



CUTS International and SAWTEE Event | UNCTAD XIII: Civil Society Forum

Climate Change, Food Security and Trade: Challenges and Opportunities

1430 – 1630, Tuesday, 24 April 2012 - Room G02

Background

Climate change is expected to adversely affect food security in many developing countries and LDCs. These countries are largely dependent on their agriculture sector for employment, revenue, employment and exports. Climate change will pose grave challenges to their agriculture, and hence food security because of increasing droughts and other extreme weather conditions, higher input costs, and increased instability in production, prices and markets. On the other hand, trade can be an instrument to impact food security positively when a free flow of products leads to greater production efficiency, larger available quantities and lower prices. Also, trade can increase people's purchasing power, enabling them to buy food at the higher expected prices. However, trade can also have negative impacts on food security when subsidized food imports displace domestic production and when international trade rules and agreements (e.g., related to the protection of intellectual property rights) impede the access to and utilization of all the needed policy tools e.g., to acquire the relevant technologies on affordable terms. Therefore, trade policies and agreements, need to be suitably designed and implemented to be valuable instruments in coping with the challenges posed by climate change to food security. However, this will require a holistic approach and since there is a lack of fuller understanding of the linkages between trade, climate change and food security, more research, training and advocacy is needed to build the capacity of all relevant stakeholders in these areas.

CUTS International, a research-based NGO, recognized this need and has initiated a pioneering work on multi-stakeholder capacity building on trade-climate change-food security linkages. This on-going work focusses on Eastern Africa and South Asia but the methodology and outputs will be accessible and useful to relevant stakeholders in developing countries and LDCs in other regions as well.

It is in this context that CUTS International is organizing an event at the UNCTAD XIII Civil Society Forum. This will provide an opportunity to the representatives of governments, international organisations, NGOs, private sector, media, think tanks and others to discuss issues related to trade-

climate change-food security linkages and to identify elements of holistic policy responses, in particular to inform the work of UNCTAD in these areas for the next four years.

Specific questions to be addressed by panelists and participants in the event include:

- a. In what ways is climate change expected to affect food security in developing countries and LDCs?
- b. How can trade facilitate facing the challenge of climate change on food security?
- c. What are the main gaps and contradictions in the current policy framework related to trade, climate change and food security?
- d. How can relevant stakeholders be engaged in developing and implementing holistic and coordinated policies related to the three areas?
- e. What role can UNCTAD as well as CSOs play in this regard?

Programme

Introduction by Chair

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General CUTS International

Presentations by Panellists

HE Mr. Shanker Bairagi, Ambassador/Permanent Representative, Embassy of Nepal and Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, Geneva, and Chair, LDC Group

Mark Halle, Director, Trade and Investment, and European Representative, IISD

Ambassador Nathan Irumba, Executive Director, SEATINI

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, and Former Ambassador of Bangladesh to the WTO and UN Office in Geneva

General Discussion

Conclusion