

Promoting Agriculture-Climate-Trade Linkages in the Eastern African Community (PACT EAC)

Project Inception Meeting

Arusha, Tanzania, February 23-24, 2012

Substantive Backgrounder

CUTS International Geneva, in collaboration with CUTS Africa Resource Centre Nairobi, is launching the PACT EAC Project at the Inception Meeting in Arusha, Tanzania on 23-24 February 2012. The Inception Meeting – based on preparatory activities carried out under the PACT EAC project so far – will be attended by key national and regional stakeholders and partner organizations, including the government, CSO, farmer organization and private sector representatives from the EAC countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda), EAC Secretariat, Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA), as well as representatives of international organizations such as FAO, UNEP, UNFCCC.

This project is based on the experience gained by CUTS International Geneva since it started functioning in July 2008 with the mission of establishing and promoting a pro-trade and pro-equity credible Southern NGO voice in Geneva, especially in the policy making circles, working on trade and development and related issues, by strengthening Geneva-grassroots linkages. Within the past three and half years, it has undertaken a number of activities pertaining to trade and development and related issues. Three of its projects - FEATS, BIEAC and FEAD - have focused on Eastern Africa to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders on issues such as: WTO and regional integration, inclusive trade policy making and implementation, agriculture and food security, and interlinkages of issues. It has also signed a MoU with the EAC Secretariat in addition to developing partnerships with many organisations in the region.

CUTS International Geneva believes that international trade can foster economic development and reduce poverty in developing countries. The precondition, however, is the existence of necessary policy making and implementation capacity. Fulfillment of this prerequisite entails demand-driven and need-based human and institutional capacity building in developing countries, particularly in Africa. This could be achieved by facilitating a better understanding of the issues, needs and abilities to take advantage of the opportunities offered by international trade, developing capacity to understand linkages among issues and relevant policies, and promoting wider stakeholder consultations in the development and implementation of holistic and coordinated policies.

It is in this context that CUTS International Geneva is undertaking the PACT EAC Project with funding support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Like all CUTS projects, PACT EAC also follows the inclusive and interlinked policy research-advocacy-networking (RAN) methodology and connects the grassroots with the international policy-making processes. The collaborative and evidence-based research will be carried out through local partners. Dissemination of information to improve awareness and understanding of the issues among all the stakeholders is continuously carried out throughout the project. Training of stakeholders in the region in national and regional training workshops will be undertaken based on Project's research outputs and through regional partners. The project also aims to establish functioning national and regional multi-stakeholder networks of representatives from EAC governments, the EAC Secretariat, private sector, farmers'

organizations and civil society, which will pool knowledge, experience and expertise to develop integrated policy and programme responses.

The project focuses on trade-climate change-food security linkages on the one hand, and on WTO discussions and negotiations, on the other hand. Accordingly, it is divided into two segments with synchronized activities. Segment one aims to identify and fill the existing gaps in knowledge, awareness, and understanding of policies, policy-making, and implementation capacity in the EAC to effectively deal with the interface of climate change-food security-trade. This will be achieved by building capacity of all stakeholders, but especially of the EAC Secretariat for designing and implementing holistic policies in trade-climate change-food security based on the MoU already signed between CUTS and the EAC Secretariat.

The second segment of the proposed project has established a bi-monthly EAC Geneva Forum that seeks to assist EAC Geneva Missions in better participation in the WTO discussions and negotiations. The Geneva Forum is envisioned to establish a durable and effective mechanism for two-way communications and inputs between EAC countries' Geneva Missions and their capitals and grassroots. This Forum will also facilitate the participation of stakeholders from the region, particularly the EAC Secretariat in important WTO meetings.

Overall expectations of the Project are to increase knowledge on climate change-food security-trade linkages and to enhance capacity of and interactions among stakeholders from the region in order to devise holistic policies to better deal with climate change and food security challenges by exploiting the potential of trade as an instrument of development.

Objectives of the Project Inception Meeting

- To assess the current state of play in the EAC on climate change, food security and trade issues;
- To identify and prioritize research, knowledge, policy, and capacity gaps to undertake targeted research;
- Raise awareness of needs of holistic policies and strategies; and
- Start advocacy and networking activities.

Expected Outcomes of the Inception Meeting:

- Identification of research and knowledge gaps and assessment of training needs;
- Launch of the interactive website and familiarization of stakeholders with the E-network for better networking, research, and advocacy purposes;
- Finalizing the topics and ToRs for the five country research studies that will be conducted by the teams of researchers
- Emergence of the core of a regional network of stakeholders; and
- Better understanding of the PACT EAC project and its activities among the stakeholders in the region.