

## **Summary Report of the Meeting of Delegates from the Geneva Missions of South Asian Countries**

**CUTS Geneva Resource Centre Conference Room, 15 September, 2009**

On Tuesday, 15 September 2009, delegates from the Geneva Missions of South Asian countries had an informal working lunch meeting at CUTS GRC. All eight South Asian Missions in Geneva were invited. Participants from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the meeting.

As agreed on the meeting held on 12 June 2009, the focal point of this meeting was “Trade in Services” based on two background papers which were previously prepared and circulated by CUTS GRC in order to help the discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Following is a summary of the main points raised during the discussion and the decisions taken in the meeting:

1. *Domestic Regulation and Emergency Safeguards.* CUTS International has a team specialized exclusively on Trade in Services. For this reason CUTS GRC will communicate CUTS International the interest of South Asian Missions on these issues in order to analyze the possibility of developing “Terms of Reference” for research on the Trade in Services regulatory framework of South Asian countries and the funding of such research.
2. *Specific Issue on Services Negotiations.* If South Asian Missions have a specific issue regarding the ongoing services negotiations on which they might need support, CUTS GRC can advise them and support them on that.
3. *LDC Group Discussions.* South Asian Missions must check with the LDC Group coordinator whether CUTS GRC can help them. In case it is possible for CUTS GRC to provide them its help, CUTS GRC could support particularly with the drafting of the proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> The two background papers are the following: “South Asian Positions in the GATS Negotiations – Some Reflections from CUTS Research” and “The Mexico – Telecoms Case: What Lessons Can Be Drawn for South Asian Countries”.

4. SAFTA Services Negotiations. CUTS GRC was requested to provide assistance in the SAFTA services negotiations. Through CUTS International in collaboration with SAWTEE<sup>2</sup>, it is possible to provide assistance to South Asian Missions to push the negotiations regarding the Services Agreement within the SAFTA framework. For this, South Asian Missions must communicate CUTS GRC the specificities or in what way they need the help to push the negotiations.
5. Data. A lot of resources are required in order to have Data continuously updated. For this reason it was suggested by South Asian delegates that CUTS GRC could post on its webpage the corresponding internet links which would direct the user to the webpage wherein the updated Data may be found.
6. More Interaction and Engagement among South Asian Countries. It is important to achieve more interaction and engagement among all South Asian countries in order to identify gaps and common objectives which might be useful to strengthen their positions in the ongoing services negotiations. It was suggested that a presentation could be organized by CUTS GRC in which the Missions of India and Pakistan will explain the rest of the South Asian Missions how they have been able to work side by side with the purpose of achieving common objectives.
7. Joint Presentation by India and Pakistan. It was agreed that the Missions of India and Pakistan need about one month to prepare the abovementioned presentation. It was also agreed that the presentation will firstly be held at a technical level and, depending on the outcome of the presentation, it will be further analyzed whether to have another similar presentation at the ambassadorial level. CUTS GRC kindly requests the delegations of India and Pakistan to inform the date when the presentation will take part.
8. Next Meeting. It was decided that the next meeting will take place on 9 December 2009. This meeting will focus on the Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference which is to take place in Geneva, Switzerland from 30 November to 2 December 2009.

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<sup>2</sup> South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment