



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

BRIDGES

Weekly Trade News Digest

March 29, 1999

Volume 3, N°12

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Easter Break
- Correction and Clarification: UNCED, Blue Box Subsidies and the Peace Clause
- U.S. Turns Up Heat Under Beef Ban Dispute
- General Council Meets Briefly on Ministerial Preparations
- U.S., African Nations Meet On Trade, Economic Development
- WTO Membership May Be Close for China
- WTO Agriculture Committee Meets
- EU, Australia and Others Complain Against Japanese Rice Tariff Regime
- EU Approves EU-S.Africa Trade Pact
- EU Leaders Pass Diluted CAP Reform Package
- In Brief
- WTO In Brief
- Events & Resources

EASTER BREAK

BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest will be taking a break over Easter, so there will be no distribution on 5 April. The next issue will be distributed as usual on 12 April.

CORRECTION AND CLARIFICATION: UNCED, BLUE BOX SUBSIDIES AND THE PEACE CLAUSE

In the first story of last week's BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, we misnamed UNCED: the UN Conference on Environment and Development was and still is the correct name of this important event, that took place in Rio in 1992.

In BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No. 8, in the story about CAP reform, we mistakenly gave the impression that the so-called "blue box" subsidies were transitional. They are not. The "Peace clause" (Due Restraint Provision) on the other hand, is transitional and due to expire in 2003. This provision is contained in Article 13 (see also Article 1 (f) of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture contains this provision, whereby a 9 year period is set during which domestic support policies and export subsidy arrangements are exempt from GATT challenges. "Blue box" subsidies is the term commonly used to refer to the set of provisions (contained in Article 6.5 of the Agreement on Agriculture) that exempts from reduction commitments those

programme payments received under production-limiting programmes - if they are based on fixed area and yields or a fixed number of head of livestock, or if they are made on 85 per cent or less of base level of production.

U.S. TURNS UP HEAT UNDER BEEF BAN DISPUTE

In a move similar to its actions in the EU-U.S. banana dispute, the U.S. on 22 March issued a preliminary list of EU products that could be hit with 100 percent import duties in retaliation for the EU ban on imports of U.S. beef produced with growth-promoting hormones (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 2, No 1, 19 January 1998). The EU was given 15 months (i.e. until 13 May) to either lift its import ban or provide scientific justification for it. U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky last week said the EU ban was "arbitrary and scientifically unjustified" and has had a "substantial negative impact" on U.S. beef producers. The preliminary U.S. list covers about US\$900 million worth of goods, including agricultural products and motorcycles.

The WTO Appellate Body in January 1998 ruled that the EU ban on beef treated with growth hormones was not based on adequate scientific evidence and so violates international trade rules. The complaint was brought by the U.S. and Canada. The EU has said it needs more time to conduct additional risk-assessment studies that it says would justify the ban. (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No 6, 15 February 1999.) So far talks between the EU and U.S. have yielded little progress toward resolving the dispute, despite both sides' reporting a real interest in keeping the dispute from escalating to the same level as

the ongoing EU-U.S. dispute over bananas. The U.S. retaliation list did little to foster co-operation between the EU and U.S. on the matter. "These measures will inevitably have a chilling effect on trade," the statement said, "and will not facilitate our discussions with the U.S., which are aimed at a mutually satisfactory solution to the hormone issue," according to an EU statement. The UK Agricultural Minister Nick Brown last week broke ranks with other EU farm ministers by arguing that the ban is not justified by science.

"U.S. Issues Draft List of European Imports Targeted for Higher Duties in Hormone Row," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 24 March 1999; "L'Europe minimise les menaces américaines," LA TRIBUNE, 24 March 1999; "Focus: EU blasts US sanctions threat in hormone row," REUTERS, 23 March 1999; "UK moves to defuse US trade row on EU beef import ban," DOW JONES, 23 March 1999; "US prepared to impose sanctions on Europe in beef row," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 15 March 1999.

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETS BRIEFLY ON MINISTERIAL PREPARATIONS

The General Council met in Special Session last week in the context of ongoing preparations for the Third Ministerial Meeting which will take place in Seattle at the end of this year. The Ministerial Declaration towards which WTO Members are currently working in the General Council Special Sessions is important as it will be the basis of the agenda for multilateral trade negotiations that should start after the Seattle Ministerial.

Last week's meeting was short and inconclusive. The meeting was supposed to focus in particular on implementation of existing WTO agreements and decisions, on the negotiations mandated at Marrakesh, and on future work already provided for under other existing WTO agreements and decisions taken at Marrakesh.

Members had previously agreed that this second phase of Ministerial preparations would focus around specific negotiating proposals, and no such proposals were on the table at last week's meeting, although a number of States either indicated what their positions might be or announced that their proposals were in preparation. Uruguay tabled a paper, which was in a sense a tool of how to deal with the different issues relating to implementation of existing WTO agreements. The document set out a methodology for dealing with the issues at stake, dividing the issues into three categories: (1) issues that can be dealt with currently in the system as it is, (2) those that can be dealt with in the system as it is but require clarification, and (3) those that need to be solved by negotiations.

Australia also presented a document (distributed as WTO document WT/GC/W/156) which contains a proposal for consideration in the second phase of the Ministerial preparatory process (currently underway). The document sets out the Cairns group objectives for the negotiations on Agriculture which are mandated by the Agreement on Agriculture itself. Some - mainly Cairns group - countries echoed Australia's proposal, but there was no substantive discussion of it.

ICTSD Internal Files.

U.S., AFRICAN NATIONS MEET ON TRADE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Clinton Administration earlier this month met with eighty-three ministers from forty-six sub-Saharan African nations, representatives from four North African nations, and the heads of eight African regional organisations to foster economic development, trade, investment, political reform, and mutual economic growth. At the meeting African ministers expressed strong support for the immediate passage by Congress of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The bill promotes trade, investment, and increased development in Africa, and aims to de-emphasise aid as the only means of cash flow from the U.S. to the region. (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No. 5, 8 February 1999.)

An African Growth & Opportunity Act passed the U.S. House last year, but failed to get through the Senate where it faced opposition from senators eager to protect U.S. textile interests. Latest reports on the status of AGOA said that Congressional and Senate leadership were negotiating on aspects of the bill to ensure that a strong but palatable AGOA could pass both Houses of Congress later this year. Meanwhile, it is unclear how a rival bill - the Hope for Africa Act introduced by Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-Illinois) is faring. The Hope for Africa Act focuses on debt relief and increased aid for sub-Saharan Africa, and also includes strong labour and environment provisions. Mr. Jackson has criticised the pending AGOA, warning it would aid multinational firms more than African workers.

A number of delegates to the U.S.-Africa meeting criticised the Hope for Africa Act as an effort to undermine the AGOA. "Unfortunately, the mounting groundswell of support of this legislation [AGOA] has had to confront the sustained attempt of a limited group of self-proclaimed advocates

for Africa, endeavouring to distract us, as well as undermine and derail what is daily becoming inevitable -- passage of this legislation," according to a statement by the African Diplomatic Corps.

In other news from the meeting, the U.S. and African officials agreed "that high indebtedness constitutes a serious constraint to sustainable development in many African countries," according to a joint communiqué. Several African ministers called for a new approach to international debt relief programs, with relief designed to suit a specific country's individual circumstances. President Clinton reiterated a proposal made at the WTO High Level Symposium of Trade and Development to introduce a plan to forgive some US\$70 billion in debt at the Group of Seven (G-7) economic summit in June. (At the WTO summit, a number of Members said that any debt relief initiative must be complemented by expanded duty-free access for exports from the world's poorest countries.)

"U.S.-Africa Ministerial: Blueprint for A U.S.-Africa Partnership for the 21st Century," U.S. Department of State, 18 March 1999; "U.S.-Africa Ministerial Joint Communiqué," "Africa bill draws rally of supporters," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 19 March 1999; "Clinton debt plan welcomed at WTO, but further trade measures urged," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 24 March 1999; "Le sommet américano-africain se solde par des promesses d'aide," LA TRIBUNE, 22 March 1999.

WTO MEMBERSHIP MAY BE CLOSE FOR CHINA

As BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest went to press, news reports are speculating that the U.S. and China may be close to reaching agreement on China's accession to the WTO. U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky was en route to Beijing 28 March to meet with Chinese negotiators, who in the last month have displayed renewed interest in concluding a WTO accession agreement in the near term. Officials note that both the U.S. and China would like to conclude a deal by the time Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji meets with the Clinton Administration in Washington on 8 April. The U.S. and EU remain the main obstacles to China's accession. EU Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan is scheduled to visit Beijing on April 22 for EU-China talks on China's WTO accession.

China earlier this month announced it was ready to make "big concessions" in its bid to join the WTO. China started its quest for membership 13 years ago. Thus far talks between China and major trading partners have been stymied over access to China's markets. China has asserted it should be allowed to forge a WTO market access deal under developing country terms, while the U.S. and EU have countered that China's economy is too large and too strong to be admitted on the less stringent terms afforded to poorer countries. With a new round of global trade talks looming, China is reportedly redoubling its efforts to participate in those talks. Earlier this month Ms. Barshefsky denied rumours that China would be granted "special observer status," in advance of being formally admitted to the WTO. Such status would allow China to participate in WTO negotiations without having to meet WTO requirements with respect to its trade policies.

Meanwhile, despite the possible conclusion of a bilateral agreement in Beijing this week there remains definite U.S. political opposition to China's WTO membership. Democratic Congressional members last week told Ms. Barshefsky that even if a deal could be concluded, China has persistently failed to honour its commitments to human rights, labour rights, and environmental standards and could therefore not be trusted. Further, a Republican Congressman introduced an

amendment to a spending bill that would require a congressional resolution before the U.S. agrees to allow China to join the WTO.

Chinese negotiators earlier this month met with trading partners at a meeting of the WTO working group on its accession. During these talks, China promised it would open its telecommunications, banking and insurance markets, and to lower some agricultural import tariffs. Some critics noted that the proposals still did not go far enough and expressed scepticism over China's ability to follow through on their proposals.

"China promises major reforms," WALL STREET JOURNAL, 25 March 1999; "China lures banks for WTO but pessimism reigns," REUTERS, 23 March 1999; "Senators say they'll block China's bid for WTO," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 17 March 1999; "Les grandes manoeuvres reprennent sur l'entrée de la Chine dans l'OMC," LE MONDE, 4 March 1999; "Jiang to Geneva for WTO talks," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 22 March 1999; "China offers telecoms concession in WTO bid," REUTERS, 25 March 1999; "Administration wrestles with political aspects of China WTO deal," INSIDE US TRADE, 26 March 1999.

WTO AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETS

The WTO Committee on Agriculture met last week, both in formal and informal sessions. A number of issues were discussed in the informal session on 24-25 March, and positions expressed seem to be explicitly moving towards addressing the forthcoming WTO negotiations on agriculture. For instance, the EU reaffirmed its position that "blue box" subsidies are not temporary (see "Corrigendum and Clarification", this issue of BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest). This is indeed the case, but the U.S. is known for wanting to do away with these subsidies in future agriculture talks. Also in the informal session, Australia pointed out that the so-called peace clause will only be extended beyond 2003 if there is a consensus to extend it, pointing out that Members wishing to prolong the peace clause will thus have an incentive to conclude the forthcoming negotiations before 2003. It is interesting to note that Australia is thus pointing to the peace clause as a bargaining chip for timely completion of the next round of Agriculture negotiations.

Amongst other issues covered in the informal session were food security in developing countries (based on a paper submitted informally by India); environment and multifunctionality in agriculture (based on a paper submitted by Norway, already discussed in the Committee on Trade and Environment); the peace clause ("due restraint" provision, due to expire in 2003); "legal security" (a proposal put forward by the EU in response to the US on the peace clause) which would protect Members' commitments from legal challenges; and special treatment for Eastern and Central European countries under the Agriculture Agreement.

In the formal session on 25-26 March, Members considered a number of notifications and other implementation measures. Amongst these was the U.S. notification on export subsidies, which were questioned by a number of countries including Argentina, Canada, Japan and the Republic of Korea, who drew attention to the subsidies to skimmed milk powder exports, which had been carried over from the previous year. Although this is allowed under flexibility provisions of the Agreement, the US has in the past criticised others - such as the EU and Norway - for doing so. Also on milk powder, Venezuela was questioned by New Zealand on its in-quota tariffs. Poland was criticised by the U.S. for allegedly buying wheat and rye locally through its state-owned

Agricultural Marketing Agency and selling for export at lower prices. The U.S. also complained about a Romanian tax credit on cigarettes and Korea's tariff rates for peanuts.

The Committee also discussed food aid, and a paper on implementation of the decision on net food importers. The question of Japanese rice tariffication was also considered during the formal session of the Agriculture Committee (See related story in this issue of BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest).

The WTO website (www.wto.org) should soon carry a more complete report on last week's formal meeting of the Committee on Agriculture. The Norwegian paper on multifunctionality is available on the web at: <http://www.landbruk.dep.no/multifunctionality> The Australian paper on non-trade concerns (a response to the Norwegian paper) is available via email from Sophie Murphy at IATP: smurphy@iatp.org

ICTSD Internal Files.

EU, AUSTRALIA AND OTHERS COMPLAIN AGAINST JAPANESE RICE TARIFF REGIME

The EU, Australia, Uruguay and Argentina last week requested consultations with Japan over its plan to implement a rice tariffication scheme next month. Japan's proposed scheme would replace the current policy for rice imports (implemented as part of its commitments under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)) which obliges Japan to import rice equal to eight percent of total domestic consumption by 2000. Japan began importing rice at a rate of four percent consumption in 1995 and committed to an annual 0.8 percent increase in imports each year. By adopting tariffication, Japan would be allowed to slow its mandatory increase in imports to 0.4 percent per year, while applying tariffs on rice imports equal to the price gap between Japanese and foreign rice. (See also BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 3 Nos 1 & 2, 18 January 1999.)

At the WTO Committee on Agriculture Meeting last week, Japan confirmed that it will go ahead with its rice tariffication on 1 April 1999 even though consultations with the four objectors have only just begun.

At issue for the EU et al is the method by which Japan calculated its proposed rice tariffs. The complainants maintain that Japan calculated the tariffs by comparing high-quality domestic rice with low-quality imported rice, thus creating a larger price differential between the rice and in turn forcing a larger tariff.

Press reports in the AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW noted that "Japan has made it clear from the imposition of a 390 percent super tariff on rice imports that it is unwilling to confront the structural rigidities in its agricultural sector." Australia, Uruguay and Argentina are members of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries, which have led calls for agricultural liberalisation at the WTO.

The U.S. last week declined to file a complaint against Japan's tariffication plan, despite earlier indications that it would do so. The U.S. said instead it would pursue "periodic consultations" with Japan to ensure that the U.S. "achieve[s] continued access to Japan's rice market in line with that of the past four years," according to a statement from the U.S. Trade Representative. The U.S. did

reserve the right to pursue "all of our options to respond to Japan's rice policy," if U.S. rice market access is hindered.

"Japan regrets objections to rice import tariffs," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 23 March 1999; "Australia displeased with Japan's rice tariffs," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 22 March 1999; "U.S. backs away from complaint against new Japanese rice tariff," INSIDE US TRADE, 26 March 1999.

EU APPROVES EU-S.AFRICA TRADE PACT

The EU on 24 March approved a free trade deal with South Africa. The deal- which took over three years to conclude, is the first between the EU and a developing country and the first EU deal to also include agricultural goods. The EU said the deal "would give an important stimulus to social progress, to the development of the poorest sectors of South African society and to the consolidation of South Africa's democracy." The deal, which is to come into force in January 2000 would encompass 90 percent of the US\$20 billion in annual bilateral trade. EU officials said the deal could be used as a model with which to negotiate a new Lome Convention with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. S. African Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin said the agreement was a "massive statement of confidence in South Africa's ability to enter the global market."

The deal was in danger of collapsing after internal EU opposition to the market access extended to S.African agricultural and spirits exports. Most notably, Portugal and Spain were strongly opposed to allowing market access for fortified wines that S.Africa has historically termed "port" and "sherry." The approved agreement provides a five to eight year period during which S. Africa will phase out the use of "port" and "sherry," on its spirits exports world-wide, with a 12-year interim period for the use of the terms "port" and "sherry" by S. African spirit producers for the domestic market. In addition, the EU agreed to eliminate duties on imports of S. African wine. (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No. 5, 8 February 1999.)

Mr. Erwin noted that the agreement would have spillover benefits for the 14-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the five-nation Southern African Customs Union (SACU). As part of the deal, EU goods will have access to SACU markets. However, critics within S. Africa were unhappy over the seemingly lopsided market access deal struck in the agricultural sector. While EU markets would be open to about 95 percent of S. African exports over the next 10 years, only 63 percent of S. Africa's vital agricultural exports will enjoy duty free access. Cheap, subsidised EU agricultural exports, critics said, would flow onto the S. African and SACU markets, which could seriously threaten small (and unsubsidised) farmers in S. Africa and SACU countries. Critics also voiced concern over the ability of S. African and SACU industrial sectors' to withstand the impact from increased imports of EU manufactured goods.

"EU Summit: S African trade pact approved," FINANCIAL TIMES, 26 March 1999; "EU approves historic deal," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 25 March 1999; "Focus: S. Africa sees EU trade deal in force by 2000," REUTERS, 25 March 1999; "South Africa sees benefits for entire region from EU accord," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 25 March, 1999; "SA's in dangerous waters with the EU," DAILY MAIL & GUARDIAN (S.Africa), 2 February 1999; "EU Delegation Arrives In South Africa," PANAFRICAN NEWS AGENCY, 2 March 1999.

EU LEADERS PASS DILUTED CAP REFORM PACKAGE

Meeting in Berlin, EU leaders last week reached agreement on the so-called Agenda 2000 package of budget and agricultural subsidy reforms. Reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy fell short of those agreed to earlier this month by EU agricultural ministers. Under the CAP reforms passed last week price supports for grain farmers would be cut by 15 percent in two equal annual instalments beginning in 2000-2001. EU farm ministers had proposed a 20 percent cut. EU leaders last week voted to postpone 15 percent reductions in dairy farm supports until 2005-2006, rather than in 2003 as proposed by EU farm ministers. EU leaders also declined to adopt EU farm ministers' proposal to cut beef support prices by 20 percent. Reports said French opposition to EU farm ministers' proposal accounted for the changes between the proposed CAP reform and the end deal agreed to by EU leaders last week.

The European Union (EU) is the world's biggest importer of agricultural goods and the second largest exporter, after the United States. With new WTO talks on agriculture looming, the EU had to take measures to address trade barriers sure to be attacked by the U.S. and the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting nations in the WTO. The EU may also have faced food overproduction if it did not reform its guaranteed pricing scheme. Further, as the EU considers expansion of its members to include agrarian economies such as Poland and Hungary, the need for CAP reform was highlighted. The cost of the CAP to EU economies has grown steadily, from US\$27 billion in 1990 to US\$45 billion in 1997, accounting for nearly half the EU budget.

EU leaders said the CAP reform package reached last week represents the framework the EU will use in WTO talks on agriculture set to begin later this year. The U.S. and other trade partners had already denounced the CAP reform package agreed to by EU farm ministers as uninspired and insufficient. (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No. 10, 15 March 1999.) An U.S. official last week said the U.S. was disappointed that "even the limited progress of the farm ministers was watered down." Indeed even EU officials have their doubts about how the deal will play at the WTO. "This deal is a damp squib," according to one unidentified official. "It certainly won't be good enough for the WTO talks."

"EU leaders reach accord on 2000-2007 farm reforms," DOW JONES, 26 March 1999; "EU summit: marathon ends in compromise;" "EU summit: defeat for market liberalisation," FINANCIAL TIMES, 27 March 1999; "Farm reform falls short of promises in EU's landmark budget deal," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 29 March 1999; "EU's Fischler rejects U.S. criticism of farm deal," REUTERS, 16 March 1999; "EU leaders seen ratifying landmark regime at summit," DOW JONES, 23 March 1999; "EU agricultural reforms viewed as 'damp squib'," AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW, 29 March 1999.

IN BRIEF

The Canadian Parliament last week - responding to calls from NGOs and church groups, voted to establish an international tax on financial transactions as part of measures to control currency speculation. Canada is the first government to formally call for the so-called Tobin Tax, named for Nobel Prize-winning economist James Tobin, and which is intended to counter or cool destructive currency speculation. "NDP Tobin Tax wins," RESULTS Canada (Press Release), 24 March 1999.

WTO IN BRIEF

The field of candidates vying for the top spot at the WTO last week again narrowed as Morocco pulled its candidate- Morocco's trade ambassador Hassan Abouyoub, out of the running. The two remaining candidates in the race to replace outgoing WTO Director General are Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Supachai Panitchpakdi and New Zealand's Mike Moore, a former prime minister. Morocco withdrew Mr. Abouyoub while calling the selection process non-transparent and unfair. Morocco called for WTO Members from developing countries to remain united in selecting a Director General from a developing country. WTO Members last week set 31 March as the deadline for reaching consensus on a new Director General. "Consensus eludes election of new WTO chief," DECCAN HERALD, 24 March 1999; "Morocco blasts process of selecting WTO leader, withdraws candidate," INSIDE US TRADE, 26 March 1999; "World trade chief to be picked next week- diplomats," REUTERS, 24 March 1999.

WTO Members last week met informally to consider a so-called credit scheme that would allow Members to gain negotiating credit in multilateral trade negotiations for autonomous trade policy reforms. The WTO Secretariat informally suggested two methods for implementing a credit scheme: either via a general statement recognising autonomous trade reforms as contributions to future multilateral negotiations or a scheme under which such reforms are assigned a certain value which could be claimed as concessions-credit in future negotiations. "WTO considers credit system for unilateral trade liberalisation," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 24 March 1999.

Canada last week announced it would appeal a WTO ruling issued earlier this month against its dairy marketing regime. In a case brought by the U.S. and New Zealand, the WTO ruled on 17 March that Canada violated WTO rules by providing low-cost milk to processors for export, constituting an export subsidy. "Canada to appeal WTO milk ruling," DOW JONES, 25 March 1999.

The U.S. last week said it would support Jordanian efforts to join the WTO in advance of the proposed Millennium Round of global trade talks. An U.S. trade official called on Jordan to implement reform to its intellectual property rights regime to comply with WTO rules as part of its application. Also last week, the U.S. and Jordan signed a bilateral trade and investment agreement. "US to push for Jordan's WTO membership before 2000," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 22 March 1999.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

• EVENTS

For a more complete list of events in coming months, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/html/calendar.htm>

WTO Meetings

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at <http://www.wto.org/wto/about/meets.htm> Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO

meetings are often changed, and that the important informal meetings of different WTO bodies are not always announced.

8 April: INFORMAL MEETING OF THE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY, on the Review of the DSU. For information, contact Nuch Nazeer, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5393.

12-13 April: INFORMAL MEETING OF THE WTO GENERAL COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION (THIRD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS). For information contact Nuch Nazeer, as above.

14 April: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING. For information contact Nuch Nazeer, as above.

Other Events

27-28 April, Brussels: FROM THE MAI TO THE MILLENNIUM ROUND; SETTING A DIFFERENT AGENDA FOR FRAMEWORKS ON INVESTMENT AND TRADE. Hosted by The Green Group in the European Parliament. This Conference will bring together people opposing further economic and financial deregulation and seeking alternatives. To register or for information contact Gaby Küppers, The Greens in the European Parliament, rue Wiertz, LEO 02 C 65, 1047 Bruxelles, tel: (32- 2) 284-3392, fax: (32-2) 284-4915, e-mail: gkupperts@europarl.eu.int

29 April, Boulder, Colorado, U.S.: LAUNCHING THE PEOPLE'S MILLENNIUM, CHALLENGING CORPORATE CONTROL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE. Presented by Alliance For Democracy. For information contact Alliance for Democracy, P.O. Box 683, Lincoln, Mass. 01773, tel: (1-781) 259-9395, e- mail: Peoplesall@aol.com

May-July, Université d'Anvers, Flanders, Belgium: COURS EN PLANIFICATION, GESTION ET EVALUATION PARTICIPATIVES DES ACTIONS DE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLES. La date limitée d'inscription est le 31 mars. Pour information contacter Karin Mercelis, Vakgroep Ontwikkelingsstudies, Prinsstraat 13, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgique, tel: (32-3) 220-4111, fax: 220-4420, e-mail: karin.mercelis@uafsia.ac.be

• RESOURCES

ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA): AN ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK. The North American Commission for Environmental Co-operation (CEC) on 17 March released a report on how to measure the connections between NAFTA and environmental quality in North America. The 384-page report is the most detailed effort yet to develop a means of measuring the ecological impacts of the 1994 trade liberalisation agreement. Printed copies are available by request from Sarah Richardson at the CEC Secretariat, e- mail: srichard@ccecm1.org. An electronic version of the report can be found on the CEC's web site: <http://www.cec.org>

STATE OF INDIA'S ENVIRONMENT: THE CITIZENS' FIFTH REPORT. This publication by India's Centre for Science and Environment is a comprehensive dossier on Indian environmental issues, events, policies and practices, along with statistics on environment-related facts analysed and presented in a reader-friendly way. Check out the details and book an early copy at: www.oneworld.org/cse/html/extra/soe5.htm

BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development with support from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Editor: Caroline Dommen, ICTSD, Geneva Executive Center, 13 ch. des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland; email: cdommen@ictsd.ch; tel: (41-22) 917 8497; fax: (41-22) 917 8093. Executive Director: Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, address as above, email: rmelendez@ictsd.ch.

Excerpts from BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest© may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcome and should be directed to the editor.

To subscribe send email to: majordomo@igc.org. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message say: subscribe tradedev. BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest© can be found at the ICTSD web page: <http://www.ictsd.org>