

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS DURING THE NRG3 AT THE KAIRABA BEACH HOTEL, BANJUL, THE GAMBIA ON 8 APRIL 2010.

The meeting was graced by the presence of Minister of Trade and Regional Integration and Employment, Hon. Abdou Kolley. In addition, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Honourable..... who had also participated during the previous training sessions and the Chairman of the Gambia Competition Commission (GCC), Mr Alhaji Tamu Njie were also present. The Minister reiterated that he still stands by the commitment he raised during the first NRG meeting at Jerma Beach Hotel. The Minister is therefore grateful to CUTS and partners for efforts to build capacity of Gambian constituents. He pointed out that the Ministry will be eagerly waiting for the outcome of the NRG meeting which will result in an advocacy roadmap which will be developed by the members. The Ministry is committed to taking any action that would be requested of it. The government remains committed to a functional competition regime in Gambia. He thanked CUTS and Pro-PAG for a timely project, given the recent competition reforms in Gambia.

During the NRG proceedings, the members felt that there was a need for caring the various advocacy issues discussed during the NRG II meetings forward. Whilst Pro-PAG has to be involved for all future initiatives relating to the project, there was need for an institution whose focus would be solely on driving the competition agenda forward without divided attention on other issues like poverty etc. It was pointed out that there was an entity known as the Competition and Consumer Protection Advocacy Group (CCOSPAG) formed during the tenure of the project which is more suitable for carrying the process ahead. CCOSPAG can therefore be used to facilitate meetings and mobilize stakeholders to discuss issues emanating from the project. Members can now look at modalities of mobilizing resources funds to set it up as it is useful as a bridge between GCC and consumers vis-à-vis violations.

It was also pointed out that PURA has some budget allocated for consumer education on its operations and if a proposal is properly crafted, they can chip in to complement whatever would have been started under the project.

On specific action points, it was pointed out that a leaflet can be used as a dissemination tool, which can be distributed to stakeholders on competition issues associated benefits. In particular, business can be the prime target and one strategy could be to work with important authorities such as the Gambia Revenue Authority and ensure that whenever they send out tax information to the business, the leaflet can also be included.

Specific Action points on issues agreed during the Regional Training Workshop (RTW)

About six specific action points were discussed during the meeting. It was decided that due to paucity of time, the members only had to agree on the responsibility aspect, i.e. who should take a lead in ensuring that the action points are acted upon. The Table below summarizes the discussions.

Specific Action Point	Further inputs required?	Likely outcome/impact	Who?
1. Enhance the understanding of National Assembly members and CSOs	Identify influential members of NA; Organise interactive session with them; Encourage and provide resource materials (publications) to enable them to reach out to entire NA Hold focus group discussions with key CSO leaders; Empower them with resource materials to reach out their members	More informed policy discourse on competition issues More effective advocacy for policy change Effective oversight over activities of competition commission	GCC, Pro-PAG, Consumer Advocacy Groups such as CCOSPAG, CPAG, FGI etc
2. Engage proactively with the business sector	Meet bi-annually with the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry to disseminate ideas on competition Prepare a leaflet on Competition issues to be disseminated through GRA	Enhanced competition culture among business operators Better cooperation between competition commission and business sector achieved	Pro-PAG, GCCI, Gambia Bar Association, GIEPA,
3. Enhance consumer awareness of competition issues and create a consumer movement	Organise radio and TV talk shows in English and local languages Disseminate information materials in English and local languages	Consumers empowered to monitor practices of business operators and to get value for money	Pro-PAG, CCOSPAG, CPAG, GCC, PURA
4. Assist the government to improve capacity for policy formulation	Nominate a representative from the public sector for training workshop under this project	More informed decision making by public sector (competition commission, regulators)	Pro-PAG, CCOSPAG, CPAG, GCC, PURA
4b. Assist GCC to resolve constraints.	Arrange for targeted		

<p>5. Advocate for greater funding support for regulatory authorities/agencies</p>	<p>capacity-building programmes for staff of these agencies with the support of CUTS</p> <p>Make available to the agencies resource materials from CUTS and other international agencies</p> <p>Organise strategic meetings between competition commission, Pro-PAG, Ministry of Finance, NA to influence allocations to competition authority</p> <p>Collaborate with commission to develop a strategy for attracting donor funding</p>	<p>Proactive implementation of provisions of the Act</p> <p>Well-resourced and empowered commission that can fulfil its mandate</p>	<p>Pro-PAG, Ministry of Finance, National Assembly,</p>
<p>6. Facilitate a framework of cooperation between the competition commission and sector regulators</p>	<p>Facilitate quarterly roundtables between competition authority and sector regulators in which challenges will be discussed and solution proffered, borrowing from experiences of other countries and the expertise of CUTS and other international agencies</p>	<p>Tension arising from issues of concurrent jurisdiction minimised</p> <p>Sector-specific competition rules better implemented by concerned regulators</p>	<p>Pro-PAG and Regulators</p>

It was decided that each of the institution which was given responsibility should now strategies and inform members how it would take the agenda forward.