consumer interests within the context of ethical trade obviously caught my early attention. When WTO came into being, my interaction with CUTS was further enhanced and I became a great admirer of what CUTS was doing.

What I liked the most is CUTS' strategic approach of walking on two legs for realising consumer sovereignty both within and across borders. Also, its focus on research-based advocacy, connecting the grassroots with national and international policy making processes is indeed commendable.

I had the privilege of working with CUTS on so many trade-related projects. I was also a member of their International civil society group advocating on competition policy. I have seen how CUTS grew out of a small parking garage to today's international organisation bit by bit. The amount of hard work and energy invested by Pradeep S Mehta and his team for the growth of this organisation is simply incredible. I can only salute this passionate institution-builder.

When WTO came into being my interaction with CUTS further increased and I became a great admirer of the work CUTS was doing

CUTS' research-based advocacy where I was once an active partner must be further strengthened. The challenge, of course will be how to integrate trade concerns in the development policies of national jurisdiction with those of global institutions like the WTO. We all need to give CUTS a hand to strengthen its capacity, both as a credible think tank and as an advocate of the comprehensive pro-people vision of inclusive growth, which it has set for itself and its friends.

Bernard Hoekman

Professor and Programme Director (2013-Present)
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute, Italy



Successfully Expanding Global Footprints

I am really unable to remember when I had my first interaction with CUTS. It was probably in the late 1990s when the WTO started discussing the competition policy and I was working in the World Bank's (WB's) Economic Development Institute. CUTS was of course one of the few organisations based in a developing country that was active in this area, both in terms of hands-on engagement and analysis/advocacy.

I was subsequently involved in a CUTS' project on government procurement but that was quite later. CUTS has been very successful in expanding its global footprints – it has made very effective use of the internet in particular through the email debates and discussion fora that it hosts.

In geographical terms, the expansion has also been noteworthy with the new offices opened in Geneva and several African countries. In research, more work could be done to get involved in the collection and publication of data and information originating in businesses and civil society and that has a direct bearing on trade and competition issues. CUTS could be a trusted intermediary for both types of groups and in helping to address government policy and market failures that lower consumer welfare.

CUTS has been very successful in expanding its global footprints – it has made very effective use of the Internet in particular through the email debates and discussion fora that it hosts

The basic challenge is to continue to be a market leader in the consumer welfare-oriented trade and competition policy arena. I do not foresee the need for this declining any time soon – to the contrary. There is still surprisingly little effective competition in the above specified area.

Bimal Arora

Chief Executive Officer (November 2011-January 2015)
Centre for Responsible Business
New Delhi, India



Organisation with Good National and International Reputation

My first interaction with CUTS was in March 2011 when Rijit Sengupta of CUTS approached me to introduce a research project, ‘Exploring the Interplay between Business Regulation and Corporate Conduct in India’ that CUTS was about to launch with the support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy, New Delhi. I participated in the meeting held on April, 2011 and got to know CUTS and some of its activities better.

I had an enriching experience being engaged with CUTS and its different team members in the above mentioned project. CUTS has a very strong and focussed team with skills and competence in research, advocacy, outreach and project management. I was impressed with the turnout of the participants at the capacity building workshops and learnt a lot and enjoyed being a part of the project.

CUTS has a very good reputation in India and internationally for its research and advocacy in the domain of consumers. Several inter-connecting areas of research and advocacy are increasingly emerging, such as corporate social responsibility/sustainable development, global value chains, fair trade etc. CUTS should find linkages with its focus in these emerging areas and develop a more comprehensive approach and agenda for research and advocacy.

CUTS has a very strong and focussed team with skills and competence in research, advocacy, outreach and project management

CUTS has created a niche for itself in India and internationally. However, foreign sources for funding in India and in several emerging economies are reducing. CUTS might have to consider its business model along with its mandate and areas of focus going forward and becoming market-oriented organisation keeping appropriate visibility in order.

Carlos A Primo BRAGA
Professor and Director (2012-Present)
Evian Group, IMD
Lausanne, Switzerland



Realising Consumer Sovereignty Domestically and Abroad

My interaction with CUTS and Pradeep S Mehta began somewhere around 2004 in the context of events organised by the Evian Group and meetings at the WTO. CUTS and Pradeep were quite active in the debates following the impasse at the WTO Cancun Ministerial. CUTS contributed incredibly to the on-going debate on the impact of trade on poverty alleviation and economic development.

At that time, I was working for the WB as the Senior Adviser for International Trade and knew that I could always rely on Pradeep/ CUTS for relevant insights about the role of international trade in fostering consumer welfare in developing countries. CUTS has also been a pioneer among the international NGOs in exploring the impact of competition law in developing countries.

What distinguishes CUTS is not only its progressive vision, but also its willingness to engage with different stakeholders in advancing its agenda via constructive debate. A good example of this has been its stance with respect to the importance of advancing effective Competition Law/ Regulation in a period in which there was significant resistance to engage in these discussions at international level in view of the debate on Singapore issues at the WTO.

What distinguishes CUTS is not only its progressive vision but also its willingness to engage with different stakeholders in advancing its agenda via constructive debate

After three decades of substantive work, CUTS has carved an important niche in the world of international NGOs by focussing on the realisation of its vision of consumer sovereignty domestically and abroad.

I look forward to continue to collaborate with CUTS and Pradeep in their journey ahead.

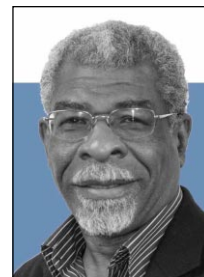
Cezley Sampson

Head (2007-Present)

Energy, Legal and Regulatory Practice

CPCS Infrastructure Development Consultants

London, UK



CUTS – A Champion in Consumer Sovereignty in Emerging Liberalised Markets

I first came in contact with CUTS and got associated with its people in Dar es Salaam in 2009 when they were putting together the ‘Tanzanian Competition Country Report’.

CUTS has done an excellent job in presenting the state of play of competition issues and its importance to economic growth and the need for strong competition policies and law in over 30 countries. It is in fact the champion of consumer sovereignty in the newly emerging liberalised markets.

There is still a lack of understanding at all levels of society of the role and importance of a strong competitive environment and the need for rules to underpin the sustainable development of this environment. Recently, in Nigeria (which incidentally does not have a competition law) when the draft Bill on competition was presented to the policy makers, one of them remarked that Nigeria has enough competition and could not understand the need for this law. Competition advocacy needs to go even down the level of the educational system and in schools to create a new culture and understanding.

CUTS has done an excellent job in presenting the state of play of competition issues and its importance to economic growth and the need for strong competition policies and law in over 30 countries

The main challenge of CUTS going forward will be funding, acquiring wide public support for independent competition authorities and convincing the general public and officials that competition does matter and is central to sustainable growth, particularly, when sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries are growing at a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of six or seven percent per annum with no or weak competition bodies.

David On'golo

Chairman, (February 2012-Present)
Competition Authority of Kenya
Nairobi, Kenya



Respected Voice of Researched Commentary

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to early 2000 when I had the privilege to be the Kenya Country Researcher, under the '7Up1' project. I was greatly impressed by CUTS' methodology of incorporating national researchers and National Reference Groups (NRGs) as part of the research and dissemination exercise.

Since my first association with CUTS, I have seen it growing from a consumer issue-based organisation to a recognised one in the key areas of international trade, regulation, competition policy and law. In all these years, CUTS has emerged to be a respected voice of researched commentary in all these thematic areas.

Whereas the strength of CUTS lies in well-grounded advocacy based on research I feel it should touch much deeper into matters relating to country collaboration in advocacy on the issues that it researches on. A deeper and long standing engagement with critical members of NRGs would enable this to happen.

I have seen CUTS growing from a consumer issue-based organisation to a recognised one in important areas of international trade, regulation, competition policy and law

The critical challenge facing CUTS in the future is to deepen engagement with national stakeholders as an art of its dissemination and national engagement activities. The voice of CUTS needs to be considered at national-level.

Edwin Laurent

Adviser and Head
International Trade and Regional Cooperation, Economic Affairs
Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
London, UK



CUTS – An Emerging Player of Development

My first encounter with CUTS was in the late 1990's when I was the Eastern Caribbean States Ambassador to the EU and embroiled in the long running Banana dispute in the WTO. Our high-level political lobbying was taking us all over Europe so inevitably engaged with this new player that was emerging on the development landscape.

The relationship strengthened after I joined the Commonwealth Secretariat where I was responsible for policy research and providing advice and technical assistance to developing countries in trade and regional cooperation. CUTS was the ideal partner, sharing our aim of empowering developing countries in identifying and implementing those policies that would contribute most to the development and help to bring about changes in the trading system to make it fairer and more efficient and supportive of its weaker members.

From its modest beginning in 1983, CUTS has under the charismatic leadership of Pradeep S Mehta, grown into a global player with a formidable reputation and tremendous convening power.

Dwindling aid budgets are putting donors, under increasing pressure to show results often within a time-frame determined by political considerations or the budget cycle in the donor country. The development process though is long-term and to be successful, engagement needs to take that into account and CUTS does so.

CUTS has been able to identify and occupy an important niche as an independent and credible intermediary in the provision of technical assistance

Its service to development and justice for consumers is invaluable and more countries should benefit. So CUTS would have to expand further, building on its solid institutional base and tremendous reputation to extend and deepen its presence in more developing country regions. To maintain success while expanding, CUTS will need to establish new partnerships and adapt its own organisational, operational, managerial and oversight structures and practices.

Eleanor M Fox

Walter J Derenberg Professor of Trade Regulation (2000-Present)
New York University School of Law
New York, USA



Competition and Consumer Think Tank

My first interactions with CUTS and in particular with Pradeep S Mehta were at international competition meetings, such as the UNCTAD conference meeting. I was at once impressed by the independence and thoughtfulness of Pradeep and members of his staff. I knew then, and I know that they have no peers in doing what they do – competition and consumer think tank of research and advocacy working with a deeply engrained global developmental agenda but with local perspective.

CUTS' activities are exemplary. It is constantly at the cutting edge, devising new projects based on real world developments working towards coherent reforms in developing countries. Its 7Up projects are remarkable in terms of the data gathered and their analysis. CUTS' work helps us to understand economies root up; appreciate their real rather than theoretical problems, and therefore, to have a better platform for solutions.

In some cases, I think CUTS can do more to survey the work already done and spend more time working intensively on smaller sets of projects. But one of the strengths of CUTS is being able to speak to developing countries in a way that no organisation other than UNCTAD can do. It has an empathy with them. It anticipates their problems. This it should not give up. It should continue to smoke out and 'sense out' the problems of developing countries. Moreover, CUTS should continue to be an independent actor on the cutting edge.

CUTS is constantly at the cutting edge, devising new projects based on real world developments working towards coherent reforms in developing countries

Essam Nada

Executive Director (June 2000-Present)
 Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE)
 Cairo, Egypt



Making a Difference in the Lives of People

Though AOYE and RAED that I am working for, were partners with CUTS long time ago but my first interaction with CUTS was when I attended CUTS celebration for 20th Anniversary 2003. I was quite amazed to see CUTS' progress in India and the way it succeeded in reaching millions of people and making a difference in their lives.

CUTS is progressing widely and I have witnessed its important achievements in many regions in the last five years. It was crystal clear when I attended the 25th Anniversary – it means after only five years of the first interaction – I found that CUTS was involved in changing policies drastically and decisions effectively within and across borders. In few years, CUTS was capable to spread its messages to wider audience and gained a lot of trust of countries' governments and CSOs.

CUTS is doing a tremendous job on research level and it could garner enormous information for many regions but this should be accompanied with some actions on the ground to give alternatives for stakeholders – the real beneficiaries and affected communities. Further, dealing with heads of countries and executives might lead to change decisions but never let things better for end users.

CUTS is doing a very good job on research level and it could garner enormous information for many regions but this should be accompanied with some actions on the ground to give alternatives for stakeholders

As far as the challenges are concerned I think they might be as given below:

- Political and economic re-mapping in many countries that might put some obstacles for consumers' rights;
- Lack of finance of community-based projects;
- International conventions and conflict of interests; and
- Lack of political will to consider consumer's rights.

Geeta Gouri

Member-Economics (2009-2014)
Competition Commission of India (CCI)
New Delhi, India



A Distinctive NGO with an Incredible Exuberance

I first came to know about CUTS when I met Pradeep about five years ago and was surprised to learn of an NGO propagating the market for a larger cause and benefit of the masses. To me, it was definitely a revelation that here was one NGO so different from the usual NGOs. In fact, CUTS represents a paradigm shift in the arena of NGOs and in their attempts and efforts to dwell on market instruments of choice.

Over the past four years, I got to know the organisation better and appreciate their approach towards their constituency – the common man. In fact, while observing the work of CUTS I noted that the tool of intervention was the market and the analysis of CUTS did not fit into a logical rational construct of the market. There is a merit in this approach, especially given their constituency.

CUTS, under the leadership of Pradeep has shown remarkable dynamism in tackling issues promptly, spreading awareness and taking them up in a systematic manner. Their vast repertoire of work on regulation, competition and market functioning are extremely useful for making an entry into competition and markets. In fact, the new agenda for CUTS is to emphasise on the importance of well-functioning markets as deterrence to corruption.

CUTS represents a paradigm shift in the arena of NGOs and in their attempts and efforts to dwell on market instruments of choice

Hari Prasad Yogi

President

Consumer Legal Help Society

Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan, India



Gaining Recognition as a Resource Agency in Governance and Consumer Empowerment

In the year 1997 when I was taking training for ‘Consumers Friend’ by facilitating a training to youth to work in their respective areas for protection of the rights of the consumers and could provide their contribution in the consumer welfare activities. I was extremely inspired by the organisation and its activities and since then I have been involved with the CUTS’ activities and projects implemented in Sawai Madhopur. CUTS has also been instrumental in executing programmes on varied consumer-related issues both at the national and international level.

The activities and initiations of CUTS for the protection of consumer rights are commendable and it actually operates from the actual consumers to the high-level policy makers. Further, it should consolidate its presence to work in the area of agricultural issues, adulteration and consumer courts functioning. CUTS has also been acquiring recognition as a resource agency for the work in governance and consumer empowerment.

As far as research and advocacy is concerned CUTS should work on consumer forums, power sector, adulteration and agriculture. The organisation should strengthen and consolidate its work in these areas.

CUTS has also been instrumental in executing programmes on varied consumer-related issues both at the national and international-level

I feel that CUTS should continue to empower the consumer movement for rural consumers from various districts of India and continue with its channel of communication with the grassroot consumers. This probably might be one of the emerging challenges for CUTS in future.

Helen McCallum

Director General (April 2011-December 2013)
Consumers International (CI)
London, UK



Addressing Trade and Economic Issues Globally

CUTS became a member of Consumers International (CI) in 1990 and has been an active and valued member, ever since. It has provided great support on the issues that unite us and has been at the forefront of some of the most important consumer rights campaigns since past 30 years.

CUTS began as a small community-based organisation and it has at present grown into an organisation with many chapter offices all around the globe addressing and dealing with issues in relation to trade and economics as growing concern. Its forte has been competition issues where CUTS contribution has been recognised throughout these years.

The advocacy efforts made by CUTS are timely and effective and always supported by evidences from the grassroots

The strength of CUTS lies in its ability to conduct sound research on trade and economics with reference to consumer welfare. The advocacy efforts made by CUTS are timely and effective and always supported by evidences from the grassroots. The entire global consumer movement can acquire benefit from CUTS' efforts, and through CI, CUTS can both share its expertise and learn from other with similar goals.

Like all consumer rights' groups and most other CSO, CUTS will face challenges and opportunities in the new digital age. How can CUTS remain relevant to the networked consumer? What can Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) offer rural, vulnerable and impoverished consumers? How can these new mediums be used to campaign? There is a need for a stronger, more relevant set of global guidelines for consumer protection. Moreover, CUTS and CI are already working together closely to ensure this.

Indah Suksmaningsih
 Executive Director
 Institute for Global Justice
 Jakarta, Indonesia



Effectively Dealing with Issues on Poverty, MDGs and Competition Policy

I first met Pradeep S Mehta at an international conference organised by CI somewhere in 1990s. Following that, I was invited to a meeting on Environment-friendly Refrigerators in Zurich by CUTS in 1998, in Switzerland. I was also invited to several other meetings of CUTS in India. It was due to the work that CUTS has been doing that waked me up about the global trade regime like WTO that had an impact on consumers, especially on the developing countries.

CUTS gave me the wisdom to understand about something of high-level and as a result, my government accepts and respects my NGO in Indonesia because I was able to give inputs into the policy making circles.

I learned from publications that CUTS sent to me were incredible in their range and depth: from how to train the young consumer leaders about the things that we really need until the very sophisticated ones on trade issues from poverty, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), WTO, climate change, competition policy etc. This was really useful to discuss with very high government officials and also Parliamentarians.

CUTS has the capacity to increase knowledge of consumers on various issues in other countries

CUTS equipped us with a good weapon to talk with my government officials who usually think that only they know everything about the WTO and also making people in Indonesia understand that trade and development does matter. CUTS also has the capacity to increase knowledge of consumers on various issues in other countries, such as ASEAN, and that is what we would like CUTS to do that more systematically.

Indrani Thuraisingham

Head of Office for Asia Pacific (December 2007-Present)
Consumers International, Kuala Lumpur Office (CIKL)
Malaysia



Reaching Greater Heights with Greater Momentum

My initial interaction with CUTS was at the 1997 CI Congress in Santiago, Chile, in which I participated as a delegate from the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA), Malaysia. Subsequently, I met Pradeep Mehta in Kuala Lumpur and interacting with him and his colleagues in subsequent meetings on consumer issues had a great impact on me as a novice in the movement. I was motivated to work on the issues that CUTS was actively working on, i.e. economic and trade issues, which at that time were at its pinnacle with the WTO issues coming into the foray.

CUTS, in my opinion has grown from a state-based organisation and evolved presently even further from working on national issues to regional and global-level. It has emerged as a front runner amongst the consumer groups world-wide in bringing current and emerging concerns to governments, the private sector and to the international bodies.

CUTS ultimate strength is its capacity to conduct credible and sound research supported by a team of excellent work force in CUTS. The evidence-based research outputs are impeccable but CUTS can further create a greater impact if it were to focus its efforts on linking both the research outputs to advocacy. I am certain that CUTS will be able to reach greater heights in the coming years and that too with a greater force.

CUTS has emerged as a front runner amongst consumer groups world-wide in bringing current and emerging concerns to governments, the private sector and to international bodies

The challenge for CUTS I believe will be to maintain gains made in consumer research and advocacy and to surge ahead and further extend its work without compromising on principles that it stands for in this current global era, i.e. consumer sovereignty in light of social justice and economic equality.

Jean-Pierre Lehmann
 Emeritus Professor
 IMD Business School
 Lausanne, Switzerland



A Catalyst for Confidence Building and Knowledge Creation

I have been involved with CUTS, since the turn of the century, hence, about 15 years. I first came across CUTS in reading an article of Pradeep S Mehta published in the *Financial Times*. I wrote to him and invited him to participate in a Roundtable by the Evian Group organised on the trade agenda. Since then, relations between CUTS and Evian Group and between Pradeep and me have been strong, close and productive.

I have been highly impressed by CUTS' activities and growth. It is a truly global organisation with global power and a very compelling message of inclusive globalisation that combines idealism and pragmatism. I think a great strength of CUTS has been its vision and the people who work with CUTS.

CUTS has a physical presence in Accra, Geneva, Hanoi, Lusaka and Nairobi. It should establish a presence and develop networks in Latin America, especially Brazil and perhaps should consider being in Washington DC.

Clearly the global axis of economic dynamism in the years ahead will be South-South. Yet this process, while clear, will not be plain-sailing. It will be difficult, chaotic and occasionally probably involving acute inter-state tensions. Most countries of the South in one region of the world (like Latin America) do not know the South in another region (like South Asia) and vice-versa. CUTS could have a critical role in acting as a catalyst for confidence building and knowledge creation.

CUTS is a truly global organisation with global clout and a very compelling message of inclusive globalisation that combines idealism and pragmatism

Joerg Weber

Head (1998-Present)

Investment Policies Branch

Division on Investment and Enterprise, UNCTAD

Geneva, Switzerland



One of the Genuine Developing Countries' NGOs

It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to congratulate CUTS on its 30th Anniversary!

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 1997 when I met Pradeep S Mehta from CUTS whom we had invited to join a regional seminar for African countries in Fez, Morocco. When Pradeep took the floor, he went on to give a *tour de table* concerning the state of affairs in investment, trade and development. I was heavily impressed, not only because of his guts to ignore the rules of the proceedings, but also because of his genuine development views.

Since this first encounter, my association with Pradeep and CUTS grew into a quite fruitful working relationship covering the foreign investment issue, at times more intense (including joint projects) than at others, but always relying on CUTS' honest engagement and intellectual input. CUTS is one of the very few 'genuine' developing countries NGOs present in the international debate on issues that tend to be dominated by 'Northern' NGOs that do not necessarily represent the views of the South. Next to Pradeep's immense energy and vision, this has been one of the key ingredients in CUTS' growth and success.

CUTS research and policy advocacy has gained considerable clout due to the its ability to connect with the world, as a whole in an interactive manner through its various online discussion forums

One of the challenges the organisation can face is that the CSO arena is getting more packed out and other developing country-based NGOs are entering the stage, competing for attention and the funds that come with it. Pradeep has shown the way, and many of us would be happy to have had such a shining light to follow and show the path.

Congratulations Pradeep, Congratulations CUTS!

John Preston

Consultant on Competition Law and Policy (October 2010-Present)

Wellington, New Zealand



Internationally Recognised and Much Admired Organisation

I had not heard of CUTS before I met Pradeep S Mehta in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2000, when he was visiting the Director of the Zimbabwe Competition Authority. At that time, I was a consultant to the Authority. Later, as a Competition Consultant to DFID in London, I became much familiar with Pradeep and people associated with CUTS for several years.

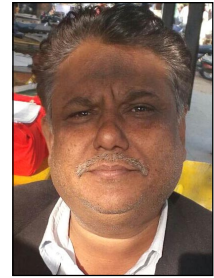
The expansion in the range of CUTS' activities has been impressive as there has been an increase in the number of its advocacy and research centres. CUTS has been recognised and valued internationally and it is able to interact effectively with key institutions at higher-level.

Continuing sound research is critical to underpinning CUTS' advocacy programmes, as policy makers seek evidence-based guidance. CUTS has good links with many academic institutions, and the research undertaken as part of many CUTS' projects is of great significance. The contribution made by research could be strengthened even further if more academic institutions are encouraged to work on issues identified by CUTS.

The expansion in the range of CUTS' activities has been impressive, as has the increase in the number of its advocacy and research centres

CUTS has a demanding portfolio of activities, and the range of its activities seems likely to increase further. The challenge will be to be able to channel sufficient resources to all of these activities. This might require some prioritisation as new activities are emerging.

Kamlesh Kumar Bohra
Secretary
K B Memorial Welfare Society
Dausa, Rajasthan, India



CUTS – A Rare CSO in the World

I came to know about CUTS through a training advertisement in a newspaper and underwent that training on consumer protection and thus became familiar with CUTS' activities. CUTS conducts its activities in a very scientific way. CSOs/NGOs working in a network with CUTS should be made more capable, so that the consumer movement should become stronger.

CUTS' activities and interventions extend to all groups of consumers, with an emphasis on supporting marginalised groups through their empowerment and facilitation of participation in the process of economic governance. The organisation has been contributing to enhance the sovereignty of all groups of consumers and the pursuit for social justice and economic equality is embedded in CUTS' activities agenda. CUTS has distinguished itself as one rare CSO in the world and has been adopting a rights-based approach to development through 'Consumer Empowerment'.

The organisation has been recognised in India and internationally for its research and advocacy in their domain of consumers. There has been a considerable increase in numerous inter-related areas of research and advocacy like corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, global value chain, fair trade etc. Further, the organisation should focus on advocacy that requires projection of views that have been verified through research.

CUTS has been contributing to enhance the sovereignty of all groups of consumers and the pursuit for social justice and economic equality is embedded in its work agenda

In the coming years, CUTS need to reach out to a large community of practitioners, policy makers to diversify its *Circumference of Influence*. These alliances should be strengthened and enhance its effectiveness as an agent of change and should further expand its outreach for reaching the unreached. Organisations having similar interests and nature of work might pose threats to the organisation.

L Alan Winters CB
 Professor of Economics
 University of Sussex
 Brighton, UK



Firm Advocate for the World Trading System

My first interaction with CUTS was in 1999. The Department for International Development (DFID) was looking for partners to help in a large project on international trade and poverty, which I was overseeing, and I had to choose one group from the developing world. I do not remember who the other two contenders were, but I do remember being impressed by CUTS' focus and their concern about the issue of poverty in India. I was also impressed by their determination to address the issues on competition and trade.

Since then, I have interacted with CUTS a good deal on international trade matters. CUTS has become a firm and clear advocate for the world trading system and has provided some of the very useful knowledge products as well. It has maintained its position in India, despite its periodic unpopularity, and expansion across borders. In terms of breadth and consistency of message in international trade, I think CUTS is probably unrivalled.

CUTS has provided research and advocacy of great effectiveness and value on competition issues and reigns supreme at home and abroad

I have also seen CUTS operating in the area of Competition Policy and here I think it reigns supreme at home and abroad. CUTS has provided research and advocacy of great effectiveness and valuable contribution on competition issues.

Funds from the North to support NGOs like CUTS are dwindling. Finding a new reliable base for funding is a challenge for all NGOs. Combining their work with training and education could be a way out. South-South trade and investment are on the rise and also warrants some critical questions. Can CUTS deal with that? Finally, the financial system is fundamentally not sustainable. Every NGO dealing with globalisation should reformulate their position on the financial system, even if this hurts consumers, in the short run.

M Ann Tutwiler

Director General (August 2013-Present)
Biodiversity International
Rome, Italy



CUTS – A Developing Country Organisation Seeking Open Trade

I came to know about CUTS at a conference in New Delhi, organised by the Carnegie Foundation to discuss the position of developing countries in the Doha Round of Trade negotiations.

CUTS is one of the few institutions from a developing/emerging country that is broadly supportive of more open trade. In addition, CUTS' approach of working alongside countries, educating policy makers and policy influencers through mutual learning and research is innovative in this field. I was pleased in my role as Programme Manager at the Hewlett Foundation to provide a grant to CUTS for opening a Geneva office, which has grown in importance and influence, over the past five years.

My impression is that CUTS has a big presence and great influence presently in Geneva. I think it could be more engaged with the other Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) countries as well as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in offering its point of view and promoting its work in those venues.

The work that CUTS has been doing could bring a very rational voice to trade negotiations and there is an opportunity with the new Director General to reinject energy into the talks. I think CUTS could add a voice of pragmatism at a critical time.

Funding, funding and funding is the real challenge for all NGOs. Many donors have turned away from trade issues as the round has languished. Moreover, convincing donors that solid trade policies are important not only in the context of the WTO negotiations, but for the long-term health of developing country economies.

CUTS' approach of working alongside countries, educating policy makers and policy influencers through mutual learning and research is innovative in trade

Mark Halle

Executive Director (2008-Present)
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
Geneva, Switzerland



A Force in the World of Trade and Development

My first interaction was with Pradeep S Mehta when he was invited to serve on the founding Board of International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in 1996. He was in the process of taking CUTS from being a developing country member of CI to become the force it is today. His participation in ICTSD Board served to correct the environmental bias that I and other Board members had and to bring in a strong voice from Asia.

CUTS has not only grown but also become a multinational! And it has moved into the networking and dialogue space with impressive deftness. It has truly become a force in the world of trade and development, influential in both WTO and UNCTAD and serving as a platform for high-level debate on trade matters.

I think CUTS should embrace its international *karma* and take a distance from India's sometimes obtuse positions on trade policy. I also think that CUTS should be more critical of UNCTAD; even if UNCTAD exists to defend the South, which should not make it exempt from criticism on grounds of political capture or ineffectiveness.

CUTS has not only grown but also become a multinational and has moved into the networking and dialogue space with impressive deftness

The challenges relate to the fact that we are moving from a system based on hard rules to one based on softer power and softer law. While this is easy to accept intellectually, it is hard to move beyond the habit of focussing still mainly on inter-governmental process. Those who do will become increasingly irrelevant.

Mohammad A Razzaque

Adviser and Head (March 2013-June 2014)
International Trade and Regulation Cooperation
Commonwealth Secretariat
London, UK



An Organisation Dealing with Wide Range of Issues

If I recollect correctly, my first interaction with CUTS dates back to 2004 when I was invited to attend a workshop in Colombo on South Asian Economic Cooperation. It was an exciting event, where I found various stakeholders sharing, debating and exchanging their views. Since then, I had some opportunities of providing my technical and professional contributions to CUTS' various activities.

I have been greatly fascinated by CUTS' activities on a wide range of issues. In my view, its biggest strength is to provide response to issues of interest while generating participation of all relevant stakeholders.

An important feature of CUTS' work has been to base its advocacy work on practical and applied research. For strengthening this role further, CUTS should consider bridging the gap between cutting edge academic research and its implications for policy developments.

One important challenge is due to CUTS' own past record – the good work undertaken so far has raised the expectation level, implying that future contributions will be assessed against CUTS' current performance.

But on a more substantive term, most developing countries have shown quite significant growth performance over the past decade or so. This would perhaps, in my view, also imply technical capacity development within the countries. With the expanded capacity, there will be a need for dealing with non-traditional issues and bringing in new issues in trade negotiations rather than understanding how trade talks progress etc.

I wish CUTS all the best and look forward to see its continued success.

The biggest strength of CUTS is to provide responses to issues of interest while generating participation of all relevant stakeholders

Mona Yassine

Chairperson (2005-2011)
 Egyptian Competition Authority
 Cairo, Egypt



Outstanding Work and Contribution on Competition Law

Going back when I was the first Chairperson for the Egyptian Competition Authority at its establishment in September 2005 and we had no experience of the field and had to hire and train people and were under pressure to perform and deliver and CUTS was among the institutions that helped in that area.

I met Pradeep S Mehta at many OECD Forums, International Competition Network (ICN) Conventions and UNCTAD meetings. His discussions and interventions were interesting and centered around the needs and applications on developing economies. In March 2007, I attended the Competition, Regulation and Development Research Forum (CDRF) International Research Symposium organised by CUTS in Delhi. After that, CUTS caught my attention with updates in the world of competition through their mails and website (a learning tool).

The strength of CUTS has been their exposure to different economies and researching through comparative analyses of the successes and failures of the application of the Competition Law

CUTS works seriously and with great determination. I was inspired by their work and contributions in starting the first NGO in the field on Competition Law, The Association for the Protection of Competition – Egypt.

The strength of CUTS has been its exposure to different economies and researching through comparative analyses of the successes and failures of the application of the Competition Law. I encourage the idea that ‘corruption’ prevents competition and is a hindrance in achieving consumer welfare and dealing with corruption helps in the development of the economies.

My interest in particular is for CUTS to lead and support the creation and the development of civil society activities in different countries for an effective Competition Law and Policy implementation, maximising sector regulation positive impact and enabling an investment climate, which is necessary for the optimisation of consumer welfare.

Wishing good luck to CUTS!

Mustafizur Rahman

Executive Director (2007-Present)
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
Dhaka, Bangladesh



Powerful Voice of Influence in Global Discourse and Policy Making

My association with CUTS dates back to the mid-1990s when I first met Pradeep S Mehta, the founding Secretary General of CUTS, at a regional seminar. There was an overlap of interests between CUTS and the Centre for Policy Dialogue, particularly in areas relating to the multilateral trading system and the negotiations in the WTO, developmental challenges facing developing countries, income inequality and poverty alleviation.

As a friend and admirer of CUTS, we are happy to note that over the past 30 years CUTS has been developing its research, outreach and civic activism portfolios in a strategic manner. CUTS has made important contributions to policy making in consumer rights, competition policies and developing country-friendly trade policies. CUTS was able to strike a good balance between grassroots activism and being a thought leader advocating developing country interests.

CUTS has been able to build a credible track record in research, outreach and advocacy by developing in-house dedicated capacities and by drawing on its strong network – championing particular policies.

Keeping its vision and mission as guiding principles, the challenge for CUTS in the coming days will be to position itself in a manner that can balance the medium to long-term focus of its activities and the immediate-term actions and advocacy initiatives that it needs to undertake.

I hope that by continuously striving to raise the quality of its research and the efficacy of its outreach and advocacy works, CUTS will be able to reach newer heights of excellence and importance in the coming days.

*CUTS' work on
competition policy is
recognised globally at
present and I feel proud
that I had my share of
contribution into it*

Nitya Nanda

Fellow (January 2007-Present)

Centre for Global Agreements

Legislations and Trade Resources and Global Security Division

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

New Delhi, India



Acquiring Prominence and Recognition in Trade Policy

My first interaction with CUTS was quite unique. It was in 1997 when CUTS was functioning from Calcutta. I was based in Delhi, but for some reasons, wanted to be in Calcutta, at least for some time. So I showed interest in CUTS, as it was working on issues of my interest. So, in one of his visits to Delhi I met Pradeep and we had a long chat ranging from issues in trade, (IPR) etc. to life in Calcutta and how it was different from Delhi or other places.

I kept watching CUTS activities, often attending the events that were organised in Delhi. It got prominence and recognition particularly in the area of trade policy. It did an extraordinary job in explaining complex trade policy issues in simpler terms. Finally, I ended up joining CUTS in 2000, primarily to work on trade issues. At that time, CUTS was developing its competition policy work, which I found interesting and somehow got involved. Today, its work on Competition Policy is recognised globally and I feel proud that I had my share of contribution into it.

CUTS has its unique model in doing research and advocacy, which like any model, has its advantages and disadvantages, but overall it worked well for CUTS. Since CUTS started as a consumer organisation, this orientation has influenced its position on several issues that it works in, even though it tried to bring in other perspectives. There is a need to have a dedicated centre on sustainable production and consumption and CUTS can experiment on how it can introduce the principles of sustainable production and consumption into subjects like trade and competition that it deals with.

CUTS has been very successful in expanding its global footprints – it has made very effective use of the Internet in particular through the email debates and discussion fora that it hosts

Pierre Jacquet

President (July 2012-Present)
Global Development Network
(New Delhi | Cairo | Washington)



*Impressive Expansion, Persuasive
Advocacy and Consistent Focus*

My first exposure to CUTS was sometimes in the early 1990s during a meeting of the ‘Evian Club’, a group of like-minded individuals interested in promoting freer trade for improving livelihoods. I was impressed by the extraordinary vision behind CUTS that I could not find in any other NGO. Another remarkable thing was the already substantial international presence of CUTS, through Pradeep S Mehta who clearly understood that this international dimension would help the cause he was defending in India and this experience would also help deliver a message of great interest for other countries, notably in the developing world.

Since that first encounter, I have stayed in touch with CUTS regularly, and been involved in some of their activities. Their expansion has been impressive, their advocacy very persuasive, and the focus consistent. CUTS has been able to bring to the often theoretical and technical debates on trade and competition policy with the perspective of the consumer.

CUTS has come out as a respected knowledge mediator, thus playing a useful social role in connecting research with policy making and other stakeholders’ interests

I appreciate the effort undertaken by CUTS to build its research capacity. This has been a very useful development, and has allowed CUTS to make substantial contributions to the public debate, through conferences as well as books or, more recently, through a very dynamic and lively email debate on various topical issues.

Advocacy in today’s world is no longer needed to promote market economics *per se*, as an ideology, but it is dearly needed to document how markets can work better and for individuals, how costly some barriers to competition might be. I have been very impressed by CUTS’ recent move exactly in that direction, because I think this is the right way to go and will bring huge benefits.

Philippe Brusick
 Chairman
 PRB International
 Geneva, Switzerland



Competence on Competition and Regulatory Reforms

As Head of UNCTAD's Competition and Consumer Policies branch, I have been associated with CUTS, since the early days of the NGO, when Pradeep operated CUTS from a garage in Jaipur. From the outset, Pradeep, as a developing country consumer activist, realised the importance of Competition Policy and the struggle against cartels and monopolies, as a means of defending consumer interests and enhancing sustainable growth and development in the developing countries. CUTS offered an invaluable bottom-up approach to the efforts of UNCTAD and the other international organisations active in this very sensitive field.

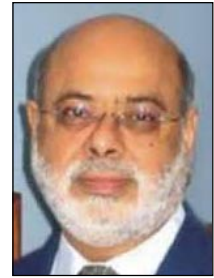
CUTS should capitalise on this competitive advantage by deepening further its research and advocacy programmes on competition and regulatory reforms and its interaction with sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Research and advocacy efforts could be strengthened in creating a grassroots conscience about the need to persevere in the struggle against monopolies and protectionism in favour of consumers.

Among the challenges faced by CUTS today, is the need to adapt to rapidly changing economic pattern; in particular with the intrusion of new issues into the realm of trade and competition, as well as renewed questioning of the benefits of open and competitive markets resulting from the economic crisis. CUTS is rightly one step ahead in the effects of climate change on trade, it should also place itself in line to respond effectively to other challenges of the future. Under Pradeep's effective guidance, I am confident that CUTS will take up the future challenges with its usual enthusiasm and achieve further successes.

CUTS should capitalise on the competitive advantage by deepening further its research and advocacy programmes on competition and regulatory reforms and its interaction with sustainable development and poverty alleviation

Happy 30th Anniversary CUTS!

R Shyam Khemani
Principal
MiCRA
Washington DC



Only International NGO Emanating from the South

My first interaction with CUTS and especially Pradeep S Mehta was when CUTS organised a seminar on Competition Policy held at the India International Centre, New Delhi in 1995. The speakers/participants ranged from avid closed economy advocates, distrustful of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), MNC etc. without any research backing their position to those embracing globalisation, and wanted to accelerate India's integration into the international economy.

The range of activities and rapid growth of CUTS has been remarkable and impressive as it has evolved into the only international NGO emanating from the South that I know of.

By continuing to engage internationally recognised experts and deepening its in-house capacity. In my view due to rapid growth of CUTS, and its willingness to expand into wide range of subject areas has increased the risk of diluting the quality, content and impact of its otherwise very valuable and topical work. CUTS has some excellent bright young staff and one approach is to designate these individuals to acquire, build on special areas of expertise and try to create within CUTS' different centres of knowledge and excellence. It has accomplished this in the area of Competition Law and Policy.

The breadth of activities and rapid growth of CUTS has been remarkable and impressive as it has evolved into the only known international NGO emanating from the South

Sustainable funding for its work is/would be a major challenge and likely to become even more so, since most of CUTS funding source are donor agencies with government funds. I think another area would be attracting and retaining staff with requisite skills, knowledge etc. Some turnover is good and as staff leave they become emissaries of CUTS.

Radheyshyam Parashar

President

Upbhokta Soochna Evam Paramarsh Samiti

Bhupal Sagar (Chittorgarh)

Rajasthan, India



Progressing through Research, Capacity Building and Networking

It was indeed a great moment in my life, when I saw and read CUTS' wall newspaper *Gram Gadar* in 1984-85 at my village in Chittorgarh. I found this publication immensely beneficial, especially for the rural people. Moreover, it covered valuable information about consumer advocacy, which was simply commendable. Since then, I became a part of CUTS. Furthermore, I was greatly interested in social work right from its initiation. I am extremely impressed with the work CUTS has been doing for the consumers and will continue to be.

CUTS has established itself as the only 'Consumer Welfare' organisation and has endeavoured to garner stakeholder support for competition reforms and better attention from policy makers towards public policy. As consumer movements in the developing countries have not grown over time so consumers are the pivot of all economic activities. Therefore, consumer interest should be synonymous with national interest and CUTS' interventions are based on this perspective.

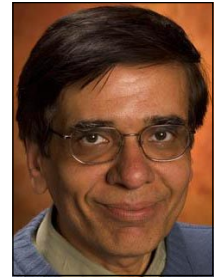
I was very delighted to know that CUTS is also engaged in advocacy work and has been using its universal feature of research, capacity building and networking and acquiring inputs from these tools the organisation could further progress towards consumer protection and generating awareness towards consumer rights through consumer empowerment.

CUTS has been using its universal feature of research, capacity building and networking and acquiring inputs from these tools the organisation could further progress towards consumer protection

In order to achieve its vision of *Consumer Sovereignty* CUTS needs to keep right balance among human, physical and financial resources. Project funding and project-based activities of the organisation would be a challenge for the organisation in the coming years. In order to expand and consolidate its activities and interventions on issues of consumer empowerment there is a need of core/long-term support.

Ragbendra Jha

Professor of Economics and Executive Director
Australia South Asia Research Centre (ASARC)
The Australian National University (ANU)
Canberra, Australia



A Prominent Research and Advocacy Centre

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 2001-02 when I met Pradeep S Mehta, from CUTS while he was visiting Canberra and I organised a seminar for him at the Australian National University.

I have been on the CUTS mailing list for receiving their publications and participating in their conversations on many critical areas of policy. CUTS has now grown into a major centre for research and advocacy on issues relating to trade, investment and competition policy. Some of the best minds working in these areas participate actively in CUTS-sponsored debates and forums.

The strength of CUTS lies in anticipating key issues in the trade, development, investment and competition policy areas for developing countries in general and India in particular. It then proceeds to provide sharp and meaningful research on the key issues being addressed and organises a well-coordinated and insightful debate among the key persons working on these areas. As such, its strength lies in initiating policy-relevant research and deepening its analysis with contributions for leading experts.

Even as CUTS extends its boundaries into new areas and grows into an internationally respected policy institute I would like to see it develop further to complement this breadth

Even as CUTS extends its boundaries into new areas and grows into an internationally respected policy institute, I would like to see it develop further to complement this breadth. It could follow the model of some successful organisations in the US and let their staff work with key researchers in universities and other academic institutions to go deeper into issues of intellectual and policy concern. Such effort might be confined to a few topics in the beginning, so that its usefulness could be continuously appraised.

Rahul Bajaj
 Chairman and Managing Director
 Bajaj Auto Ltd.
 Pune, India



Pioneer in Being Part of Policy Making Process

Great to know about an organisation like CUTS, which is distinct in not only its functional areas but also in its approach to address consumer issues along with other cross-cutting issues like international trade, economic regulation, competition, investment, etc.

In arriving at public policy there is a need for an informed discussion of issues. For historical reasons this has been a government or quasi-government domain in our country. It is not so as edifying results are there to see. CUTS has been a distinct NGO working on consumer issues and its research on competition and international trade has been simply outstanding.

Ultimately, the views of a broader, well informed spectrum have to be a part of the policy making process. CUTS has been a pioneer in this respect and has continued to evolve.

Foreign aid or getting funds and sustaining in the presence of organisations working on similar issues might be one of the greatest challenges for CUTS in the coming future.

CUTS has been a distinct NGO working on consumer issues and its research on competition and international trade has been simply outstanding

CUTS journey and the process of its expansion has been tremendous in all these years. On completion of its 30 years, my best wishes for its continued evolution and contribution to the national interest.

Ranbir Singh

Vice-Chancellor (2008-Present)
National Law University
Delhi, India



Incredible Contribution of Quality Work

National Law University Delhi (NLUD) came in association with CUTS after the establishment of CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition (CIRC) in 2009. NLUD and CUTS CIRC partnered to offer certificate and diploma courses in Competition Law and Policy in view of the growing importance of interface between Competition Policy and Law and businesses in the year 2012. The courses offered have received overwhelming response not only from the students, academicians and lawyers but also from the business houses.

CUTS started its journey in 1983, as a rural development communication, and in the past 25 years it has proved its worth through the initiatives taken and the quality of the work accomplished by it. It began as a rural wall newspaper *Gram Gadar*, which critically analysed developmental activities of the government and has presently grown into nine functional units in specialised areas.

Its functional areas include international trade and development, competition, investment and economic regulation, consumer safety, consumer protection and good governance and human development. It has about 16 national and international affiliations. It has worked extensively in the area of consumer protection not only with the NGOs in India but also on international platforms.

CUTS has worked extensively in the area of consumer protection not only with the NGOs in India but also on international platforms

CUTS journey will not be without challenges. First challenge for CUTS lies in identifying researchers for producing quality and relevant research in the core areas. Second challenge lies in its vision of horizontal expansion and vertical consolidation in identifying institutions with similar interests and leadership in order to meet its mission and vision.

Robert R Kerton

Emeritus Professor of Economics
University of Waterloo
Canada, USA



Active Participation in Important Policy Organisations

CUTS came to my attention in the 1980s for its fearless defence of consumers. I met its leaders in 1990 at the Hong Kong Congress of Consumers International. CUTS and its collaborators worked tirelessly on trade trying to acquire international policy to include the interests of world-wide consumers, not merely the interests of insiders at GATT/WTO.

In 2005, I was delighted to become a CUTS Centre for International Trade and Economics (CITEE) Fellow. With other organisations, CUTS laboured – with eventual success – to get the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to change its long-standing policy of punishing consumers in developing countries for problems created by the bankers.

The impact of CUTS is evident from its official status with UNCTAD, its participation in so many important policy organisations and the 2013 invitation to Pradeep S Mehta to the WTO Advisory Panel on the ‘Future of Trade’.

CUTS has been a key player in competition policy, which deserves even more attention

CUTS has been a key player in competition policy, which deserves even more attention. Also, early success improved lives of millions of consumers through stunning progress in scores of countries where monopolies are endemic and where there is an urgent need for fair practices in the market. For worldwide contributions to consumer well-being, CUTS earned the 2013 Rhoda Karpatkin Award of the American Council on Consumer Interests.

Communication has been a vital part of every programme, but there is no doubt that the second key reason for CUTS’ success is its use of research in advocating – with relentless persistence – evidence-based policies.

Best wishes on the 30th Anniversary!

Rohinton P Medhora

President (2012-Present)

Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI)

Waterloo, Canada, USA



Inhabiting a Niche Occupied by Very Few

My first interaction with CUTS was around in 1998, when I was head of the International Economics Programme at Canada's International Development Research Centre. Focussed as we were on governance issues and 'rules of the game', and non-traditional 'behind the border' areas, we were impressed by the breadth and depth of CUTS' work. Though several groups working on these matters, but at a time, CUTS inhabited a niche occupied by very few others and managed to stay ahead of the pack – a developing country organisation that straddled the research and practice divides.

CUTS has moved beyond the national arena in India to establish a presence elsewhere and work across countries; and it has done so thematically, by selecting topics (competition policy, government procurement, energy policy) that other research and activist institutions have not arrived at in the same manner of effectiveness as yet.

It would be very easy – and gratuitous – for outsiders to give advice to CUTS on how to be even more effective. I would suggest that the model that has kept CUTS going to date continues to be followed. It is to be grounded in one country but present in several; to have a strong management and staff team that is encouraged to take risks; to do rigorous research but not neglect advocacy; and (thus) to be creative in the manner in which work themes are executed.

CUTS has thematically selected topics like competition policy, government procurement, energy policy etc. that other research institutions have not arrived at

The risk going forward would be if the fine balance within and between these several elements of success is lost. If CUTS remembers where it started and how it got to where it is today, then the future will be the continuation of a journey, and not a disjuncture.

Roger Nellist

Deputy Head of Growth and Resilience &
Investment Climate Team Leader (2010-Present)
Department For International Development (DFID)
London, UK



Promoting Fairer Market Competition

I first met CUTS early in 2001, after I joined the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in London; indeed, Pradeep S Mehta was my first overseas visitor there. He made a favourable impression on me and subsequently as I came to learn more about CUTS, I was convinced that this Southern NGO could become an influential and important partner for DFID – in helping us support Asian and African governments in their ambition to promote fairer market competition as a means to boost economic growth, reduce poverty and enhance consumer welfare.

CUTS' close working relationship with my team in DFID was open and productive. I was personally impressed by the way that Pradeep and his talented team in CUTS pushed the boundaries on the challenging competition policy agenda, came up with a stream of new ideas and established many useful international linkages.

CUTS has grown enormously over the last 12 years and I have had the privilege to interact with them. The progress that has been made internationally, over this period on the adoption of appropriate competition policy regimes in so many developing countries is due in no small measure to Pradeep and CUTS.

CUTS' close working relationship with my team in DFID was open and productive and we exchanged ideas freely

As to the future, CUTS should continue to carve out for itself a niche role on competition policy. Competition policy also needs to become better integrated in the business regulatory, private sector development and economic growth programmes of governments and donors: it seems there will always be a need to sensitise citizens and decision-makers on the benefits of fair market competition. CUTS can help deliver all of this. I wish them every success during the following 30 years.

Roshan Mewari
Block Incharge
Consumer Services Samiti
Kapasan, Chittorgarh
Rajasthan, India



Exclusive and Amazing Focus on Research

I was extremely inspired by CUTS when I started working as a volunteer I came to know that the organisation is working for the rights of the consumers. It is also engaged in human development issues through interventions focussing on social political and economic empowerment of people. Besides, the organisation has also been rendering its contribution to environmental education and protection and ensuring sound health for all.

I am very pleased with CUTS' innovative human development activities focussing mostly on the backward and poor sections of the society. CUTS' endeavours and activities for consumer movement have been generating awareness in the country. CUTS is turning out to be a leading consumer organisation and has also extended its activities in South Asian and African countries to get involved in consumer welfare programmes.

Exclusive and amazing focus on research is the key feature of CUTS, which has established a track record of acquiring competitive research grants from various international organisations. Using its exclusive research and advocacy tools CUTS has been contributing in the protection of consumer rights and welfare comprising awareness generation and creating network of people/organisations and building their capacity by conducting research-based advocacy, campaigns and handling complaints and providing advisory services to consumers.

I feel CUTS should work on governance issues, which is one of the programmatic areas of CUTS. It has been well known globally for its capacity of showing results to increase transparency and accountability. One of the greatest challenge that CUTS can face in the coming years will be the increasing competition among the fund seekers as new organisations are also emerging.

CUTS has been contributing in the protection of consumer rights comprising awareness generation and has created a wide network of people/organisations and has been involved in research-based advocacy, campaigns etc.

S L Rao

Emeritus Fellow
The Energy and Resources Institute
New Delhi, India



Effectively Dealing with International Trade and Competition

My interaction was with Pradeep S Mehta, I think was in 1984 or so. I had established the Consumer (now Citizens') Action Group in Madras with S Guhan and Sriram Panchu and I think Pradeep had just started CUTS, at that time. He came down from Jaipur for an event. I was impressed then by his energy, enthusiasm and networking skills apart from undoubted intelligence and articulation.

Then around 1992, I wrote an article in the Economic and Political Weekly on Competition (perhaps the first time in India). When CUTS started the CUTS Institute of Regulation and Competition and I joined the Board of Trustees.

CUTS has been a very active NGO in India and influential in writing laws and policy on competition. Soon CUTS became involved in issues of regulation and governance, which were closely related to issues of competition. Unlike many other NGO's, it was a powerful advocate and realised soon that these issues were common to many countries. It became the first Indian NGO with international reach, and offices with work in Africa, Asia and Europe.

CUTS has been active on issues of international trade, having another influence on competition. CUTS has been influential because of the range and scope of its work

Since long, CUTS has been active on issues of international trade, having another influence on competition. CUTS has been influential because of the range and scope of its work. Pradeep's vision and dynamism has made it what it is today.

CUTS has to prove its superiority amongst its competitors and similar organisations. I think this could be one of the challenges that CUTS might encounter in the coming years.

S V Divvaakar

Managing Partner (May 2010-Present)

Ace Global Consulting LLP

New Delhi, India



Possessing Credibility among Policy Makers and Multilateral Institutions

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 2003 when I met Bipul Chatterjee and Pradeep S Mehta from CUTS while I was designing the DFID/UNCTAD/Ministry of Commerce's 'Strategies for Globalisation'. Honestly, I had no idea that the organisation was in existence for over twenty years and learnt during the interactions of its presence in many countries, and its global programmes focussing on trade issues.

My interactions with CUTS transformed to a different level with our getting selected to do evaluations of CUTS' donor-funded programmes in various parts of Asia and Africa. I also noted that CUTS Secretary General had an acknowledged voice on global trade issues. CUTS enjoys credibility among policy makers (Indian as well as foreign) and the multilateral institutions.

Over the years, CUTS has strengthened its in-house research capabilities and has put in place a well-balanced team. However, the research capabilities of its associates and partners in other countries is somewhat varied, and this creates a mixed bag of outputs, under a common multi country programme. CUTS needs to look at more permanent partners in countries and intensively train a core set of people in all its points of presence with its regional centres becoming expert nodes for project implementation.

CUTS represented a third axis view of trade issues, the consumer, civil society and community views

The challenges are to sustain and grow its regional centres that it has started, staff them with appropriately qualified regional experts, and also manage attrition, which could be severe in some markets, given the paucity of quality human resources. CUTS will need to have an aggressive donor partnerships strategy and a dedicated resource mobilisation team to build a 'Trust Fund' to maintain its cutting edge and grow its international presence through its multiple regional centres.

Sacko Seydou

Programme Officer

Trade and Competition

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Secretariat

Abuja, Nigeria



An Emerging Strong Regional Partner

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 2006. At the UNCTAD. Inter-governmental Expert Group Meeting on Competition Policy in Geneva, when I met Pradeep S Mehta from CUTS. During this meeting, I had the privilege of knowing about CUTS and its activities. It was obvious that CUTS had laudable programmes to work with developing countries, especially in West Africa.

Since my association with CUTS has developed from 2006 to 2012 programmes and activities addressing and dealing with issues in relation to capacity building on Competition Policy within the ECOWAS Region. CUTS in all these years has emerged as a strong regional partner and has been effective in bringing to the forefront issues relating to competition policy to awareness of stakeholders in the region.

The strength of CUTS lies in research and advocacy during all these years and has strengthened its research capability with the support of a well-balanced research team. It has a strong research team to enhance its advocacy efforts.

The challenge before CUTS is to extend its boundaries and grow without shedding the basic purpose it was constituted for. The world is growing and progressing at a more rapid pace. This calls for a change in the attitude of CUTS in viewing things in order to follow the maxim 'Survival of the Fittest'.

Regulation and governance are major issues CUTS is already involved in. These will become more complex. CUTS will need strong managerial and organisational skills to advocate how the number of regulators could be minimised, made effective, honest and helpful to buyers as well as sellers.

CUTS has been effective in bringing to the forefront issues relating to competition policy to awareness of stakeholders in the region and its strength lies in research and advocacy

Saman Kelegama

Executive Director (1995-Present)
Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)
Sri Lanka



Most Visible Advocacy Institutions in South Asia

CUTS by far is one of the most visible advocacy institutions in South Asia. Its outreach is unparalleled in the South Asian region and is well known in the rest of the world. CUTS has been promoting e-dialogues on contemporary international economic issues and they have attracted the attention of key academics, policy makers, and civil society activists in the world. These dialogues are both informative and educative and play a significant role in exposing the regional players to the latest thinking in global economic issues.

CUTS' work on advocacy, sensitisation and networking has gone a long way in influencing other research institutions in the region to emulate and set higher standards. All this has been possible for CUTS essentially due to the 30 year exemplary leadership of Pradeep S Mehta, who is a champion of consumer rights and an iconic figure in the region.

Its research and advocacy contributions have been commendable and this is one of its strengths. CUTS should pursue its endeavours in this area and keep up the good work in order to further strengthen its base.

In the coming years, funding might pose one of the greatest challenges to the organisation. Therefore, sustaining in the coming years with the changing global scenario might be a cause of concern.

CUTS' work on advocacy, sensitisation and networking has gone a long way in influencing other research institutions in the region to emulate and set higher standards

Sander van Bennekom

Policy Adviser (2003-Present)

Oxfam Novib

The Hague, The Netherlands



Emerging Professional and Effective Network

My first interaction with CUTS dates back to 1994 when I met Pradeep S Mehta from CUTS who approached me during one of his first roundtrips through Europe to meet his fellow NGOs. Pradeep made a great effort in finding common understanding between different NGOs working on globalisation.

CUTS has developed from local consumer issues and global trade rules addressing and dealing issues related to economic (investment) and sustainability. CUTS in all these years has emerged as a professional and effective network. CUTS has been effective in bringing issues, such as competition rules, interests of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the forefront and less ideological items in the globalisation agenda.

I was, especially, impressed with the discussion on the Doha Round where opinions were very refreshing, criticising their own governments much more than others. The strength of CUTS lies in their continuity and quality of the staff. During all these years, it has strengthened its research capability and with the support of a well-balanced research team and has come up with a good research work.

CUTS has been effective in bringing issues, such as competition rules, interests of small and medium-sized enterprises to the forefront and less ideological items in the globalisation agenda

I firmly believe that CUTS will be able to overcome the coming challenges in future and remain as a strong voice in the developing world.

Santiago Roca

Professor of Economics and Finance
Graduate School of Business, ESAN University
Peru, South America



Role in Regulating Competition, Consumer Protection and Regulatory Authorities

The first time I interacted with CUTS was when it invited me in the year 2004 to participate writing an article about Competition Law and Policy in Peru for the book being edited on ‘Competition Regimes in the World I met Pradeep S Mehta at the Fifth United Nations Review Conference on Competition and Consumer Protection in Antalya, Turkey, in 2005. At that time, I was also invited by CUTS to participate along with other experts, in the panel commenting on the publication of its book on ‘Competition Regimes in the World’.

Deeply engaged on issues of regulation, competition, consumer protection and poverty, CUTS has expanded in activities not only in India but also in Africa, Europe and various other Asian and Latin American countries. As a mid-activist, mid research and mid public policy organisation, CUTS has promoted grassroots movements and connected policy makers with practitioners and academia’s for the benefit of defending competition, consumer protection and the poor.

CUTS has promoted grassroots movements and connected policy makers with academicians for the benefit of defending competition, consumer protection and the poor

CUTS has been able to get funds from particular agencies and organise high quality research and activists’ events in New Delhi and other parts of the world. They do a lot with small funding, few professionals and activists. Therefore, the organisation needs to think over how to better install or relate to national chapters and projects in other parts of the world and with international organisations.

CUTS should play a higher role acting as an observatory to discipline national competition, consumer protection and regulatory authorities in their respective roles. Issues, such as ranking national competition authorities and denouncing anti-competitive and anti-consumer practices could prove useful in many countries.

T K Arun

Editor - Opinion (2009-Present)
The Economic Times
New Delhi, India



Working Productively on Trade Liberalisation, Competition and Regulation

I have known CUTS, since the later 90s and watched its growth and diversification. By broadening the definition of consumers' interests, CUTS has involved itself in trade liberalisation, competition and regulation, productively enriching public discourse on these themes through seminars, publications and more recently, coherent engagement with Parliamentarians.

I have observed CUTS builds itself in multiple locations in India and is developing centres abroad. It develops expertise, spreads awareness and brings the pressure of advocacy to bear on public policy. I have seen people starting with small jobs at CUTS and growing in their professional capabilities and taking up prestigious assignments outside their parent organisation.

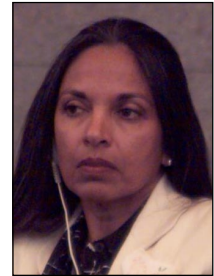
I have great respect for CUTS and its founding spirit and mentor, Pradeep S Mehta who has demonstrated that funds will not constrain genuine enterprise, when it comes to social entrepreneurship, a prime example of which CUTS represents.

I wish the CUTS' family all the best on its 30th Anniversary.

I have seen people who started with small jobs at CUTS and growing in their professional capabilities and take up prestigious assignments outside their parent organisation

Taimoon Stewart

Associate Senior Fellow (September 2006-Present)
Sir Arther Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)
University of West Indies
Jamaica



Impressive, Courageous and Audacious Work

It was back in March 1999 that I presented a Paper at the WTO High-level Symposium on Trade and the Environment, and was approached by Pradeep S Mehta immediately after my presentation, inviting me to present at an upcoming CUTS conference in India. I knew nothing about him or CUTS at the time, but this was a typical example of Pradeep on the move.

I came to know CUTS as the years passed, and was struck by its phenomenal rise in influence, becoming known internationally in all circles related to the fields of research it undertook. It was impressive to see the tenacity with which CUTS took on the Goliaths of the international economic order, unmasking their ingrained exploitative nature, and calling for equity for the people of the developing world. CUTS outreach activities in Africa and Asia have been not only impressive, but courageous and even audacious, persevering against all odds.

The world economy is constantly transforming itself, creating new economic processes in the international division of labour, sometimes so veiled that their exploitative nature are not easily discernable. A key to CUTS' ability to respond proactively through its research to the effects of the systemic process of exploitation is by exercising vigilance in observation of the subtle changes that are occurring, and seeking understandings of their meanings for us in the developing world.

A key to CUTS ability to respond proactively through its research to the effects of the systemic process of exploitation is by exercising vigilance in observation of the subtle changes that are occurring

Succession planning is, in my view, the greatest challenge that CUTS faces in the future. Pradeep has been the life and soul of CUTS. His dedication, tenacity, and ability to swim against the tide are largely responsible for CUTS meteorological rise and its influence globally.

Valentine Rugwabiza
Deputy Director General, WTO (2005-2013)
Geneva, Switzerland



Providing a Platform for Trade and Development Policy Discussion

My first encounter with CUTS dates back to July 16, 2008 when I delivered a statement on behalf of the WTO at the inauguration of the CUTS Geneva Centre. I indicated that being a pro-trade, pro-consumer and pro-development organisation, the establishment of the Geneva Centre was timely for the trade and development community in the period of a fragile multilateral trading system.

The growth of CUTS from an India-focussed NGO to one that supports the global South has been remarkably impressive. It is the most important platform for trade and development policy discussion for it maintains a substantial network of researchers and practitioners. Opening of Regional Resource Centres is commendable for it harnesses local knowledge pools enabling it to produce informed, topical and country-specific case stories.

CUTS can explore subjects where there is scarcity in research like access to trade finance for SMEs in agriculture and manufacturing in developing countries. Through the monitoring exercise for the 4th Global Aid for Trade Review, it was clear from the 700 private sector responses that ‘Access to Trade Finance’ was amongst the most binding constraints.

The growth of CUTS from an India-focussed NGO to one that supports the global South has been remarkably impressive

To strengthen advocacy, CUTS Geneva should be utilised to organise trade-related briefings to Mission delegates as well as capital-based officials in Geneva for long-term training. By leveraging its existing networks, CUTS can provide an alternative point of view to existing platforms through pertinent evidence-based insight.

Future challenges lies in providing value added contributions on trade and development. Through its knowledge network and expert dialogue, CUTS has already provided a unique platform. By working on the recommendations described above CUTS can further enhance its niche.

Vijay Mathur

Chairman (July 1993-Present)

Inapex Limited

New Delhi, India



Remarkable International Presence and Credibility for Indian Activism

My first exposure to CUTS was meeting Pradeep S Mehta many years ago – I think it was in the late 1990s. I found it very unusual for someone to be taking up public advocacy on the need for better competition in a country that had made an art form of suppressing it! In fact when I first moved to New Delhi in 1973 to the hallowed portals of *Udyog Bhavan* and the Ministry of Heavy Industry, I discovered what ‘pre-emptive licensing’ was.

Since my ancestral home is in Jaipur, on my next visit there I dropped in to see Pradeep at the CUTS office in Jaipur, and was struck by the enthusiasm and intelligence of the youngsters that he had inspired to join him. Since then, it has been a pleasure to get co-opted to several of CUTS activities and groups. Doing so has provided me with an excellent opportunity to contribute in a very small way to the larger long-term interests of our industry on a *pro bono* basis. Moreover, this has also given me the opportunity to keep in touch with an outstanding group of idealistic individuals who are seeking to establish healthy competitive practices in the critical sectors of our economy.

It was a pleasure to get co-opted to several of CUTS’ activities and groups as it provided me with an excellent opportunity to contribute to the larger interests of our industry

The international presence and credibility for Indian activism that they have established is truly impressive. Its research and advocacy work is incredible and I believe that it will overcome any challenges coming in its way and can foresee endless possibilities in the coming times.

My best wishes and sincere appreciation to Pradeep S Mehta and CUTS on achieving a major milestone.

Vishnu Kumar Kumawat
 Dissemination Officer
 Manpura Gram Panchayat, Semalpura, Chittorgarh
 Rajasthan, India



An Intensive Quality Research and Effective Advocacy Organisation

I remember that after completing my high school when I came to Chittorgarh, I chanced to meet an associate of CUTS Centre of Human Development (CHD) who told me about Consumer awareness programme. That time, I fortunately met Pradeep S Mehta and was given the book 'Information is Power'. After reading the book I became aware of the consumers' rights and advocacy and since then I have been in association with CUTS.

In the developing world, consumers are somewhat less informed about their rights and responsibilities due to the fact that consumer movements in developing countries have not grown over time. Realising the fact that consumers are the pivot of all economic activities and consumer interest should be synonymous with national interest, CUTS' activities and interventions are based on this perspective and it has been persistently engaged in the consumer welfare activities from time to time. Moreover, CUTS has also been providing information about government schemes, policies, rights and duties at the grassroots and has expanded its functional and geographical outreach.

CUTS is presently on the frontline of research and advocacy on global trade issues and on account of its incredible intensive quality research and effective advocacy, the organisation has been successful in acquiring an international recognition

CUTS is presently on the frontline of research and advocacy on global trade issues and on account of its incredible intensive quality research and effective advocacy, the organisation has been successful in acquiring an international recognition. Besides, keeping a balance between needs and challenges has been key to the success of CUTS.

Though the organisation has significant partnerships with many government and donor agencies, which have been supporting its endeavours from time to time but reduction in number of funding sources would be a cause of concern and a challenge for the organisation.

Xiaoye Wang

Director, Economic Law Department, Institute of Law
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
Beijing, China



Greater Role for Economic Growth and Consumer Welfare

I am delighted to hear that CUTS will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary. As member of International Advisory Board of CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (CCIER) and as an academic in the antitrust field, I have coordinated with CUTS for more than 10 years.

Herewith, I heartily congratulate to CUTS for their great achievements and efforts for the consumer welfare and competition advocacy in the world, in particular, in the developing countries.

Advocacy is one of the greatest strengths of the organisation and its quality and exemplary research work places it at a distinct position.

I am very much impressed by CUTS' great enthusiasm and endorsement for the social work in the past and very confident that as an International NGO, CUTS will continually expand its social work and play more important role for the economic growth, consumer welfare and social justice specifically in the developing world, in future.

*I am very much
impressed by CUTS'
great enthusiasm and
endorsement for the
social work and believe
that it will continue
expanding its social
work*

Y Venugopal Reddy
 Chairman (2013-Present)
 14th Finance Commission of India



Contribution to Debates on Public Policies is Palpable

I am fortunate to be introduced to the work of CUTS by Pradeep S Mehta. I am a recent addition to the long list of admirers of CUTS. The issues relating to regulation and competition have been of special interest to me. I got immensely benefitted from debates in CUTS relating to financial sector and public utilities. Providing multiple perspectives is the special strength of CUTS' forum.

Candour is its hallmark in-depth knowledge pervades most of what is exchanged in CUTS. Above all, its contribution to debates on public policies in India is palpable. I have a few suggestions to make.

First, it might be useful for CUTS to penetrate internet communication in regional languages, in particular, *Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Malyalam, Kannada, and Bengali*. Second, it should attempt deeper understanding of the issues of fairness, and opportunities affecting large segments of the poorer sections.

I got immensely benefitted from debates in CUTS relating to financial sector and public utilities

Constant reminder of perceptions and experiences of the poor, the under-privileged and the discriminated, would enhance appreciation of issues relating to governance. Finally, deeper analysis of the interests of consumers of print and electronic media, and their regulation might be useful, recognising their growing links with commercial and political interests.

Y G Muralidharan

Managing Trustee (December 1993-Present)
Consumer Rights, Education and Awareness Trust (CREAT)
Bengaluru, India



Establishing Linkages between Economic Governance and Consumer Welfare

My first interaction with CUTS goes back to 1994, when I was seeking help and guidance to set up a consumer organisation in Bengaluru. In those days, only four or five consumer organisations namely CUTS, Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), Common Cause and Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) in Chennai were functioning on professional lines.

I came across an old issue (dating back to 1988-89) of CUTS' *Patrika*. Attracted by its contents, method of presentation I wanted to know more about CUTS. I wrote a detailed letter to Pradeep S Mehta. Soon came the reply with lots of encouraging words and a bundle containing briefing papers, booklets, reports etc. I was very much moved by the 'We Can Do' training manual. The first impression about CUTS was marvellous and its activities had a tremendous impact on me.

CUTS has grown from a small voluntary organisation to that of a professionally run think tank and pressure group. Its work on economic issues is marvellous and if myself and Consumer Rights, Education and Awareness Trust (CREAT) have any insights into issues like WTO, Trade, Intellectual Property or Competition Law, it is because of CUTS.

The first impression about CUTS was marvellous and its activities had a tremendous impact on me and CREAT

The strength of CUTS lies in its ability to research every issue deeply and advocate for its findings. However, I feel that research and advocacy needs to be taken to a logical end. It is here CUTS has to build up grassroots institutions and linkages.

In the years to come, CUTS has to identify national issues like capacity building of consumer groups, a pan India consumer network and if possible, an office to cater to the needs of Southern India. The presence of CUTS in Karnataka/Bengaluru will boost the consumer movement in the entire South.

Yashwant Bhawe

Chairman (2009-Present)
Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA)
New Delhi, India



Reinventing along the Lines of New Challenges

I was very happy to hear the news that CUTS is celebrating its 30th Anniversary to address its future. This initiative shows the internal dynamism of CUTS, under the able leadership of Pradeep S Mehta. It also shows that instead of resting on its past laurels CUTS wants to reinvent itself along the lines of new challenges in new situations.

I have been fortunate to be able to associate with the working of CUTS, since my days in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs as its Secretary where the focus of the Ministry was on consumer welfare. I continued this association in my present assignment as the Chairman of Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) and had no hesitation in associating CUTS as a representative body of advocating consumer interests, as an important stakeholder in our work of tariff determination.

During past few years of my association with CUTS, I have seen it growing and acquiring strength and found its research of sterling quality

During the past seven years of my association with CUTS, I have seen it growing and acquiring strengths and found its research of sterling quality. During the Authority's deliberations one has noticed that a large number of advocacy groups and consulting organisations tend to highlight only interests of relevant group, a foible that CUTS has been able to avoid scrupulously.

Even so, in the limited area of regulatory approach and economic regulation, CUTS can be of great help and be a reference point. Even if it has an ongoing research for public dissemination on different strands of opinion in academic literature given its vast reach and accumulated body of knowledge in this subject.

I wish you and CUTS a very bright and meaningful future.

Bridging the Gaps between Global and Local Agendae



The completion of three decades of CUTS coincides with the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have been adopted by the world community in September, 2015. While the world has witnessed significant growth and poverty reduction over the past three decades, new challenges particularly those relating to the understanding and governance of global public goods have emerged.

I am pleased to underline that CUTS has been working on many of those global public goods, such as international trade and economic regulation, green growth and energy security, good governance and social accountability. As an international NGO with its roots spread across the global south, these emerging challenges provide both opportunities and challenges to CUTS.

In writing the Preface to this document, the head of our organisation has highlighted many challenges and way forward for us, which have been pointed out by our friends and well-wishers. Without going into those details again, let me borrow from Eric Hobsbawm, a famous British economic historian who once described why the 19th century be considered a ‘long century’. While it is expected that the 21st century will be a ‘long Asian Century’, how do we enable CUTS to be a significant contributor to make that happen and make it more global?

This is a big question, if not loaded, and there is no single and/or simple answer to it. One cannot expect to find answers overnight. Other than keeping continuously abreast with new developments including their economic, political and social dimensions, one has to set the process right.

On the occasion of our 25th Anniversary we started this process through regular brainstorming among ourselves and with our peers, which resulted in ‘CUTS@50 – A Vision Document’. We have to make sure, not just keep in mind that our Vision Document is not just a writing on the wall. Otherwise, we may grow and continue to produce glossy outputs but we may not be able to convert them to outcomes to make economic, political and social changes necessary for transforming our lives with sustainable development at its core.

This means whatever that we do, we need to keep in mind how they are contributing to policy and practices changes. More importantly, how they help strengthening economic, political and social institutions, not just their organisations. While we are aware that as compared to changing economic institutions, it takes much more time to change political and social institutions, our presence at the grassroots and spread across the developing world puts us in a position to contribute to the transformative change as articulated in the SDGs.

Moreover, we have to be more careful in applying our business models. This is because most of them have a limited shelf life. This is much more challenging than just writing proposals and implementing projects. We have to transform ourselves into social and economic entrepreneurship, and our *modus operandi* should not just confine to raising money from the market for development interventions but to continuously underline ‘value for money’ and ‘value for people’.

Therefore, the most important question before us is: Is the stage set for social and economic entrepreneurship for policy and practice changes? The answer is and will never be this *or* that. It has to be this *and* that. Not one but we have to embrace various lines of thinking to make this happen. In this context, a good development across the world, particularly in the developing world, is that people are getting increasingly aware of their rights and responsibilities as consumers, who are the *raison d’être* of all activities, even political and social activities.

Rajeev Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, once said: “[t]he fulfilment of consumer rights will resolve most of the problems of our governance”. If we look at the set of consumer rights and responsibilities – from basic needs to healthy environment to sustainable consumption – one can discern how powerful this thinking is.

Over 30 years, CUTS has kept this in mind while making strategic interventions in various spheres of economic, political and social development. We have to do them more strategically so as to make some significant contributions not just to the achievements of the SDGs but to make the 21st century a ‘long century of multilateralism with local actions for bridging the gaps between the global and local agendae’.

We have to transform CUTS from being a policy think-tank to a ‘policy and action’ think-tank continuously marrying research with advocacy, networking and capacity building. For this to happen, other than continuous strategic thinking on what’s happening at the ‘core’ and those at the ‘periphery’, we have to lay a special emphasis on organisational development. As against different centres of the organisation working in silos, we have to adopt a ‘whole of organisation’ approach. That will happen if and only if we can transform our colleagues from having a research bent of mind to political and social bent.

In short, in partnership with other like-minded organisations and movements, we have to spread the consumer movement to every nook and corner of the world. We have to make it a political and social movement rather than confining ourselves to economic benefits. That will transform us from fulfilling ‘consumer welfare through the betterment of endowments’ towards achieving ‘consumer sovereignty as an outcome of entitlements and responsibilities’.

Long Live CUTS!

Bipul Chatterjee
Executive Director

Views of Former Employees

I joined CUTS in September 2000 as a Research Assistant- straight after college. Little did I know that the place where I had come only to begin my career, would play such a vital role in shaping my personality and hence, in turn, my life!

Here, I achieved a remarkable growth. All thanks to Pradeep Mehta – his continuous guidance and never ending faith in his team. The exposure and opportunities extended to a newcomer are almost impossible to comprehend. My communication skills – both written as well as verbal were refined to the best possible as I did a lot of report writing and everyone had to contribute in the various publications.

Despite my reluctance initially, I was given immense opportunities of addressing large audiences at national as well as international platforms only because of Mehta's school of thought (to which I didn't agree then!) of putting a person in the deep end of the pool to make him learn swimming! And today I know that has been the sole reason of my popularity as a speaker everywhere.

There could not have been a better place than CUTS to start my career as it is only on a strong foundation that the strongest of the buildings are built!! I can most easily say that the three-year time spent here at CUTS has been the most happy and successful time of my life-both professionally and personally!



Anjali Bansal

The exposure and opportunities extended to a newcomer are almost impossible to comprehend. There could not have been a better place than CUTS to start my career as it is only on a strong foundation that the strongest of the buildings are built

I joined CUTS in 2008 and left in 2010 and joined Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Prior to joining CUTS, I worked in various organisations in Zambia, Ghana and Germany focussing on trade policy, economic and social justice issues.

My achievement during my period at CUTS included among others; raised the profile of CUTS in Zambia and different stakeholders came to appreciate that CUTS was an effective and influential policy change organisation.

At personal level, CUTS has contributed to my being a strong woman that stands by her rights and achieve intended goals in any situation. I have become a dynamic, results-oriented African woman, with proven ability to creatively adjust to a variety of work cultures and environments, and across a broad range of development-related subjects and issues.



Angela Mwape Mulenga

At personal level, CUTS has contributed to my being a strong woman that stands by her rights and achieve intended goals in any situation



Arjun Dutta

I consider CUTS as an international, action research organisation well-grounded at grassroots with a non-depleting urge of creating benchmarks

I joined CUTS in February 1999 and worked at Jaipur, Kolkata and Delhi. I left CUTS in November 2003 to take up an assignment as a Sustainability Professional. Prior to this assignment, I worked with a market research organisation in Kolkata and one Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) in North Bengal.

In fact, the first Public Private Partnership (PPP) project in India targeting Parliamentarians of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries on Atmospheric issues was conceived by CUTS in partnership with UNEP in 2002.

I consider CUTS as an international, action research organisation well-grounded at grassroots with a non-depleting urge of creating benchmarks.



Ayesha Patel

To me, CUTS is an influential and future-facing organisation that embodies tenacity and advocacy

My internship at CUTS from January to May 2005 was a series of 'Firsts:' first job after completing my BA; first time living abroad, alone and in Jaipur; first exposure to NGOs and the policy sphere; and the first step on a society-focussed career with many international assignments to date.

At CUTS, I thrived with my colleagues (now friends), who looked after me like family. I worked in Editorial before being asked to coordinate a Competition Policy report: "Competition Regimes Around the World" that was released at an UNCTAD event in Antalya, Turkey. It was an incredible responsibility and achievement.

My overall experience challenged and educated me-enabling tremendous growth, both professionally and personally.



Joie Chowdhury

CUTS focusses on skills development for younger staff. It provides them ample opportunities to take on leading roles in its projects as well as participate in relevant conferences

I joined CUTS in August 2005 and left the organisation in May 2006 to pursue higher studies. It was my first job and I acquired tremendous learning experience in CUTS. The organisation has an intellectually dynamic and extremely supportive work environment. CUTS focusses on skills development for younger staff. It provides them ample opportunities to take on leading roles in its projects as well as participate in relevant conferences.

I primarily worked on a health sector study that CUTS was conducting for the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India. The research process left me with deep appreciation of how well CUTS linked developments in law and policy at the international and national-level with grassroot concerns.

The importance of this linkage is so effective that it continues to motivate me in the work I am involved in, at present. I consider CUTS to be a remarkable organisation, and a leading actor working to advance public interest.

I joined CUTS in June 2013 not having the faintest idea that how it would become a milestone in terms of pursuing my career goals/objectives in the development sector. I worked in CUTS till 2015 and it will not be exaggeration if I state that these two years helped in shaping my career as a development professional in the best possible manner.

Before joining CUTS I had the experience of working with a national level NGO where I developed understanding regarding implementation of projects at the ground level. I certainly believe that CUTS is an organisation with strong work ethics not only on paper but also in practice.

I consider CUTS as a big booming platform for fresher's to join for expediting their career growth while developing excellent professional skills as well, as it provides an immense national and international exposure and opportunity to grow.

Two years I spent with CUTS is the remarkable period I enjoyed professionally and personally. A Japanese proverb 'Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great mentor' precisely illustrates the contribution of CUTS in my professional endeavour during my short-term engagement with the organisation. All thanks to Udai S Mehta for his continuous support and supervision.



Mamta Nayak

CUTS is an organisation with strong work ethics not only on paper but also in practice

While I worked for CUTS only for a year from 2002-03 at the start of my career, the dynamic experience and knowledge I gained there on a multitude of trade policy issues stood me in good stead for a very long time.

Not only was I given the opportunity to conduct extensive research and analysis on pertinent international trade/WTO issues, but in my short tenure I also represented CUTS at the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Mexico, chaired project meetings of the South Asian Civil Society Network on International Trade Issues, and wrote a booklet explaining the benefits of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Indian state government officials.

In my view, CUTS' work is outstanding in targeting and promoting awareness of real issues behind national/international trade issues from the standpoint of improving public policy, for the ultimate benefit of the consumer. CUTS is one of its kind in India and its work remain indispensable to a holistic development of the trade policy framework of my country.



Manleen Dugal

CUTS' work is outstanding in targeting and promoting awareness of real issues behind national/international trade issues from the standpoint of improving public policy, for the ultimate benefit of the consumer



Nupur Anchlia

The work culture has been quite enabling and provides immense opportunities to any individual to learn and grow. I got the opportunity to interact with experts from diverse fields comprising economists, professors and researchers at national as well as global-level

My association with CUTS began in February 2001 and I left in August 2007. This was indeed my first job and it was certainly a great learning experience for me at CUTS.

The work culture has been quite enabling and provides immense opportunities to any individual to learn and grow. Within my tenure of six years, I got the opportunity to interact with experts from diverse fields comprising economists, professors and researchers at national as well as global-level.

CUTS provided me a platform to contribute to various publications under the valued guidance of Pradeep Mehta who always strives for perfection and is well-versed in diverse issues ranging from consumer safety to global trade issues and policies relating to competition.

CUTS has been doing a phenomenal job in educating and bringing together stakeholders under its various functional areas to a common platform (via conferences, publications and online forums) and address the issues effectively and efficiently.



Pramod Dev

I was part of CUTS during 2005-06 and 2007-09. It was not my first job; but it was my best job. I visualise CUTS as bandwidth, an aggregator of ideas, and which facilitate a dialogue between developing and developed parts of the international political economy system

I was part of CUTS during 2005-06 and 2007-09. It was not my first job; but it was my best job, saving my filmmaking work. In fact, the idea of my first film originated from the research that I did while at CUTS. Opportunity is what stood out at CUTS. It is difficult to get such international exposure and opportunities for young researchers. Those who put up their hand were rewarded with good assignments.

I was given considerable freedom to even work without time restrictions. Despite being a young researcher, I led a team of researchers on a 13-country field survey project, which is a rare opportunity even today. Similarly, I led teams that carried out large-scale field surveys in the most under developed regions of India. While doing these projects, I had complete freedom to design and implement the project. Support, both financial as well as logistical, has never been a problem with me at CUTS.

CUTS has a unique position in the middle of that system, so that the communications from both sides are not lost in translation.

I was associated with CUTS from the age of 17. I joined the organisation as a full time employee in May 1998 and thoroughly enjoyed my innings till about April 2001.

This was not my first job. I strongly believe that CUTS under the leadership of Pradeep Mehta taught me how to think with agility. The work culture was quite demanding and only those who performed prospered and those who did not perished. This is very different as compared to the work culture across several other NGOs.

CUTS is an organisation that sees what lies in the womb of the future when it comes to consumer and trade issues. We need to preserve and grow this ability of CUTS by getting on board a combination of prophetic professionals and practical visionaries. I wish CUTS all the best for all its future endeavours.



Raghav Narsalay

CUTS is an organisation that sees what lies in the womb of the future when it comes to consumer and trade issues

I joined CUTS on January 11, 2001 and left on April 30, 2009. It was not my first job. My earlier job was teaching which was entirely different from this. The key positive features of CUTS work culture are – importance of team work, excellent communication from top to bottom and encouragement to youngsters.

When I joined we had a common team working on trade, competition and regulatory issues. The year 2001-04 was a transformative phase in terms of CUTS work on trade and competition issues. CUTS was recognised as main credible civil society voice from developing countries on range of trade, investment, competition and regulatory issues. During that period CUTS overseas presence got greater visibility, which resulted in setting up offices at several locations in Africa, Asia and Europe

CUTS has been able to create its own brand and space. Now the challenge is not only to maintain and sustain this but also to further expand its presence.



Pranav Kumar

The key positive features of CUTS work culture are – importance of team work, excellent communication from top to bottom and encouragement to youngsters

My association began with CUTS in January 09, 2006 and continued till June 30, 2010. This four and half years journey was an interesting period of learning which provided exposure to new assignments and a distinct work culture. Working at CUTS brought in a range of experience in project management, fund raising for implementation of projects, writing papers and articles, stories for newsletters, survey analysis etc. CUTS is an excellent learning platform which provides useful insights on the need of good governance and effective regulation for the benefit of public interest.

Working with CUTS has broadened my thought process and evolved my personality to become more confident and communicative along with a crisp and concise approach towards my work. Special thanks to the Secretary General, CUTS under whose able guidance I was able to learn and grow!!



Richa Bhatnagar

CUTS is an excellent learning platform which provides useful insights on the need of good governance and effective regulation for the benefit of public interest



Rijit Sengupta

Clearly CUTS is an organisation, which provides considerable and perhaps unparalleled amount of exposure and knowledge to ‘young professionals’ – who have a desire to work on public policy issues nationally and internationally. There is no dearth of encouragement and motivation for staff, challenging them to stretch their professional and intellectual limits to new heights

I joined CUTS in June 2004, and worked here for nearly 12 fulfilling years. I had joined CUTS after working for another NGO (Peoples’ Science Institute, PSI) for four years. PSI being my first job and offered considerable amount of field-level experience across India. However, I wanted to work on policy issues, and so I joined CUTS.

Initially, I had to struggle to find my bearings in the organisation, especially since regulatory policy was a new subject area for me. But my desire to work on policy-related issues was very well complemented by the exposure that I received in CUTS.

Clearly CUTS is an organisation, which provides considerable and perhaps unparalleled amount of exposure and knowledge to ‘young professionals’ – who have a desire to work on public policy issues nationally and internationally. There is no dearth of encouragement and motivation for staff, challenging them to stretch their professional and intellectual limits to new heights.

CUTS stands at an interesting cross-road as an organisation at the moment. There is a need for the organisation to leverage on its internal strength and position itself to better capitalise on some of developments in the external environment. A lot has happened in the Trade, Regulation & Sustainable Development space in 2015 – and CUTS has the potential to be a leading CSO globally on some of the issues.



Sajeev Nair

The work culture at CUTS during my time was not only motivating but also demanding

I joined CUTS in April 1999 and left in March 2007 but continued my links with the organisation.

The work at CUTS was intellectually stimulating particularly since I got ample opportunity to interact with subject experts from various countries. I really enjoyed organising conferences, training workshops and seminars in various cities and countries.

The work culture at CUTS during my time was not only motivating but also demanding. I saw the organisation expanding at national and international levels – in terms of work undertaken as well as the opening up of new centres at Lusaka, Nairobi, London and Hanoi.

I firmly believe that CUTS has an unique opportunity in consolidating and expanding its work in four core competencies – trade policy analysis, economic regulation, advocacy and lobbying through lucid and reader-friendly publications.

I joined CUTS Nairobi in July 2007 and it was my first job. CUTS visionary work culture gave me an opportunity to learn and participate in various global trade discourses. These enhanced my capacity to understand the emerging issues in the wider trade policy spectrum.

Given the flexibility and CUTS' objective to enhance the professional development of staff, I was able to undertake several academic and professional training opportunities in the area of trade and competition policy. These training opportunities have fostered my capacity to manage and directly provide advisory services to the government on trade policy and related issues.

CUTS has developed good networks especially in Africa, Asia and Geneva. However, CUTS contribution on trade and trade policy related issues in the Pacific is dismal. A futuristic strategic approach for CUTS may consider developing programmatic work in the Pacific.



Samson Odhiambo

Given the flexibility and CUTS' objective to enhance the professional development of staffs, I was able to undertake several academic and professional training opportunities in the area of trade and competition policy

It was November 2009 when I joined CUTS. It was my first job and I stayed there for about a year. However, that one year was enough for sowing the seed for years to come. Just after my graduation, I came across an advertisement of CUTS concerning an international project in West Africa, requiring expertise in social science and French Language.

I still remember the day I joined. I quickly discovered that there was a wealth of wisdom and knowledge to gain from my colleagues. The exposure and opportunities coupled with autonomy provided to a fresher were unanticipated. These additional responsibilities and liberty did wonders for me and in that one small year I learnt like I might never learn again.

I organised six international meetings in four different countries of Africa, liaised with partners and funders and also made many international friends around the world. Today I am working as Associate Research Fellow in SaciWATERs, working in bilateral and multilateral water management issues. This has been a long journey. However, even after, I still feel I am part of CUTS. I am a proud CUTSian.



Samir Bhattacharya

The exposure and opportunities coupled with autonomy provided to a fresher were unanticipated



Siddhartha Mitra

My biggest achievement I feel was to take the lead in drafting the Vision Document of the organisation which I believe will go very far in the future both in scale, scope and contributions to society

I joined CUTS in 2007 and left the organisation in 2010. Before joining CUTS I was a Reader at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) at Pune. The two jobs were as different as chalk is from cheese. During my tenure at GIPE I devoted my time to teaching and theoretical research.

At CUTS as Research Director I was supposed to guide research on diverse field, such as trade and development, competition and regulation etc. The research always had a policy angle to it which was suitably exploited through advocacy.

I learnt a lot on the job especially in the field of competition and regulation. My biggest achievement I feel was to take the lead in drafting the Vision Document of the organisation which I believe will go very far in the future both in scale, scope and contributions to society.



Sonali Singh

After 10 years of being a Corporate Lawyer from the time I left CUTS, I still miss the quality and nature of work that CUTS had to offer. The learning that came with it is something I hold very dear to me. Mehta is a perfectionist and he does instil a sense of ownership in what you deliver. The man refuses to rest until a piece of work is 'perfect'. This was my learning. CUTS made me passionate about my work and learning

I joined CUTS in December 2004 and worked through January 2006 as a Legal Researcher. It was my first job and I can say that after 10 years of being a Corporate Lawyer from the time I left CUTS, I still miss the quality and nature of work that CUTS had to offer. The learning that came with it is something I hold very dear to me. Mehta is a perfectionist and he does instil a sense of ownership in what you deliver. The man refuses to rest until a piece of work is 'perfect'. This was my learning. At all the other places that I worked, I have probably been implementing what CUTS taught me in my own ways. CUTS made me passionate about my work and learning.

CUTS has opportunities to offer in abundance and it is just for you to recognise and grab it. The nature of work is really broad, dynamic and non-repetitive and the enthusiasm to work is always high.

CUTS is very ambitious, driven and a dedicated organisation that has made its presence felt across the globe. It is unstoppable. My heart felt wishes to CUTS and all its members. Keep growing and keep up the fabulous work.

I joined CUTS in April 2009 and left CUTS in April 2015 after working for more than six years. It was my second job. The working ambience I got was way different compared to my earlier organisation. I found this job more structured, systematic and streamlined. After joining, my work profile completely changed from paper to online.

The working environment and exposure at CUTS is highly conducive to profile building and career growth. I feel CUTS is perhaps the only organisation in India that provides such exposure and opportunity.

While working with CUTS, from a completely introvert character, I developed myself into a better outspoken person, who could communicate with clarity and effectiveness.

CUTS is one of the best organisations in the area it is presently serving. It is certainly a very good platform to both experienced and starters who genuinely want to contribute in the area of trade.



Suresh P Singh

The working environment and exposure at CUTS is highly conducive to profile building and career growth. I feel CUTS is perhaps the only organisation in India that provides such exposure and opportunity

I joined CUTS on October 01, 2012 and left CUTS on September 30, 2013. This was not my first job. Before working in CUTS I was working in a corporate law firm in Mumbai. Both my profiles were very different from each other. At CUTS my work was refreshingly more proactive in nature that involved writing research papers and articles and commenting on policy papers.

CUTS functions like a small loving family with mutual cooperation being its central spine. I had the opportunity of working with all teams, while working on several scholarly articles and papers on topics related to Public Policy.

During my stint at CUTS I also had the privilege of attending conferences in the United Nations, Geneva and listening to learned scholars and bureaucrats from across the world. I also assisted in organising CUTS 30th Anniversary lectures in London, Geneva, New Delhi, Jaipur, etc. My stint at CUTS was a great learning experience for me.

At CUTS I prepared a research paper on “Unfair Trade Practices”, which required meeting several scholars and bureaucrats, various detailed internal discussions and travel to different cities to understand the gravity of situation in the country in comparison to the practice in other developed and developing countries. In my opinion preparation of the said report on “Unfair Trade Practices” contributed a lot to me in terms of professional qualities as well as personality development.



Tanushree Bhatnagar

CUTS functions like a small loving family with mutual cooperation being its central spine. In my opinion preparation of the report on “Unfair Trade Practices” contributed a lot to me in terms of professional qualities as well as personality development

I joined CUTS in early 2006. I had to quit a job at Ministry of Planning and National Development where I was employed as a Junior Economist (Economist-II) in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Department for one year. But, I had always wanted to be engaged more on trade policies more than planning or M&E. I was yearning for faster growth and an opportunity that could give me international exposure and early engagement in trade and development policy world.

At CUTS, I was soon to start steadily on my growth curve when I started being engaged in more and more challenging trade policy assignments as well as programme design and implementation work. This I found more satisfying.

CUTS made me realise that one had to work for what he deserved and compensation was always negotiated based on one's contribution to the organisation, which inspired hard work.

I have to say that all I am as a package is what CUTS made of me because I have built upon that foundation since then. My research skills, presentation skills, immeasurable networks and international experience and exposure were gained and honed early enough at CUTS.



Victor Ogalo

I have to say that all I am as a package is what CUTS made of me because I have built upon that foundation since then. My research skills, presentation skills, immeasurable networks and international experience and exposure were gained and honed early enough at CUTS

I joined CUTS in 2004 and worked till 2016 that makes a long journey of nearly 12 fulfilling and exciting years. Before joining CUTS, I was associated with 'The Indus Entrepreneurs' (TiE). Though TiE gave me exposure on various aspects of entrepreneurship and social enterprising. I was keen to work on other developmental and public policy issues and research that makes difference on the ground.

Over the years, I was able to strengthen work programmes of the organisation on diverse subjects, such as healthcare, pharmaceutical, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Business Responsibility.

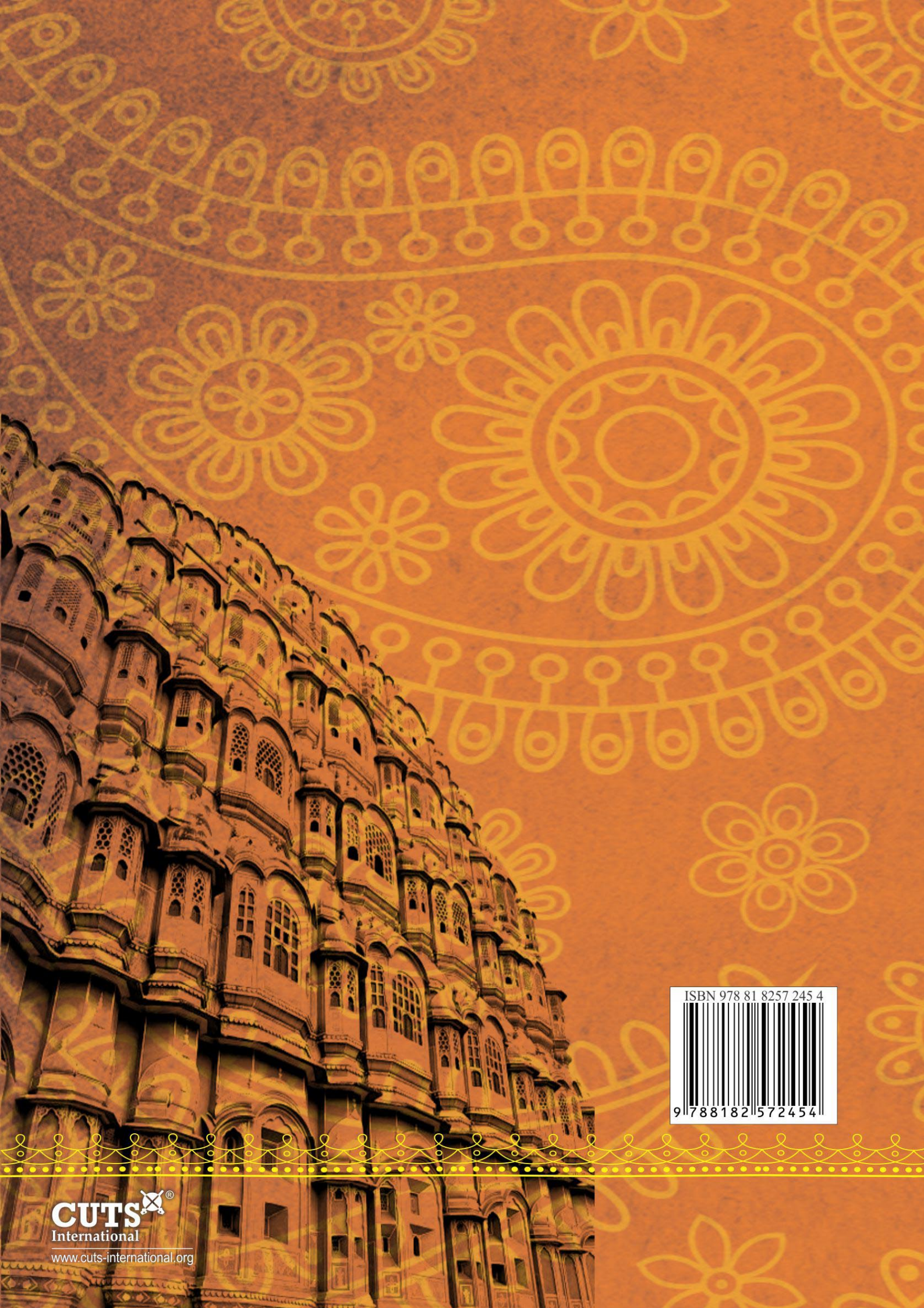
As a credible research and advocacy think tank, the organisation has been able to mainstream promises associated with 'trade' and 'competition' in a number of countries, including India and has been able to bring trade and competition reforms out of the economic theory into practical political and policy discourse.

CUTS has not only a strong network at local, state, national, regional and international levels with CSOs but also with the government, business and academia; and such 'networked way of action' carries a lot of potential for arriving at sustainable solutions to global problems.



Vikash Batham

As a credible research and advocacy think tank, the organisation has been able to mainstream promises associated with 'trade' and 'competition' in a number of countries, including India and has been able to bring trade and competition reforms out of economic theory into practical political and policy discourse



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