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DSB: EU, U.S. PREPARE FOR SHOWDOWN

The EU and U.S. last week engaged in a war of words at a meeting of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB). The U.S. told DSB members that it is within its rights to threaten retaliation against the EU for what the U.S. expects to be an EU failure to comply with a 1997 WTO ruling against the EU banana import regime (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 2, No. 40, October 19, 1998). The EU warned that the U.S. threat was based on the unilateral U.S. determination that the EU proposed revised banana import regime does not comply with the WTO ruling.

The EU reminded the U.S. that retaliatory action based on a unilateral determination of non-compliance is illegal under Article 23 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU). Further, the EU noted that dispute settlement rules mandate that the U.S. must first, under Article 21 of the DSU, request the establishment of a panel to determine whether the EU revised regime complies with the WTO ruling. The EU warned that to circumvent DSB rules would put the WTO in jeopardy. "We gave a very clear message that any unilateral action by the U.S. outside the multilateral framework would be a very serious threat to the multilateral system," EC spokesman Nigel Gardner said.

Regarding so-called unilateral determination, the U.S. countered that it was the EU that has acted unilaterally, in crafting its revised regime without seeking input from the five components in the case (the U.S., Guatemala, Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico (G-5)). The G-5 last week called on the European Commission "to wipe the slate clean and talk to us on an urgent basis about implementing a truly WTO-consistent banana regime before January 1, 1999."

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 and distributors. 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. Also, the U.S. wants the EU to use tariffs only - as opposed to quotas - in its revised regime.

Also at the DSB last week, Canada made good its threat to request a dispute settlement panel to decide its complaint against a French ban on chrysotile asbestos imports. Canada is the world's second largest producer of chrysotile asbestos. France instituted a ban for health- safety reasons in January 1997. Consultations began last May between Canada and France in an unsuccessful effort to resolve the issue. The EU immediately rejected the request, saying it had already provided

Canada with scientific justification for the ban. A panel would automatically be established should Canada make a second request for a panel at a subsequent DSB meeting.

The DSB last week also agreed to set up a panel charged to decide an EU and Japanese complaint against a Massachusetts state law that assesses a "pricing penalty" in the government bidding process against foreign firms doing business with Burma (Myanmar). The EU and Japan argue that the penalty violates WTO rules on government procurement. Massachusetts instituted its penalty policy in protest against consistent, extensive human rights abuses by the governing regime in Burma. The U.S. noted disappointment over the EU participation in the complaint, citing a resolution passed last month by the European Parliament to end all trade, tourism and investment in Burma because of human rights abuses there. In related news, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Unions (which represents more than 20 million EU workers in all 15 EU member-states) last week called on the European Commission to sever all ties with Burma.

"U.S., EU clash over planned retaliation for EU banana policy," INSIDE US TRADE, October 23, 1998; "EU warns U.S. banana import row may threaten trade," REUTERS, October 20, 1998; "Bananas and beef take trade conflict to the brink," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 22, 1998; "Slippery slope? Washington steps up trade threats in EU banana drama;" "Canada asks for WTO panel against French ban on asbestos;" "WTO panel on Massachusetts law on Myanmar seen biased by Japan, EU," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 21, 1998; "WTO sets up dispute panel on Mass law on Myanmar," REUTERS, 10/21/98; "EU Commission suggests improvements in WTO dispute settlement mechanism," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 19, 1998.

WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT REVIEW

On October 22nd, the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) met in informal session for the first meeting at which it substantively discussed issues relating to the Review of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU Review), due to be completed by the end of 1998. (See also BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 2, Number 38, October 05, 1998). The discussion on October 22 centred around an September 18 document prepared by the secretariat which contains a compilation

of comments submitted by Members, on the DSU Review. Members discussed notification of mutually agreed solutions and the role of consultations in the Dispute Settlement Procedure.

A number of proposals have been submitted to the DSB in the context of the DSU the review, including those of Venezuela, Turkey, Japan, Korea and the EU. BRIDGES Between Trade and Sustainable Development (Vol. 2 No. 4, page 7) has already referred to some of these. The EU's far-reaching proposal, submitted last week, suggests inter alia, that a body of 15-24 professional panellists be set up, from which panels could be created. The EU proposal also favours greater transparency by advocating making all the arguments put to panels and to the Appellate Body available to the public. The EU noted that this is necessary as in recent years WTO rulings have touched on sensitive public health and environmental concerns. The EU also wants greater weight given to consultations and to strengthen the rights of other WTO members who have substantial interests in a case being considered by the WTO's Dispute Settlement Procedures. The DSB will next meet to discuss the DSU review on November 3, 1998.

"EU calls for improved transparency in WTO dispute settlement system," EU PRESS RELEASE, October 21, 1998; "Call for WTO dispute reform," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 1998; ICTSD Internal Files.

MAI GOING NOWHERE FAST

Negotiators emerged from talks last week on a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) discouraged and pessimistic about the chances of concluding an agreement at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Still, negotiators would not concede defeat outright, pledging to meet again before the end of the year--although no firm date was set--to discuss the future of the MAI. However, discussions were downgraded from "negotiations" to "consultations," in light of the uncertainty surrounding the MAI at OECD. The October 20-21 talks were the first since the MAI was put on a six-month hiatus. (See also BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 2, Number 40, October 19, 1998).

A week before MAI talks were to resume, France announced its decision to withdraw from OECD talks, reflecting French desire to include developing countries in MAI negotiations, and concerns over the global economic crises. The French decision reflected the stance taken by most developing countries led by India, Egypt, Pakistan and Malaysia which 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.

Negotiators did agree to explore ways the current MAI could address the most controversial aspects of the agreement, specifically those related to the issue of sovereignty and those related to labour and environment. With regard to the latter, negotiators must come to terms with whether to make binding or non-binding obligations that prevent countries from lowering their environment and

labour standards in order to attract investment. Mexico is strongly opposed to making any labour and environment obligations binding, and indeed wants all labour and environment issues off the table. Negotiators are also said to be giving further consideration to a proposal under which countries could take steps to protect human, animal and plant life and exhaustible resources without violating the MAI as long as they are not disguised restrictions on investment.

Negotiators would not comment on the future venue of MAI talks, except to say that they would leave open the possibility that work done on the MAI since talks began in 1995 could serve as the basis for talks in another forum, e.g. the WTO. However, a number of obstacles exist to moving MAI talks to the WTO. Reaching consensus among 29 countries on the MAI has proved impossible to this point since incorporating the entire 134 WTO-member body could stretch talks out well into the future with no guarantee of success. Further, most developing countries remain opposed to WTO talks on investment.

Kavaljit Singh, co-ordinator of Public Interest Research Group in India, said access to information about the ramifications of agreements such as the MAI is imperative to the mobilisation of so-called people's movements against the MAI. Further, mobilising people in the source countries of investment funds is also critical and as yet not fully exploited. Any successful campaign against the MAI in source countries must include middle-class investors, who invest heavily in mutual funds. In the U.S. alone, individuals/households account for 35 percent of investments in the \$US4 trillion U.S. mutual fund market.

"OECD nations forego MAI decision, agree to examine possible changes," INSIDE US TRADE, October 23, 1998; "US cool on investment pact," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 20, 1998; "FOCUS-OECD investment negotiations on hold;" "EU's Brittan pessimistic on MAI prospects," REUTERS, October 20, 1998; "OECD investment talks seen heading for frustration," REUTERS, October 19, 1998; "US wants to pursue OECD investment talks despite French pullout," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 19, 1998. "Financial Globalization: New Challenges for Peoples' Movements," Kavaljit Singh, October 1998.

CLIMATE CHANGE TALKS TO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Fourth Conference of the Parties (COP-4) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is set to meet November 2-13 in Buenos Aires. Delegates are expected to discuss the roles of developing countries in the climate change convention. "There are key developing countries whose emissions have to be controlled or limited," Raul Estrada-Oyuela, former chair of the Kyoto Protocol negotiating group said earlier this month. Mr. Estrada cautioned that smaller developing countries should not be held to the same standard as larger developing countries. Mr. Estrada also warned that, "You cannot ask developing countries to commit themselves if the commitment taken by developed countries is not fulfilled." Michael Zammit-Cutajar, Executive Secretary of the Climate Change Secretariat, speaking in New York on October 22, said that the key phrase concerning the Buenos Aires Meeting is "meaningful participation by developing countries."

The Kyoto Protocol--adopted in December 1997 but not yet in force, requires industrial nations to collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-2012. The protocol allows countries to meet some of their reductions by purchasing unused greenhouse gas allowances from other industrialised nations. The Protocol also established a system for trading in greenhouse gases.

COP-4 must also address the question of flexible mechanisms, e.g. emissions trading and technology transfer schemes. This includes the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which would establish a concrete platform for emissions co-operation between developed and developing countries. "CDM is good because it has enormous potential for the South to reduce emissions without compromising its efforts toward economic growth," according to Christiana Figueres of the Centre for Sustainable Development in the Americas, based in Costa Rica.

Speaking at a regional climate change forum in Nairobi, Kenya UN Environment Programme deputy executive director Shafqat Kakakhel, said that the CDM would play an important role for developing countries. The CDM, Mr. Kakakhel said, would "promote economic development through technical and financial transfers and assistance without endangering the climate and environment. The clean development mechanism is relevant to African states even though this region's contribution to the historic build up of greenhouse emissions in the atmosphere is a negligible 3 percent," he said. Michael Zammit-Cutajar said that the inability of governments to come to grips in a practical way with the transfer of technology was one of his biggest disappointments since Kyoto.

In advance of the Buenos Aires talks, EU ministers agreed late last month to a negotiating position on the use of flexible mechanisms in fulfilling emissions reduction commitments. EU ministers agreed to abandon the EU call for a 50 percent cap on the use of flexible mechanisms in a countries' emissions reduction program: instead, the EU will now call for the flexible mechanisms to be defined in quantitative and equitable terms, but have dropped a specific cap. EU officials said that despite dropping a specific cap from the negotiating mandate proper, they will still argue explicitly for the 50 percent cap. The change in language is likely due to intense U.S. opposition to a cap on flexible mechanisms. Some EU ministers worried that the U.S. would not ratify the Kyoto Protocol if a fixed quantitative cap was included. The U.S. has proposed that there be no limit on the use of emissions-allowance purchases in meeting emissions targets, arguing that it will allow for the most cost-effective means of achieving emissions reduction.

"EU agrees climate trading negotiations stance;" "Climate impacts of EU agriculture explored," ENDS, October 6, 1998; "Climate change chair predicts no dramatic results in Buenos Aires;" "European Union relents on demand for strict limit on emissions trading," INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT REPORT, October 14, 1998; "Climate Change Forum Begins In Nairobi," PANA, October 19, 1998; "Global warming tops agenda of UNEP meeting on financial institutions," INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT REPORT, September 30, 1998; U.N. Press Briefing on Climate Change, October 22, 1998.

WARY EYE KEPT ON SEA FISHING CAPACITY

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation is to host this week a world conference on fishing. Environmental groups hope the meet will yield a plan of action to end overfishing of endangered marine stocks. FAO estimates that 70 percent of the world's most valuable fish stocks are already depleted or overfished. Nearly all the leading fishing nations-- including the U.S., Chile, Thailand and China, have fishing overcapacity in excess of 150 percent. A number of issues are likely to be addressed at the meeting, including the role government subsidies play in encouraging overfishing

and overcapacity, and the role institutions such as the World Bank and Global Environment Facility should play in facilitating enforcement of fishing controls.

Separately, officials from the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) met with U.S. tuna industry and government officials earlier this month for informal discussions around the tuna treaty between FFA member countries and the U.S. FFA members include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. The FFA and U.S. have worked under a tuna treaty for over 10 years, which allows up to 50 U.S. purse seine-equipped vessels access to Pacific Islands' waters. Both the FFA and U.S. officials expressed concern over the recent expansion of fishing capacity worldwide and the potential threat to healthy fisheries in the western and central Pacific. Delegates also discussed the role of biological sustainability, deemed critical by all parties, but also acknowledged that economic factors needed to be considered in order to ensure financially viable fishing operations. The U.S. raised concerns over the recent collapse of prices for tuna intended for canning, which U.S. industry officials indicated was aggravated by Taiwanese, Korean and other producers who bring in large landing of fish to an oversupplied market and driving prices down.

"Action needed to end overfishing," IPS, October 23, 1998; "Pacific Islands and U.S. tuna industry talks," PACIFIC ISLANDS REPORT, October 8, 1998.

SWISS FIRM FOCUSES ON DEVELOPING COUNTRY TECH TRANSFER

Limited markets and high capital requirements often preclude technology transfer between rich and developing countries. However, one non-governmental organisation, the Geneva-based Technology for the People (TFTP), hopes to capitalise on a more nimble industrial development model by facilitating company-to-company technology transfer between developing countries. So far, TFTP has helped put together eight company-to-company technology-transfer deals in Georgia, with imported technology from Thailand, the Philippines, and Bangladesh, used in various consumer goods manufacturing. Most transfer projects have come via joint-ventures between more developed and less-developed companies, the former bringing production and management expertise to emerging companies and also providing funding options for emerging companies which often cannot afford capital upfront. International agencies such as the UN and World Bank, keen to promote business development, have taken notice of the TFTP model. In addition to working under contract to those agencies, TFTP hopes to grow into a venture capital company specialising in developing country technology transfer.

"Trade to bridge the wealth gap," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 20, 1998.

UNCTAD: WORLD BANK'S STIGLITZ CALLS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The 144 member countries of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) met for the annual session of the Trade and Development Board (TDB) October 12-23. Much of the focus was on the global financial crises and the causes, management and prevention thereof. Developing countries stressed the need for reform in the international financial institutions and for increased developing country participation at a decision-making level in those institutions. The TDB concluded its session by adopting agreed texts on the causes, management and prevention of

financial crises; trade and investment opportunities and constraints for the least developed countries; and development prospects for Africa. The TDB also agreed to hold the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in the EU, in early 2001.

Delivering a key speech at the occasion of the TDB, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics Joseph Stiglitz noted that the global economic crisis has done much to reveal the weaknesses in the "Washington-consensus" development approach, wherein privatisation, trade liberalisation, and exchange rate stability become means unto themselves. "We now know that there are systemic problems, problems not limited to individual countries. We realise that for every borrower there is a lender; and that the lender is as much to blame as the borrower." Mr. Stiglitz blasted rich countries for hypocrisy in their pushing developing countries to liberalise markets by reducing trade barriers while at the same time engaging in restrictive trade practices, especially anti-dumping measures.

Mr. Stiglitz went on to outline a set of principles for development that go beyond the traditional narrow focus of economics and resource allocation and focus instead on "the transformation of society." Integral to this transformation is increased local participation in development policy and project implementation. Further, Mr. Stiglitz said that the transformation vision needed to encompass policy, including trade policy, that addresses all sectors of society-private, public, community, family and individual.

In other news, UNCTAD will hold its first Partners for Development exposition in Lyon, France November 9-12. The initiative will bring together over 400 private companies, nearly 100 non-governmental organisations, a number of government delegations and young entrepreneurs from developing countries in an effort to foster mobilisation of resources for development.

Also, Thailand has agreed to host the 10th international meeting of UNCTAD in 2000. Thailand's Foreign Ministry hopes the position of host will give developing countries a strong voice forging international development strategies. More immediately, Thailand hopes the 2000 meeting will give Asia the opportunity to show it has recovered from its recession and signal a turning point for the region.

"UNCTAD board examines issue of the day," UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE, October 16, 1998; "UNCTAD governing board to hold annual session," UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE, October 9, 1998; "The Washington Consensus has failed; we need a new paradigm for development," UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE, October 21, 1998; "Nouveau partenariat pour le développement," LE TEMPS, October 23, 1998; "Thailand to host UNCTAD meeting," BANGKOK POST, October 21, 1998; UNCTAD Board Builds Consensus on Management of Financial Crises, Priorities for the LDCs and Africa, UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE, October 23, 1998.

WTO NEWS IN BRIEF: NGO WEBSITE; TRADE FACILITATION; IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENTS

WTO-NGO Website Has Arrived! As announced earlier this year, The World Trade Organisation has established the Information Centre for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on its Website. This is one of the steps being taken by Director- General Renato Ruggiero to enhance dialogue with civil society, in accordance with the General Council guidelines for relations with NGOs which "recognizes the role NGOs can play to increase the awareness of the public in respect of WTO activities." To access, go to: www.wto.org/wto/ngo.htm

A committee on improving global trade facilitation met for the first time late last month at the WTO, to discuss ways to minimise and harmonise customs regulations. A number of WTO members would like trade facilitation to be incorporated into the so-called Millennium Round of global trade talks, hence the preparatory meetings. The EU last month proposed that the WTO aim for a pact on import and export procedures that trim procedures "to an absolute minimum necessary to ensure the application of legitimate controls." The U.S. thus far is not convinced the WTO could successfully negotiate a customs simplification pact, concerned that the size and breadth of WTO membership may preclude reaching a global agreement. Instead, the U.S. thinks the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrialised nations should reach agreement on harmonisation, thereby placing competitive pressure on all WTO members to adopt that model. "WTO explores ways to ease cargo delays at borders," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 12, 1998.

As this issue of BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest goes to press, WTO members are involved in two debates: (1) An Informal Intersessional Meeting of the Special Session of the General Council. The main item on the agenda of this meeting is implementation of WTO Agreements. (2) A regular meeting of the Committee on Trade and Environment focused on the market access cluster of the CTE agenda. Delegates have engaged in a difficult and heated debate on, inter alia, the issue of agricultural subsidies and the quid-pro-quo demanded from the EU, in particular, which will allow further progress on convening a high-level meeting in the spring of 1999. BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest will report on this meetings next week, in Vol. 2 Number 42.

IN BRIEF

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Trade Negotiating Committee sub-group on civil society participation last week agreed to limit input from the private sector and NGOs to comments "relevant to trade." While groups are free to post whatever comments they wish on the FTAA website (www.alca-ftaa.org), only those comments "relevant to trade" will be passed on to the civil society committee for inclusion in the negotiating record. The "relevant to trade" clause could be used to screen out input from environment and labour groups as many FTAA negotiating partners, including the LatAm economic giant MERCOSUR, are strongly opposed to labour and environmental linkage to trade within FTAA. "Labor, environment again in middle of trade battle," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 21, 1998.

The World Bank announced earlier this month that it would establish a Safeguard Compliance Unit, charged with ensuring that World Bank loans protect populations and the environment or mitigate the harm done from projects associated with World Bank loans. Environmental groups criticise the Bank's back-end approach, arguing that the Bank should not make loans for potentially harmful

projects in the first place. In an effort to address this charge, the Bank said also that it will adopt so-called green accounting practices--which take into account the long-term costs to the environment and the cost of any health problems associated with development loans made by the Bank, to better assess the cost-benefits associated with World Bank-funded projects. "World Bank's 'zero tolerance' of rule-breakers," IPS, October 19, 1998.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

• EVENTS

WTO Meetings

26-27 October 1998: Informal Intersessional Meeting of the Special Session of the General Council. The main items on the agenda of this meeting are implementation of WTO Agreements, and preparation for the 3rd Ministerial Conference. For information, contact: Peter Pedersen, WTO, tel: (41) 22 739 5848.

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

29 October 1998: WTO Briefing for NGOs. 10 a.m., Geneva Executive Centre, 13, ch. des Anémones, 1219 Geneva. For information, contact WTO External Relations Division, tel: (41) 22 739 5111, or ICTSD, tel: (41) 22 917 8492.

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

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

3 November 1998: Informal meeting of the Dispute Settlement Body, on the Dispute Settlement Review. For information, contact Nuch Nazeer, WTO, tel (41) 22 739 5393.

11-12 November 1998: Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. For information, contact: Lucie Giraud, as above.

20 November 1998: Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade. For information, contact: Lucie Giraud, as above.

Other Meetings

PROGRESS ON THE FTAA NEGOTIATIONS, Diplomatic Community-Private Sector Roundtable Discussion, 28 October 1998, Washington DC, USA. For more information, contact: Tony Garrastazu, North-South Centre, 1420 16th Street NW, Washington DC, USA; tel: (1) 202 986 4264.

BIODIVERSITY, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND INDIGENEOUS RIGHTS, 4-7 November 1998, Managua, Nicaragua. For information, contact: Zarifeth Bolaños, Oficina de

apoyo de URACCAN, Barrio Ducualí, del Puente El Edén 1 cuadra arriba y 2 cuadras al sur, Apartado Postal No. 891, Managua, Nicaragua; tel: (505) 248 4658/2119; fax: (505) 248 4685; email: uraccan@ibw.com.ni

PARTNERS FOR DEVELOPMENT, 9-12 November 1998, Lyon, France. This summit convened by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will bring together the business community, governments, consumer associations, academia and non-governmental and international organisations to devise and launch new ways of bringing tangible benefits to developing countries. It will open the way to the closer involvement of civil society and business in the work of the United Nations and will generate new human, technological and financial resources to serve the cause of development. For information, contact: Jean Gurunlian, Executive Secretary, Partners for Development, UNCTAD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; tel: (41) 22 907 5544; fax: (41) 22 907 0052; email: partners@unctad.org; web: www.lyon-conferences.com/english/index.html

5th MEETING OF THE EXPERT PANEL ON TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 18-20 November 1998, Hotel Righi Vaudois, Glion, Switzerland. For information, contact: Aimée Gonzales, WWF International, 1196 Gland, Switzerland; tel: (41) 22 364 90 02; fax: (41) 22 364 52 19; email: aimee.gonzales@wwfnet.org

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, 26-28 November 1998, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain. For information, contact: Rosana Larrauri, Xabide Congressos, Calle Mondragón, 11, 01013 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; tel: (34) 945 253 500; fax: (34) 945 253 874; email: xabide@jet.es; web: www.nekanet.net/congress/default.htm

• RESOURCES

"Policy Effectiveness and Multilateral Environmental Agreements," by Scott Vaughan and Ali Dehlavi, Geneva: UNEP, 1998, 172 pp. This book is the 17th volume of a series launched in 1994 with the objective of providing the trade, environment and development communities, as well as civil society and industry with background information and analysis of issues related to trade, environment and sustainable development. Free copies available from: Economics, Trade and Environment Unit, UNEP, 15 chemin des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland; fax: (41) 22 917 81 79; email: leond@unep.ch.

"Formal Knowledge Networks: A Study of Canadian Experiences," by Howard Clark, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), 1998. This study, a follow-up to the Strong Task Force report "Connecting with the World: Priorities for Canadian Internationalism in the 21st. Century," surveys Canada's formal knowledge networks and establishes their potential role in Canada's foreign policy and sustainable development. Available from: IISD, 161 Portage Ave. East – 6th. Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: (1) 204 958 7700; fax: (1) 204 958 7710; email: info@iisd.ca.

"Beyond Regulation: Exporters and Voluntary Environmental Measures," by Robert Kerr, Aaron Cosbey and Ron Yachnin, 1998. This report, the result of a research project commissioned and directed by a sub-committee of the Task Force on Trade and Environment of the International Trade Advisory Committee, determines how non-regulatory approaches to environmental protection could affect the trade competitiveness of Canadian industry. Available from IISD, address above.

New Website :

Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and Decision Guidance Documents (DGDs): once a chemical is identified for inclusion in the PIC procedure, a Decision Guidance Document (DGD) is sent to each participating country together with an Importing Country Response form. The DGDs are intended to help governments analyse the potential hazards connected with the handling and use of the chemical, and to assist countries in taking a decision whether to allow or prohibit future import of the chemical. To access, go to: www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpp/pesticide/pic/dgdhome.htm.

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Comments and suggestions are welcome and should be directed to: Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, Executive Director, ICTSD, Geneva Executive Center, 13 chemin des Anémones, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; email: ictsd@iprolink.ch; voice: (41-22) 979-9492; fax: (41-22) 979-9093.

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