

Summary Report

Informal East Africa Community Geneva Based Delegates Meeting

CUTS Geneva Resource Centre Conference Room, 20 June 2011.

East Africa Community (EAC) Geneva based delegates were invited for an informal working lunch meeting at CUTS Geneva Resource Centre (GRC) on 20th June 2011. The Agenda was to discuss the WTO proposed “Plan B” on the ongoing Doha Round negotiations and to brief the delegates on CUTS-GRC programmes in the EAC region: Below is a brief on the outcome of the deliberations.

It was recalled that the issues proposed for the early harvest in “Plan B” have for long been repeatedly demanded by Least Developing Countries (LDCs) a group in which 4 (four) of the EAC countries are members and therefore this is a positive step.

However currently 20 issues are listed for consideration under “Plan B” and yet the core issues for which LDCs are requesting early harvest are Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) market access; the Cotton issue; Services waiver; and Special & Differential Treatment. These may not be achieved in an overloaded list; in fact the Cotton issue is already missing from the proposed list. More work needs to be done towards ensuring that all issues of interest to LDCs are included for consideration and pushing for fewer items on the list, as this would enhance the chances of an early harvest on those issues.

The other issue discussed was the need for EAC member countries to strategize their economic sectors especially the Small & Medium Enterprises within the global value chains more so in partnership with

the emerging economies, following the success stories from the East and Southern Asian States. Such strategies would meaningfully enhance development in the region.

Thereafter delegates were briefed on the ongoing “Facilitating Equitable Agriculture Development (FEAD)” project in the region; and on two other forthcoming projects on linkages between Trade, Climate Change and Food Security; and Support for linking EAC delegates with grassroots in their countries and the EAC secretariat in order to facilitate more informed and common EAC participation in the WTO negotiations / discussions. Under the latter project, it was proposed that when linking Geneva based delegates with grassroots, provision should also be made for such meetings to take place in the Capitals in order to enable delegates gather positions from a wider group of stakeholders.

The next informal meeting will be convened in August 2011, in order to take stock of the WTO negotiations on “Plan B” and any other issues of interest to the delegates.