

**Report on the Meeting of the International Network of Civil Society Organisations
on Competition (INCSOC), Hanoi, Vietnam, August 17, 2005.**

The Interim Review Meeting of the 7Up2 (Advocacy and Capacity Building on Competition Policy and Law in Asia) Project of CUTS International was held at Hanoi on 16th and 17th August 2005. Since many INCSOC members were attending the Review Meeting, it was decided to organise a brief fringe meeting on 17th August 2005 to take stock progress of the network and speak to the new members. The following INCSOC members were present in the meeting:

1. Pradeep S Mehta, CUTS and Co-Chair, INCSOC (accompanied by Nitya Nanda of CUTS)
2. Deunden Nikomborirak, Thailand Development Research Institute
3. Darshan Singh (on behalf of Indrani Thuraisingham of FOMCA, Malaysia)
4. Neelu Thapa, SAWTEE
5. Iftekar Ahmed, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute
6. Hoang Van Thanh, CIEM, Vietnam
7. Leeber Leebouapao (with Saykham Vodalet), NERI, Lao PDR
8. Sok Hach (with Nuth Monyrath), EIC, Cambodia
9. Zafrullah Chowdhury, Consumers Association of Bangladesh
10. Kwame Owino, Institute of Economic Affairs, Kenya
11. Indah Suksmaningsih, YLKI, Indonesia
12. Do Gia Phan, VINASTAS, Vietnam
13. Erlinda Medalla, PIDS, Philippines

Sitesh Bhojani, Barrister, Australia representing FEMAG and Malathy Knight John of IPS were also in Hanoi but missed this meeting due to other exigencies.

1. The meeting started with Pradeep S Mehta welcoming the members, especially those who have joined recently. Since, there were a few new members, Mehta gave an introduction to INCSOC briefly talking about its history, objectives and structure. INCSOC functions through three working groups: Advocacy, Capacity Building, and World Competition Report. He spoke about the proposed major initiative of publishing World Competition Report, which is being lead by CUTS and IPS. However, that will take some time as it would require some money for which IPS is negotiating with IDRC, Canada. As Malathy could not participate, it was left to her to advise all members.
2. However, Mehta spoke about the precursor to that, it was decided to prepare a status report on “Competition Regimes Around the World: A Civil Society Perspective”. This is a voluntary effort by INCSOC members and other experts. The report giving competition profiles of about 125 countries is scheduled to be released at UNCTAD’s 5th Review Conference on the “Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Rules and Principles on Restrictive Business Practices (UNCTAD Set)” in November 2005 at Antalya, Turkey.

3. He also talked about the e-group discussion forum of INCSOC and urged members to participate in the discussion and keep the forum active which is also important for making INCSOC a vibrant network. Members can post important news and views from their countries and regions on which others can comment. Members can also raise questions that they might have which will reach other members and some of them might have the answers. He also requested all to get new members especially Parliamentarians. After that he invited comments and suggestions from others.
4. Kwame Owino, the Co-Chair of the Capacity Building Working Group gave a brief description of his group which is trying to develop a framework for capacity building of CSOs on competition issues. Though the group has some plans, further progress could not be made due to lack of funds. Even the third AGM of the network could not be held because of lack of funding.
5. Iftekar Ahmed wanted to know about the kind of commitment expected from the parliamentarians, while Deunden Nikomborirak wanted to know the modalities of becoming a member. Mehta responded by saying that there is no binding commitments and it would be left to the voluntary efforts of the members to contribute to promoting competition culture with whatever resources and contacts they might have. Becoming a member is also very simple. They can just write an email to incsoc@incsoc.net expressing their intention to become a member.
6. Darshan Singh informed that FOMCA is likely to organise a seminar on competition policy very soon and they will keep INCSOC posted on it.
7. Sok Hach wanted to know how many parliamentarians should be invited as he knows many of them in his country. To this, Mehta responded by saying that there is no need to have too many of them. A few but interested and active members would be more useful. He also mentioned that it could be better if they are comfortable with English language though that should not bar parliamentarians who are otherwise very influential in policy making of the country. Zafrullah Chowdhury opined that it would be useful to get parliamentarians from all major political parties. Hence, their number will depend on that.
8. Deunden suggested that it could be useful to invite media persons and lawyers to join as members as well to which everybody agreed.
9. Neelu Thapa wanted to know, in a situation like that in Nepal where there is no parliament in existence, what would be done. It was agreed that in such a situation former parliamentarians and even important politicians could be invited to join.
10. Leeber Leebouapao raised the question of institutional affiliation of members. It was clarified that the first category of members are CSOs and not any individuals. For parliamentarians, it would not be necessary to talk about institutional affiliation as they are affiliated to parliament. However, academicians and

competition experts working in any field can join INCSOC as associate member. This is applicable for competition authorities as well.

11. Iftekar Ahmed draw attention of the members to the modus operandi of the Rapid Response Group of the World Bank. The moderator of the group picks up a topic and initiate the discussions. This can be tried at INCSOC forum as well.
12. Mehta informed the members that efforts are being made to raise funds for the third AGM of the network and some success has also been achieved. He expressed hope that the next AGM could be held in near future. The meeting came to an end with thanks from him.

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