



Tradequity

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ESA-EU EPAs: Missed Deadlines

The Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) was one of the regions that opted to continue negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in 2008 after agreeing to sign an interim agreement in 2007. However, the 2008 deadline has also been missed, and now the negotiation is deferred to 2009 due to a number of contentious issues, which both parties – European Commission (EC) and ESA – have failed to agree upon.

Contentious Issues

These issues were also brought on the table during the ESA senior council meeting held at Lusaka, on December 05, 2008. Among the contentious issues raised included quantitative restrictions, standstill clause and bilateral safeguards. Others were more flexibility regarding timing and coverage of trade liberalisation for the least developed countries (LDCs), a revision of the most favoured nation (MFN) clause to exclude developing countries, enabling the use of export taxes, revision of the standstill clause and safeguards and improvements in the rules of origin (RoO).

The EC reportedly indicated it was open to discuss such issues in the EPA or World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations provided the ESA region cooperated.

With regard to development, the EC has indicated that the matrix and benchmarks will be refined to serve as a basis for joint mobilisation of additional resources. Diversion of progress in this regard also had emerged. The ESA region, however insisted that they needed an EPA that would enable them contribute to economic development and reduce poverty, other than an EPA that would lead to increased poverty.

ESA countries have also insisted on using internal mechanisms for financing such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) fund as the proposed 10th European Development Fund (EDF), aid for trade (Aft) and bilateral sources seem to be inadequate to meet EPA implementation costs. With regard to development matrix which outlines basically projects that would need financing, the ESA region

insisted that the matrix be costed or rather accompanied by a budget. However, the EC did not agree to this sitting that, it would not be realistic at the moment to cost the development matrix as no research has yet been done by ESA countries.

In addition to agriculture, new issues such as services, investment, intellectual property, competition rules, public procurement, sustainable development and environment were also discussed and contain some diverging views between the two parties.

For instance, on services, ESA's interest is on gradual progressive approach that takes into account ESA interest in particular the development of the services sector. On trade related issues, the parties have continued to discuss transparency and ESA's position is to focus on cooperation and capacity building, other than having rules as proposed by the EC.

Missed Deadline

Based on these divergences on outstanding issues the ESA countries and the EC proposed for an extension of EPA negotiations into 2009. The EPAs are basically Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) between two parties and form the trade pillar of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The negotiations began in 2004 between the African, Caribbean Pacific (ACP) countries and December 31, 2007 was the official deadline provided in the WTO waiver agreement from the WTO member-states allowing the EU to continue applying discriminatory non-reciprocal tariff preferences to the ACP exports. Due to the fact that the negotiations could not be concluded in 2007, was achieved.

The EPAs were agreed upon with the objective of reducing and eventually eradicating poverty, consistent with the objective of sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries in the world economy. EPAs are also expected to pay attention to important global issues such as services, intellectual property, standardisations, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, labour standards and the environment.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is important that, the ESA countries and the EC achieve comprehensive EPAs that meet the objectives of EPAs and not to rush due to time frames set up. Hence, the extension of the EPAs negotiations into 2009 is inevitable as the two parties need to iron out all the outstanding issues in order to achieve developmental EPAs. However, in order to make steady progress of the negotiations in 2009, the two parties need to improve on the involvement of all stakeholders including non-state actors so that there could be a broader representation and participation.

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Time to “walk the walk”

At a high level meeting of the UN General Assembly on African development needs, Jakaya Kikwete, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) and President of the United Republic of Tanzania, told that African leaders have taken firm action to tackle their continent's problems.

But because it is the world's poorest continent, Africa does not have enough resources to adequately enhance the well-being of its people or raise the productivity of its economies.

Africa development partners, especially the wealthy industrialised countries, have repeatedly pledged to increase their support for Africa's own efforts though not all of those promises have been fulfilled; hence the time for friends of Africa in the developed world is to “walk the walk”. (AR, 10.10.08)

No to Increasing Lending Rates

The Central Bank of Zambia (BoZ) recently charged that it did not expect commercial banks to increase lending rates despite increase in annual overall inflation rate. Caleb Fundanga, Governor, BoZ stated that commercial banks should not increase lending rates owing to the micro economic stability, although the annual inflation rate has retreated to double digit.

Fundanga urged commercial banks to instead reduce their operational costs by taking advantage of new technological developments in order to maintain lower lending base rates.

In addition, when inflation was declining bank's response in terms of reducing lending base rates was at a much lower pace compared to the drop in inflation. In this regard Government's response should be aimed that liquidity in the markets is not tight but rather moderate given the commercial banks' current account balances. (TP, 16.10.08)

Global Crisis to Reduce Earning

Kenyan Airways recently said the financial global economic crisis and high fuel prices have significantly reduced the earnings of the aviation industry and airline is no exception. International Air Transport Association (IATA) has predicted African airlines would lose up to US\$300mn due to the crisis as passenger traffic and cargo declined by three percent, respectively.

Rose Kiseli, Country Manager, Kenya Airways said it would take more than the changes beyond the control of airlines to navigate back into profitable domain. Meanwhile, Kiseli said that Kenyan Airways has since July 2008 doubled flights into Lusaka. The additional night flights have proved to be very popular to customers because of their convenience and flexibility. (ZDM, 12.12.08)

Cell Phone Banking Launched

Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO) has launched a new product called, Xapit, a cellular phone banking service, to enable customer make payments using mobile cell phones and enhance

payment procedures. Xapit is a brand, which allows ZANACO customers to buy mobile phone airtime or pay bills.

Mark Weissing, Managing Director, ZANACO said that the facility would be made available to existing customers, although two million people who had cell phone but no bank accounts. He said that it was an ideal tool for any customer who wanted to transact any time from outside the branch. “You can buy air time, pay bills such as multi choice bills and make transfers to third parties”, he informed.

(ZDM, 16.09.08)

Angola to Expand Agriculture

Angola, one of the world's fastest-growing economies, has launched an ambitious plan to exploit both its fertile soils and high global food prices to attract US\$6bn in agriculture investments over the next five years.

As it emerges from one of Africa's most protracted civil wars, Angola's abundant oil and diamonds have attracted febrile interest from foreign investors. Yet the talks under way with several private-sector farming giants are subject to a host of obstacles, ranging from clogged ports and red tape to corruption fears and competing claims to land rights.

With arable land of 35m hectares, Angola used to feed its own people as well as satisfy world demand for coffee, sisal, bananas and sugar before the outbreak of a conflict that raged for nearly three decades. (FT, 04.10.08)

Food Crisis in 2009

Zambia and Malawi may face a food crisis in early 2009, a regional food security study recently warned, as Zambia announced it was importing maize as a pre-emptive measure.

According to a US-based Michigan State University (MSU) study entitled, *Food Price and Food Security Situation in Eastern and Southern Africa: Implications for Immediate and Longer Run Responses*, there is some evidence of a potential food crisis emerging in Zambia and possibly Malawi in early 2009, not because of world food price levels, but because of potential physical shortages, which are likely to send maize prices sharply higher over the coming months.

In both countries, national maize supplies may be depleted before the 2009 harvest and maize imports may be required to avoid rationing of Government stocks. Indications are that food security problems have been compounded by inaccurate projections in Malawi and lack of coordination between the private and public sector on food requirements in Zambia. (IRIN, 29.11.08)



Africa to fund Oil Imports

Zambia and the Pan-African PTA Bank have agreed a US\$1.2bn deal to import 1.5 million tonnes of crude oil over two years.

Peter Mumba, the Permanent Secretary for Energy and Water Development, said the deal would stabilise oil imports and the crude oil which has been offloaded in Dar-es-Salaam. These would be kept in storage facilities there and pumped to Zambia's sole refinery, the Indeni Oil Refinery, which is currently shut for routine maintenance.

He further added that oil marketing companies would continue to import finished petroleum products until the refinery reopened to ensure steady flow of fuel to the vast copper and cobalt mines, the country's economic lifeblood and the rest of the economy. (Reuters, 09.10.08)

IMF Commends South Africa

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that South Africa's economic performance has strengthened in last several years, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growing by 5-5.5 percent in 2005-07, inflation declining to mid-single digits until recently and employment growing steadily.

A report issued by the IMF shows that growth in 2007 was driven by strong domestic demand, with private consumption and investment spending supported by robust consumer and business sentiment.

It said that real GDP growth also slowed to 4.2 percent (year-on-year) in first half of 2008, and subsequent high-frequency indicators point to further moderation. *(AN, 12.10.08)*

SA to Borrow for Growth

The South African Government plans to play a more active role in raising foreign funds to finance the current account deficit and ensure the continuity of an ambitious public sector capital investment programme.

Foreign funds will be sought to finance investment in the public sector as well as a larger budget deficit which is likely to arise from an economic slowdown.

Concern has been growing over South Africa's vulnerability to a shock on the current account of the balance of payments, which totalled 7.3 percent of GDP in 2007, as exports fall and foreign capital inflows contract.

The country received US\$6.46bn in net foreign capital inflows during 2007, but there has only been an inflow of US\$5.12bn thus far in 2008. *(BD, 24.11.08)*

Nigeria Cuts Oil Production

Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation has announced a five percent cut from two million barrels per day of crude oil exports in compliance with instructions by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Levi Ajuonuma, General Manager, Group Public Affairs said as a result, cargoes in November and December lifting programmes were reduced by five percent. He pointed out that in addition,

Meet on Aid Effectiveness

In the quest to analyse and review progress and assess bottlenecks in improving aid effectiveness, the international development community met in Accra, Ghana, on September 02, 2008.

The participants in the third high-level forum on Aid Effectiveness consisted of ministers from over 100 countries, head of international financial institutions, donor organisations and CSOs from around the world.

Speaking ahead of the meeting Elliott Harris of the IMF Policy Development and Review department said the meeting would present

opportunities to chart a course for strengthening aid, as the past three years had shown how difficult it had been to change processes and priorities that governed actions of donors and beneficiaries. *(TP, 14.11.08)*



www.farm3.static.flickr.com

five cargoes from November lifting programme and 7.6 cargoes from December lifting programme have been cancelled.

In view of OPEC cuts, Nigeria would be withdrawing 113,000 bpd, bringing its official production to less than 1.8 million bpd. *(AN, 31.10.08)*

Media on Trade & Development

The media plays a pivotal role in harnessing development. An evaluation conducted in Zambia revealed that though the media has done significant strides in reporting on other issues, there is a lapse in reporting on trade and development issues.

Therefore, CUTS Africa Resource Centre (CUTS ARC), Lusaka in partnership with Caritas Zambia organised a media capacity building workshop on trade and development.

In his opening remarks, Amos Chanda, Vice President, Press Association of Zambia (PAZA) castigated the kind of reporting that had befallen the media saying that journalists had lost touch.

Speaking on media's role, CUTS ARC coordinator Angela Mwape Mulenga asked journalists to take up the current contentious issues on trade and development. *(Simon Ng'ona 19.12.08)*

Enhancing Investment

Targets have been set by the Mozambican Government for a seven percent growth in GDP in 2009 and for an annual inflation rate of no more than eight percent.

Targets included in the economic and social plan for 2009 and the accompanying state budget were approved at a cabinet meeting which now needs to be approved by the Country's Parliament.

Finance Minister Manuel Chang said that goods exports in 2009 should reach a value of over US\$2.9bn, an 8.9 percent increase on the projected figure for 2008. The plan also aims to maintain net international reserves at a level that can sustain five months of imports.

The Government will pursue efforts to build a climate more conducive to investment while safeguarding the environment and the quality of public services such as health, education, water and sanitation, roads and electricity. *(Afrique en ligne, 10.02.08)*

Africa to Achieve MDGs

Through accelerated industrialisation and the strategic use of the international demand for natural resources, Africa will be able to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), according to the Africa Union (AU) Commissioner for Trade and Industries, Elisabeth Tankeu.

He said that for Africa to eradicate poverty and achieve rapid and sustainable development, it will have to step up the pace of its industrialisation process.

The industrialisation would lead to an industrial sector which would act as a strong engine for sustainable economic growth and development. *(Buaneews, 29.10.08)*

An End to Dual Membership

The IMF has challenged Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the founding members of the now expanded East African Community (EAC), to resolve the issue of overlapping memberships in regional trade agreements.

The IMF said that the three countries should agree on one regional trade bloc to belong so that they can have a more effective customs union (CU). The CU, now in its third year, had made progress though overlapping membership was hindering its smooth implementation.

The IMF warns that since legally or technically a country cannot apply for two different common external tariffs (CETs), the pattern of overlapping membership will become impossible to maintain, once Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) become customs union.

(<http://ippmedia.com>; 10.11.08)



COMESA Initiates Reforms

Governments in the COMESA have intensified efforts to harmonise their national public procurement systems to benefit from an expected increase in intra-regional trade when the CU becomes operational.

“We have been compelled to introduce public procurement in regional trade arrangements because it is anticipated that within the region itself, there will be increased cross-border trade”, said COMESA Secretary-General Sindiso Ngwenya.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group is already providing technical assistance and funding to strengthen and sustain the procurement reforms. This is at the request of the market’s Secretariat as member states look to launch their CU early in 2009.

(BD, 26.11.08)

Development Funding for EPAs

The EAC has effectively linked future EU trade negotiations with greater funding for development projects.

Since the EAC suffers from supply-side bottlenecks precluding trade with the EU (such as poor infrastructure and deficiencies in technology), the trade negotiators figure that to make use of the new EPA framework, the EAC needs greater technical and financial assistance from the EU.

Its ultimate goal is to diversify exports to high value-added products for tea and

coffee, and regional leaders understand that to compete in this market, producers must increase the quality of products.

(TS, 21.11.08)

Botswana Stands on SACU

Botswana’s Minister of Trade and Industry, Neo Moroka, has said that the country can no longer allow South Africa to behave like ‘Big Brother’ in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

Moroka said that South Africa’s attempt to prescribe to everyone how to deal with the EPA with the EU has caused significant problems. According to Moroka, this issue as well as the standoff on the EPA means that Botswana can no longer afford to let South Africa take the lead in trade negotiations.

SACU was split during 2007 when Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (BLNS) broke ranks with South Africa, signing an interim EPA that would govern trade with the EU and replace the Cotonou Agreement.

(TR, 26.11.08)

COMESA Exploits Carbon Trade

The COMESA is to invest in more carbon emission reduction projects as the continent’s largest trading bloc moves to tap into US\$30bn global carbon emissions reduction business.

Under the COMESA Climate Change initiative, member states are to identify opportunities for reducing

emissions and help countries to invest in projects that enable them to sell carbon credits while developing the legal framework in poor countries.

The initiative is also expected to induce trade as well as allow investors play a part in mitigating against the effects of global warming due to emissions of hazardous greenhouse gases.

(BD, 10.11.08)

Establishment of a Single Market

The leaders of the members of the EAC, the COMESA and the SADC have agreed here to further deepen and widen cooperation and coordination in all sectors with an ultimate goal to form a super trade bloc.

The proposed establishment of a single market will have profound positive effects on the integration in the African continent. However, there will be no easy path ahead for them to realise the dream.

Among the three blocs, the EAC has a functioning CU. COMESA has planned to launch its own CU by the end of 2008. Meanwhile, the SADC is preparing to set up a CU 2010. So the three blocs have to remove the tariff barriers and agree on common RoO to expand their economic and trade cooperation and integration.

(Xinhua, 22.10.08)

Competition Agency Launched

The COMESA launched a Competition Commission to ensure economic fair play at the end of 2008. According to the Commission’s Trade and Integration Adviser Mwansa Musonda, it will also eliminate abuse of dominance and over-pricing, as well as price-fixing and all forms of collusion.

Musonda said that through the Commission, consumers will be able to benefit from regional integration by eliminating false and misleading representation on product quality to consumers.

The Commission will address anti-competitive practices at the regional level, Musonda added. The National Competition Commission will address such practices at the national level. It will also handle mergers and acquisitions (M&As) made across the region, which may hinder or reduce competition.

(TS, 07.01.09)

Buy Low, Sell High

The Zambian Government has been advised to buy and stockpile copper from mining companies and sell it when international markets recover. According to Copperbelt University (CBU) economist lecturer Prof John Lungu, history had shown that the ups and downs of availability of copper were trends that could be read as lows in international prices that come after great highs.

A very good example was Botswana where the Government made a success of its strategy of buying diamonds from mining companies when world market prices were low and resold the commodity when there was a price hike at the international level.

Therefore, the Zambian Government needed to consider using such a mechanism for it to earn more revenue.

(TP, 26.11.08)

Legalising Foreign Trade

The huge proportion of trade between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the rest of the world that goes unrecorded will soon see the light of day as efforts to regularise it intensify.

The resources-rich DRC not only supplies its neighbours with light-value products like quality timber and minerals, but is also a big market for their fish, foodstuffs and manufactured goods. About less than 30 percent of the transactions across its borders are legal.

Efforts by COMESA, assisted by the DFID, UK and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are now in high gear to bring other 70 percent of the transactions by traders, while the Government also earns more revenue from the provision of better services to the people.

(EA, 02.11.08)

EU Pledges Continued Aid

The EU recently said that Zambia would continue receiving development assistance even if the country does not sign full EPA because there is already a country indicative programme in place.

Reacting to assertions that EPA will affect European Development Fund (EDF), EU Director of Trade and Development Peter Thompson said that it is very ridiculous and completely false that the EDF, which is the main instrument for providing assistance in the ACP region, has been attached to the signing of the EPA. He said whether Zambia signs full EPAs or not, development assistance will still be provided because these funds are available and continue to exist under the national indicative programme that fits into the five year cycle of the EDF," he said.

(TP, 11.11.08)

Litmus Test for WTO Members

Africa's biggest cotton exporter Burkina Faso called WTO members to conclude a trade deal that would tackle rich countries' distorting trade through heavy subsidies on cotton.

President of Burkina Faso Blaise Compaore urged WTO members to finish the talks to open up trade. In the negotiations, WTO members are supposed to make agriculture a priority, particularly cotton.

Cotton has become a litmus test of WTO members' ability to produce a fair deal for developing countries. The cotton sector had been hurt by subsidies granted by rich countries to their producers and tariff barriers that limit West African country's exports of farm produce and cotton.

(DN, 14.11.08)

Trade to Reach New Heights

Trade among EAC is likely to reach new heights in the near future through Regional East Africa Integrated Programme (REAP). Gareth Thomas, Minister for Trade and Development, Department for International Development (DFID), UK recently launched a new 'Aid for Trade' programme with a view to critically address problems that hamper the region's economic growth, its ability to create jobs and increase incomes.

The US\$29.5mn REAP aims to address challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, high transport costs, difficult customs procedures and bottlenecks at ports and border. It will also boost trade opportunities through improving transport links, streamlining border controls, and deepening regional economic integration in East Africa.

(AT, 06.12.08)

Blamed for Dwindling Fortunes

The WTO has been largely blamed for dwindling fortunes in Kenya's local textile industry. According to the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), the WTO acted in a manner to suggest that developing economies harbour slave labour whose production is of no value in the global market. KAM Chief Executive Betty Maina attributes the predicaments to the 1974 WTO's enacted Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA).

According to a World Bank and IMF study, the system costs the developing world 27 million jobs and US\$4,000bn in lost exports a year. KAM now wants the Government to intercept the looming collapse in the industry by implementing rescue plan.

(EAS, 18.11.08)

Cote d'Ivoire, EU Sign EPA

Cote d'Ivoire and the EU recently signed an EPA to promote bilateral trade, which the European bloc sees as an example for other West African countries to follow.

Under the agreement, the European market will open freely to all the products from Cote d'Ivoire, with tariffs to be removed in phases. In return, Cote d'Ivoire will allow the free flow of 80 percent of European products, while maintaining tariffs on the remaining 20 percent as a means of protection for the country's sensitive products such as coffee, cocoa, cotton and palm oil.

The deal will help Cote d'Ivoire promote its development, improve the competitiveness of its enterprises and enlarge its share in the European market.

(allafrica.com 27.11.08)



Initiative to Save Trees

Zambians are gradually turning to greener energy technologies to save trees after suffering years of extensive flooding and droughts. Charcoal-fed braziers are being replaced by those burning briquettes made of treated coal waste, which are smokeless and emit low levels of sulphur dioxide gas.

Biogas, a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide produced by fermenting organic matter like animal or human waste, biodegradable waste and municipal solid waste are also being pushed as alternatives to wood fuel.

Most of the trees are used as firewood or for producing charcoal, while in many rural areas they are cut and burnt to ash, which is used to improve soil fertility on subsistence farms. *(IRIN, 03.12.08)*



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Africa Bust on Wildlife Crime

An operation across five Africa countries over weekend, targeting wildlife crime has led to arrest of almost 60 people and seizure of one ton of illegal elephant ivory, Interpol has reported.

The one-day sweep, code-named Operation Baba, targeted more than 50 locations, including local ivory markets, airports, border crossings and smuggling points. Operation Baba was planned to address that problem and is first in a series of operations of this nature being planned worldwide.

Arrests and seizures were part of a five-country law enforcement operation coordinated by INTERPOL, and involved more than 300 law enforcement officers from police, customs, national wildlife and national intelligence agencies in Congo (Brazzaville), Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, further saying this represented largest-ever international wildlife law enforcement operation conducted in Africa. *(AN, 17.11.08)*

Making Use of Coal Waste

For some, waste is just waste, but to others, it turns out to be a valuable commodity. Imagine turning charcoal dust and sawdust into a form of energy. Well, this may sound complicated to some but it is happening in Zambia's capital Lusaka where two firms namely National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research (NISIR) and Star Energy famously known as Nistar have integrated to make cookers, warmers and coal briquettes using coal from Maamba Collieries, charcoal and sawdust.

These briquettes are said to be affordable, smokeless, long lasting, less polluting and environmental friendly. "We make coal briquettes from coal waste (slurry) from Maamba Collieries, which we enhance with charcoal and sawdust",

said Nistar Chief Executive Director Nasri Safieddine. *(TP, 30.11.08)*

Hunger, HIV/AIDS hit Africa



A persisting food crisis and rising HIV/AIDS infection rates in Africa form a deadly partnership that is destroying livelihoods and undermining economies in the world's poorest continent.

Poor rural and urban African families who were not getting enough nutrition in their diets, because of conflict disrupting their lives, natural disasters or high prices putting food beyond their budgets, were seeing their immune systems weaken. This made them more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

Initiatives to tackle Africa's HIV/AIDS epidemic should not just focus on medical treatment alone but should also look to improve the already deficient nutritional intake of most poor African families. *(Reuters, 05.12.08)*

Declining Resources in Africa

Food, water and energy resources are declining at an alarming rate, researchers have observed. The scholars are worried that the resources that have sustained East Africa for years are on the verge of running out. They blame population pressure, increased human activities and climate change for rapid depletion.

A report, 'Nature Under Pressure' by the Society for International Development, presents a snapshot of the grim status of the region's three natural systems, which sustain and enhance the quality of human life.

The report says rapid increase in East Africa's population is exerting pressure to the resources. East Africa has more than 125 million people today. *(EA, 04.12.08)*

Cleaner Power for Development

The energy crisis of sub-Saharan (SSA) region comes at the time when the world is grappling with climate change. The region, therefore, needs to adopt solutions that move in the direction of cleaner energy.

Currently, the bulk of Africa's electricity is produced from thermal stations, such as coal plants in South Africa and oil-fired generators in Nigeria and North Africa. Coal and oil generation contribute to carbon emissions, environmental degradation and global warming.

Africa exploits only eight percent of its potential for hydroelectric power, one of the cleanest forms of energy available. The Democratic Republic of Congo alone has the third largest hydroelectric potential in the world after China and Russia but less than six percent of its population has access to electricity. *(AR, 24.10.08)*

Cholera Still 'Out of Control'

International aid agencies warned that Zimbabwe's humanitarian crisis was deepening, with a sharp rise in acute child malnutrition and a worsening cholera epidemic.

Critics blame President Robert Mugabe's land reform policies for the collapse of Zimbabwe's farming sector and the ruin of what had been the region's breadbasket. Zimbabweans are continuing to die of hunger and disease and acute child malnutrition in parts of the country had increased by almost two thirds compared with 2007.

The outbreak was not under control and that neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana, where the disease has also been reported, should increase their disease monitoring surveys and preparedness. *(TO, 28.12.08)*

CUTS Hosts FEATS Inception Meeting



- establish a network by launching a National Reference Group of which was made;
- discuss and finalise the Terms of Reference for the Trade Policy study; and
- identify key potential collaborators for trade policy research and the FEATS Project.



CUTS ARC, Lusaka hosted its national inception meeting under the project entitled, 'Fostering Equity and Accountability in the Trading System (FEATS)' in Lusaka, Zambia, on October 21, 2008. CUTS Geneva Resource Centre (CUTS GRC) with the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, US, is implementing the project.

This National Inception Meeting is one of the five project meetings in five countries of which Zambia is one of them. Other meetings were held in Nairobi, Kenya, on October 14; Kampala, Uganda, on October 15; Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 17; and in Lilongwe (Malawi) on October 23, 2008 respectively

The main objectives of the National Inception Meeting were to:

- broaden and deepen the understanding of all stakeholders in Zambia about CUTS International, FEATS Project and the Trade Policy study;
- better understand the ground realities of trade and development in Zambia;

The meeting was well attended by six representatives from the government ministries/agencies, 11 from the private sector and the civil society and, and four each from the research organisations and the media. A representative of the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) local office was also present.

Presentations were made by representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI), Economic Association of Zambia (EAZ) and the Civil Society.

The meetings achieved the main objectives, including the adoption of revised Terms of References for trade policy research and the establishment of the five National Reference Groups.

Workshop for Media on Development Issues

CUTS ARC, in partnership with Caritas Zambia organised a capacity building workshop for the media on trade and development in Lusaka, Zambia, on November 07, 2008. The workshop was constituted from a background that there still remains a gap in the general reporting of the media in Zambia in the areas of trade and development. The workshop was characterised with presentations on contentious issues under the WTO and the EPAs, including floor discussions.

CUTS ARC believes that generating information and knowledge about the relevance of international trade and strategies for poverty reduction and a partnership based development approach for any debate on economic policy making in Africa, requires a more effective engagement of the media to address the information flows among policy makers and the various stakeholders.

Further, for an effective debates on trade, economics and development issues, there is need to have appropriate information dissemination which can only be done once the media is provided with adequate skills through capacity building training.

PUBLICATIONS

Fighting the Financial Meltdown

The world economy is currently passing through a recession. This financial recession which originated as a mortgaging crisis in the US has acquired global dimensions in today's inter-linked world and threatens to engulf India – one of the fastest growing emerging economies where the annual average rate of gross domestic product (GDP) growth has been around nine percent per annum over the last three years.

This Briefing paper examines whether a major economic recession in India is inevitable and concludes that the largeness and diversity of the economy coupled with positive behaviour on the part of all economic agents – government, consumers and individual investors – might be enough to save the Indian economy from collapse. A four fold mantra elaborates on what constitutes positive behaviour in this crisis.

This Briefing Paper can be accessed at:
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/BP08-DI-14.pdf>



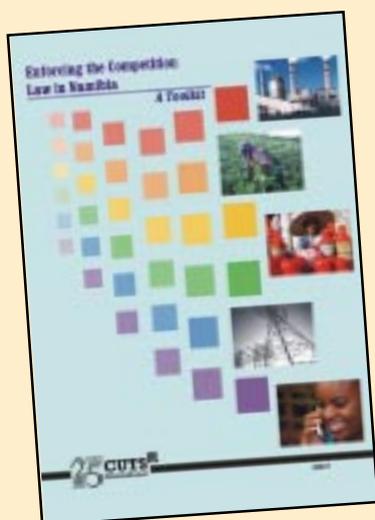
Enforcing the Competition Law in Namibia: A Toolkit

This document, researched and compiled by CUTS and customised in the Namibia context, is meant to act as a manual for Namibia, providing a simple and concise handbook on various implementation issues relating to the Competition Act, 2003 (Competition Law of Namibia). It provides the definitions, characteristics of and ways to deal with all the major restrictive business practices (RBPs), which are prevalent in the Namibian markets, with real life case studies.

Wherever possible, similar cases from other developing countries have been cited in the text in order to help the reader understand the issues through case studies. The toolkit draws information regarding the prevailing competition regime, from the report on the state of competition in Namibia (developed under CUTS project entitled, 'Capacity Building on Competition Policy in Select Countries of Eastern and Southern Africa', or the 7Up3 project).

Last but not the least, the document analyses the constraints and challenges that the competition authority of Namibia may face towards building a healthy competition culture in the country, and suggests a framework for addressing the same. The paper is meant for competition authority officials and administrators. However, activists, journalists, academician, business community, etc. can also use it. Furthermore, it can also be used for enhancing the understanding on competition issues of other stakeholder groups who may have interest in the subject.

This Toolkit can be viewed at:
http://www.cuts-ccier.org/7up3/pdf/Enforcing_the_Comp_Law_in_Namibia_Toolkit.pdf



Sources

AN: Afrol News; AR: Africa Review; AT: African Times; BD: Business Day; DN: Daily Nation; EA: East African; EAS: East African Standard; FT: Financial Times; IRIN: Integrated Regional Information Network; TO: The Observer; TP: The Post; TR: The Reporter; TS: The Standard; ZDM: Zambia Daily Mail

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