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**DIRECTORATE FOR FINANCIAL AND ENTERPRISE AFFAIRS
COMPETITION COMMITTEE**

Global Forum on Competition

THE ROLE OF CONSUMERS IN PROMOTING PRO-COMPETITIVE REFORMS

Presentation by Mr. Pradeep S. Mehta

-- Session III --

This presentation is submitted by Mr. Pradeep S. Mehta (CUTS) under session III of the Global Forum on Competition to be held on 21 and 22 February 2008.

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Engaging Civil Society to Promote Competitive Reforms in Developing Countries Promoting



Pradeep S. Mehta
Secretary General
CUTS International



Organisational Profile

“Consumer sovereignty in the framework of social justice and equality, within and across borders”

- Established in 1983; will be celebrating Silver Jubilee this year
- Accredited to UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNCSD, WTO, World Bank etc.
- Serves on several policy-making bodies in India and abroad
- Over 100 employees in ten offices

Programme Areas:

- Consumer Protection
- International Trade and Development
- Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation
- Human Development
- Consumer Safety



The Family Tree

Programme Centres

- Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment
- Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation
- Centre for Consumer Action Research & Training
- Centre for Human Development

New Initiative

- CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition

Resource Centres

Jaipur, Calcutta,
Chittorgarh and Delhi (India)
London (UK)
Lusaka (Zambia)
Nairobi (Kenya)
Hanoi (Vietnam)
Geneva (Switzerland)*

* Forthcoming Centre

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International Network for Civil Society Organisations on Competition (INCSOC)



- A Network of 120 members from 53 countries
- Members represent CSOs, Research Institutes and Parliaments
- Close contact with international organisations

Milestone Publication

- Competition Regimes in the World – A Civil Society Report

www.incsoc.net

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Distillation of Experiences

- Completed projects in 20 developing countries across Asia and Africa, and Competition Regimes
- In a nutshell, two important considerations:
 - Convergence between competition and consumer protection policies:
 - Availability, quality and prices
 - End objectives of both policies are same
 - Lack of adequate resources within the institutions
 - Human, technical and financial resources

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CSO Participation in Evolution

- Stage I: Evolution of a Competition Law
 - Clear Policy Directives
 - Willingness to engage stakeholders
 - Participation needs clear policy directives e.g. “Working Group on Competition Policy” in **Mozambique**.
 - Public Consultation
 - Opportunity to provide comments on draft laws
 - Builds up interest and knowledge

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CSO Participation in Evolution (cont'd)

- Stage II: Developing Conditions
 - Sensitisation of Multiple Stakeholders
 - 7Up Approach
 - Successfully applied in 19 countries of Asia and Africa
 - Lauded by OECD Development Assistance Committee
 - Motivating National Research Projects
 - BIDPA, **Botswana**
 - Competition Commission of India, **India**
 - Competition Admin Deptt, **Vietnam**

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CSO Participation in Evolution (cont'd)

- Stage III: Actual Implementation of Law
 - CSOs working as Allies
 - Limitations pertaining to human and financial resources
 - Need to develop synergies with consumer groups
 - Pro-active civil society engagement

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Impediments in Civil Society Engagement

- Lack of Continuity
 - Garnering Resources for Functioning
 - Developing Capacity
 - Continuous Engagement
- Contradictions and Frictions
 - When many CSOs working on policy issues
 - Differences of opinion
 - Difficulty to form consensus
- Ill-developed concept of Civil Society

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In Conclusion

- Strong will, commitment and vision
- Capacity on competition law & policy issues
- Ability to sensitise other stakeholders
- Identify and report anti-competitive practices
- World Competition Day
- Commitment from the International Development Community
- International Competition Fund

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