



MC10  
NAIROBI  
2015

10<sup>TH</sup> WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE SIDE EVENT

## REGIONALISM, MULTILATERALISM: WHERE IS AFRICA IN ALL THIS?

## REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND POVERTY: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

Organiser: CUTS Nairobi  
Venue: Nairobi Safari Club  
Time: 0800 – 1300 hours

### BACKGROUND

Disenchantment with the slow pace of negotiations and exclusion of ‘new generation’ issues, among others, have made regionalism more attractive than ever to many developed and developing countries. EU and USA have formed a trading bloc comprising 29 countries; USA is already in a preferential trading arrangement with Australia, Singapore, New Zealand and 8 other countries; whereas India and China together with 14 developing and developed countries are in a trade bloc as well. Perhaps what seems to be the saving grace for the WTO in the face of this wave of regionalism is none of the emerging countries are in a regional trade agreement with the EU and USA, a perfect reflection of what is happening at the WTO.

Africans have not failed to note the mad rush towards regionalism by heavy weights in the trade world and not a single of their nations is part of it. Evidence is emerging that the formation of these mega blocs is poised to erode preferences African nations enjoy in some of the markets. Africa also has its own mega trading bloc initiatives- the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). The pace of negotiations, aggressiveness of liberalisation, political commitment, among other factors, will ultimately determine Africa’s share in world trade and its impact on global trade governance.

As attractive as regionalism sounds, one is inclined to also ask if regionalism in fact results in poverty reduction. Existing evidence and simulation analysis on trade, integration and poverty and their correlation need to be explored and documented based on conceptual frameworks and empirical evidence.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ? Is Africa better off within or outside the multilateral trading system?
- ? Will Africa’s mega trading bloc(s) have substantial impact on world trade and its governance?
- ? What are the necessary ingredients for a strong African mega trading bloc that can impact on global trading rules and expand world trade market share?
- ? What is the relationship between regional integration and poverty?
- ? Does regional integration lead to structural changes?
- ? What are the principal transmission channels through which RI could impact on poverty?



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## TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

0800 - 0830	Arrival and Registration
0830 - 0840	Welcoming Remarks AND INTRODUCTIONS <i>Clement Onyango, CUTS Nairobi</i>
0840 - 0900	Regionalism vs. Multilateralism: Implications for Africa <i>Martha Getachew Bekele, CUTS Nairobi</i>
0900 - 0920	Regionalism in Africa: TFTA and CFTA <i>Simon Ng'ona, CUTS Lusaka</i>
0920 - 1020	Plenary Discussion (15 minutes each) <i>Appiah Kusi Adomako, CUTS Accra</i> <i>Pradeep S. Mehta, CUTS International</i> <i>Bipul Chatterjee, CUTS International</i> <i>Rashid Kaukab, CUTS Geneva</i>
1020 - 1030	Floor Discussion
1030-1100	Health Break
1100 - 1120	Regional Integration and Poverty Reduction: What we know so far <i>Michael Gasiorek, Sussex University</i>
1120 - 1220	Plenary Discussion (15 minutes each) <i>Dr. Christopher Onyango, KIPPRA</i> <i>Dr. Maximiliano Mendez-Parra, ODI</i> <i>Dr. Miriam Omolo, IEA</i> <i>Dr. San Bilal, ECPDM</i>
1220 - 1250	Floor Discussion
1250 - 1300	Wrap up and Closing Remarks