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COUNTRIES MEET TO RE-START BIOSAFETY TALKS

Governments met from 15-19 September in Vienna, Austria for informal consultations on how to restart negotiations toward a biosafety protocol. Talks for an international biosafety protocol to ensure the safe transfer, handling, use and disposal of living modified organisms (LMOs, often referred to as genetically modified organisms or GMOs) broke down in March 1999 in Cartagena, Colombia as negotiators clashed over trade in GMOs (see *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 3, No. 8, 1 March 1999, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/story1.01-03-99.htm>)

An estimated 300 representatives from over 115 governments and 70 representatives from intergovernmental, non-governmental and industry organisations attended the Vienna Extraordinary Conference of the Parties (ExCOP) (the press was not invited to attend). The first two days were used for consultations within the negotiating groups that emerged from the Cartagena meeting, namely, the Miami Group (Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Uruguay, and the U.S.), the European Union, the Central and Eastern European Countries, the Compromise Group (Japan, Mexico, Norway, South Korea and Switzerland), and the Like-Minded Group of Countries (which includes most of the developing countries).

During the final two days of discussions, negotiating groups addressed the issues of commodities, the relationship between the CBD and other international agreements, the scope of the agreement and the implementation of the so-called advance informed agreement procedure.

The commodities issue has taken on a new urgent dimension in light of recent developments around market resistance to GMOs, and the increasing likelihood that GMO and non-GMO commodities

will require parallel supply chains. The Miami Group wants the protocol to apply only to GMOs that are deliberately released into the environment, e.g. seeds for planting. The EU and the Like-Minded Group support including all GMO products in the protocol, e.g. commodities.

Around the issues of commodities and of advanced informed consent (informing an importer of the presence of GMOs), delegates discussed the highly controversial issue of applying the precautionary principle to trade in GMOs. The Like-Minded Group and the EU stressed the principle's importance to GMO trade, and the Compromise Group acknowledged the right for a country to take a decision on GMO movement/imports based on legitimate concerns, such as the precautionary approach and risk assessments. The Miami Group expressed concern over the use of the phrase "legitimate concern," arguing instead that decisions should be based on risk assessments using sound science.

The Miami Group also noted that a biosafety protocol reference to the precautionary principle would be the first operational usage of the principle in an environmental agreement. The Miami Group stressed the need to ensure that such an inclusion would be consistent with other existing international environmental agreements. The Compromise Group noted the presence of the precautionary approach in the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), but the Miami Group pointed out that the SPS is not an environmental agreement.

No major breakthroughs were reached at the five-day session. However, negotiating groups re-confirmed their political will to conclude a protocol and their support for concluding negotiations at the resumed session of the ExCOP. This session is scheduled for Montreal from 25 to 28 January 2000 and will be preceded by informal meetings from 20-23 January.

"Briefing note on the informal consultations regarding the Resumed Session of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties for the Adoption of the Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity: 15-19 September 1999," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN (IISD), 20 September 1999; "Negotiators to seek resumption of biosafety talks," UNEP PRESS RELEASE, 15 September 1999; "Renewed efforts on biosafety protocol in September," PANAFRICAN NEWS AGENCY, 30 August 1999; "Informal meeting to seek process to rescue biosafety protocol," INSIDE US TRADE, 10 September 1999.

NGOS MOBILISE AGAINST WTO

Demonstrations took place around the world last week as environmental, consumer and other public interest groups called for a moratorium on further trade liberalisation and an assessment of the impacts from the Uruguay Round agreements. More than 1000 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from 77 countries issued a statement opposing a new round of global trade talks. The NGO joint statement said that the organisations were opposed to further trade liberalisation and called for an in-depth review of existing WTO agreements to address the impact on, *inter alia*, marginalised communities, development, environment, human right and labour rights.

The London-based Consumers' International (CI) representing about 150 consumers groups in over 100 countries last week said it could not back the launch of a new trade round unless fundamental reforms to the WTO were made first. The 14 September announcement followed the release of a CI report in August critical of the WTO. CI had offered its endorsement of the Uruguay Round in 1993, but said that while Uruguay Round agreements promised much, thus far they have delivered

very little for consumers. The report, titled "Consumer Rights and the Multilateral Trading System: What Needs to be Done Before a Millennium Round," argues that consumer rights are being undermined by the WTO system as it exists now.

"Increasing world trade can bring important benefits to consumers," said Julian Edwards, CI Director-General. "But we insist that they must be shared equitably. Governments need to commit themselves to a very specific agenda of reviewing, problem solving and fully implementing existing agreements. Equitable, sustainable development and the needs of the world's poorest consumers must have top priority."

At a Washington, D.C. rally on 15 September, Ralph Nader -- founder of the watchdog group Public Citizen -- warned that the WTO threatens health and environmental standards. "The WTO is the greatest surrender of our national, state and local sovereignty and subordinates our health, safety and environmental standards to the imperatives on international trade," Mr. Nader said. The Washington, D.C. rally was attended by a handful of U.S. lawmakers who called for a reassessment of Uruguay Round commitments before any further trade liberalisation.

Also last week, WTO-reform activists called for transparency in the WTO Dispute Settlement Process. Rhoda Karpattan, president of the U.S.-based Consumers Union, criticised the inability of NGOs to make their views known during WTO dispute hearings. "Consumer interests have no rights," she declared. "This is against the common law jurisprudence of the United States and other countries." Adding to that, Mike Dolan of Global Trade Watch argued that the WTO has a "judicial role that is extremely untransparent and extremely undemocratic."

Observers note that last week's events offer a preview of what is to come when WTO Members meet for the Third WTO Ministerial in Seattle from 30 November - 3 December. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to converge on Seattle representing environmental, consumer and labour groups opposed to the WTO and further trade liberalisation.

David Hartridge, Director of the WTO Trade in Services Division, said last week that NGOs who contend the WTO does more harm than good are misguided. "To say that the WTO is harmful is literally to say the world would be better off without a multilateral set of rules on trade. It's manifest nonsense. Nobody could seriously defend that position," Mr. Hartridge stated. "But you can perfectly well say that some of the individual rules should be revised. That's okay; that's what rules are for," he said.

"Big business and democracy on collision course at WTO," IPS, 16 September 1999; "Stop the Millennium round," FRIENDS OF THE EARTH PRESS RELEASE, 16 September 1999; "Trade policy must protect consumer rights says international federation," CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE, 16 August 1999; "No new round without changes in WTO, say consumers," SUNS, 15 September 1999; "Consumer group cites opposition to new round of WTO trade talks," DAILY REPORT FOR EXECUTIVES, 15 September 1999; "WTO seeks to counteract 'misperceptions'," SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER, 15 September 1999.

FAO/NETHERLANDS CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON AG'S MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROLE

Government policy-makers, agricultural and environmental experts and civil society representatives from more than 100 countries met in Maastricht, The Netherlands from 12-17 September for the

"Cultivating Our Futures" Conference on the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land (MFCAL). The conference, jointly-organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Government of the Netherlands, focused on two principle tasks: reviewing progress towards the principles contained in the "Rio Declaration on Environment and Development" and "Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development"; and identifying analytical approaches and policy options to increase agriculture's contribution to food security, social cohesion, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

The findings and conclusions of the conference will be incorporated into discussions at the eighth annual session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8) from 24 April-5 May 2000. The discussions at the Maastricht conference are also relevant to the upcoming WTO talks on agriculture set to begin later this year. Article 20 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) calls on WTO Members to pursue the "long-term objective of substantial progressive reductions in support and protection resulting in fundamental reform," of the agricultural sector, taking into account Members' "non-trade concerns." The only non-trade concerns explicitly mentioned in AoA are food security and the environment. Some WTO Members have argued however that these non-trade concerns should be broadened to include other "multifunctional" aspects of agriculture, such as economic viability of rural areas, preservation of landscapes and social cohesion.

At the Maastricht conference, delegates discussed the role of trade policy in contributing to sustainable agriculture and rural development. Developing countries warned that the multifunctional character of agriculture should not be used as a pretext for maintaining trade subsidies. Delegates from Chile supported by Uruguay and Argentina argued that export prices have been depressed by other countries' export subsidies at the expense of sustainability. In the final conference report, participants agreed to language stating that a "fair and market-oriented" agricultural trading system would facilitate further integration of agricultural and environmental policies; and emphasised the need to ensure that policy measures do not unfairly limit market access, especially for developing countries. Delegates also noted the important role women play in sustainable agriculture and rural development and called on countries to take urgent action to address environmental and economic degradation in developing countries - significantly affecting women and children in rural areas.

The issue of agriculture, trade and food security will again be addressed at a special FAO symposium from 23-24 September in Geneva. The symposium will examine issues relating to the forthcoming WTO negotiations on agriculture from the perspective of developing countries.

"Highlights from the Conference on the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN (IISD), 12-17 September 1999; "Environment, trade and SARD: concepts, issues and tools," FAO (Background Paper 4), September 1999; "Conference to focus on importance of agriculture," FINANCIAL TIMES, 10 September 1999.

For further reference please see RESOURCES below.

ACCESSIONS UPDATE: CHINA AND OTHERS IN THE PIPELINE

China's on-again-off-again bid to join the WTO received an important boost earlier this month after the U.S. and China agreed to restart WTO accession talks. The two sides met from 11-13 September for talks where negotiators reassessed positions and outlined continuing points of difference.

Chief among these is whether China should be treated as a developed or a developing country in terms of its accession bid. China insists that it be admitted under developing country terms, e.g. less stringent liberalisation requirements. "China, as a universally recognised developing country, will not accept any condition that goes beyond the economic capacity of China, and will not undermine its national interests," a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry said. U.S. and other WTO Members argue that China's economy is too large and too strong to be admitted on the less stringent terms accorded to poorer countries.

Stemming from that discussion is a U.S.-China disagreement over a U.S. demand that China waive its right (under developing country terms) to unconditional access to the U.S. textile market for ten years, a demand China refuses to comply with. Other outstanding issues remain in the banking, securities, and audio-visual services negotiations. China must also conclude bilateral agreements with a few other WTO members such as the EU, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland and Norway. APEC ministers meeting last week in Auckland called for China's accession before the Third WTO Ministerial - a date most observers agree is not feasible. Regarding Taiwan, China has long demanded that it be admitted before Taiwan as China considers Taiwan a rogue state.

Russia on 7 September said it would like to participate in the proposed next round of global trade talks with observer status. A Russian trade official said that Russia is close to tabling a revised services offer but that it would be absolutely impossible for its full accession bid to be complete before the Third WTO Ministerial in November.

In August Jordan's parliament revised its intellectual property rights regime to comply with WTO rules. The legislation is expected to help bring Jordan closer to WTO accession. The intellectual property regime is also expected to boost foreign investment in the country.

Meanwhile, deputy director of the UN Conference on Trade and Development Carlos Fortin advised Arab nations to tread carefully when opening their markets. "Free trade in this region can be a stepping stone towards global trading. But this should be done carefully because opening up economies that have been protected for a long period may have disruptive and counterproductive effects," Mr. Fortin said. A WTO Working Party on the accession of Saudi Arabia will hold its sixth meeting on 22 September. The Working Party will review Saudi Arabia's market access negotiations as well as its implementation plans for the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) Agreements. Slow progress on market access from the world's number one producer and exporter of oil has held up the process, as has the Saudis' claim that -- like China -- they want to join as a developing, and not as a developed, Member.

On 6 October a Working Party on the accession of Albania will meet. It is expected that this will be the country's final accession meeting and that a protocol will be adopted officially inviting Albania to join the trade body. At that point it will be up to Albania's government to ratify the protocol before it formally becomes a WTO Member.

Finally, Estonia's parliament is currently in the ratification process of its own WTO accession bid. According to one WTO source, "if all goes smoothly we should expect to have Estonia in before the [Seattle] Ministerial."

"U.S., China resume WTO accession talks; more work needed," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 15 September 1999; "Russia wants role in next WTO trade talks; official," DOW JONES, 7 September 1999; "Egypt says Arab economies must integrate or lag," REUTERS, 14 September 1999; "Jordan's parliament OK's intellectual property rights law," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 18 August 1999; "UN urges care in opening Arab markets," REUTERS, 10 August 1999; "Chinese envoy urges US not raise threshold for China's WTO accession," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 19 August 1999; "Saudi Arabia's WTO entry hangs on better market access conditions," WORLD TRADE AGENDA, 21 June 1999; ICTSD Internal Files.

WORLD BANK RELEASES ANNUAL WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The World Bank on 15 September released the "World Development Report 1999/2000: Entering the 21st Century." The report has a dual focus on globalisation and so-called localisation. Regarding the former, the report discusses trade, financial flows, and environmental issues, such as biodiversity and climate change. Regarding localisation (what the World Bank defines as the growing economic and political power of cities, provinces, and other sub-national entities) the report addresses decentralisation, cities as the engine of economic growth, and making cities liveable.

Launching the report last week, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, Joseph Stiglitz, spoke of the interplay between globalisation and localisation in developing countries.

"Globalisation is like a giant wave, that can either capsize nations or carry them forward," Mr. Stiglitz said. "Successful localisation creates a situation where local entities and other groups in society -- the crew of the boat if you will -- are free to exercise individual autonomy but also have incentives to work together."

The report outlined benefits to developing countries from the world trading system. Among these were streamlined resource allocations and improved productivity for firms as a result of trade liberalisation. Regarding the benefits from the WTO specifically, the report said the WTO serves developing countries by facilitating trade reform, providing a mechanism for settling disputes, strengthening the credibility of trade reform (vis a vis tariff-binding) and promoting transparent trade regimes that reduce transaction costs.

To order the report contact the World Bank, The World Bank, P.O. Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172-0960, U.S., tel: (1-703) 661-1580 or 800-645-7247, fax: 661-1501 email: books@worldbank.org, or visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/publications/wdr99.htm>

"WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1999/2000; "World Bank sees 'localisation' as major new trend in 21st century," WORLD BANK PRESS RELEASE, 15 September 1999; "Promulgate globally, adjust locally, says World Bank," IPS, 16 September 1999.

SEEDS PLANTED FOR ANTI-TRUST LAWSUIT

Reports emerged last week that two U.S.-based organisations, the Foundation on Economic Trends (FET) and the National Family Farm Coalition -- together with farmers in up to 30 countries -- are expected to file a multi-billion dollar anti-trust lawsuit against the world's biggest agricultural and biotechnology firms. The suit is expected to allege that large so-called life sciences firms such as

Monsanto and Novartis are exploiting bioengineering techniques to gain a stranglehold on agricultural markets.

Observers note that ten companies now control about 30 percent of the US\$23 billion annual world commercial seed trade; and five companies (Monsanto, Novartis, AstraZeneca, Aventis and DuPont) control nearly all of genetically modified (GMO) crops. The expected lawsuit reflects concerns about the growing concentration of ownership in the seed business. Potential parties to the lawsuit are particularly concerned over the practice by life sciences companies of leasing rather than selling seeds to farmers, and then claiming patent rights on seed varieties so that farmers are prohibited from replanting seeds for a subsequent harvest. This is of urgent concern to farmers in developing countries where an estimated 80 percent of growers depend on saved or exchanged seeds. It is also estimated that nine out of ten farmers in developing countries depend on farming for their survival.

According to FET President Jeremy Rifkin: "In a few years' time, no farmer in the world is ever going to own seeds again -- if that's not a case for antitrust [litigation], I don't know what is."

A spokesperson for Novartis, one of the firms expected to be named in the lawsuit, said, "We believe that there is no evidence to support an allegation of market control on which the proposed lawsuit appears to be based. The agricultural market is characterised by strong competition and farmers can purchase their seeds from a number of small and large seed companies and they can choose whether to use genetically-modified or conventional seeds."

Filing of the suit is expected to coincide with the Third WTO Ministerial in Seattle from 30 November-3 December.

"Life science groups face lawsuits;" "Antitrust case sows seeds of debate," FINANCIAL TIMES, 13 September 1999; "Genetically modified seeds lawsuit," SKALI (Malaysia), 14 September 1999; "Planned lawsuit to fuel biotech debate;" "Novartis says no ground for crop control allegations," REUTERS, 13 September 1999.

IN BRIEF

From 17-18 September, 41 high-level experts acting in their personal capacities attended a Forum on Trade and Environment in Geneva. Chaired by Jan Pronk, the Netherlands Minister for Environment, the meeting included ministerial-level government personnel, high-level individuals from non-governmental organisations, academics from developed and developing countries and the heads of UNCTAD and UNEP. The meeting was conceived of as an informal event: attendees aimed to work towards a balanced process of negotiations for Seattle on a number of issues relating to trade, environment and development. The Forum decided to come together again in the near future -- preferably before the Seattle Ministerial -- to resume its work and follow up on ideas presented in the course of the proceedings. The meeting was convened by Gary Sampson of the London School of Economics and James Cameron of the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development. Institutional support was provided by ICTSD. For a list of participants or copies of documentation discussed at the meeting, kindly contact ictds@ictsd.ch ref: HLFTE. ICTSD Internal Files.

Brazil and Mexico have entered into "exploratory" talks regarding a bilateral trade accord. Mexico, which currently has bilateral agreements with the three other members of Mercosur (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay), hopes an agreement with Brazil could lead to a full Mexico-Mercosur pact. "Brazil-Mexico ending two-year impasse in trade relations," DOW JONES, 14 September 1999.

Noting that the "multilateral system is under-performing," Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Juan Somavia, last week said he would seek an agreement with the WTO, International Monetary Fund and World Bank toward forging a common agenda for discussions on economic growth, workers' rights and social protections. This approach is thought to reflect the fact that trying to push a trade and labour linkage in WTO agreements is not a realistic objective given strong opposition by many developing countries. "ILO looks for global allies," FINANCIAL TIMES, 16 September 1999.

Members of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA: comprising Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania) met from 14-15 September to try and work out differences over agricultural and industrial trade. CEFTA members failed to meet "even our most pessimistic expectations," according to one participant, as members failed to agree on anything. CEFTA was established in 1993 with the goal of gradually liberalising intra-CEFTA trade by 2002. "East Europe free trade talks a complete failure," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 16 September 1999.

Vietnam last week said it needed more time to review a bilateral trade agreement with the U.S. before signing. The U.S. and Vietnam had hoped to use the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Forum annual meeting to sign the accord. Vietnamese trade negotiators said last weekend however the government needs more time to assess whether they are prepared to undertake commitments to tariff cuts and caps. Both parties hope the accord will be signed by the 30 November WTO Ministerial. The U.S.-Vietnam trade accord is expected to help Vietnam's WTO accession bid. "Vietnam reassesses trade deal with U.S., delay likely until November," INSIDE US TRADE, 17 September 1999.

ON THE MOVE

WTO Director-General Mike Moore on 8 September announced two personnel appointments designed to build developing countries' support for the WTO. Mr. Moore hired Anthony Hill, Jamaica's former ambassador to the WTO, as a short-term consultant to help design assistance programs for the 29 developing country members without representative missions in Geneva. Mr. Moore appointed Chiedu Osakwe, currently working as a counsellor in the WTO's development division, as a special advisor to the Director-General on least developed countries (LDCs). In this position Mr. Osakwe will forge common strategies for LDCs with other international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

John Weekes, former Chairman of the WTO General Council and Canada's Ambassador to the WTO was last week appointed chairman of the global trade practice of APCO Worldwide, the world's leading public affairs consulting firm. Mr. Weekes will commence his post at APCO from 1 November, based in Geneva.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

▪ EVENTS

For a more complete list of events, 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 the dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of different WTO bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held in Geneva, Switzerland.

1 October: COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE. For information contact Luis Ople, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

5 October: COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS. For information contact Luis Ople, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

6 October: MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL. For information contact Nuch Nazeer, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5393.

8 October: WORKING PARTY ON GATS RULES. For information contact Nuch Nazeer, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5393.

8 October: COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS -- 24th Session. For information contact Hans-Peter Werner, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5286.

Other Events

23-24 September, Geneva: FAO SYMPOSIUM ON AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND FOOD SECURITY: ISSUES AND OPTIONS IN THE FORTHCOMING WTO NEGOTIATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. In connection with the forthcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is intensifying its assistance to member countries to enable them to be better informed and well-prepared for the forthcoming trade talks. The symposium will examine the major trends in agricultural trade and food security in recent years and analyse how the changing international policy environment may have affected those trends, as may be inferred from the experience so far. For information contact the Commodity Policy and Projections Service, Commodities and Trade Division, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, tel: (39-06) 570-52855, fax: 570-54495, email: Olwen.Gotts@fao.org, web: <http://www.fao.org/ur/geneva.htm>

30 September – 1 October, Lima, Peru: ECODIÁLOGO 99: COMMITMENTS FORSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. For information contact Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Boulevard de los Virreyes No. 155 Col. Lomas de Virreyes. México, D.F. México, tel: (52) 5202-6394 and 5202-4841, fax: 5202-0950, email: unepnet@rolac.unep.mx, web: <http://www.conam.gob.pe/Start.htm>

3-5 October, Washington: TRADE MATTERS: TRADE POLICY AND PRACTICE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM. Hosted by the Organisation of Women in International Trade (OWIT), their 10th Annual Trade Conference will explore trade matters from both a U.S. and international perspective. For information contact OWIT, Department 3500, Washington, D.C. 20042-3500, fax: (1-202) 429-5112, web: <http://www.embassy.org/wiit/confer.html>

21-22 October, Washington, DC: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY: Protecting the environment, reducing poverty in developing countries, ensuring food security. Can biotechnology help?". Organised by CGIAR (the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the conference will address issues related to biotechnology in the context of developing countries, including the roles of the public and private sectors in biotechnology research for developing country agriculture, risks to the environment and human health, impacts on social and economic order, and intellectual property management. For information contact the CGIAR Secretariat, Room J4073, The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington DC 20433, tel: (1-202) 473-8951, fax: 473-8110, web: <http://www.cgiar.org/cgbroch.pdf>

24-25 October, Miami, Florida: ENVIRONMENTALLY-SOUND TRADE EXPANSION IN THE AMERICAS: A DIALOGUE OF TECHNICAL AND POLICY EXPERTS. This workshop is organised by the North-South Centre and will explore the advantages of integrating environmental sustainability into production and marketing strategies and the long-term benefits for trade and international competitiveness. For information contact tel: (1 305) 284-8974, email: stross@miai.edu, web: <http://www.miami.edu/nsc/>

25-29 October, Geneva: TRIPARTITE MEETING ON THE HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION AND RESTRUCTURING IN COMMERCE. Organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the purpose of the meeting is to exchange views and experiences concerning the emerging circuits of distribution and how they impact on employment and working conditions of persons employed in commerce. The meeting aims to create proposals for further action and to adopt a report on the discussion. For information contact the ILO, tel: (41-22) 799-6666, fax: 799-6061, email: europe@ilo.org, web: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/index.htm>

▪ RESOURCES

THE MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS AND BENEFITS OF SMALL FARM AGRICULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. 1999. The Institute for Food and Development Policy/Food First, by Peter Rosset. Small farms are more productive than large farms, yet their continued existence is threatened by international trade agreements. Full text of the report available at: <http://www.foodfirst.org/pubs/policybs/pb4.html>

UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1999. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Based on hard facts and solid analysis, the Report reaches challenging conclusions about private capital flows and international trade relations in the 1990s. To order contact Ms. Carine Richard-Van Maele, fax: (41-22) 907-0045, email: press@unctad.org

A REFORM AGENDA FOR THE WTO SEATTLE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. September 1999. World Wide Fund for Nature International. This WWF position paper outlines its proposals for "greening" the Seattle WTO trade liberalisation talks. The paper outlines necessary reforms for ensuring that the multilateral trading system facilitates, rather than hinders, sustainable development. To view the position paper, see: <http://www.panda.org>

REPORT FROM WORKSHOP ON RECONCILING POLICY CONFLICTS ON TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT. September 1999. By the World Wide Fund for Nature International (WWF). The Expert Panel on Trade and Sustainable Development is composed of government and intergovernmental officials, lawyers, academics, business and NGO representatives. The balanced multi-stakeholder group's primary objective is to accelerate the formulation of integrated policies which minimise conflicts and maximise synergies between trade and sustainable development objectives. To order contact Charles Arden Clarke, Trade and Investment Unit, WWF Intl., Ch 1196, Gland, Switzerland. tel: (41-22)364-9001, email: caclarke@wwfnet.org

GOVERNMENT POSITIONS ON A NEW ROUND OF WTO NEGOTIATIONS. 2 September 1999. Friends of the Earth. This summary of governments' proposals for the Seattle WTO Ministerial and future negotiations outlines various governments' positions regarding the powers of the WTO. It also examines areas of disagreement between governments, which provide opportunities for targeted activism. A chart outlines governments' positions on changing the powers of the WTO. It is available at www.foe.org/international/wto/govt.html. To read complete proposals from submitting governments, see: <http://www.wto.org/wto/minist/seatdocs.htm>

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