

About CART

Established in 1983 as a small voluntary group of concerned citizens, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) expanded its activities and CUTS CART was set up in 1996 as a programme centre to pursue the cause of common consumers, initially being undertaken by CUTS as the mandate.

The programmes of the Centre are primarily aimed at generating awareness, creating a more responsible society and encouraging changes at the policy level by advocating with the government machinery and sensitising it to the issues of concern of the common man. The Centre has spearheaded several campaigns and pioneered consumer empowerment.

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Biodiversity – Time for Nature World Environment Day 2020

Since its beginning in 1974, World Environment Day has developed into a global platform for raising awareness and taking action on urgent issues from marine pollution and global warming to sustainable consumption and wildlife crime. It has been celebrated every year on 5 June; engaging governments, businesses, celebrities, and citizens to focus their efforts on a pressing environmental issue.

The theme for the 2020 World Environment Day is "Biodiversity – Time for Nature". CUTS observed World Environment Day by organising an international webinar using a virtual platform on June 05, 2020. It was attended by more than 65 participants, representatives of civil society organisations across the country.

George Cherian, Director, CUTS International said that the year 2020 is a critical year for nations' commitments to preserving and restoring biodiversity because it marks the end of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (2011- 2020). He also said biodiversity plays an important role in dealing with the pandemic like COVID-19.

Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International, delivered the opening address on "Why Biodiversity Conservation is necessary for dealing with the Pandemic". He opined that biodiversity imbalance happens due to consumption patterns and lifestyle. He shared anecdotes about the Earth Summit, which was a major United Nations conference held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The Earth Summit led to the establishment of the Convention on Biological Diversity along with other conventions.

Anubha Prasad, National Coordinator, Partnership for Action on Green Economy, UNEP, India, spoke about the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity. She said one million species are now threatened with extinction worldwide. The main reasons for species loss are changes in land and sea use, unsustainable resource consumption, direct exploitation of organisms (like hunting or fishing), climate change, and pollution. She highlighted more than half of the world's total gross domestic product is moderately or highly dependent on natural capital.

Maria Rydlund, Senior Policy Advisor (Tropical Forest), Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), Stockholm, explained land-use change and its implication on biodiversity and humans about the pandemic. She said biodiversity crisis is as big as climate change and also very important for the economy. Biodiversity loss, however, is happening at a very high speed and will soon affect our economies because 'natural systems that support lives and livelihoods are at risk of collapsing'.

Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International, London, explained about consumers and biodiversity. She began by pointing out that today people are looking for a little inspiration on how to make better environmental choices. COVID-19 is strengthening the idea of a sustainable lifestyle. She highlighted the importance of sustainable consumption and consumer information to make an environment-friendly decision. Eco-labelling is an effective way of informing consumers about the environmental impacts of selected products and the choices they can make.

Balakrishna Pisupathi, Chairperson, FLEDGE & Regional Vice-Chair of IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (for South and Southeast Asia), explained about nature-based solutions. In 2020, everything is centred around biodiversity and nature conservation. But, despite so many works, biodiversity is losing at a great speed. Evidence on the ground suggests a very wide gap between the policy and programme intentions and reality. Land degradation and unsustainable consumption practices remain a challenge.

The meeting concluded with questions and answers session and a vote of thanks.



EARTH DAY

50th Anniversary observed on the theme 'Climate Action'

Earth day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate the support for environmental protection. This year it is the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and this year's theme for Earth Day 2020 is 'Climate Action'. CUTS observed Earth Day by organising a webinar by using the virtual platform of Skype on April 22, 2020.

The Webinar commenced with the opening remarks by **George Cherian**. He opined that the first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, to raise awareness about mankind's role in protecting our natural world. Earth Day started as more of a political movement, though today it has become a popular day for many communities to gather together and discuss environmental issues, clean up litter, plant trees, or simply reflect on the beauty of nature, etc.

He further said in 2020 about 1 billion people are expected to observe the Earth day, mainly sitting at home. The theme of climate action represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable.

Sara Nilsson, Programme Manager, SSNC, Stockholm focused on the key lessons learned in the context of pandemic about climate change and how these experiences can be used to shape the future of the people and planet. She also drew the linkage between sustainable consumption and the sharing economy. She highlighted the key learning about climate change and experiences shaping the future of humankind and the planet during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International, London, and Co-lead of One Planet Network spoke about the linkage between climate action and sustainable consumption. She highlighted the Oslo Symposium in 1994 which proposed a working definition of sustainable consumption as "the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations".

Rashid S. Kaukab, Executive Director, CUTS International, Geneva explained the role of trade and agreements about climate action. He highlighted CUTS Geneva's intervention on agriculture, climate change in East African communities with the help of CUTS Nairobi. He highlighted trade and trade agreements can be part of both problem and problem-solving. Trade is an efficient allocation of resources. The transfer of technology should be further enhanced. He also emphasised the need for advocacy and research work on climate action for concrete action.

Clement Onyango, Director, CUTS International, Nairobi explained initiatives, challenges, and the need of budget allocation for climate action. He highlighted there is the highest number of environmental laws and bodies in the history of earth which is not sufficient to deal with climate change. There is a need for a holistic approach to climate change and action. Civil society should unbundle and demystify the greenhouse gases and climate change. There should be a curriculum on sustainable consumption in primary and secondary education.

After the question and answer session, Cherian summed up the discussions and concluded the webinar by thanking the speakers and participants.

UNCTAD Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Consumer Protection

The Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Consumer Protection was held virtually on June 24, 2020, attended by 121 participants from over 59 member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. This was a preparatory meeting for the Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices (UN Review Conference), to be held, under the auspices of UNCTAD, from October 19-23, 2020.

The Ad Hoc Expert Meeting held consultations on the issue of 'Preventing International Trade in Unsafe and Hazardous Consumer Products', followed by discussions of the UNCTAD Working Group on Consumer Product Safety, convened by the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy (IGE). George Cherian represented CUTS International in the meeting.



Commemoration of World Food Safety Day



CUTS celebrated the second World Food Safety Day on June 05, 2020. This year the theme was 'Food Safety: Everyone's Business'. The main focus of the event was to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism, and sustainable development.

Everyone has the right to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food. Still today, almost one in ten people in the world fall ill after eating contaminated food and 4,20,000 die every year. The call to action and key messages has been disseminated through social media platforms. A blog written by George Cherian and Madhu Sudan Sharma entitled 'Food Safety: A Shared Responsibility' got published as post of Consumers International special blog series.

Campaign on Good Hygienic Practices

As part of ProOrganic project of CUTS, in partnership with SSNC, the team made preparations for launching awareness activities as part of the COVID response and had online meetings with partners in 11 target districts. In addition to educating the target population through various means, it was planned to distribute sanitising kits consisting of materials such as masks, sanitizers, soap, etc.

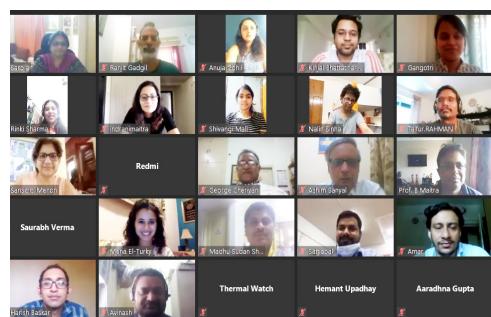
Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) contributed 5000 soaps free of cost, on June 12, 2020, to be distributed to the participants of these awareness events. CUTS expresses sincere gratitude to HUL, especially Sangeeta Chadha, Lead Regulatory Advocacy Affairs (India).



Virtual Meeting of GRSP Partners

A Virtual Meeting of partners of Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) organised by Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), Chennai was held on June 29-30, 2020.

George Cherian, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Satyapal Singh, and Aradhana Gupta attended the meeting. Taifur Rehman from GRSP provided a brief overview of the meeting. CUTS facilitated the first session on 'Partner Update: An overview'. Madhu Sudan Sharma provided a detailed overview of the activities of project partners through a PPT, prepared with inputs from all of them.



The second session was on 'Impact of COVID-19 on GRSP partner's work' which was facilitated by Parisar, Pune. The third and concluding session was facilitated by Save Life Foundation, Delhi.

On second day, the first session was on 'Going Forward in the Post COVID-19 scenario' facilitated by CEE, Ahmedabad. The second session was on 'Communication strategies' facilitated by Consumer Voice. GRSP social media team also gave their inputs and suggestions in the proposed plan and spoke about highlights of sub-working group activities. More than 25 partner representatives, GHAI and GRSP representatives participated.

WEBINARS

Towards Recourse Efficiency in Indian Cities

Deepak Saxena and Amit Babu attended a webinar on 'Secondary Resource Utilisation in Construction Sector: Towards recourse efficiency in Indian cities' organised by Development Alternative on June 29, 2020.

Financial Consumer Protection in Emerging Economies

George Cherian made a presentation on 'Engaging and Enhancing Consumer Protection in Financial Services', in a workshop on 'Effective Financial Consumer Protection Advocacy in Developing and Emerging Economies', organised by Consumers International/ Consultative Group to Assist the Poor on June 22, 2020.

Climate Resilient Natural farming, Andhra Pradesh experience

Rajdeep Pareek attended a webinar on 'Climate Resilient Natural farming, Andhra Pradesh experience' organised by Rapid Rural Community Response on June 22, 2020.

SCORAI International Conference

The 4th International Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI) conference was jointly organised by Northeastern University and the KTH Royal Institute of Technology on June 10-12. The theme for the 2020 conference was 'Sustainable Consumption & Social Justice in an Urbanizing World'. CUTS presented two posters and was ranked first in the 'Leaderboard'. George Cherian, Amar Deep Singh, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Amit Babu and Simi TB attended the conference.

WEBINARS

Successful Campaign on Consumer Protection Act of Zimbabwe

George Cherian, Deepak Saxena and Aradhana Gupta attended a webinar on the 'Successful Campaign on Consumer Protection Act of Zimbabwe organised by CI on April 30, 2020. Cherian spoke on the new Indian Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

Lawyering & Corporate Legal Profession in the Post Corona Period

Deepak Saxena and Aradhana Gupta attended a colloquium on 'Lawyering & Corporate Legal Profession in the Post Corona Period' organised by O P Jindal Global Law School on May 09, 2020.

Pandemic and Beyond: Rebuilding Public Health

Madhu Sudan Sharma participated in the webinar on 'Pandemic and Beyond; Rebuilding Public Health' organised on May 11, 2020 by Mindmine Mondays live on CNBC-TV18.

Can I recycle this?

Deepak Saxena, Amar Deep Singh, Simi TB, and Amit Babu attended a webinar 'Can I recycle this?' organised by The One Planet Network's Consumer Information Programme on May 13, 2020.

Consumer Outreach Programme

George Cherian and Deepak Saxena attended an online meeting of Consumer Advocacy Groups on June 01, 2020. Deepak Saxena, Dharmendra Chaturvedi, and Aradhana Gupta also attended a Consumer Outreach Programme organised by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Regional Office at Jaipur on June 26, 2020.



CART IN MEDIA

The collage includes the following news items:

- THE EDITION**: Banning the Tobacco products, as part of fight against Covid-19
- Consumers International**: Banning the Tobacco products, as part of fight against Covid-19
- BW SMARTCITIES**: Mitigate Road Crash Deaths during National Lockdown in Rajasthan: CUTS International recommends Rajasthan Government
- Matters India**: Time to redefine relationship with nature
- Matters India**: Ban tobacco products to fight Covid-19
- George Cherian & Simi TB**: Kerala Sets Example In Trans-Fat Free Bakery Products
- George Cherian & Simi TB**: Banning the Tobacco products, as part of fight against Covid-19
- George Cherian & Simi TB**: Why biodiversity conservation is necessary for dealing with the pandemic
- George Cherian & Simi TB**: Towards trans-fat free bakery foods

Food safety, everyone's business

Madhu Sudan Sharma and Simi TB attended a webinar on 'Food safety, everyone's business' organised by Consumer VOICE in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry - Surakshit Khadya Abhiyan on June 07, 2020.

Road Safety

Satyapal Singh and Aradhana Gupta attended a BIGRS webinar on Road Safety organised by World Bank and IRAP on June 02, 04, 09 & 11, 2020.

Impact of COVID-19 on Urban Mobility

Amar Deep Singh attended a webinar, on 'Impact of COVID-19 on Urban Mobility' organised by The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI), on June 08, 2020.

Organic farming

Deepak Saxena, Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Nimisha Gaur attended a talk-cum-discussion on 'Challenges & opportunities in organic farming' organised by a grower couple Tejaswi and Asha Nairn on May 06, 2020.

Agrarian Crisis

Rajdeep Pareek attended a webinar on 'Agrarian Crisis Also Needs an Economic Solution' and 'Seeds in the Hands of Community' organised by the Revitalizing Rainfed Agriculture network on May 22 and 27, 2020 respectively.