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## NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Due to technical difficulties the distribution of *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest is one day late this week. We apologise for the inconvenience.

## EU TRADE MEETING SETS UP NEGOTIATING POSITION

Meeting in Oporto, Portugal over the weekend, EU trade ministers agreed to maintain the EU's approach to launching trade negotiations at the WTO, indicating the EU would only give ground if other Members were also prepared to show flexibility. However, EU member states remain divided on how flexible the EU itself is to be, with some (Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland) saying they want a more flexible approach to issues such as environment, investment, competition and labour

while others (notably France and Belgium) advocate a harder line in these areas. Those pushing for a flexible stance posited that if the EU wants a comprehensive new round (incorporating a broad range of issue-areas into WTO negotiations), it should be more willing to move on labour standards and agriculture. Environment, investment, and particularly labour and agriculture proved to be contentious stumbling blocks in last year's stalled WTO Ministerial in Seattle.

Other ministers called for the EU to clarify its positions on new issues such as labour and environment, as a number of developing countries feel that opening up these areas under the WTO could lead to new barriers to trade. Several ministers want the EU to clarify its position on whether a proposed "standing working forum" on trade and labour between the International Labour Organisation and the WTO would form part of a new trade round.

Stated EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy after the talks on 18 March, "is there a will to demonstrate flexibility on one point or another? The answer would be 'yes' -- on the condition that our partners demonstrate they are showing the same flexibility." This view was corroborated by Dutch Trade Minister Gerrit Ybema, who said, "after the debate, everyone agreed that we have to be flexible on a reciprocal basis."

Many other WTO Members -- particularly those belonging to the Cairns Group of agriculture-exporting countries -- want the EU to demonstrate more flexibility in breaking down its trade barriers in agriculture. The EU's agricultural subsidies continue to be a bone of contention: the US, Japan and the Cairns group contend that EU agricultural export subsidies subvert competition and create artificially high prices for consumers.

At the Oporto meeting, trade ministers from France and Belgium stood their ground on the issue of cutting back farm subsidies. Said French minister of trade Francois Huwart, "flexibility is not the priority for the moment."

Members meet for the first Special Session of the WTO's Committee on Agriculture this week from 22-23 March where formal negotiations on Ag will take place. Nestor Osorio Londoño, Colombia's former Ambassador to the WTO, will chair the meeting and at its conclusion will hand the chairship over to the new chair -- if indeed one is chosen -- who has yet to be named. Pascal Lamy confirmed in Brazil on 22 March the EC's veto on the name of Brazilian Ambassador Celso Lafer. On their part, some developing countries have suggested the name of US Ambassador to the WTO Rita Hayes as a compromise solution. Observers in Geneva say that, in view of the lack of agreement on the Chair position, some of the WTO's larger trading partners will ask that the much-awaited meeting Special Session on Agriculture be postponed. Heads of delegations will meet on 23 March to take a decision either way on the matter.

*BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* will report on the outcome of the Special Session in next week's edition.

"EU trade ministers maintain WTO strategy; Unsure on flexibility," DOW JONES, 20 March 2000; "EU not budging on trade round proposals," REUTERS, 18 March 2000; "France, Belgium block EU

effort to compromise on farm subsidies," BLOOMBERG, 18 March 2000; " Agriculture: new fight over subsidies in WTO," SUNS, 21 March 2000. ICTSD Internal Files.

## **BANANA RULING OFFERS NEW TRADE TOOL FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

A WTO dispute arbitrator on 17 March ruled that Ecuador -- the world's largest Banana exporter -- could request over US\$200 million in retaliatory sanctions against the EU for the EU's failure to comply with a WTO ruling against its banana import regime. The WTO ruled in April 1999 that the EU had not complied with a 1997 WTO ruling against its banana import regime (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 3, No.13-14, 12 April 1999, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/story1.12-04-99.htm> ). Subsequent EU attempts at compliance have yet to satisfy Ecuador or the other parties in the dispute who argue that the EU proposals continue to discriminate against its exports.

The 17 March arbitrator's report is significant in that it allows Ecuador to pursue so-called 'cross-sector retaliation' against the EU. Under this approach Ecuador could expand its retaliatory request beyond imposing punitive tariffs on EU goods by also targeting intellectual property rights and services including EU copyrights, geographical indicators for wines and spirits (e.g. port or sherry), as well as access rights for EU wholesale distributors. Ecuador requested cross-sector retaliation to maximise the impact on the EU. As a developing country and a relatively small importer of EU goods, Ecuador's imposition of punitive tariffs on EU imports would have little impact on the EU but could have a painful effect on Ecuador's consumers. The cross-sector ruling could be an important precedent for developing country WTO Members who would otherwise have very little leverage against major trading powers such as the EU and the US. One Ecuadorian official described the ruling as "a major breakthrough for developing countries."

Ecuador may formally seek retaliation against the EU when the WTO Dispute Settlement Body meets in early April. Ecuadorian sanctions would apply to 13 of the 15 EU member states: both the Netherlands and Denmark, who have consistently urged the EU to accept the complainant's demands in the banana case, would be exempted.

In related news, the WTO issued a preliminary ruling against the US in an EU-US dispute over whether the US violated international trade rules when it unilaterally imposed trade sanctions on 3 March 1999 against the EU for the EU's failure to comply with a WTO ruling against its banana import regime. The WTO did ultimately authorise US sanctions against the EU in April 1999, but the nature of the EU complaint focused on the US decision to take unilateral action before WTO Members had authorised sanctions. The EU argued that WTO rules prohibit unilateral action against another WTO Member. The WTO is expected to issue a final report within 30 days.

"Ecuador sanctions plea backed," FINANCIAL TIMES, 18 March 2000; "WTO arbitrator to rule in banana dispute between EU, Ecuador soon after march 15," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 13 March 2000; "WTO rules against US on timing of banana retaliation against EU," INSIDE US TRADE, 17 March 2000; "WTO raps US over banana sanctions," FINANCIAL TIMES, 16 March 2000; "Finnish Min: WTO banana ruling shows EU must make reforms," DOW JONES, 18 March 2000.

## **CODEX TASK FORCE MEETS ON BIOTECH FOODS**

Delegates convened in Japan from 14-17 March for the first meeting of the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology. The task force is charged with devising -- within a four-year timeframe -- standards, guidelines, and other principles for foods derived from biotechnology.

In advance of the meeting, a grouping of 200 organisations and individuals accused the task force of seeking to undermine the Biosafety Protocol. In a letter to Thomas Billy, Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and head of the US Food Safety and Inspection Service, the grouping said that preparatory documents issued to government delegates included a summary review of the recently concluded Cartagena Biosafety Protocol, which "could be viewed as preparatory to a WTO action intended to force nations to accept GMO imports or pay penalties for lost trade revenues, contrary to the provisions of the Protocol."

"[The Codex Alimentarius Commission's] attempt to reduce the Protocol's text to 1 1/2 pages of explanation contains major inaccuracies related to commodities, the Precautionary Principle, and the relationship of the Protocol to the WTO, i.e., the precise issues which dominated the Protocol negotiations that were finally resolved last month in Montreal", the grouping said. Codex Alimentarius is the only international food standards body recognised under WTO rules. Thus, its findings could resonate in WTO trade disputes and ongoing negotiations, precisely why the grouping called on Codex to withdraw its allegedly inaccurate summary lest it be used in deriving standards.

The Cartagena Biosafety Protocol agreed to in January is intended to ensure the safe transfer, handling, use, and disposal of living modified organisms (LMOs, often referred to as genetically modified organisms or GMOs). The Protocol represents the first binding international agreement addressing situations where GMOs cross national borders (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 4, 1 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.01-02-00.htm> ).

In related news, Thailand's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said beginning next year labels would be required from on all genetically modified organism (GMO) foodstuffs. Groups had called for labels on all GMO foodstuffs and for legislation protecting consumer health in relation to GMOs. The Thai FDA said it had not yet defined terms for a labelling regime and would have to decide such issues as what GMO content level in a product would warrant labelling. The announcement came as an alliance of consumer groups and non-governmental organisations demonstrated in Bangkok calling for transparency and caution from the Thai government in dealing with GMO foods.

"Letter charges UN's Codex Alimentarius Commission of 'undermining' biosafety protocol," AGWEB.COM, 15 March 2000; "Labels to be introduced by next year," BANGKOK POST, 16 March 2000.

## WTO MEMBERS REACH AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON SPS MEASURES

In the year's first meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Members reached an agreement on a draft text concerning voluntary guidelines to ensure that national food safety standards and standards for the protection of plant and animal health are applied consistently and do not discriminate between Member countries. The text's guidelines are designed to assist governments in implementing Article 5.5 of the SPS agreement, which states that WTO Members must avoid arbitrary or unjustifiable distinctions in the levels of sanitary or phytosanitary safety measures if the distinctions lead to discrimination or act as a disguised restriction on trade. The guidelines request governments to, *inter alia*: indicate what they see as appropriate levels of protection when applying an SPS measure; adopt methods to determine whether a proposed measure varies in its level of protection from existing SPS measures; compare proposed measures with measures proposed in comparable situations; examine existing international guidelines and decisions taken by other WTO members in similar situations; and seek advice from experts when deciding whether to adopt a new measure. The guidelines will not compromise Members' rights to set their own levels of SPS protection. The text is expected to be approved at the committee's next meeting in June.

Also at the meeting, the EU presented its white paper on the application of the Precautionary Principle. The paper, released 2 February, lists conditions under which trade restrictions can be imposed to deal with threats to health, the environment, and food safety. The US, along with Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong, and Mexico, expressed concerns over the paper, claiming it could weaken WTO rules by lessening the predictability of existing SPS requirements and giving Members room to use the Precautionary Principle as a protectionist measure. The EU stressed that the paper did not affect Members' SPS obligations and is not designed to encourage arbitrary trade restrictions. The EU has previously used the Precautionary Principle to justify its ban on hormone-treated beef imports from the US.

"WTO Members Agree on Consistency In Guidelines for Food Safety Measures," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 17 March 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy is scheduled to be in Brazil from 19-26 March as part of EU efforts to build support for a new trade round. The visit comes the same week as WTO talks on agriculture are set to launch in Geneva (23-24 March), and includes a meeting with Brazil's Agriculture Minister Vinicius Pratini de Moraes. Agriculture remains a prominent thorn in the side of EU-Brazil trade relations: Brazil is a major producer of agricultural goods and a member of the Cairns Group of agriculture-exporting countries, and has called on the EU to reduce or eliminate its export subsidy regime. The Cairns Group argues that agricultural subsidies distort trade by making their own products less competitive on world markets. The issue will also figure prominently when Brazil and its Mercosur partners (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and associate members Chile and Bolivia) negotiate a proposed EU-Mercosur free trade area - preliminary talks for which are scheduled for 6-7 April in Buenos Aires.

Japan's trade minister Takashi Fukaya on 13 March said that he and EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy had agreed to continue to pressure the US to show flexibility on the scope of a new global trade round. Mr. Fukaya said that the EU and Japan hope to break the impasse over whether and how to approach issues of importance to the EU, Japan, and many developing countries such as the multifunctional role of agriculture (e.g. agriculture's role in rural development), trade linkages to core labour standards, and antidumping measures. Last week's announcement is the latest development in the EU-Japanese alignment on matters related to a new trade round. Mr. Fukaya said that the EU and Japan did not expect a new round to commence until after the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised countries meet for their annual summit on 21 July. US President Bill Clinton has called for a new round to begin before that meeting.

On 2 March Brazil and South Africa met for exploratory trade talks that trade officials from both sides said could lead to talks on a free trade area between the South African Customs Union (SACU, comprised of S. Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland)) and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR, comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay). Trade between SACU and MERCOSUR has increased from US\$30 million in 1994 to US\$300 million in 1999.

Leaders from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) welcomed a call from French President Jacques Chirac for closer ties with France. Meeting for a CARICOM summit in St. Kitt's, Caribbean leaders said France's interest in closer economic and political ties with the grouping would be an important counter-balance to a dominant US presence in the region.

"This new interest from France brings a new dimension to the region's relationships with industrialised countries," according to a Trinidadian trade minister. "We are being pilloried by the Americans...our economies are being attacked with US pressure on our banana markets."

In related news, Dominica on 14 March informally called on the EU to grant special membership status in the EU. Dominican Prime Minister Rosie Douglas said EU-affiliation would help the island move toward economic recovery as its tourism and banana-dependent economy continues to struggle. Mr. Douglas said he would further discuss EU-affiliation when he meets with French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin later this month.

"Honduras awaits lifting of Nicaragua tariffs," REUTERS, 8 March 2000; "Colombia targets Nicaraguan tax," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 27 January 2000; "S. Africa, Brazil begin free trade talks," REUTERS, 2 March 2000; "Caribbean welcomes Chirac initiative," FINANCIAL TIMES, 15 March 2000; "Dominica wants closer ties to EU," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 14 March 2000; "Japan, EU want US to be more flexible on WTO issues," KYOTO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 13 March 2000; "EU's top trade negotiator to visit Brazil March 19-26," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 10 March 2000.

## **EU PROPOSES EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME**

The European Commission (EC) on 8 March put forward a plan to meet its emissions reductions commitments as part of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. The Protocol - adopted in December 1997 but not yet in force, requires industrialised nations to collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 5.2 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-2012.

The EC plan includes a two-pillar approach: one pillar comprised of about 30 EU-wide policy measures designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; the second pillar is based on a plan to implement an EU-wide emissions trading scheme. The EC said that both approaches were necessary to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by the allotted EU commitment of eight percent by 2012.

Regarding emissions trading, the EC issued a so-called green paper outlining approaches to an internal emissions trading mechanism that could be set up by 2005. The mechanism would offer the EU an opportunity for "learning by doing" in advance of an international trading scheme expected to be established by 2008 under the Kyoto Protocol. The green paper said that a number of policy questions had to be answered before a formal EU emissions trading scheme could be established, and noted that the paper was the start of a consultation process on the matter between the EC, EU member-governments, non-governmental organisations and industry.

The green paper can be viewed at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/docum/index.htm> . The EC will be accepting comments on the green paper at email: [ENV-CLIMATE@cec.eu.int](mailto:ENV-CLIMATE@cec.eu.int). Comments can also be sent to Jos Delbeke, Head of Climate Change Unit, 200 Rue de la Loi/Wesstraat 200 B-1049, Brussels, Belgium.

Many environmental groups have expressed concern over emissions trading as a means of emissions reduction. These groups worry that trading does nothing to encourage the development of new technologies, processes and consumer behaviours necessary to address climate change for the long term. They also argue that emissions trading could allow countries to rely heavily on emission trading permits purchased abroad instead of requiring its own consumers and industries to curb emissions at home.

In related news, two workshops on aspects of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) were held from 9-11 and 13-15 March in Bonn, Germany. The 9-11 March workshop focused on actions needed to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing countries arising from the adverse effects of climate change. The 13-15 March workshop focused on the impact of the implementation of response measures to climate change.

At the 9-11 March workshop, the conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) called on industrialised countries to set up a compensation fund for developing countries that are victims of natural disasters linked to climate change. WWF called on governments contributing most to the build-up of global warming gases such as carbon dioxide to accept responsibility for compensating countries suffering from its effects.

"Long debates over the responsibility of industrialised countries for the consequences in developing countries of the changing climate ignore the fact that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people are already suffering the effects. Governments have to accept that if they are not prepared to take domestic measures to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions, they will have to pay the price...If the US tobacco industry can be held responsible for smoking-related deaths and illnesses, and ordered to pay very hefty fines, wealthy countries must be held responsible in some way for the contribution their carbon pollution is almost certainly making to recent droughts and floods," said Jennifer Morgan, Director of WWF's Climate Change Campaign.

"Twin Track' plan to reverse rising GHG, meet Kyoto aims includes trading scheme," INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT REPORTER, 15 March 2000; "Climate change: Commission launches European Climate Change Programme and advocates twin-track approach for reducing emissions," EU PRESS RELEASE (IP/00/232), 8 March 2000; "Brussels backs trading of pollution permits," FINANCIAL TIMES, 7 March 2000; "Polluters should pay climate change victims says WWF," WWF PRESS RELEASE, 13 March 2000; "Workshop on Article 4.8 and 4.9 of the UNFCCC, Summary," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN (IISD), 17 March 2000.

## **USTR UNDER LABOUR FIRE FOR CHINA PNTR**

China last week held bilateral trade talks with a number of WTO Members as part of its continued efforts to join the WTO. China must still conclude bilateral accession talks with the EU, Guatemala, Poland, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Latvia, and Ecuador before it can be admitted to the WTO. Chinese trade officials said they were optimistic that in each case China was close to concluding agreements.

In the US, the US Trade Representative on 14 March released the full text of its bilateral accession agreement with China. The 250-page document was released as part of the Clinton Administration's efforts to secure Permanent Normal Trading Relations (PNTR) and came in response to congressional pressure that PNTR for China be debated with full disclosure of the US-China agreement (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 10, 14 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.14-03-00.htm> ). Proponents of PNTR with China said the release would do much to sway sceptics that the US-China deal is good for the US on many levels; PNTR opponents said the deal was notable for the absence of any language on linkage to labour, environment or human rights standards.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Charlene Barshefsky on 25 February appealed to three prominent US labour leaders -- John Sweeny of the AFL-CIO, Jay Mazur of UNITE!, and Lenore Miller of RWDSU -- to rethink their 24 February resignation from the President's Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations (ACTPN). The three labour leaders resigned from the committee in protest over the decision by corporate ACTPN representatives and USTR Charlene Barshefsky to focus the ACTPN agenda on the singular goal of securing US congressional approval for PNTR - a goal opposed by most US labour organisations (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 8, 29 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story3.29-02-00.htm> ). Labour groups are opposed to NTR because of China's record on human rights, particularly workers' rights.



"Your proposal to do nothing this year but support a Congressional vote in favour of permanent normal trade relations with China is unnecessarily divisive and narrow; it appears designed to isolate the non-corporate representatives who now serve on the ACTPN and raises a serious question as to whether there is a genuine acceptance of the premise that workers' interests should be considered in the formulation of U.S. trade policy," the three labour leaders wrote in their 24 February resignation letter. The leaders rebuffed Ms. Barshefsky's request to reconsider their resignation, saying they would not reconsider until major changes were made to the trade advisory system.

"White House, Gephardt work on China trade bill," REUTERS, 17 March 2000; "China to start intensive talks on WTO accession," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 15 March 2000; "Barshefsky calls on labour leaders to rejoin trade policy panel," BLOOMBERG, 25 February 2000; "Barshefsky outlines four steps to broaden trade advisory process," INSIDE US TRADE, 3 March 2000; "USTR official says release of US-China deal could sway sceptics," INSIDE US TRADE, 17 March 2000; "Clinton releases China trade pact details," REUTERS, 14 March 2000.

## **EU-US BEEF DISPUTE UPDATE**

EU and US trade officials are reportedly close to starting talks on resolving a longstanding dispute over an EU ban on imports of US 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 therefore violates international trade rules. The US and Canada brought the complaint to the WTO, estimating that US and Canadian farmers lose a combined US\$250 million a year from lost trade due to the ban. The EU in May 1999 said it would not lift the ban after two preliminary studies identified risks to health caused by hormones found in US hormone-treated beef. In response, the US imposed US\$191.4 million in trade sanctions against the EU for its failure to comply with the WTO ruling. (Canada also imposed sanctions.)

In a subsequent development, the EU threatened to ban imports of US hormone-free beef after (as part of a comprehensive risk- assessment study into hormone-treated beef) EU scientists in April 1999 announced that they had found traces of hormones in 12-20 percent of beef samples from US slaughterhouses - samples that were supposed to be hormone-free. The US last year then implemented a voluntary ban on hormone-free beef while it reviewed monitoring measures. An EU veterinary committee this month announced it had accepted measures announced by the US for improving its monitoring programme to test for unauthorised substances and residue levels exceeding the maximum EU residue limits for authorised medicinal veterinary products in fresh meat and meat products.

With the hormone-free beef issue seemingly resolved, EU Agricultural Commissioner Franz Fischler said on 13 March that he expected the US and EU to begin talks on a compensation plan under which the EU would compensate the US for lost revenues due to the EU ban on hormone-treated beef. The EU has repeated its vow that it will not lift its ban on hormone-treated beef until its comprehensive risk assessments are complete (no completion date is yet certain) but instead would like to pursue the

route of compensation - an alternative allowed under WTO rules. This would likely include expanding access for US hormone-free beef.

In related news, a European Commission (EC) plan for an independent food safety agency that would keep the power to create and enforce legislation on food safety with the respective EU member states received strong support from EU governments on 16 March. Under the January white paper on food safety from the EC, the European food safety agency would be responsible for assessing risk rather than managing it. The agency would also communicate with the public about food safety issues. Most ministers indicated that they would be monitoring the EC food authority closely to ensure it did not encroach excessively on their own domestic food agencies.

"US hormone-free beef settlement this month: EU official," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 13 March 2000; "Fischler says US, EU near deal on hormone-free beef," REUTERS, 13 March 2000. "EU agrees to toothless food watchdog," FINANCIAL TIMES, 17 March 2000.

## **IN BRIEF**

Sales of products carrying the Max Havelaar fair trade label rose 29 percent between 1998 and 1999, increasing to about US\$40 million from US\$28 million. The label is carried on a range of products: coffee, tea, cocoa, honey, sugar, orange juice and bananas. Max Havelaar products are certified for fair trade standards by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO), which encourages the development of a fair market through setting minimum prices that cover the costs of production of each good and cutting intermediaries from the trading scheme. An additional premium is paid to producers who then decide how to distribute and reinvest their profit. "Les produits Max Havelaar se vendent comme des petits pains," LE TEMPS, 3 March 2000.

A team of US International Trade Commission (ITC) officials will be in the UK from 15 March to consider the feasibility of Britain, the world's fourth largest economy, joining the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA is comprised of the US, Canada and Mexico. The UK government has thus far ruled out the possibility of joining NAFTA, as it would require the UK to withdraw from the EU. The US Senate, however, ordered the enquiry to move forward in order to consider the potential benefits of bringing the UK into NAFTA. "Britain to be sized up for NAFTA entry," TRADE COMPASS, 15 March 2000.

## **WTO IN BRIEF**

A WTO panel considering a controversial case involving a ban by France on imports of chrysotile asbestos from Canada has delayed its final ruling until June 2000. According to a notice distributed to WTO Members on 7 March, the panel's chairman Adrian Macey (New Zealand) has indicated that the panel needs more time to complete its work. The panel had originally been expected to decide the case in December 1999. The dispute focuses on a 1996 ban by France on the manufacture, import and sale of asbestos, of which Canada is the world's leading exporter. It is seen by many as a test case of the WTO's sensitivity to environmental and public health concerns. Chrysotile asbestos (most often

used in construction for insulation) is a known carcinogen, but Canada argues that the material is safe if proper control and management practices are followed.

"WTO delays releasing decision in complaint by Canada against France's ban on asbestos," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 16 March 2000.

## **EVENTS & RESOURCES**

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

### **• WTO Events**

An updated list of forthcoming World Trade Organisation meetings is posted at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/about/meets.doc>. Please bear in mind that 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 at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, Rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

5 April, Geneva, Switzerland: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5393; email: [nuch.nazeer@wto.org](mailto:nuch.nazeer@wto.org)

24 March, Geneva: WTO Working Party on GATS Rules. The following items are proposed for the agenda: (a) Negotiations on safeguards under Article X of the GATS; (b) Negotiations on subsidies under Article XV of the GATS; and (c) Negotiations on government procurement under Article XIII of the GATS. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5393; email: [nuch.nazeer@wto.org](mailto:nuch.nazeer@wto.org)

29-30 March, Geneva: WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements. For information contact Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5075; email: [lucie.giraud@wto.org](mailto:lucie.giraud@wto.org)

### **• Other Events**

27-28 March, San Salvador, El Salvador: CTI JOINT INDUSTRY SEMINAR ON TECHNOLOGY DIFFUSION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. Hosted by the Climate Technology Initiative (CTI) in co-operation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC). The seminar will focus on the role and function of the private sector in the diffusion of climate friendly technology. For information contact: Michael Rucker, International Energy Agency Office of Energy Efficiency Technology and R&D, 9 rue de la Federation, 75739 Paris, Cedex 15, France; tel: (33-1) 4057-6766; fax: 4057-6759; web: <http://www.climatetech.net/conferences/elsalvador/index.shtml>

29-30 March, Oaxaca City, Mexico: FROM THE COFFEE TREE TO THE COFFEE CUP. Hosted by the North American Commission for the Environmental Cooperation (CEC), this workshop will look explore ways to get Mexican shade-grown coffee into the hands of North American consumers. For information contact: Charles Dickson, CEC; tel: (1-514) 350-4308; email: [cdickson@ccemtl.org](mailto:cdickson@ccemtl.org); web: [http://www.cec.org/programs\\_projects/trade\\_envIRON\\_econ/goods\\_service/coffee.cfm?varlan=english](http://www.cec.org/programs_projects/trade_envIRON_econ/goods_service/coffee.cfm?varlan=english)

3-5 April, Seattle, Washington, USA: SEATTLE SUMMIT ON PROTECTING THE WORLD'S CLIMATE. The summit will bring together people from the high tech, investment, trade and energy sectors and will feature a symposium on clean energy. For information contact: Rhys Roth, Climate Solutions; tel: (1-360) 352-1763; fax: 943-4977; email: [info@climatesolutions.org](mailto:info@climatesolutions.org); web: [www.climate.org/seattlesummit](http://www.climate.org/seattlesummit)

1-10 April: RESISTANCE IS FERTILE. A global week of activities against genetically engineered foods to celebrate the diversity of local agriculture. For more information contact: web: <http://www.resistanceisfertile.com/contents.htm>

5 & 25 April, New York, USA: SYMPOSIA: THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION AFTER SEATTLE. These symposia will be hosted by the New York Law School. For information contact: NY Law School, tel: (1-212) 431-2865; email: [mrhee@nyls.edu](mailto:mrhee@nyls.edu)

12-14 April, Guatemala City, Guatemala: MEETING OF THE FTAA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE. For information contact: FTAA Secretariat, 100 Chopin Plaza, Plaza Level Miami, Florida 33131-2140 USA; tel: (1-305) 381-9043; fax: 381-8390; email: [ftaa-alca@ftaa-alca.4tz.com](mailto:ftaa-alca@ftaa-alca.4tz.com)

18 April, Brussels, Belgium: WTO CONFERENCE: IMPLICATIONS OF THE EU's GLOBAL TRADE POLICY ON HEALTH. For information contact: European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), 33 rue de Pascale, 1040 Brussels, Belgium; fax: (32-2) 233-3880; email: [epha@epha.org](mailto:epha@epha.org)

23 April, Geneva, Switzerland: DIALOGUE WITH MINISTER JUAN MAYR-MALDONADO (COLOMBIA) ON THE CSD-8'S FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INVESTMENT AND AGRICULTURE. Hosted by ICTSD, the key issues that will be covered are the CSD-8's (the 8th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development) focus on International Trade, Finance, Investment, Economic Growth and Agriculture. For information contact: Stephanie Hanford, ICTSD, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; web: [shanford@ictsd.ch](mailto:shanford@ictsd.ch)

- **Resources**

PROGRAMME OF TRAINING FOR THE APPLICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW: COURSE 9, ENVIRONMENT AND TRADE. 2000. By Richard Tarasofsky. Published by UNITAR, UNEP, and IUCN. UNITAR's programme is designed to promote improved environmental management for sustainable development through the strengthening of national legal and institutional systems. It is specifically directed to respond to the needs of developing countries. To obtain contact: UNITAR, Palais de Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 917-1234; fax: 917-8047; email: [daniel.navid@unitar.org](mailto:daniel.navid@unitar.org); web: <http://www.unitar.org>

THE PRODUCT/PROCESS DISTINCTION: AN ILLUSORY BASIS FOR DISCIPLINING UNILATERALISM IN TRADE POLICY. 2000. By Robert Howse and Donald Regan. This paper, released by the WTO's Economic Research and Analysis Division, discusses legal and economic aspects of production techniques and the extent to which they should affect the legal treatment in the WTO of internationally traded commodities. To view visit the WTO website at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/research/research.htm>

WORKERS WITHOUT FRONTIERS - THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION. 2000. By Peter Stalker. Published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), this book concludes that the free movement of goods and capital between rich and poor countries will not be large enough to offset the need for employment in poorer countries. To obtain contact: ILO Bureau of Publications; fax: (41-22) 799-6938; email: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org)

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