



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
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## CONSENSUS EMERGING ON 'HIGH-LEVEL MEETING' ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

It seems that a consensus is now shaping up on the "High-Level Meeting" on Trade and Environment. Indeed, following consultations with a number of delegations last week and today, a consensus might be struck on something which ends up looking like this:

A two-day High-Level Dialogue on Trade and Environment will be held in March 1999 in Geneva. The event will probably take place during the week of March 22, although there is a possibility the meeting will be held during the week of March 8. The meeting will be held back-to-back with a High-Level Dialogue on Trade and Development. Both meetings will be convened by the WTO secretariat, and will take place at the WTO itself, but outside the formal organisational structure of the WTO. Senior officials from both environment and foreign trade ministries will attend the High-Level Dialogue on Trade and Environment, which will be chaired by WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero. The Dialogue will also be open to Inter-governmental agencies and NGOs. Documents submitted to, and emanating from, the Dialogue will be available on the WTO's web-site.

The agenda will comprise three subject-clusters: (1) complementarity between WTO and environmental protection; (2) synergies between environmental protection, trade and sustainable development; and (3) dialogue between trade and environment communities. Each subject will be

introduced by a panel of speakers, then, the meeting will break up into workshops, in which governments, NGOs, IGOs and academics will participate.

As reported in BRIDGES Trade News Digest Vol. 2, Number 40, October 19, 1998, the EU has already offered funding for the High-Level Dialogue on Trade and Environment, and the WTO secretariat is seeking to incite other countries to come forward with funding for both events. Funding should cover NGO attendance, particularly from developing countries, as well as participation of LDC government officials.

While observers see the above as the emerging consensus on the High-Level Dialogue, it still has to be formally presented. The final decision on the shape of these meetings will be taken at a November 18 informal meeting of heads of delegations to the WTO.

ICTSD Internal Files.

## **WTO MEMBERS DISCUSS IMPLEMENTATION OF URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENTS**

The first inter-sessional meeting of the WTO General Council to prepare the ground for the next round of trade liberalisation was held in Geneva last week. Delegates focused on the implementation of existing WTO Agreements, an issue of particular concern to developing countries. This was the first time that substantive and meaningful discussions were held within the WTO on implementation of existing Agreements. Last week's meeting took place in the context of the Special Session of the General Council, launched on 24-25 September, where countries stated their initial positions regarding the post-2000 negotiations (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 2, No. 37, September 28, 1998).

On the whole, developed countries felt that implementation problems were 'within the realm of the manageable' and should not slow the pace of further trade liberalisation. Developing countries on the other hand, continued to emphasise the need for assessing the impacts of the existing agreements and making their implementation a priority. Assessment of the effects of existing agreements, such as provided for in Article 20 of the 1994 Agreement on Agriculture, opens space for work on NGOs' sustainable development concerns.

Most developing countries evoked similar concerns with regard to implementation. First amongst these was the partial implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreements' (URA) 'special and differential treatment' provisions in favour of developing countries (this concern was brought up by virtually every developing country speaker, particularly Cuba, Egypt, Pakistan and India, who went through the URAs' special and differential treatment provisions, Agreement by Agreement). Speakers noted that these provisions should be used *inter alia*, to afford developing countries flexibility in bringing their domestic legislation in line with WTO Agreements; to enhance developing country access to technical assistance; and to offer better protection to developing countries against anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

The implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture and the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) are considered particularly insufficient by developing countries. In agriculture, frequently mentioned shortcomings were: export and production subsidies; tariff escalation and other market access constraints. The Cairns groups of agricultural producers and the United States agreed with

many of these concerns, particularly with regard to export subsidies. Most countries acknowledged that these implementation problems could probably only be addressed within the framework of the round of agricultural negotiations slated to start in the year 2000.

Many developing countries also noted their concern over the increasingly stringent sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures adopted by some WTO Members. ASEAN pointed out that risk assessment and risk management in the SPS were new disciplines developing countries were still grappling with, and deplored the slow progress of international harmonisation of SPS measures.

On textiles, developed countries defended their record in conforming to the letter of the ATC, while developing countries repeatedly pointed out that the ATC had hardly increased their market access at all due to developed countries' 'back-loading' the most significant quota removals to the very end of the transition period. Colombia, Egypt, India and Pakistan argued most forcefully for better implementation of Agreement on Textiles and Clothing.

The Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) also elicited much comment. Although Article 27.3(b) on the patentability of plants and animals other than micro-organisms is the only TRIPs provision that has to be reviewed according to the built-in agenda, interventions made it clear that many countries will bring other issues to the table.

Echoing many others, Cuba said that any revision of the TRIPs agreement that would result in greater obligations for developing countries would be contrary to the 'special and differential treatment' principle. In contrast, the United States expressed concern that many developing country Members had not yet informed the TRIPs Council on how they intend to meet their obligations when the TRIPs Agreement enters into force for them on 1 January 2000. It warned that technical assistance for achieving compliance was available, and that it 'would not be sympathetic to claims that implementation cannot be met because of lack of assistance'.

Several countries made remarks concerning services and the need for increased technical assistance for developing countries both regarding the implementation of GATS so far, and for the future negotiations. Turkey singled out movement of natural persons as an area where insufficient progress had been made. Peru noted that accepting an emergency safeguards mechanism in services before launching the negotiations would provide a stimulus for developing country commitment and willingness to work out compromises.

The Canadian delegate raised transparency issues, saying that the trade agenda must become 'more transparent, democratic and inclusive' as the WTO increasingly deals with issues once considered domestic. Finally, although the dispute settlement review is handled in a separate process, many developing countries commented on the high cost and difficulty in securing legal expertise for dispute settlement proceedings.

ICTSD Internal Files.

## **EC ADOPTS CONTROVERSIAL BANANA REGIME**

The European Commission (EC) last week approved a revised banana import licensing system devised to comply with a 1997 WTO ruling. The system allocates licences under which bananas would be imported into the EU and sets import quotas on bananas from Latin American and African, Pacific and Caribbean (ACP) producers.

The WTO ruled last year that the current EU banana import regime violates global trade rules by discriminating in favour of imports from Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela and Nicaragua. The EU has until January 1, 1999 to implement a reformed import regime.

Even before the EC announced its revised licensing system last week, the U.S. and the G-5 called the proposed changes "primarily cosmetic," arguing that the revisions perpetuate the discriminatory nature of the existing EU import regime. The G-5 argue that the revised regime would continue to afford an unfair concentration of import licenses among companies that historically import bananas from former EU colonies in ACP countries. Also, the U.S. wants the EU to use tariffs only - as opposed to quotas - in its revised regime. (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 2, No. 41 October 26, 1998.)

The regime approved by the EC last week would allocate import licences only to so-called traditional importers, or those companies that imported fruit into the EU during the years 1994 to 1996. The regime establishes a 2.553 million-ton quota for Latin American bananas, and an 857,000-ton quota for ACP bananas. Additionally, eight percent of the quotas would be reserved for so-called "newcomers," or companies that want to begin importing bananas into the EU, with the condition that these companies must have imported at least a certain amount of fruit or vegetables into the EU in either 1994, 1995 or 1996. No single newcomer could secure in excess of 10 percent of the newcomer-quota. The quota for Latin American producers breaks down as follows: Ecuador - 26.17 percent; Costa Rica - 25.61 percent; Colombia - 23.03 percent; and Panama - 15.76 percent.

The EC said in a statement that by adopting the revised import regime last week it had "fulfilled its obligation" under the WTO. However, the regime--which faces some opposition among EU Member States, still needs to be approved by a majority of EU States before going into force on January 1, 1999. The G-5 has already warned the EU that it would request a WTO dispute settlement panel to decide whether the revised regime does indeed comply with the WTO ruling.

"Commission adopts banana import licensing regime," MIDDAY EXPRESS (European Commission), October 28, 1998; "EU changes banana import permit system after US trade threats," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 28, 1998; "EU defies US on banana imports," FINANCIAL TIMES; "European Commission approves controversial banana licensing regime," INSIDE US TRADE, October 30, 1998; "U.S. steps up pressure on EU in banana row," REUTERS, October 29, 1998.

## **WTO ACCESSION UPDATE**

The WTO is reportedly doing some hard thinking about how to accelerate the accession process for the growing list of countries eager to join the international trade forum. Presently 134 States have been granted membership, and at least 30 more have launched accession bids to the WTO, which does not have the capacity to deal with all the bids effectively. Global economic turmoil and a

possible new global trade round have prompted the WTO to focus on ways to bring more developing economies into the forum. This is because a new round will surely drain WTO resources further, making it difficult to deal with accession negotiations. Also, a new round of trade talks could end in "raising the bar" for membership to the WTO: a bar that many developing countries are far from meeting at the current level.

WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero suggested extending "provisional membership" to countries prior to full-fledged membership, on the contingency that the countries erect no new trade barriers during the accession process. The U.S., while supporting the idea in principle, worries that extending membership benefits to provisional members would deter them from really "earning" membership benefits by fully meeting WTO obligations. The U.S. wants to ensure that membership can be rescinded if provisional members fail to meet WTO commitments.

The "provisional membership" idea may face a difficult challenge in the case of China. Accession talks with China have slogged along for 11 years, with no sign of concluding anytime soon. China wants to be admitted to the WTO on developing country terms, terms opposed by the U.S. and others who argue that China's economy is too large and too strong to be admitted on the less stringent terms accorded to poorer countries. Most recently, China's accession talks have stalled, with the EU and U.S. waiting for it to make new market access offers. China's intransigence on a number of accession issues thus far leave many WTO Members wary of extending any type of provisional membership to China, for fear of losing negotiating leverage.

Separately, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero recently called on the WTO to make it easier for least developed countries (LDCs) to join the WTO. 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 that LDCs should be put on a fast track for membership.

Meanwhile, Russia last week told the WTO it is still pushing to join despite the its economic turmoil. Russian officials told the WTO that Russia would be ready to offer a market access package on agriculture in December. Negotiations for Russia's WTO accession began five years ago.

"Dilemma for WTO as queue grows outside its door," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 29, 1998; "WTO mulls shift in accession strategy," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 23, 1998; "L'OMC veut accélérer l'entrée de nouveaux membres dont la Chine," LE TEMPS, October 27, 1998; "WTO director-general meets Russia's trade minister to review WTO accession," WTO PRESS RELEASE, October 27, 1998; "Russia says still pushing for WTO entry," REUTERS, October 27, 1998; "Russia ready to offer WTO agriculture plan," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 29, 1998; "China assures U.S. it still seeks WTO entry," REUTERS, October 28, 1998; "Accession to the WTO - State of play," NOTE BY THE WTO SECRETARIAT, September 30, 1998.

## **WTO ISSUES FINAL RULING ON AUSTRALIA-SALMON CASE**

The WTO late last month issued its final ruling in a complaint brought by Canada against an Australian law requiring heat treatment of imported salmon. The WTO Appellate Body upheld an earlier WTO panel ruling which found that the Australian requirement violates international trade

rules, and recommended that Australia bring its import rules into compliance with the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).

Canada originally brought its complaint against Australia's prohibition on the importation of untreated fresh, chilled or frozen salmon from Canada in 1995, subsequent to which Australia conducted a risk assessment on importing salmon without heat treatment. After concluding its risk assessment, Australia said it had to keep import restriction measures in place. Canada again complained to the WTO in 1997, arguing that Australia's import restrictions violated Articles 2, 3, and 5 of the SPS. The U.S filed a supporting complaint against Australia. In June 1998 the WTO panel found that the Australian restrictions on Canadian salmon imports are not justified by Australia's risk assessment. The Appellate Body upheld this view in its final decision last month, saying that Australia was violating Article 5.5 (and by association Article 2.3) of the SPS, which prohibits SPS measures that establish arbitrary or unjustifiable restrictions in levels of protection resulting in "discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade." Specifically, the panel found that Australia allowed the import of other untreated fish or fish products that could have carried of the same diseases for which untreated salmon imports were banned, thus creating an unfair import restriction on Canadian salmon.

Steve Charnovitz, Director of the Global Environment & Trade Study at Yale University, said the WTO ruling signals a threat to national health protection programmes. He says that the effect of having a WTO mandate dictate health safety standards could undermine public support for the WTO, and offer further justification to WTO critics who argue that trade globalisation leads ultimately to lowering health and environmental standards.

"Australia - measures affecting importation of salmon (AB-1998-5) Report of the Appellate Body," WTO, October 20, 1998; "World Trade Organisation "Salmon" Decision May Undermine Health," YALE-GETS PRESS RELEASE, October 28, 1998.

## **WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT MEETS**

The WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) met on 26-28 October in Geneva. Chaired by Ambassador Chak Mun See (Singapore), the meeting followed the so-called cluster approach that groups the first eight items on the Committee's agenda into a "market access" cluster and a "linkages between the multilateral environment and trade agendas" cluster and deals separately with the ninth (work programme envisaged in the Decision on Trade in Services and the Environment) and tenth (input to the relevant bodies in respect of relations with intergovernmental organisations and NGOs) items.

In the context of market access, Argentina tabled a paper on non-trade concerns in the next agricultural negotiations (WT/CTE/W/97), arguing that the elimination of trade restrictions and subsidies in agriculture are essential for the promotion of a co-operative relationship between environmental protection policies and international trade agreements.

Brazil presented a paper on alcohol fuel (ethanol) in the energy sector (WT/CTE/W/98), making a case for tariff reductions and elimination of trade distortions on ethanol. As the world's largest producer and consumer of ethanol, Brazil identifies it as environmentally beneficial because it is derived essentially from biomass energy (i.e. agricultural crops) and is therefore a renewable source of energy.

On trade in services and the environment, the United States submitted a paper on the liberalisation of trade in environmental services (WT/CTE/ W/70). The paper concludes that such liberalisation can yield environmental and economic benefits and that globalisation and increasing intra-industry trade can result in a dynamic improvement in the ability of firms to provide high quality services while minimising costs. With the saturation of many industrial country markets, environmental services companies are seeking to expand their activities in emerging markets. UNCTAD estimates that, in 1996, 87% of the \$452 billion-worth global environmental market was accounted by the United States, western Europe and Japan. Double digit growth is, however, forecast in the years ahead in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The WTO Secretariat announced that its Environmental Database will be updated by the end of the year to include all notifications made by Members in 1998. Also at the meeting, observer status was granted to the International Plant and Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), an intergovernmental organisation.

The Committee adopted its 1998 Report that contains a programme of work and a schedule of meetings for 1999. Meetings are planned for 18-19 February (market access cluster), 29-30 June (multilateral cluster) and 12-13 October 1999 (all ten items). The 1998 Report which consists of the year's meetings' minutes is to be forwarded to the General Council's 10 December 1998 meeting.

"US calls for open environment sector," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 30, 1998; ICTSD Internal Files.

### **DSB RULES AGAINST JAPAN IN FRUIT CASE**

The WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) last week ruled that Japan's testing requirements for agricultural imports (specifically apples, nectarines, cherries and walnuts) violate international trade rules. The U.S. brought the case to the WTO. The WTO rejected Japan's argument that variety-by-variety inspection of the agricultural products is necessary to protect against the spread of the codling moth pest in Japan. While the DSB acknowledged Japan's right to establish testing measures which would protect its market from codling moth pest infestation, the DSB said Japan lacked adequate scientific evidence to support its variety-by-variety testing method. The U.S. maintained that the test measures--which could take up to two years per variety to complete, were "thinly veiled protectionist measures." Japan's agricultural ministry immediately announced plans to appeal the ruling. If Japan loses on appeal, it could face an influx of cheap fruit imports from the U.S., Asia, and Europe.

This case marks the third case involving Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) considered by the DSB. The WTO last month also ruled against Australian SPS restrictions on salmon imports (see related story in this issue). The WTO previously ruled against an EU ban on hormone-treated beef imports, saying that the EU had not provided adequate scientific evidence of the health risks posed by hormone- treated beef.

"Japan - Measures Affecting Agricultural Products - Report of the Panel," WTO, October 27, 1998; "WTO finds Japan agriculture tests broke trade rules," REUTERS, October 27, 1998; "WTO says Japanese fruit testing violates int'l rules," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, October 27, 1998; "WTO panel rules against Japan apple quarantine," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, October 28, 1998; "US announces another win at the WTO," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, October 28, 1998;

"Japan to appeal over WTO apple test ruling," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 29, 1998; "WTO rulings may benefit US fruit, salmon exporters," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 27, 1998.

### **JAPAN FEELS HEAT FROM FORESTRY, FISHERIES TARIFFS**

Japanese officials last week rejected U.S. allegations that Japan is standing in the way of freer trade within the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (APEC). APEC ministers are to meet November 12-18 for the annual APEC summit, where a free trade pact is to be discussed. APEC ministers agreed last year to fast track liberalisation of at least 9 of 15 sectors by 1999, including telecommunications, environmental goods and services, chemicals and the energy sector. Forestry and fishery products is another of the nine sectors scheduled for fast-track liberalisation. Japan has rejected calls for it to further reduce tariffs in forestry and fishery products. "Japan's tariff levels in the area have already been lowered significantly, while the domestic industry is in a difficult situation," Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Kunihiro Saito said last week. The U.S. wants Japan to make further tariff cuts in forestry and fishery products to help boost the struggling Asian economy. Japan would like the topic of its fisheries and forestry tariffs taken off the table completely at the APEC forum later this month--other APEC members intend to make it a focus of discussion. Japanese officials held meetings with U.S. and EU officials last week in advance of the forum, in an effort to deflate the issue at the APEC summit.

APEC members include Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the U.S.

"Japan to discuss tariffs with US, Europe ahead of APEC," AGENCE FRANCE- PRESSE, October 26, 1998; "Japanese envoy dismisses U.S. APEC trade allegation," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, October 27, 1998.

### **EU, AFRICA ON TRACK FOR FREE TRADE; BLEAK VIEWS ON AFRICAN TRADE**

The EU last week outlined a timetable for concluding a long-negotiated free trade agreement with South Africa. EU Development Commissioner Joao de Deus Pinheiro told EU ministers last week that the EU would present its final compromise package to South African trade negotiators in mid-November, in order to conclude the agreement by December. Talks with South Africa have been underway for three years: the EU is keen to conclude an agreement before South Africa's presidential election in April 1999. The two sides have been stymied around market access for industry, wines and spirits, fishing, and agricultural products. Portugal and Spain remain opposed to allowing market access for fortified wines that South Africa has historically termed "port" and "sherry." The EU has refused to conclude agricultural market access talks until the wine and spirits issues have been resolved. South Africa has been angered by EU reluctance to open up its agricultural market: farm exports account for almost half of all South African agricultural exports to the EU.

South Africa's Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin also said that South Africa was also negotiating with member countries of the Southern African Development Community for free trade within the region.



Meanwhile, the Economic Monetary Community of Central Africa, signed in the Chadian capital Djamena four years ago and lauded as a major development that would enhance and facilitate the movement of goods, persons and intra-regional trade, seems to be floundering due to lack of commitment of its six members: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

In other news, the World Bank this month released a bleak picture of African trade, reporting that Africa's share of world trade has not kept pace with other regions. Africa's share of total global exports fell from nine percent in the 1960s to three percent in the 1990s, even as Africa's total exports grew. The World Bank indicated that primary commodities (agricultural, mineral and metal products) account for 60 percent of African exports compared to 33 percent for other developing regions. The Bank noted that developed countries have not opened their economies up to traditional African exports such as agricultural products, textiles and clothing, aggravating slow economic growth in the region.

"South Africa, European Union Agreement Expected Soon," PANA, October 7, 1998; "Brussels sets timetable for deal with S Africa," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 27, 1998; "Africa economy: UNCTAD urges new recipe for growth," ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT, October 11, 1998; "Africa Loses 68 Billion Dollars In Export Income," PANA, October 11, 1998; "TRADE-AFRICA: Lack of Political Will Hampers Intra-regional Trade," IPS, September 20, 1998.

## **OIL AND THE WTO**

Experts are calling for the inclusion of oil in WTO negotiations, arguing the commodity and its producers have not benefited from trade liberalisation in the same manner as other sectors. Addressing the International Forum on Energy and Integration last week in Caracas, trade experts said that including oil would benefit producers and end-consumers of oil by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in place in high-consumption countries such as the U.S. and Japan. Trade experts said oil has been left out of the WTO forum for two main reasons: first, because large oil-producing countries were generally not part of the GATT framework until the 1980s, and second, because consumer-countries tend to rely on oil-tariff revenues for domestic funding. Trade experts added that global oil trade in its present mode is "not consistent with a global focus for trade of a non-renewable resource" for producers. Trade expert Miguel Rodriguez Mendoza noted that now that many oil-producing countries are, or are applying to be, WTO Members, inclusion of oil at the WTO would complement the global trade body's work on the link between trade and the environment, investment, government procurement, and restrictions on production and subsidies.

"COMMODITIES: time for oil negotiations at WTO, Experts say," IPS, October 25, 1998.

## **WTO IN BRIEF**

As part of his ongoing efforts to improve WTO-civil society relations, WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero will be holding a meeting in Washington, DC on 5th November. This meeting will convene executive heads of U.S.-based non-governmental organisations working on environment, development, labour, trade, consumer affairs and business interests. This is a follow-up to the process which can be traced back to December 1997 when Renato Ruggiero started informing and

consulting NGOs on enhancement of public participation in the WTO. Last July Ruggiero met with several international NGOs in Geneva - he plans to hold similar meetings with developing country NGOs in the coming months. ICTSD Internal Files.

## **IN BRIEF**

In Geneva last week, officials of UNCTAD and of the Earth Council, a leading environmental group, announced the establishment of the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA). IETA, sponsored by UNCTAD and the Earth Council, is to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and experience related to international greenhouse gas emissions trading. Membership is open to companies, governmental and non- governmental organisations as well as individuals. The inaugural meeting of IETA is to take place November 12 in Buenos Aires during with the COP4 meeting on climate change. \*\*\*BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest will cover the issue of emissions trading more fully next week in the context of the Buenos Aires Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention\*\*\* "International emissions trading association established UNCTAD's help," IETA PRESS RELEASE, October 30, 1998.

The EU late last month issued an ultimatum to Australia, threatening to block imports of meat products unless Australia improves slaughterhouse health-safety controls. The EU issued the threat after inspecting a number of cold stores and slaughterhouses in Australia, where EU inspectors found weak supervision and inadequate health-safety processes. Australia, one the largest meat exporters in the world, said it would comply with EU corrective action directives within the six-month timeframe called for by the EU, but also noted that the rejection level for its exported meat by other countries was among the lowest for any exporter. "EU warns Australia of meat embargo," FINANCIAL TIMES, October 26, 1998.

Several members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have agreed to release a portion of their shares in the regional Inter American Development Bank (IADB), in order to open IADB membership to six small Caribbean nations: Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. The six countries will seek IADB membership as a single unit known as the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States. IADB membership is considered vital to OECS countries' successful participation in the future Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). "Neighbourly gesture gives Caribbean isles entry to hemisphere's development bank," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, October 28, 1998.

Japan, which imports a third of the world's tuna harvest, is reportedly eager to take decisive action against overfishing of tuna stocks. Having learned its lesson from international condemnation for its past reluctance to cutbacks on the whaling industry, Japan has recently begun to acknowledge the overfishing situation with regard to tuna. However, Japan is likely to face strong resistance from both local and international fishers, who depend on the high tuna-consumption level in Japan." Japan curbing appetite for tuna has a price," IPS, October 30, 1998.

European aid projects worth billions of dollars are ruining the environment in developing countries and pushing indigenous tribes to the margins, says a report published last month by a non-governmental organisation: the Rainforest Foundation. The report, the result of an 18-month investigation points out that many Third World projects funded under the European Union's aid programme and administered by the European Commission are also breaching the EC's own guidelines and procedures meant to protect the environment and vulnerable people.

"ENVIRONMENT: EU projects hurt forests, indigenous peoples, study says," IPS, October 11, 1998.

Late in October, the UN General Assembly's Second Committee held a panel discussion on "How to Achieve a Better Coherence and Improved Coordination among Environmental and Environment Related Conventions." Points raised were that the environmental Conventions would benefit from a strong UNEP and how national reporting burdens for the Conventions could be minimised. "ENB briefing note on UNGA panel: Convention coherence and coordination," ENB, October 26, 1998.

In August, Montaya a Eugene based company in hardwood panels and plywood joined the Certified Forest Products Council, an organisation that promotes the purchase of timber harvested in an environmentally sound way - that is, timber from trees cut selectively to allow sustainable, long-term harvests. Such voluntary efforts are leading to a growing market for certified wood. The problem, however, is that efforts by governments to require purchases of certified wood could, according to the World Trade Organisation, be constructed as barriers to free trade. "Will it be 'timber' for green logs?", BUSINESS WEEK, October 19, 1998.

## **EVENTS & RESOURCES**

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#### **WTO MEETINGS**

4 November 1998: Safeguards Committee. For information contact Luis Ople, WTO, tel (41) 22 739 5374.

5 November 1998: Rules of Origin Committee. For information contact Luis Ople, as above.

6 November 1998: Dispute Settlement Body. 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, WTO, tel (41) 22 739 5075.

17-18 November 1998: Committee on Agriculture. For information, contact Lucie Giraud, as above.

#### **OTHER MEETINGS**

**REGIONAL AGREEMENTS, TRADE AND SUSTAINABILITY:** This conference organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and previously scheduled for 3-4 December 1998 has been rescheduled for 1-2 February 1999. For more information, contact: Miguel Jimenez-Pont, ICTSD, 13 chemin des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland; tel: (41) 22 979 9478; fax: (41) 22 979 9093; email: [mjimenez@ictsd.ch](mailto:mjimenez@ictsd.ch).

**JOINT SESSION OF TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT EXPERTS:** Workshop with NGOs, 3 December 1998, OECD Headquarters, Paris, France. This workshop aims to providing NGOs with the opportunity to exchange views, and to provide input into the formulation of the OECD Joint Session of Trade and Environment Experts' work programme for the next two-

year period. For information, contact: Carrie Delecourt, OECD, rue André-Pascal, Paris, France; tel: (33) 1 4524 9307; fax: (33) 1 4524 7876.

GLOBAL WORKSHOP ON DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION, 18-22 January 1999, Costa Rica. This NGO-government initiative aims to contribute to the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. For information, contact: Simone Lovera, The Netherlands Committee for IUCN, Plantage Middenlaan 2B, 1018 DD Amsterdam, The Netherlands; tel: (31) 20 626 1732; (31) 20 627 9349; email: slovera@nciucn.nl; web: www.nciucn.nl.

SIXTH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON A BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL, 14-19 February 1999, Cartagena, Colombia. For information, contact: CBD Secretariat; World Trade Centre, 393 St. Jacques Street, Suite 300, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9; tel: (1) 514 288 2220; fax: (1) 514 288 6588; e-mail: chm@biodiv.org; web: www.biodiv.org.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, 22-23 February 1999, Cartagena, Colombia. For information, contact: CBD Secretariat, as above.

#### OPEN CALL FOR POLICY INFLUENCE EXAMPLES

The Policy Research Capacity Initiative (PRCI) of the World Resources Institute (WRI) is looking for true stories on ways in which NGOs have influenced environmental or development policy at the local, regional, national, or international level--either by influencing policy-makers directly or by influencing another party that then influenced a policy decision. Examples from other subject areas, from the private sector, or from organisations other than NGOs will also be of interest if they reveal best practices. Examples from developing countries are especially welcome. For information, go to: [www.wri.org/prci](http://www.wri.org/prci) or contact: Beth Behrendt, World Resources Institute, PRCI - Best Practices, 1709 New York Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20006, USA; fax: (1) 202 638 0036; email: [bethb@wri.org](mailto:bethb@wri.org).

#### • RESOURCES

"Nature's Subsidies to Shrimp and Salmon Farming," by Rosamond Naylor et al., *Science Magazine*, Vol. 282 Number 5390, 30 October 1998, pp. 883-884. Fish farming increases pressure on wild fisheries, pollutes ecosystems and may reduce the world's overall supply of fish, according to *Science Magazine*. To order, go to: [www.sciencemag.org/content/current](http://www.sciencemag.org/content/current).

"The Least Developed Countries: 1998 Report," United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, October 1998, 210 pp. This annual publication of UNCTAD provides socio-economic analysis and data on the 48 nations identified by the UN as the "least developed." To order, go to: [www.unicc.org/unctad/en/pub/ps11dc98.htm](http://www.unicc.org/unctad/en/pub/ps11dc98.htm).

"Our Planet," Volume 9, Number 6, October 1998. This bi-monthly magazine of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) focuses on issues related to environmentally sustainable development. This issue contains contributions by, *inter alia*, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, UNCTAD Secretary General Rubens Ricupero, and GEF Chairman Mohamed El-Ashry. To order, contact: Mani Kebede, Circulation Manager, Our Planet, UNEP, PO Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: (25) 42 621 234; fax: (25) 42 623 927; web: [www.ourplanet.com](http://www.ourplanet.com).

"The Globalisation of Poverty," by Michel Chossudovsky, Third World Network, 1998, 280 pp. This book analyses the new financial order and documents the role of the Bretton Woods institutions. To order, go to: [www.twinside.org.sg/souths/twn/title/glob-cn.htm](http://www.twinside.org.sg/souths/twn/title/glob-cn.htm).

"Creating a New Consensus on Population: The International Conference on Population and Development," by Iyoti Shankar Singh, London: Earthscan, 1998, 215 pp. This book traces the evolution of the population debates from 1974 to 1994. To order, contact: Earthscan Publications Limited, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN, UK; tel: (44) 171 278 0433; fax: (44) 171 278 1142; email: [earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk](mailto:earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk); web: [www.earthscan.co.uk](http://www.earthscan.co.uk).

"Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development 1998/99," edited by Helge Ol Bergesen, Georg Parmann and Oystein B. Thommessen, London: Earthscan, 1998, 349 pp. This 7th edition of the Yearbook provides valuable descriptions of international environmental treaties, conventions and protocols and the progress made towards their achievement. To order, contact: Earthscan, as above.

## WEBSITES

The Earth Council has launched several new interactive features on the Earth Charter Campaign website and invites you to participate in the campaign via the website. To do so, go to: [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org) For more information, contact: Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter Project Co-ordinator, The Earth Council/Campaign Secretariat; tel: (1) 506 256 1611; fax: (1) 506 255 2197; email: [echarter@terra.ecouncil.ac.cr](mailto:echarter@terra.ecouncil.ac.cr).

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