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### NOBEL PRIZE AWARDED TO AMARTYA SEN

BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest has noted the positive welcome the press worldwide has for the news that the Indian economist Amartya Sen was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics last week. Sen's work has given academic credence to the concepts of distribution and equity. He has shown that it is possible to move away from pure concepts of economic efficiency, and that entitlements other than utility also play a role in the distribution of economic benefits. His contribution to economics is very close to the ideals of sustainable development and dear to organisations working for it.

### WTO GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSES DOCUMENT DERESTRICTION, TRANSPARENCY

The WTO General Council, meeting last week, discussed transparency and document derestriction, the appointment of a new Director General, issues relating to senior WTO staffing, the high-level meeting on trade and the environment, and a possible high-level meeting on development. The General Council also approved the applications of Latvia and the Kyrgyz Republic to join the WTO.

No conclusions were reached on the document derestriction and transparency. Discussions centred around a joint U.S.-Canadian paper on document derestriction (WT/GC/W/106, October 13, 1998) which makes proposals on different types of documents, proposals based on discussions the two countries' representatives held with a large number of delegations. The resulting proposal is less open to document derestriction than prior proposals by the two countries, or by the EU. It covers different categories of documents: those submitted by Members, minutes of meetings, secretariat background notes, and Final Panel Reports.

The U.S.-Canadian paper proposes that documents submitted by Members should generally be circulated as unrestricted unless the Member making the submission makes an "exceptional request for restricting the submission, but for a period not, in principle, to exceed six months." The paper suggests that minutes of meetings should be considered for derestriction three months after their circulation in all three WTO languages. As far as secretariat background notes are concerned, the U.S.-Canada paper suggests that these normally be circulated as unrestricted, with an exception made for those which "purport to portray the views of WTO Members." In exceptional cases, such papers could be restricted for a maximum of six months. On the whole the U.S.-Canadian proposals were well-received, and a number of industrialised and developing countries spoke out in support of them. Pakistan, Mexico and India seem to be amongst the WTO members most reticent to any changes towards document derestriction, opposing the U.S.-Canadian proposals and favouring the status quo.

The U.S.-Canada proposal did not mention agendas of meetings (airgrams). The U.S., Canada and the EU (the latter in papers submitted earlier this year) had already expressed their view that meeting agendas be derestricted immediately when circulated as drafts to members. Agenda derestriction was supported, inter alia, by some OECD members and Jamaica but Indonesia and some other developing countries objected, saying that as draft agendas have to be approved by members, making them public before approval could cause confusion.

As regards dispute-settlement, the U.S.-Canadian proposal said that once the "Findings and Conclusions" portion of a completed panel report is prepared in all three official languages of the WTO, a final report shall be issued to the parties to the dispute and the "Findings and Conclusions" portion shall be circulated for information purposes as an unrestricted document. This proposal was supported by ASEAN (for whom Indonesia was spokesperson) which noted that this should put an end to the leakage of the findings to the media as is currently the case.

Amongst the other issues discussed by the October General Council the high-level meeting on trade and environment was also raised. The EU submitted a revised proposal on the subject to WTO members. The talk is of a meeting at senior but not ministerial level, involving also UNCTAD and other inter-governmental organisations as well as NGOs. The EU indicated readiness to help fund participation from developing country delegates. With the exception of India, Mexico and Cuba, the proposal, which by and large coincides with the NGO call for a "standing conference on trade and environment" (see BRIDGES Between Trade and Sustainable Development, Vol.2, No. 3, April-May 1998), appears to be gathering increasing support from delegations.

A new proposal came from Egypt, with the support of ASEAN, which suggested that next year the WTO holds a high-level meeting on trade and development. The idea, to be further discussed at the

next session of the General Council, calls for the involvement of senior level officials from trade, finance, pertinent inter-governmental organisations and NGOs to discuss issues of interest to developing countries. The agenda would include items like special and differential treatment, impact assessment of the implementation of the Uruguay Round and the implications of the current financial crisis for the trade prospects of developing countries.

WTO Members, at last week's General Council, also discussed the appointment of the next WTO Director-General, the number of Deputy Directors-General of the Organisation, and senior staffing positions at the WTO. Several delegations believe that the nationality of those who hold high-level posts within the WTO should better reflect WTO membership. Opinions are divided between WTO members as to whether the appointment of a new Director-General should be discussed separately from, or together with, how many Deputy Directors-General the Organisation should have. Pakistan, for instance, wanted to separate the issues. Canada, it appears, disagreed. In the meantime, the new organisation chart reflecting last week's changes within the WTO secretariat (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 2, Number 39 October 12, 1998) has already dropped the Latin American Deputy Director-General, leaving the WTO with a European Director-General and three Deputy DGs from the U.S., India and South Korea.

"Trade: Kyrgyz, Latvia accession okayed," SOUTH-NORTH DEVELOPMENT MONITOR, October 16, 1998; ICTSD Internal Files.

## **MAI IN DOUBT AFTER FRANCE WITHDRAWS FROM TALKS**

France last week made the sudden announcement that it would withdraw from talks on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). The French withdrawal casts an even longer shadow on already troubled MAI talks, underway at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since 1995. Talks were to resume this week after a six-month hiatus, during which member countries were to take stock of constituents' concerns and positions regarding the international investment agreement.

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin told the French Parliament last week that the decision to withdraw from OECD talks reflected French desire to include developing countries in MAI negotiations, and concerns over the global economic crises. Regarding the latter, Mr. Jospin said, "it does not seem to us that it would be wise to allow private interests to encroach excessively on the sovereignty of states." Regarding the former, developing countries led by India, Egypt, Pakistan and Malaysia have expressed strong suspicion and opposition toward the MAI agreement and its presumed mandate over developing countries, which did not participate in the OECD negotiations.

Prior to the six-month break, labour, environment and citizens' groups expressed strong opposition to the MAI for not incorporating labour and environment standards and for a lack of transparency. The OECD had also been strongly criticised for its failure to include developing countries in negotiations, while still expecting them to sign on to an agreement that only rich industrialised countries had had a hand in crafting.

Although the other 28 OECD members agreed to meet this week as scheduled, government officials concede that nothing of substance will be accomplished, and that the meeting will be more of a wake for the MAI at the OECD than substantive talks. It is likely that developed countries will now push for MAI talks to be shifted to the WTO. A number of countries have long argued that the WTO is the appropriate forum for such an agreement to be negotiated. Proponents for moving talks to the WTO--including Mr. Jospin, argue that WTO investment negotiations would be open to nearly all likely recipients and sources of foreign direct investment, rather than the small group of 29 OECD member-states. They also point that at the WTO the balance could be shifted from regulating governments on investment to effectively regulating investment. However, the MAI may not be welcome at the WTO given developing countries' opposition to adding investment talks to the WTO agenda, also wary over issues around sovereignty, as well as labour and environmental issues.

Meanwhile, environment and labour NGOs remain ever vigilant regarding the future of MAI negotiations. While NGOs may yet be able to claim victory over the defeat of the MAI at the OECD, moving investment talks to the WTO could be just as troublesome. The forum may prove a difficult one in which to get labour, environmental and transparency issues addressed.

"L'OMC boude l'AMI," *Le Figaro*, October 16, 1998; "La France claque la porte de l'AMI," *Le Figaro*, October 15, 1998; "France remains obstacle to global investment plan," *WALL STREET JOURNAL*, October 15, 1998; "German BDI slams French investment talks pull-out;" "Investment treaty threatened as France snubs talks," *REUTERS*, October 15, 1998; "Hopes dim for investment talks after Paris withdraws backing," *FINANCIAL TIMES*, October 16, 1998.

## **SHRIMP-TURTLE RULING GETS LUKEWARM REACTION FROM ALL SIDES**

Environmental groups and the victorious complainant countries had mixed reactions to the WTO Appellate Body ruling last week in the shrimp-turtle dispute between the U.S. and Thailand, India, Malaysia, Pakistan (See *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 2, No. 39 October 12, 1998). The WTO last week ruled in its final decision on the case that WTO members do have the right to make market access conditional on compliance with environmental protection measures "within the scope of measures permitted" under the exceptions clause (Article XX) of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), thus affirming the U.S. shrimp import ban in theory. However, the WTO ruled that the U.S. erred in its application of the ban, which the WTO found to be applied in a discriminatory manner between WTO members.

The dispute was brought to the WTO in 1996 by India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand, who were complaining about U.S. restrictions on imports of certain shrimp and shrimp products not caught with nets fitted with a special "turtle excluder" device which prevent turtles from drowning. The Panel ruled on the complaints of these countries this spring, finding that the U.S. import restrictions were contrary to GATT.

Thailand cautiously welcomed last week's ruling but noted warily that the ruling leaves the door open for more trade disputes linked to environmental policy. "There could be more cases requesting environmental protection in the future," Thailand's Deputy Commerce Minister Paitoon Kaewthong

said. One Thai economist expressed disappointment over the WTO ruling. "The decision should have been in favour of Thailand, delinking trade measures from environmental issues. Environmental protection is the domestic business of any nation, so countries should not be able to force others to preserve their own resources," Sirilaksana Khoman, dean of the faculty of economics at Thammasat University said.

Several major international environmental groups expressed disappointment over the ruling. "It's better law, but the same result. The message is, the WTO is broken and needs to be fixed," said Mathew Stillwell of the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL), speaking on behalf of a coalition of environmental organisations, including CIEL, WWF, Friends of the Earth, the Sierra Club and Earth Island Institute.

"[The WTO] has failed to correct its bias against the environment [in this case]," WWF said in a statement. "The WTO keeps moving the goalposts, creating new tests at every turn for any country wishing to prevent environmental damage associated with international trade," Charles Arden-Clarke of the WWF's trade and investment program said. "What is needed is the reform of basic WTO rules to remove uncertainty for environmental policy makers, and dispel fears that the environment could be used for protectionist purposes," Mr. Arden-Clarke said.

Some of these groups did welcome components of the WTO ruling allowing dispute settlement panels to consider amicus briefs from civil society-- at the panel's discretion, when considering a case. This reversed an earlier panel ruling, which said that amicus briefs from non-governmental sources were not allowed under dispute settlement rules. While this development may appear to open the door of the WTO to environmental and sustainable development non-governmental organisations, it also opens the door for other, competing lobbying groups with their own special interests, warned SUNS, the information service of the Malaysian-based Third World Network (TWN).

Trade observers caution this could ultimately produce an environment similar to that of Washington, D.C., where lobbyists often write legislation and have disproportionate control of the legislative process. Further, while this aspect of the ruling might quiet some NGOs, developing countries are less impressed. The South is more interested in more substantive transparency, e.g. making the trade negotiations process less secretive, and taking some power away from dispute panels whose "interpretations" of WTO rules can set precedents that effectively rewrite trade agreements.

The U.S. must now decide how it will comply with the WTO ruling. U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky noted that "WTO panel reports do not change U.S. law. [This report] does not suggest that we weaken our environmental laws in any respect, and we do not intend to do so." Should it not change its laws in response to the ruling, the U.S. could compensate Thailand, et al for lost trade or accept trade retaliation from those trade partners. However, if the U.S. delays or rejects compliance with the ruling, the move could undermine the WTO's authority, if WTO members begin to disregard politically difficult rulings. The U.S. must also tread carefully as it formulates its response to the ruling, especially as it exerts its force against the EU to comply with two other high profile WTO rulings on bananas and beef (see related story in this issue).

"U.S. appeal on shrimp import ban rejected," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 13, 1998; "WTO says U.S shrimp-import ban legal, not evenly implemented," BLOOMBERG, October 12, 1998; "WTO overturns U.S. law on sea turtles," WASHINGTON POST, October 12, 1998; "Thai victory in shrimp row may be temporary," BANGKOK POST, October 14, 1998; "US loses appeal on saving sea turtles," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 14, 1998; "WWF criticises WTO for environmental failings in shrimp-turtle case," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 13, 1998; "WTO backs India's stand on shrimp exports to US," ECONOMIC TIMES (India), October 14, 1998; "Environmentalists protest WTO ruling on shrimp nets," IPS, October 14, 1998; "Trade: Shrimp-turtle ruling against US of no benefit to South," SUNS, October 12, 1998; "Ban turned turtle," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 15, 1998.

### **CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PROMISES RETALIATION OVER BEEF, BANANAS**

The Clinton Administration last week yielded to congressional demands for swift and decisive retaliation against the EU for trade disputes between the U.S. and EU over the EU banana-import regime and its ban on hormone-treated beef imports. The U.S. argues that the EU has failed to meet WTO obligations regarding separate WTO rulings on the beef and banana matters. The Clinton Administration told Congress last week that it would seek retaliation February 1, 1999 unless the EU brings its banana-import regime into compliance with WTO rules. Further, the Administration said it would seek additional retaliation against the EU May 13, 1999 if it fails to comply with a WTO ruling against an EU ban on hormone-treated beef imports. Regarding its ban on hormone-treated beef, the EU has said it needs more time (beyond the May 13, 1999 WTO-mandated implementation date) in order to conduct additional risk-assessment studies.

Regarding bananas, the WTO ruled last year that the current EU banana import regime violates global trade rules by discriminating in favour of imports from four Latin American countries (namely, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela and Nicaragua) and from African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) nations, and against all other producers. The EU has until January 1, 1999 to implement a reformed import regime. Earlier this year the EU adopted a revised quota structure for banana imports. After reviewing the EU's proposed revised regime, the U.S. and the complaining Latin American countries called the proposed changes "primarily cosmetic," arguing that the revisions perpetuate the discriminatory nature of the existing EU import regime. The main focus of concern for the G-5 is over the yet-to-be-settled details around the EU's import licensing system, which had previously reserved a third of licences for ACP producers. EU ministers won't settle the details of the revised licensing system until later this fall, but contend that it will comply with the WTO ruling.

The Administration issued its announcement in order to stop a Republican bill in Congress, entitled the "Uruguay Round Agreements Compliance Act," which would have forced the U.S. to impose punitive tariffs on a list of EU imports. The Administration was to last week begin soliciting public comment on whether the EU banana-import regime burdens and restricts U.S. commerce. In November the Administration will publish for public comment a list of specific retaliation options.

Debate began on the bill before the Administration made its announcement. During debate opponents argued that the bill played into the hands of Chiquita Brands at the expense of ACP producers' livelihood. The bill amounted to "The big and ominous America crushing down on small countries, breaking their economic system, throwing people who are making pennies out onto the streets because we are jealous, if you will, of the relationship they have with the Europeans," a Democratic congresswoman argued. A Democratic congressman questioned the Republican argument that retaliation was necessary to protect U.S. workers. "It is the Republican perception when they talk about American workers, they are talking about the CEO of a multinational company. [In this case referring especially to Chiquita CEO Charles Lindner.] That, to them, is the embodiment of the average American worker." Indeed, critics charge that the beef issue was included in the Uruguay Compliance bill simply to give Chiquita more political leverage. Chiquita Brands estimates that it has lost US\$1 billion in trade due to the current EU regime.

In related news, informed sources report that the European Commission is considering offering compensation for lost trade resulting from its ban on hormone-treated beef imports. Compensation is one option available to countries under WTO compliance measures.

"Administration yields to demands for action against EU on bananas," *INSIDE U.S. TRADE*, October 16, 1998; "House plan slaps punitive tariffs on EU," *JOURNAL OF COMMERCE*, October 14, 1998; "U.S. moves on launching retaliatory action this week against EU over beef, bananas," *INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER*, October 14, 1998.

### **UNCTAD CHIEF CALLS FOR FLEXIBILITY TOWARDS LDCS AT WTO**

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero last week called on the WTO to make it easier for least developed countries (LDCs) to join the WTO. Releasing UNCTAD's annual report on LDCs, Mr. Ricupero said that so far too little has been done to integrate LDCs into the world economy. He said that WTO members should be more flexible with LDCs with respect to market access requirements, and also said that LDCs should be put on a fast track for membership. The UNCTAD report also noted LDC concerns that developed countries would not meet their commitments under the global Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), under which developed WTO economies including the US and EU committed to phase out restrictive import quotas by 2005.

In other news, the WTO last week issued a gloomy prediction on world trade growth for 1998. In sharp contrast to its last forecast in March, when it boldly predicted the Asian financial crises would make just a "small dent" on the world economy, the WTO predicted that world trade growth this year would be around 4 percent, compared to 9.5 percent in 1997. The WTO had previously forecast 1998 world trade growth at 7 percent. The WTO forecasts a 3 percent growth in world trade for 1999. WTO economists said the revised economic forecast came about due to "a combination of factors, starting with the Asian crises and linked to the slowdown and reduced growth in the world economy in 1998 as well as uncertainty about growth prospects in the EU and U.S." As a group, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are expected to see a 10 percent growth in exports in 1998, but a "big contraction in their imports," according to the WTO.

Also in the news, meeting at the WTO last month, WTO members balked at U.S. attempts to dictate the future work agenda for the working group on competition policy. Specifically, the U.S. wants to take off the table any discussion of anti-dumping laws affects on competition policy. Trade observers worry that as the global financial crisis continues stronger economies like the EU and US will increasingly utilise anti-dumping measures to protect their economies. The mandate for the competition working group ends at the end of 1998. Separately, developing countries said at the meeting that any future work on competition policy must proceed at equal pace with a working group on investment, which would establish disciplines for host countries. India, Egypt, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and a representative of UNCTAD told the competition working group that foreign investment liberalisation needs strong competition policy to deal with restrictive business practices.

"WTO told: be flexible with poor nations;" "IMF economic data inaccurate; use of outdated figures blamed," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 16, 1998; "FOCUS-WTO: 1998 world trade growth to halve," REUTERS, October 15, 1998; "WTO slashes its estimate of world trade growth," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, October 16, 1998; "Economic crises stalls fight against poverty," IPS, October 16, 1998.

## **BIOTECH POLLUTION THREATENS ENVIRONMENT**

The increase in global trade has given market access to more than just consumer and agricultural goods: it has also broken down natural barriers for insects, weeds and viruses, which can now travel to new environs via packaging, airlines and other carriers. "Bioinvasion," as the transfer is called, is a growing concern in the age of increasing global trade and biotechnology. "Because it brings the intelligence of evolution to bear, bioinvasion is a kind of 'smart' pollution," according to Chris Bright, author of "Life Out of Bounds, Bioinvasion in a Borderless World." When a species finds a friendly environment, Mr. Bright says, "it tends to get better and better at exploiting an area's resources and at suppressing native species."

This kind of smart pollution is a major concern of opponents to genetically modified organisms (GMO) in the food chain. While companies like Monsanto tout their GMO technology as the answer to global food security concerns, environmentalists and food security experts are less certain. Environmentalists argue that transgenic crops are a threat to local biodiversity due to pollination gene transfer and increased pest resistance to genetically engineered crops. Consumer groups note that GMOs pose as yet unknown health risks to humans.

The environmental group Friends of the Earth last week said dramatic failings on the part of the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has resulted in genetic polluters escaping legal action. Friends of the Earth said last week that official UK inspections of genetically-modified crop test sites are "inadequate, secretive and ineffective", with the result being that genetic pollution is almost certainly being illegally released into the environment.

In related news, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Delta Pine Land Company (soon to be a subsidiary of Monsanto) are pursuing the international marketing of its



Terminator Technology. Terminator Technology renders seeds sterile after one planting. This could end the historic practice among farmers of saving seeds for subsequent year's planting. Opponents to the technology argue it is inconsistent with Monsanto's claim that its biotechnology is the answer to world food problems.

According to a scientist working on the Terminator Technology initiative with the USDA, "Our main interest is protection of American technology. Our mission is to protect U.S. agriculture, and to make us competitive in the face of foreign competition. Without this, there is no way of protecting the technology [patented seed]."

In August, India announced it would ban imported seeds containing the Terminator gene because of the potential harm to Indian agriculture. In May, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recommended that the precautionary principle be applied to the Terminator technology. The Conference also directed its scientific body to examine the technology's impact on farmers and biodiversity.

"Global warming endangers arctic;" "Strong calls for mobilisation of science and technology," IPS, October 15, 1998; "Bio-pollution sweeps across planet," IPS, October 12, 1998; "Biotech firms have their eyes on Africa," IPS, October 16, 1998; "World Bank praises green revolution," IPS, October 5, 1998; "Main points of Development Committee statement," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 5, 1998; "Genetic polluters escape scot free Government Shambles Means Offenders Escape Prosecution," FRIENDS OF THE EARTH PRESS RELEASE, October 16, 1998.

#### **OTHER WTO NEWS IN BRIEF**

On October 8, 1998, the Permanent Delegation of the European Commission formally submitted to the Dispute Settlement Body its status report on the implementation of the rulings in the Banana Dispute, in advance of the October 21 DSB Meeting at which the issue will be once again discussed. The status report notes that the implementation of the recommendations of the DSB requires a modification of the trade provisions of Regulation 404/93. The Council of the European Union thus adopted Council Regulation No. 1637/98 of 20 July 1998, published in the Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEC) L 210 of 28 July 1998. The status report also notes that that Regulation, which is for the time being a partial implementation of the DSB recommendations, will be followed, in the near future, by another regulation concerning the rules for the management of the import regime which will be adopted by the Commission of the European Communities. This second regulation will conclude the implementing process.

The Appellate Body Report in the case "Australia – Measures Affecting Importation of Salmon," is now available on the WTO's website: [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org) In its decision, the Appellate Body recommends that the DSB request that Australia bring the measure in question - which was found by the Panel and the Appellate Body to be inconsistent with the SPS Agreement - into conformity with its obligations under the SPS Agreement

On October 7, 1998, the EU requested consultations with Argentina on the countervailing duties imposed by Argentina on wheat gluten imported from the EU. Argentina imposed a countervailing duty on the above imports with effect from 23 July 1998. The investigation which led to the

imposition of these duties had been initiated on 23 October 1996. Article 11.11 of the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreement specifies that investigations shall in no case be concluded more than 18 months after their initiation. In the case in question, Argentina's investigation exceeded 18 months; it has consequently not complied with this provision and has violated Article 10 of the SCM Agreement.

On October 6, the European Communities, requested consultations with India concerning certain measures affecting the automotive sector. Observers are closely watching this case as it is first one on a developing country compliance with the agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures - TRIMs.

ICTSD Internal Files.

## **IN BRIEF**

The European Union (EU) and Japan agreed last week to hold regular meetings on trade before the WTO resumes new global trade liberalisation talks in the year 2000, Japanese trade ministry officials said. European Commission Vice President Leon Brittan, visiting Japan, and Kaoru Yosano, Japan's minister of international trade and industry, agreed to adjust interests of the two sides before the WTO's new talks start, the officials said. On matters with Japan, Brittan told Yosano that the EU will seek bilateral talks under the WTO in seeking lower tariffs on EU exports of leather products to Japan. The EU is also seeking talks with Tokyo on Japan's increasing automobile exports to the European market, the officials said. "EU, Japan to meet regularly to prepare for WTO talks," KYODO, October 12, 1998.

Negotiations began last week on what will probably be North America's first trans-Atlantic free trade agreement. The negotiations, which started in Ottawa, involve Canada on the one hand, and the European Free Trade Association--whose members are Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein - on the other (See also BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 2 No 21, June 08, 1998). Also, earlier this month, Swiss Federal Councillor Pascal Couchepin signed a free trade agreement with the Mexican government with he said represented the first step on the path of creation of a free trade area, which could fit in to the context of EFTA. "Canada and EFTA will start talks this week on free trade agreement," WALL ST. JOURNAL, October 12, 1998; "Vers un libre-échange avec le Mexique," l'AGEFI, October 9, 1998.

Lack of funding for a comprehensive evaluation of health risks associated with the use of asbestos has created a development dilemma in China. Chinese officials know that asbestos poses serious health risks, but increasing pressure to accelerate economic and industrial growth in the country has fostered increased reliance on asbestos for industrial production. Funding for research into the effects of asbestos exposure on the population has been scarce. One researcher estimated that at least 100,000 people in China are exposed to asbestos, and at least 10 percent of those are affected by that exposure. Meanwhile China plans to expand its capacity to produce asbestos domestically, so to decrease its dependence on asbestos imports from countries such as Canada. "Lack of resources undercuts asbestos control in China," IPS, October 15, 1998.

Economic and environmental organisations from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia were to meet last week in Casablanca to discuss ways to increase the profile of environmental protection in the Arab-Mediterranean region. Discussion was to cover environmental awareness in the region, environment and local and transnational legislation, funding and investment in environmental projects and the transfer and exchange of information and technology among Arab countries. Organisers hope the meeting could lead to increased Arab-Mediterranean co-operation in the area of environment and quality of life. "Arab-Mediterranean Countries To Discuss Environment," PANA, October 12, 1998.

## **EVENTS & RESOURCES**

### **• EVENTS**

#### **WTO Meetings:**

21 October 1998: Dispute Settlement Body. For information, contact: Nusrat Nazeer, WTO, tel: (41) 22 739 5393.

26-28 October 1998: Committee on Trade and Environment. For information, contact: Hans-Peter Werner, WTO, tel: (41) 22 739 5286.

29 October 1998: Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries. For information, contact: Lucie Giraud, tel: (41) 22 739 5075.

29-30 October 1988: Trade Policy review - Jamaica

2 November 1998: Committee on Trade and Development. For more information, contact: Lucie Giraud, as above.

#### **Other Meetings:**

CONFERENCE ON TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND GENDER, 5-6 November 1998, Brussels, Belgium. This event is co-sponsored by ICDA (International Coalition for Development Action) and WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) as part of a broader effort to enhance the effectiveness of NGOs in policy analysis and lobbying activities aimed at the next round of WTO negotiations due to start on 1 January 2000. For information, contact: ICDA, 115 rue Stevin, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium; tel: (32) 2 230 0430; fax: (32) 2 230 5237; email: [icda@skynet.be](mailto:icda@skynet.be)

4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT, 16-20 November 1998, Monterey, USA. For information, contact: Cheryl Wasserman, US-EPA, fax: (1) 202 260 0129; email: [public-access@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:public-access@epamail.epa.gov)

TRADE AND INVESTMENT WITHIN THE MERCOSUR, 24-26 May 1999, Geneva,

Switzerland. For information, contact: Partners in Foreign Trade Affairs (PFTA), 14 rue du Rhône, 1204 Geneva, P.O. Box 5481, 1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland; tel: (41) 22 329 2905; fax: (41) 22 781 1579; email: [pace@worldcom.ch](mailto:pace@worldcom.ch); web: [www.cecal.ch](http://www.cecal.ch)

EMERGING MARKETS INTERNATIONAL FAIR, 26-29 May 1999, Geneva, Switzerland. For information, contact: Christiane Etienne-Warynski, Sales and Information, Fair Ema; tel: (41) 22 348 3701; fax: (41) 22 348 3701; email: [info@ema1999.ch](mailto:info@ema1999.ch); web: [www.ema1999.ch](http://www.ema1999.ch)

## • RESOURCES

"The Relationship Between International Trade Rules, National Policy and Natural Resource Use in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Ghana and Kenya," 1998, 47 pp. This book published by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development looks at interaction between international trade rules and the sustainable management of resources, focusing specifically on provisions of Agriculture Agreement of GATT. Case studies examine the relationship between national policies on agricultural trade and management of soil, water and forests. For cost and ordering information, contact: Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD), University of London SOAS, 46-47 Russell Square, WC1B 4JP London, UK; tel: (44) 171 637 7950; fax: (44) 171 637 7951.

"Property rights and regulatory systems in fisheries," Symes, D. and P. Freon, Iowa State University Press, 1998, 256 pp. To order, contact: Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Ave, Ames, IA 50014-8300, USA; tel: (1) 515 292 0140; fax (1) 515 292 3348; web: [www.isupress.edu](http://www.isupress.edu)

"Regulatory Reforms in the Global Economy: Asian and Latin American Perspectives," OECD, 1998, 144 pp. This book examines the role regulatory failures played in Asia's economic crisis, looks at regional trade groupings such as Mercosur and sheds light on the current international debate on food regulation as well as on the latest developments concerning the OECD Information Technology Agreement. To order, contact: OECD Paris Centre, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France; tel: (33) 1 49 10 42 35; fax: (33) 1 49 10 42 76; email: [sales@oecd.org](mailto:sales@oecd.org).

"Economie, le grand satan?", Pierre-Noel Giraud, Editions Textuel, 1998, 142 pp. This book argues very convincingly that in the realm of economics, despite constraints such as resource scarcity, extreme inequality and poverty are not inevitable.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) is looking for a Policy Officer for Trade. Closing date for applications is 28 October 1998. For a job description and application information, contact: CIIR, Unit 3, Canonbury Yard, 190A New North Road, Islington, London N1 7BJ, UK; tel: (44) 171 354 0883; fax: (44) 171 359 0017; email: [jobs@ciir.org](mailto:jobs@ciir.org)

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International is looking for a Trade and Investment Officer, initially for one year, to start as early as possible in 1999 in its offices in Gland, Switzerland. Formal economics training and experience on the economics/environment policy

interface are required. Closing date for applications is 9 November 1998. For further information and application requirements, contact: Ms. M. Fuhrer, Human Resources Department, WWF International, 1196 Gland, Switzerland; tel: (41) 22 364 9306; fax: (41) 22 364 7850.

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