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WTO: VOICES SPEAK OUT IN FAVOUR OF A RE-BALANCING NEW ROUND AND AGAINST FURTHER LIBERALISATION

While WTO Members remain enveloped in acrimony over the appointment of a new Director-General, preparations for the Third Ministerial (scheduled for 30 November - 3 December Seattle) have been held up. The Informal Meeting of the Special Session of the General Council due to be held last week was cancelled, and no new date has yet been fixed. Despite the lack of formal activity, government officials and NGOs continue to voice their opinions on what the Ministerial and the proposed Millennium Round of trade talks should or should not include.

Indian commerce officials have been reported to express opposition to a new round of trade talks until imbalances in current agreements have been rectified. N. N. Khanna, a special secretary in India's Ministry of Commerce, said that Northern countries have ignored the development dimension in WTO agreements. In related news, Martin Khor, Director of the Malaysia-based non-governmental organisation Third World Network, writing in the BANGKOK POST, warned developing countries that agreements sought after by Northern countries on competition policy, investment and government procurement could seriously affect national economic interests and severely constrain national government's ability to regulate and build local resources.

Meanwhile, over 500 NGOs of a wide diversity of thematic focus and size and from worldwide origin have signed a statement proposing content for the new trade talks to be launched at the Seattle Ministerial. The statement from members of international civil society opposing a new round of comprehensive trade negotiations opposes "any further liberalisation negotiations,

especially those which will bring new areas under the WTO regime" and calls instead for a "comprehensive and in- depth review and assessment of the existing agreements" in order to change them. According to these NGOs, such a review should address "the WTO's impact on marginalised communities, development, democracy, environment, health, human rights, labour rights and the rights of women and children."

In the U.S., the Sierra Club and National Wildlife Federation issued last month a White Paper outlining a proposal for granting the Clinton Administration "fast track" trade negotiating authority while ensuring that environmental and health goals are not undermined. Fast track negotiating authority would give the Clinton Administration the ability to bring negotiated free trade agreements to Congress for a straight yes or no vote immune from amendment. Fast track is critical to U.S. credibility at the negotiating table since trade partners are reluctant to negotiate with the U.S. if hard work can become unravelled in the U.S. Congress.

Among other things, the paper calls for the elimination of subsidies that distort trade and harm the environment. It also calls for the adoption of the so-called precautionary principle - a principle used to allow taking preventive environmental and health measures when scientific evidence is lacking. This principle - often cited in international environmental policy - is the same principle European countries have used to justify bans on genetically modified seeds and feedstuffs, the source of a trade dispute between the U.S. and EU.

"Trade: WTO 'Millennium Round' challenged by NGOs," IPS, 28 April 1999; "In the path of the juggernaut," BANGKOK POST, 28 April 1999; "Deadline draws closer to meet WTO Agenda," ECONOMIC TIMES (India), 30 April 1999; "India cautious over fresh WTO talks," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 29 April 1999; "White Paper on Environmentally Responsible Trade Negotiating Authority," National Wildlife Federation/Sierra Club, 26 April 1999; "U.S. green groups offer safeguards on trade," FINANCIAL TIMES, 28 April 1999.

EU REPORT FANS FLAMES UNDER BEEF BROIL

The EU last week said "there can no longer be any question" of its lifting a ban on hormone-treated beef imports after two preliminary studies identified risks to health caused by hormones. Specifically, an EU scientific panel found that one hormone (17 beta oestradiol) "exerts both tumour initiating and tumour promoting effects." In light of this the EU said it needed to reconsider how it would respond to a WTO ruling against its ban on hormone-treated beef.

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 U.S. and Canada brought the complaint to the WTO, estimating that U.S. and Canadian farmers lose a combined US\$250 million a year from lost trade due to the ban. The EU was given 15 months (i.e. until 13 May) to either lift its import ban or provide scientific justification for it. (See BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No 6, 15 February 1999.)

The U.S. criticised the new EU report on hormones as a stalling tactic and misleading. "In its 1999 meeting, the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) of the World Health Organisation and Food and Agriculture Organisation reconfirmed the safety of certain growth hormones when administered to cattle in accordance with good veterinary practices. . . . Scientific consensus has already answered the debate over public health and safety. The issue is the EU's refusal to comply

with the WTO rulings and its unwillingness to honour its international obligations," U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said in a joint statement.

EU officials disagreed. "The scientific evidence is of enormous importance to European consumers as it demonstrates that the Commission was right to strenuously defend the ban on hormones," Acting EU Consumer Policy Commissioner Emma Bonino said in a May 4 statement. "We now have a scientific basis to defend our position."

The U.S. and Canada will now press ahead with trying to secure retaliatory sanctions against the EU to compensate for lost trade. U.S. trade officials said a revised list of US\$900 million worth of EU goods would be ready for early June. Canada published a list of CDN\$50 million of EU goods against which it would impose sanctions. Sources said that the EU hormone report could complicate WTO approval for retaliatory sanctions. Prior to the release of the EU report, it had been generally expected that the EU would not comply with the WTO 13 May deadline - or rather make no real attempt to comply, which would have made it easy for the U.S. and Canada to win approval for sanctions. Last week's report however could be viewed as an attempt at compliance with the WTO mandate - as the EU reads it, to provide scientific justification for the ban. No talks are currently scheduled between the EU and Canada or the U.S. to try and resolve the dispute.

"Washington récusé le danger des hormones de croissance dans l'élevage," LE MONDE, 6 May 1999; "Embargo européen et tractations à l'OMC," AGRA PRESSE HEGBO, 7 May 1999; "Boeuf aux hormones," LE FIGARO, 4 May 1999; "Les dangers du boeuf européen, LIBÉRATION, 4 May 1999; "Executive summary of committee report on hormone risks," EU PRESS RELEASE, 30 April 1999; "Hormones first Commission debate," EU PRESS RELEASE, 4 May 1999; "U.S. sees little chance of settling dispute with EU over beef imports as talks collapse," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 5 May 1999; "EU Commission closes door on lifting ban on hormone-treated beef," INSIDE US TRADE, 7 May 1999. "Joint Statement by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and United States Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky on the EU Hormone Report," 3 May 1999; "Canada set to hit EU with import ban," GLOBE & MAIL, 5 May 1999.

TRANSATLANTIC ENVIRONMENT DIALOGUE LAUNCHED

Environmental NGOs from the EU and the U.S. have teamed up to present a united front when campaigning on global issues such as climate change, biotechnology, standardisation and biodiversity. The "Transatlantic Environment Dialogue" (TEAD) was launched in Brussels on 3 May, by the Brussels-based European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the Washington DC-based National Wildlife Federation, in an effort to formalise and strengthen dialogue between environmental non-governmental organisations in the EU and the U.S., and to increase NGO access to high-level policy makers.

The impetus and initiative for the TAED stems from the New Transatlantic Agenda, signed by the EU and the U.S. government in 1995 to further co-operation and integration between the EU and the U.S. The TAED calls for the Transatlantic Economic Partnership (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 2, No 36, 21 September 1998 and Vol. 2, No 49, 21 December, 1998) to take more notice of environmental issues and put sustainable development at the centre of its agenda.

The TAED will be invited to make formal policy recommendations during biannual EU/U.S. summits, the next of which will be held in Cologne, Germany in June.

The project receives funding and backing from the US government (USIA and USTR) and the European Commission. John Hontelez of the EEB stressed that it would be an independent force to monitor and lobby bilateral and international policy making.

"Transatlantic Green NGO Alliance Formed," ENS, 4 May, 1999; ICTSD Internal Files.

MERCOSUR FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Could economic and political volatility relegate the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) to an also-ran trading bloc? Comprised of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, Mercosur had for the last few years been emerging as the fourth largest world economic force after NAFTA, the EU and Japan - flexing its muscles at the U.S. as the hemisphere continues its negotiations to establish a hemispheric-wide Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) by 2005. Indeed, Mercosur's success bore fruit for the entire region, attracting greater investment in the region as a whole. That was before Brazil, Latin America's largest economy, devalued its currency in January threatening the balance of trade between Mercosur members and most especially between Argentina and Brazil. Intra-Mercosur trade is expected to fall this year by almost 20 percent marking the second consecutive year of decline after momentous growth from US\$4 billion in 1990 to about US\$18 billion in 1997.

Talks on broader Mercosur integration and common external tariffs have been frustrated. Brazil to the chagrin of its Mercosur partners struck out on its own last month to try and strike a free trade deal with the neighboring Andean pact of countries after Mercosur-Andean talks proved fruitless after two years. Observers warn that Mercosur must - despite member's economic woes and political uncertainty, continue to press forward with a deepening of Mercosur ties towards its ambitious goal of a customs union to keep foreign investors and perspective trade partners interested. Mercosur leaders say that with the worst of the economic crisis behind them they are ready to put more emphasis on a stronger Mercosur.

Meanwhile, Mercosur and the EU have shown political and trade interest to get closer. An EU-Mercosur Summit is scheduled for June 99, during which the two blocs are expected to announce their intention to create a free trade zone by 2001. The EU is already responsible for 43 per cent of foreign direct investment in Mercosur and a bilateral trade of US\$ 55 billion in 1998. From 1990 to 1996, Mercosur's imports from Europe surged by 274 per cent, while exports grew by only 25 per cent. This free trade zone is expected to close this gap and open up opportunities for small and middle-size firms from Mercosur. A major obstacle, however, are the alleged US\$160 billion in subsidies to the EU agricultural sector, coupled with sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements which block access to EU markets.

Mercosur has demanded that any agreement with the EU must include significant EU concessions on agriculture.

It is clear that both blocs have to gain with this approximation. On the one hand, the EU sees Mercosur as the embryo for a South American Common Market, which would grow out of the

Mercosur Customs Union. On the other hand, Mercosur needs to negotiate from a position of strength for a demanding roster of upcoming free trade talks at the multilateral and hemispheric levels.

Some observers claim that the prospects of FTAA coming to fruition are slowly becoming uncertain. First, until the Clinton Administration gets so-called fast track negotiating authority (see related story in this issue) the FTAA process is not likely to gain momentum. Second, FTAA negotiations risk being swept-up or sidelined by a potential new round of global trade talks. Later this year, smaller, poorer countries in the Americas may need to choose between the regional FTAA talks and a proposed WTO Millennium Round of comprehensive trade talks. "We simply cannot afford the human and financial resources, particularly small countries, to duplicate negotiating services [for the FTAA] and the WTO," said a Jamaican trade official.

Whatever the arena, observers note that Mercosur must be fit and ready to compete.

"Acordo comercial entre a Uniao Europeia e o Mercosul," O Globo, 10 April, 1999. "Mercosurs malaise," THE ECONOMIST, 24 April 1999; "EU: Rio Summit," OXFORD ANALYTICA, 8 March 1999; "Do WTO talks threaten gains to build FTAA," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 3 May 1999; "Crisis en el MERCOSUR;" "Brasil negocia unilateralmente con la Comunidad Andina;" "El Mercosur se resquebraja," BOLETIN SICA-AL (No. 62), 30 April 1999;

SACU FEARS FLOODING BY EU IMPORTS; S. AFRICA CRITICISES EU FARM SUBSIDIES

A study released last month by the SA Foundation, a lobbying group representing South Africa's 50 largest businesses, estimated that the member-countries of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) stand to lose as much as US\$420 million annually due to lost customs revenues and an influx of cheap imports as a result of the free trade agreement signed earlier this year between S. Africa and the EU. (See *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 3, No. 12, 29 March 1999.) The S. Africa-EU agreement extends market access for EU goods to SACU member-countries-Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland in addition to South Africa.

SACU producers must now compete with cheap, subsidised agricultural products which could seriously threaten small (and unsubsidised) farmers in S. Africa and SACU countries. There is also concern over the ability of SACU industrial sectors to withstand the impact from increased imports of EU manufactured goods. S. African trade and industry minister Alec Erwin said any potential negative effects of the S. Africa-EU trade deal could be remedied by a clause within the deal specifying that "special attention will be given to providing support for the adjustment effort occasioned" within SACU countries. SACU member-countries warned they would seek compensation should the SA Foundation forecast hold true.

Meanwhile, South Africa last week said it would campaign vigorously against protectionist EU agricultural policies when WTO talks on agriculture get underway later this year. S. Africa had already, as part of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries, expressed displeasure with the EU's revised Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which Cairns Group countries argued did not go far enough to cut subsidies to the farm sector. "We want to get rid of internal supports, specifically export subsidies, out of the trade system [to achieve] fair competition on an international basis. But we can't have that as long as specifically first world countries are supporting

their agriculture sectors to a higher degree," according to Ben Van Wyck, chief director of trade with S. Africa's department of agriculture. Mr. Van Wyck noted that S. Africa had phased out all export subsidies on farm products and is willing to bring farm import tariffs lower as part of the WTO talks.

"Interview: S. Africa farm min attacks EU protectionism," DOW JONES, 5 May 1999; "SACU braces itself for flood of EU imports," AFRICA ANALYSIS, 30 April 1999.

GMO FOOD LABELLING AT LEAST A YEAR OUT

Divisions over GMOs were again emphasised last month when the Codex Food Labelling Committee, part of the UN Codex Alimentarius Commission that sets global food standards last month failed to reach agreement on labelling rules for food containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The 53 countries attending the 27-30 April meeting in Ottawa could only agree to create a new working group to develop a proposal for consideration at the committee's next annual meeting in the spring of 2000. Last months talks faltered amid disagreement between the EU and the U.S. over a draft proposal for mandatory labelling of all processed food products containing GMOs. This marks the second year in a row that the Codex Food Labelling Committee failed to reach agreement and puts a global GMO labelling agreement out by at least a year.

Codex was established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation in 1962 to recommend minimum standards on food safety that all countries should follow. WTO Members cite Codex standards in food-related agreements such as the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. While Codex rules are usually ignored in the mainstream press, the Codex Food Labelling Committee has received a good deal of attention because labelling figures prominently in on-going trade disputes between the EU and U.S., in particular on the EU ban on hormone treated beef imports and over EU restrictions on GMO maize and soybean imports.

The EU favours mandatory labelling of processed foodstuffs containing GMOs. EU consumers favour GMO labelling as tool for making an informed choice about food purchases with respect to food safety and purity preferences. U.S. officials argue that the EU approach is impractical and moreover unwarranted - saying that GMO products are substantially the same as non-GMO products with respect to nutritional value and contain neither toxic nor allergenic elements.

Meanwhile, those in favour of GMO-labelling say the consumers want the right to make an informed choice about the food they eat. "People in different parts of the world voice concerns about this on environmental, religious and ethical grounds, so labels have to be provided that allow people to make appropriate choices," a spokesman for Consumers International, which represents 246 consumer organisations from 110 countries, warned representatives to the Codex Commission in Ottawa.

"EU-U.S. dispute delays Codex labelling rule for a year, could spark new trade battles," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 5 May 1999; "De nouvelles regles pour le commerce," AGRA Presse Hebdo, 3 May 1999; "Sticky labels," THE ECONOMIST, 1 May 1999; "Giant food companies control standards: Critics," TORONTO STAR, 28 April 1999; UN agency meets to decide on rules for labelling produce," THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, 28 April 1999.

U.S., CANADA CALL FOR GMO TRADE ON WTO AGENDA

The U.S. and Canada last month announced they would push to include trade of biotechnology products on the WTO agenda for the proposed new round of global trade talks. Officials from the two countries said the issue must be addressed because U.S. and Canadian biotechnology products face increasing barriers in markets such as the EU, where the approval process for imports containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can take up to two years. "What you have is a non-transparent, non-science based, highly politicised approval process [for biotechnology products]," according to a U.S. agriculture official. "This leads us to begin thinking about whether we want to negotiate some new sort of disciplines within the WTO for approval procedures and labelling," he said. Observers have suggested that a new stand-alone agreement on biotechnology could be appropriate rather than revising existing relevant agreements including the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures, the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), and possibly the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures.

Meanwhile, a leading U.S. consumer rights group said the EU could successfully resist U.S. and Canadian pressure to open its market up to GMOs under current WTO rules. "There are numerous recommendations from bodies like the World Health Organisation, which would stand up in any WTO challenge. If you couch your rules in terms of basic consumer rights, they're unchallengeable," according to Jean Halloran with the Consumers Union.

"U.S., Canada to press for rules on biotech in new trade round," *INSIDE US TRADE*, 7 May 1999; "US group welcomes EU control on gene food," *REUTERS*, 23 April 1999; "Les Américains passent à l'offensive pour faire la promotion des OGM en Europe" *LA TRIBUNE*, 5 May 1999.

LITTLE PROGRESS ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS IN WTO - AN ISSUE FOR SEATTLE?

The WTO's Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) met on 29-30 April, and 3 May. A number of regional trade agreements were discussed, with no decision being taken. Matters are somewhat blocked in the CRTA at the moment with Hong Kong, Japan and Korea calling for a study of negative impacts of regional trade agreements. The three countries, not members of any regional trade agreements, are preventing the CRTA from granting its approval to a number of regional trade agreements - including the accession of Bulgaria to the Central European Free Trade Agreement, agreements between the EC and Slovenia, between the EC and Andorra, and bilateral agreements between Turkey and Romania, Hungary and Lithuania - until the systemic issues have been addressed.

Hong Kong, Japan and Korea would like the question of whether regional trade agreements are compatible with WTO, and whether Article 24 of GATT and Article 5 of GATS, addressed in the next round of multilateral trade negotiations. (See also *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 3, No 5, 8 February, 1999).

The WTO General Council established the CRTA in February 1996, to centralise in a single body the effort of the various working parties devoted to examining individual RTAs, and to provide a forum to discuss the systemic implications of RTAs for the multilateral trading system and the relationship between them.

WTO Website; ICTSD Internal Files.

GROUPS CRITICISE COMMERCE DECISION ON DOLPHIN-SAFE TUNA

A group of U.S. environmental, consumer and animal rights organisations have sharply criticised the U.S. Commerce Department for "gutting" a law designed to protect the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) dolphin population. The Commerce Department late last month issued new regulations regarding the labelling of canned tuna product as "dolphin safe," which would allow the use of the label unless observers stationed on fishing vessels personally discovered dead or seriously injured dolphins and reported the information.

The Commerce Department issued its ruling after an 18-month study on whether encircling tuna with purse seine nets has a negative effect on dolphin stocks. U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley said the study had not shown that the encirclement process has a significant impact on dolphin survival. The study was commissioned in 1997 as part of a compromise agreement in the U.S. Senate (Marine Mammal Protection Act) which would, pending results of the encirclement study, permit the importation of previously embargoed yellowfin tuna for countries in compliance with the so-called Panama Declaration. Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Spain, Venezuela and the U.S. signed the declaration in 1995 agreeing to keep their annual dolphin kill resulting from purse seine fishery for yellowfin tuna below 5,000. Under the agreement the definition of dolphin safe would be changed from non-encirclement to a more liberal definition pending the results of the study. At the time, several environmental groups criticised the Act as a trade agreement under the guise of environmental policy.

The 85-member Dolphin Safe/Fair Trade Campaign - comprised of environmental, consumer and animal rights groups, lashed out against the Commerce Department decision, saying it runs "contrary to all available scientific information." "Scientists, U.S. tuna companies, and the public know that chasing and netting dolphins is not safe for dolphins," stated David Phillips, Director of Earth Island Institute's International Marine Mammal Project. "Today's decision is consumer fraud and a death warrant for thousands of dolphins," Mr. Phillips said. Environmental groups are expected to file a federal lawsuit against the decision.

"The decision by the Secretary is an outrageous attack on environmental protection laws in order to allow Mexico and other dolphin-killing nations access to the lucrative U.S. tuna market. Once again, trade trumps science," Patricia Forkan, Executive Vice President of the Humane Society (U.S.) said. Meanwhile, U.S. canned tuna processors, who collectively comprise approximately 90% of the U.S. canned tuna market, said they intend to retain their non-encirclement policy regardless of the Commerce Department findings. U.S. tuna producers said changing the definition of dolphin-safe to a "no-mortality" definition would cause confusion and concern among U.S. consumers who understand the non-encirclement definition of dolphin-safe.

"Dolphin Safe Tuna Label Gutted by U.S. Commerce Secretary," DOLPHIN-SAFE FAIR TRADE COALITION PRESS RELEASE, 29 April 1999; U.S. Tuna Foundation letter to U.S. Commerce Secretary, 18 February 1999; "U.S. under fire on dolphin deaths," FINANCIAL TIMES, 1-2 May 1999.

IN BRIEF

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) last week admitted Cambodia to its organisation, bringing to fruition the ASEAN goal of "One Southeast Asia under ASEAN by the year 2000." With Cambodia's entry, ASEAN has a total population of about 500 million, a combined gross national product of US\$685 billion and intra-regional trade around US\$70 billion. ASEAN comprises Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. "ASEAN admits Cambodia," ASEAN PRESS RELEASE, 30 April 1999.

A new European Commission is unlikely to be in place until September, leaving a five-month hiatus in EU policy-making after the mass resignation of EC ministers in March. The timing would give a new EU trade commissioner just weeks to prepare for the Third WTO Ministerial in November, and the launch of a proposed new round of global trade talks. The timing could also delay EU compliance with the WTO ruling on its banana import regime. "EU policy-making faces delay," FINANCIAL TIMES, 3 May 1999.

The EU last week approved a ban on imports of white asbestos (chrysotile), used in ceiling tiles, brake linings and cement. Deaths from asbestos-related illnesses are expected to rise from 5,000 annual to 10,000 by 2020. Russia and Canada are the main producers of white asbestos. A French ban on white asbestos was the source of a WTO complaint last year by Canada (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 2, No. 20, 1 June 1998). "EU to ban white asbestos due to health concerns," REUTERS, 7 May 1999.

The American Electronics Association (AEA) has expressed opposition to proposed EU legislation requiring electronics manufacturers to take back discarded consumer electronic products for recycling and reuse. The EU legislation is aimed at phasing out the use of six hazardous, persistent bi-accumulative toxic materials found in common electronic products such as VCRs and computers. In a brief submitted to the U.S. Trade Representative the AEA said the proposed legislation violates global trade rules. "US Trade Representative opposes European efforts to phase out hazardous materials in electron products," BUSINESS WIRE, 3 May 1999.

In a presentation to Canada's Standing Committee on International Trade, last month in Vancouver, Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, said that any initiatives that are designed to exploit or further commercialise Indian lands and resources require Indians' full and informed consent, both under international law and under domestic Canadian law. Until Canada obtains this consent, Phillip says, Canada is not in a position to enter into any international trade agreements concerning unceded Aboriginal Title territories and resources within British Columbia. "Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs presentation to the Standing Committee on International Trade," 26 April 1999.

Canadian and Mexican aboriginal groups signed the first set of trade and investment agreements on construction and agriculture in Mexico City last week. The groups, which expect to focus also on the coffee sector, personal computer assembling, environmental management and community health and education consulting services, have launched a campaign to strengthen commercial ties between indigenous communities under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). These initial dozen Canadian aboriginal owned companies and their Mexican counterparts, are looking to benefit from a NAFTA clause promoting indigenous people's development, a policy

further bolstered by a separate bilateral agreement between Mexico and Canada. FINANCIAL TIMES, 7 May 1999.

WTO IN BRIEF

The EU countries met last week under the German presidency of Council in Berlin to discuss the EC's general negotiating guidelines for the Ministerial in Seattle and the so-called Millenium Round. On the topic of trade and environment and trade and development issues, the meeting confirmed the statements made by Sir Leon during the WTO's high level symposia last March in Geneva. A full account of the meeting will be carried by this Digest in its next number. ICTSD Internal Files.

The EU and U.S. last week called for Albania's quick accession to the WTO. EU and U.S. trade officials said Albania has recently made significant progress in its bid to join the WTO despite difficult regional circumstances. Both Members called for a swift completion to Albania's WTO bid now in its seventh year. "US, EU support Albanian WTO bid," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 3 May 1999.

Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives last week announced they had reached agreement on Japan's negotiating-position for WTO talks on agriculture. The parties agreed to protect food security through domestic food production and land integrity and to maintain the current rice tariffication scheme. "Agreement reached on agricultural stance," THE NIKKEI WEEKLY, 4 May 1999.

A study conducted by Rowe & Maw, a London-based law firm utilising WTO statistics, found that developing countries are increasingly launching anti-dumping measures to curb imports. The study found that South Africa initiated more antic-dumping cases last year than any WTO member did, initiating 41 out of 225 cases launched. The U.S. opened 34. "Poorer nations starting more dumping cases," FINANCIAL TIMES, 6 May 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.

19 May: WTO MEETING TO DECIDE ON A NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL. For information contact Nuch Nazeer, WTO, (41-22) 739-5393.

2 June: SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES--on creation of a new sub-group for small economies within LDCs and Developing Countries. For information contact Lucie Giraud, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739- 5075.

4 June: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT--on E-commerce and technical cooperation, and on CTD input to Ministerial/forthcoming negotiations. For information contact Lucie Giraud, WTO, as above.

Other Events

17-18 May, Brussels: EU MINISTERIAL MEETING ON AGRICULTURE AND GENERAL AFFAIRS (including WTO). For information contact the European Council of Ministers, tel: (32-2) 299-1111.

25 May, Managua, Nicaragua: SEMINAR: FOOD SAFETY AND EXPORTING ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM. Sponsored by the North-South Center, University of Miami; Center for Agribusiness Policy Studies, Arizona State University; Unión de Productores Agropecuarios de Nicaragua; and Caribbean/Latin American Action. Location: Universidad Americana, Managua, Nicaragua. For information contact Jerry Haar, tel: (1-305) 284-8967, e-mail: jhaar@miami.edu

30-31 May, Dresden, Germany: INFORMAL MEETING OF EU MINISTERS ON AGRICULTURE (including CAP reform, WTO). For information contact the European Council of Ministers, as above.

3-4 June, Cologne, Germany: EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF HEADS OF EU STATES (including decisions on agriculture, WTO) AND COUNTER-SUMMIT BY NGOs. For information contact the European Council of Ministers, as above, or Myriam Vander Stichele, TNI, Paulus Potterstraat 20, NL-1071 DA Amsterdam, Netherlands, tel: (31-20) 662-6608, fax: 675-7176, e-mail: stichele@worldcom.nl

21-22 June, Brussels: GENERAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (potentially discussing the EU's WTO position). For information contact the European Council of Ministers, as above.

18-20 July, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.: WORKSHOP ON MARKET-BASED INSTRUMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. This workshop will be hosted by Harvard University and co-sponsored by the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AERE), the John F. Kennedy School of Government, and the Harvard University Committee on Environment. For information contact Robert N. Stavins, tel: (1-617) 495-1820, fax: 496 3783, e-mail: robert_stavins@harvard.edu, web: <http://www.ecu.edu/econ/aere>

■ RESOURCES

Proceedings of the SEMINAR: "INTERNATIONAL TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT : STAKES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE AFRICAN CONTINENT" 6th - 8th April 1999, Grand Bassam, Ivory Coast. Organised by French-based NGO, SOLAGRAL, at <http://www.rio.net/solagral>

SUSTAINABLE MEASURES: EVALUATION AND REPORTING OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL PERFORMANCE. May, 1999. This book, edited by Martin Bennett and Peter

James, collects together most of the key work and individuals concerned with the topic of sustainable development from around the world. Cost: \$US 65.00, 416 pp. ISBN 1 874719 16 0. To order contact Greenleaf Publishing, Aizlewood Business Centre, Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, UK, tel: (44-114) 282-3475; fax: 3476, or order online at <http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com>

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