

Fostering Equity and Accountability in the Trading System (FEATS) Project Geneva Inception Meeting, 16 July 2008

The Geneva Inception Meeting of the FEATS Project was held on 16 July 2008. The Meeting was attended by representatives of the governments, civil society and research institutions of the five project countries (Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) as well as the staff of CUTS Geneva, London, Lusaka, and Nairobi.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the first set of policy studies. Two documents were circulated among the participants to facilitate a focused discussion: a short note on the FEATS project and draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the first policy study.

The participants provided useful information and comments about the trade policy issues in their countries. They also discussed the process of trade policy making and implementation in the project countries and identified key stakeholders, their roles, and the salient features of the process. The following key points related to the substance of the study emerged from the meeting:

1. The trade policy making in the project countries, like in any other country, takes place through interaction among a set of actors or stakeholders. There are formal and informal processes for this interaction. The interaction among the actors through the process leads to outcomes.
2. The governments occupy the central position. Various government ministries are most often the key actors. Governments also design and oversee the formal processes for trade policy making as well as are often at the centre of informal processes.
3. All the players do not enjoy equal power. Moreover, all the relevant stakeholders are not always included as recognized actors in the formal processes. The discussion was quite useful in identifying the broad universe of possible actors, irrespective of their inclusion in or powers in the formal processes. These included: consumers, exporters, importers, farmers, business, manufacturers, donors/development cooperation partners, government ministries, women, NGOs, members of parliament, trade unions, media, and academics/think tanks. It was recognized that these are overlapping categories of actors, for example, all importers can be regarded as business and some of them would be in the category of manufacturers as well.
4. All the actors attempt to play one or more of the following roles in policy making: advisors, influencers, makers, enforcers, implementers, monitors, informers, evaluators, legislators, and “impact bearers”. An initial categorization of the identified actors based on their perceived policy roles was finalized during the meeting.
5. The sphere of action of actors can be defined on four levels, that is, local, national, regional and international. While the boundaries of national and international levels are more clearly understood, those of local and regional levels are more ambiguous.
6. The governments have instituted formal processes for trade policy making. The most common features of these processes are: led by one identified ministry, structured, level-specific, government-run/controlled, stakeholder-based, private sector involvement, and soliciting of inputs from interested actors. These processes can be either consultative (where a group of

actors is asked to provide inputs only) or participatory (where actors have the opportunity to participate more actively in the process, for example, through meetings). There was concern that these processes are often not adequate to receive inputs directly from the grassroots' level.

The discussion helped in improving the draft ToR which will be presented at the National Inception Meetings to be organized in October 2008 in the project countries for finalization.

Another key outcome of the Inception Meeting was the establishment of an Initial Reference Group (IRG). This group will continue to be engaged throughout the implementation of the project.

Initial Reference Group (IRP) of FEATS Project

S.No.	Name	Organizacion
1.	Ms. Jane S. Nalunga	Country Director, SEATINI, Uganda
2.	Mr. Silver Ojakol	Acting Commissioner for International Trade, Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, Uganda
3.	Ms. Susan Kayonde	Senior Trade Policy Analyst, Centre for Development Initiatives, Uganda
4.	Ms. Irene Alenga	Research Assistant, Economic and Social Research Foundation (ERSF), Tanzania
5.	Mr. Odilo Majengo	Acting Director, Commodity Marketing, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Marketing, Tanzania
6.	Mr. Andrew Kumbatira	Executive Director, Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN), Malawi
7.	Mrs. Elisabeth Manda	National Coordinator, Initiative for Development of Equity in African Agriculture (IDEAA), Malawi
8.	Mrs. Margret Sauzande	Principal trade Officer, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Malawi
9.	Ms. Langani Phiri	Senior Agricultural Economist, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Zambia
10.	Mr. Gideon Lintini	Director Planning and Information, Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Zambia
11.	Mr. Clement Onyango	Head, CUTS Nairobi Resource Centre, Kenya
12.	Ms. Angela Mulenga	Head, CUTS Lusaka Resource Centre, Zambia
13.	Mr. Gideon Rabinowitz	Head, CUTS London Resource Centre, UK
14.	Mr. Atul Kaushik	Director, CUTS Geneva Resource Centre, Switzerland
15.	Mr. Rashid S. Kaukab	Deputy Director and Research Coordinator, CUTS Geneva Resource Centre, Geneva, Switzerland