



EVENTS

World Consumer Rights Day 2018

CUTS Accra, Ghana in collaboration with Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) has launched an E-petition campaign to garner 20,000 signatories to get Ghana President Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo to prioritise the passage of the Consumer Protection Law before close of the year. In a



Press conference organised to commemorate the ‘World Consumer Rights Day 2018’ on March 15, 2018 and launch the campaign in Accra, Country Coordinator for CUTS Accra, Appiah Kusi Adomako, called on Ghanaians both home and abroad to support the campaign. He called for a strengthened media advocacy and public education to engage the attention of policymakers to prioritise the passage of a comprehensive National Consumer Protection Bill, to replace the current fragmented ones.

Capacity Building of County Legislators and CSOs

The uptake and use of renewable energy (RE) technologies can be enhanced by a sound policy framework tailor-made to fit the needs of local communities. In full realisation of the foregoing, CUTS Nairobi, Kenya in collaboration with the Department of Energy-Home Bay County convened two capacity building workshops – for Members of County Assembly (MCAs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The MCAs training sought to build their capacity RE issues to enable them fully grasp the concept in order to pass the necessary laws for the county to shift towards the use of clean energy sources and technologies. Moreover, the training of members of the civil society was to facilitate awareness creation of RE among community members.

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Presentation of Research Findings to Parliamentary Select Committee on Local Government and Rural Development

CUTS Ghana, with support from Oxfam, is undertaking a project entitled, ‘Fiscal Policies to Address Inequalities’. The project examines how government can use the tools of taxation and spending to address the level of inequalities in the country. As part of project implementation, a presentation of the research findings was made in Accra, to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Local Government and Rural Development. CUTS Accra Centre Head, Appiah Kusi Adomako presented a strong case to members of the Committee on March 13, 2018 as to how government can maximise revenue from property taxes to address inequality in the health, sanitation and education sectors of the Ghanaian economy.

EVENTS

Capacity Building Workshop for Selected MMDAs

A capacity-building workshop on Maximising Revenue from Property Rates was organised at Miklin Hotel in Accra, Ghana on March 08, 2018 under 'Fiscal Policies to Address Inequalities' project. The workshop was held with the funding support of Oxfam and in collaboration with the Office of the Head of Local Government Service and the Institute of Local Government Studies. The workshop provided the platform for revenue officers in the districts to share experiences on challenges and seek practical solutions to property rate collection, equipping participants with tools and contemporary approaches for increased property rate mobilisation, etc.



Promoting Sustainable Food Consumption in Zambia Dissemination Meeting

CUTS Lusaka, Zambia held a dissemination meeting on March 14, 2018 for a study undertaken in collaboration with the World Food Programme, with the support from HIVOS for promoting sustainable diets in Zambia. The results indicated that a lot is to be done to ensure that all consumers have access to safe, diverse, nutritious and affordable foods. Lusaka City Council, National Food and Nutrition Council, HIVOS, and Unilever (private sector) were present to give their feedback.



Fifth National Reference Group Meeting

NRG5 meeting was held on March 20, 2018 and was attended by representatives from line government Ministries (trade, environment, EAC and agriculture), Climate Change Directorate, civil society organisations (CSOs), agro-processors, agro-dealers, media and CUTS Nairobi, Kenya representatives. During the meeting, participants considered the way forward in ensuring that the draft 'Buy Kenya Build Kenya' policy incorporates strategies to promote climate-aware, trade-driven and food security-enhancing agro-processing whilst safeguarding regional integration.

NEW INITIATIVES

Understanding Low Intra-regional Trade in Food Products in Select ECOWAS Countries

CUTS Accra, Ghana is seeking for funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and ENDA-CACID to implement a project entitled, 'Understanding Low Intra-regional Trade in Food Products in Select ECOWAS Countries'. The goal of the project is to enhance food security in select West African countries through the increased intra-regional trade in food in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in a sustainable manner. The project is expected to be implemented over a one year period.

Exploring the Challenges Surrounding PPPs in the Country

CUTS Accra, Ghana is soliciting for funding support from Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) to implement a project dubbed, 'Exploring the challenges surrounding Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the country'. The goal of the project is to prepare studies on some key PPPs in the country in order to understand such partnerships. The project is expected to be implemented over a period of six months.

Aggregating Smallholder Farmers into Value Chains in Ghana to Enhance Food Security

CUTS Accra, Ghana is soliciting support funding from Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to implement a project dubbed, 'Aggregating Smallholder Farmers into Value Chains in Ghana to Enhance Food Security'. The aim of the project is to enhance smallholder farmers' welfare by addressing barriers to inclusive market access and participation in the value chain in two states in Ghana.

Exploring the Anti-Competitive Practices in Freight Forwarding Industry in Ghana

CUTS Accra, Ghana is seeking support from Ghana Institute of Freight Forwarders to undertake a project entitled, 'Exploring the Anti-competitive Practices in Freight Forwarding Industry in Ghana'. The principal objective of the study is to undertake a research study aimed at understanding the market structure and resultant competition issues in the freight forwarding industry in Ghana. The project is expected to be implemented over a period of 12 weeks.

Post Advocacy of COMPAD I

CUTS Accra, Ghana with funding support from the Business Sector and Challenge Fund (BUSAC Fund) is implementing a project in Ghana – ‘Post Advocacy of COMPAD I’. The aim of the project is to ensure that the gains made in COMPAD I are sustained and to see to the full operationalisation of the Competition Policy. The project implementation duration is eight months.

Promoting Agriculture, Climate and Trade Linkages in the EAC (PACT EAC2)

Promoting Agriculture, Climate and Trade Linkages in the EAC (PACT EAC2) project, led by CUTS Geneva, Switzerland in collaboration with CUTS Nairobi, Kenya aims to build the capacity of individuals, networks and institutions to identify and promote appropriate policies for climate-aware, trade-oriented, food security-enhancing agro-value-addition in the East African Countries (EAC) region.

Promoting Sustainable Food Consumption in Zambia

CUTS Lusaka, Zambia is undertaking a project in conjunction with World Food Programme (WFP), is to be done in form of a survey. It was part of a bigger project on awareness-raising and sensitisation of the general public on sustainable diets in Zambia. The objective of this study is to provide insights on food consumption in urban areas, such as Lusaka, Zambia. This information is critical for influencing households to change food consumption, especially encouraging a shift from mono-diets towards diversification.

Internationalisation of MSMEs through E-Commerce

In collaboration with CUTS Centre for International Trade Economics and Environment (CITEE), CUTS Nairobi, Kenya is working on ‘Internationalisation of or MSMEs through E-Commerce’ project to highlight the importance of micro, medium and small enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries as well as showcase the role of E-Commerce in internationalisation of the MSMEs, with the aim of identifying the challenges faced in integrating with global markets.

Energy Sector Public

Budget-Expenditure Tracking

CUTS Accra, Ghana with funding support from Netherland Development Organisation, SNV Ghana is undertaking a project entitled, ‘Energy Sector Public Budget-Expenditure Tracking’. The overarching goal is to help improve electricity access in the rural communities in Ghana. The key objectives of this project are to track the use of energy sector budgets are utilised at the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDA) level, help identify and address problems and weaknesses in the energy sector public expenditure, transfer and service delivery, identify how spending has changed overtime, and how these dimensions compare across administrative boundaries. The project is being implemented over a period of three months.

Investment Incentives in Zambia

CUTS Lusaka, Zambia is working on a project with the Zambia Accountability Programme (ZAP). The project entails calculating and evaluating the drivers of the Marginal Effective Tax Rates in the key economic sectors in Zambia. These comprise: manufacturing, mining, agriculture and financial sectors. The main objective of this project is to do an assessment of the sector level marginal effective tax rates and also evaluate the drivers of investment, given the predominance of tax incentives in investment promotion in Zambia too.

Fiscal Policies to Address Inequalities

CUTS Accra, Ghana with funding support from OXFAM Ghana is implementing a project dubbed, ‘Reducing the Poor over Exposure to Indirect Taxes, Expanding the Tax Bracket through Real Estate Taxes, Increase Spending in the Healthcare Sector, Increase Spending in the Education Sector’. The overall objective of the assignment is to present to policymakers the gains that can be achieved through progressive pro-poor spending and motivate them to bring in adequate fiscal reforms in this endeavour. The project is being implemented over a period of five months.

Agricultural Commodity Management in Zambia

CUTS Lusaka, Zambia is working with Zambia Advocacy Programme (ZAP), by undertaking a study to aid the enhancement of Zambia Commodity Exchange (ZAMACE) in the agricultural sector. The study would consequently aid in the enhancement of the work that ZAMACE is already doing in the agriculture sector. Significant stakeholders in the sector have discussed the best possible ways of managing agricultural commodities. The two major suggestions made were: 1) how efficiently management of excess commodity can be explored; and 2) how to develop agro-processing plants, to create a greater demand for the staple food internationally and locally.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Technical Working Committee Meetings

Several meetings of the Technical Working Committee (TWC) meetings in Homa Bay County will be organised by CUTS Nairobi, Kenya to finalise the drafting of the Renewable Energy Policy. The draft policy document will then be presented to the Homa Bay County (Nyanza Province of Kenya) Assembly.

Meeting with International Fertiliser Development Corporation

CUTS Accra, Ghana has a meeting with the International Fertiliser Development Corporation (IFDC) to discuss possible extension of 'Competition Reforms in Key Markets for Enhancing Social & Economic Welfare in Developing Countries' (CREW project) staple food finding research on issues related to the fertiliser sector.

Milk Safety and Loss Reduction

An event for mobilisation of national level consumer groups to join their voice and influence policymakers to develop policies and programmes on milk safety and loss reduction in Kenya will be organised By CUTS Nairobi, Kenya.

PUBLICATIONS

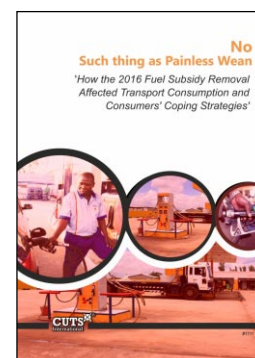
Research Reports

No Such thing as Painless Wean

'How the 2016 Fuel Subsidy Removal Affected Transport Consumption and Consumers' Coping Strategies'

In October 2016, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) removed subsidies on fuel to let its prices be determined by market forces. It is highly expected that this policy shift had both direct effects on end-users of fuel products and indirectly on consumers of fuel-input intensive goods and services. In this regard, Consumer Unity & Trust (CUTS, Lusaka) and Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) carried out research aimed at informing public debate and potential policy responses on fuel subsidies and their removal. The objective of the research was to understand how the fuel subsidy removal affected individuals with different incomes residing in both rural and urban areas in Zambia.

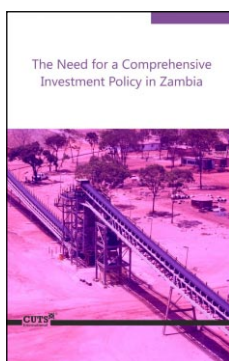
This can be accessed at: http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/pdf/How_the_2016_Fuel_Subsidy_Removal_Affected_Transport_Consumption_and_Consumers.pdf



The Need for a Comprehensive Investment Policy in Zambia

This study focusses on the investment policy regime in the Zambian economy in general. This was an interesting exercise given that Zambia was looking to investments as a means for growth, job creation and poverty reduction. Therefore, any diagnosis that tries to point out where the flaws and strengths in the investment regime, is key in informing any policy decision. Therefore, Oxfam and CUTS have been felicitated for initiating this piece of research which is timely, as the Ministry of Commerce, Trade & Industry (MCTI) has taken a board decision to officially develop an investment policy that should take into account the contemporary developments on investment. The publication, by undertaking a systematic scoping of existing institutional, legal, policy and regulatory framework associated with investment in Zambia, validates old insights on investment, on one hand, and more importantly provides new insights, on the other.

This can be accessed at: http://www.cuts-international.org/ARC/Lusaka/pdf/The_Need_for_a_Comprehensive_Investment_Policy_in_Zambia.pdf



REPRESENTATIONS

Chenai Mukumba, Centre Coordinator, CUTS Lusaka, Zambia represented CUTS Lusaka, Zambia at the Launch of the Continental Free Trade Agreement held on March 17-21, 2018 at Kigali, Rwanda organised by the African Union (AU). The main objective of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement is to provide a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of people and investments.

Mutanga Musiwa represented CUTS Lusaka, Zambia at the 'Third Global Road Safety Leadership Course (GRSLC)' held on March 04-16, 2018. The course aimed at building leadership capacity to design, advocate for, and implement effective road safety programmes and policies. The event was organised by Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit (JHU), and was held at Nairobi, Kenya.

Appiah Kusi Adomako, Isaac Yaw Obeng, Hilary Enos-Edu and Juliet Oppong Yeboah of CUTS Accra, Ghana had a meeting on March 21, 2018 with Ghana Standard Authority with the objective of establishing a strong working relationship and discussing future collaboration.

Daniel Asher, Martin Mulwa and Jackline Wanja of CUTS Nairobi, Kenya participated in the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) field day organised on February 22, 2018. The field day aimed at promoting fodder value chain for improved livestock productivity in the face of climate change.

Isaac Yaw Obeng attended the Tralac Annual Conference 2018 in Kingali, Rwanda on The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) – Opportunity for Africa from March 22-25, 2018. The objective of the Conference was to reflect on, and appraise the AfCFTA. Additionally, the way forward of the AfCFTA was also considered.

Martin Mulwa attended a Pre-Budget Hearing Meeting on February 15, 2018. The Meeting was convened to collect pre-budget proposals for Kenya's 2018-19 Budget.

Collins Owegi of CUTS Nairobi, Kenya attended the National Post COP 23 Stakeholders Workshop on March 14, 2018. The workshop reflected on the achievements, outcomes and lessons learnt from COP 23 and analysed how these could be used to Kenya's advantage as we start preparations for COP 24.

Jackline Wanja attended a meeting with the Nakuru Acting Director for Economic Planning on March 07, 2018 to introduce Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNS) project and influence inclusion of food safety and loss reduction aspects into Nakuru County.



REFLECTIONS FROM MEDIA

CUTS Demands Review of Fuel Prices

News Diggers, January 02, 2018

Centre Coordinator of CUTS Lusaka Centre Chenai Mukumba has challenged the Energy Regulation Board to carry out and publish a December review of wholesale and retail prices of fuel. In a statement to News Diggers, Mukumba noted that the ERB had only carried out four fuel price reviews instead of six from the time government announced the removal of fuel subsidies and gave a policy directive to migrate to cost reflective tariffs. Mukumba stated that the bimonthly system of reviewing fuel prices ensured predictability and certainty in the fuel sub-sector and that it also ensured that consumers were indeed paying cost reflective tariffs.

<https://diggers.news/business/2018/01/02/cuts-demands-review-of-fuel-prices/>

Using Fiscal Policies to Address Inequalities in Ghana

B & FT, February 21, 2018

The cost of healthcare has been on the increase all over the world. Globally, healthcare expenditure has been projected to reach US\$8.7tn by 2020. Ghana seems to be on track with an average of 8.6 percent of government's allocation to the sector. Though this figure seems commendable, yet it is below the 15 percent as part of the Abuja Declaration. Over the years, Ghana government's allocations to the sector have gone primarily into the payment of compensation of arrears, employee salaries, and building non-functioning health facilities in the urban areas with little going into infrastructure and other capital projects. Like in many countries, healthcare financing has been a mix between government's support, user fees as well as dedicated taxes.

<https://thebftonline.com/features/using-fiscal-policies-to-address-inequalities-in-the-healthcare-sector/>



Despite Ban, CUTS Concern of Illegal Mukula Trade Continuation

Lusaka Times, January 15, 2018

CUTS Lusaka, Zambia has expressed concern that despite the ban on the harvest, transportation and exportation of Mukula tree, there is a lot of illegal trading. CUTS Lusaka, Zambia Country Coordinator Chenai Mukumba said that this is the more reason why her organisation feels that the government lifts the ban as it works out on measures of properly managing the Mukula tree. Mukumba said there is need for the government to see to it that the Mukula specie is properly managed and that the citizens benefit from this species.

<https://www.lusakatimes.com/2018/01/15/despite-ban-cuts-concerned-illegal-mukula-trade-continued/>

CUTS Launches a Movement to Pressurise Government to Pass Consumer Protection Law

Ghana Web, March 15, 2018

The Centre for Policy and Research (CUTS) in collaboration with the Consumer Protection Agency has launched operation 20 thousand signatures to pressurise Zambian government on the passage of the Consumer Protection Law. In a press briefing to mark the World Consumer Day, Appiah Kusi Adomako, Centre Coordinator of CUTS Accra, Ghana said it is about time government enacted the Consumer Protection Commission which will ensure that consumers are not taken for granted by merchants and manufacturers.

“We supposed to have put on red because we have been in the trenches for many years in talking about the need for government through its many agencies to pass the consumer protection law”, Adomako said. On his part, the Chief Executive Officer of Consumer Protection Agency, Kofi Kapito said the passage of the consumer protection law should be a priority to all Ghanaians as everybody at one point or the other becomes a consumer and source the services of agencies.

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/CUTS-launches-a-movement-to-pressurize-government-to-pass-consumer-protection-law-634726>

Can Zambia Escape Maize Dependency Syndrome?

Daily Mail, February 11, 2018

The debate on Zambians rethinking dependency on maize has once again taken centre stage. For almost every Zambian, maize means food. Many homes, whether in the rural or urban areas, depend on *nsbima* for their main meals. In some homes, it is the only food available for all the three meals in a day, breakfast, lunch and supper. CUTS Lusaka mentions that it is difficult for the Zambians to shift from maize dependency to other crops because they cannot afford alternative foods. Chenai Mukumba said that Zambia, for decades, has had a mono-diet culture that has been heavily dependent on maize. She argues that agricultural policies that have been maize focussed with over half of the agriculture budget going towards providing maize subsidies and maize marketing.

<https://www.daily-mail.co.zm/can-zambia-escape-maize-dependency-syndrome/>