



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
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## CAFÉ & CROISSANTS WITH WTO D-G MIKE MOORE, 19 APRIL 2000

Dear *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest readers:

ICTSD will be hosting a "CAFÉ & CROISSANTS" MEETING WITH WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL MR. MIKE MOORE on Wednesday, 19 April, from 10:00 to 11:30, at International Environment House, 13 ch. des Anémones, Geneva, Switzerland. Topics to be covered will include a post-Seattle assessment of stakes in the context of the future WTO negotiating processes from a trade and sustainable development approach, and perspectives for strengthening dialogue and exchange processes between the multilateral trading system and civil society. If you are interested in attending or would like further information please contact: Oscar Haro, ICTSD, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; email: [oharo@ictsd.ch](mailto:oharo@ictsd.ch)

## **PROSPECTS FOR NEW ROUND DEPEND ON FLEXIBILITY**

Flexibility continues to be the key message as WTO Director General Mike Moore works to rebuild confidence amongst WTO Members for launching a new round of global trade talks. In separate addresses to EU trade ministers and an Asian business grouping last week, Mr. Moore repeated his warning that a new round would not take place until WTO Members take more flexible positions in key negotiating areas.

Delegates to the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) echoed Mr. Moore's call. Meeting last week in Hawaii, representatives from 1,100 businesses in 20 Asian countries called on WTO Members "to review their positions outstanding from [the failed WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle] and demonstrate flexibility necessary to bridge remaining gaps and move forward expeditiously on negotiations aimed at launching a new global round", according to a PBEC statement.

In other news, Sergio Marchi -- Canada's ambassador to the WTO and Chair of the WTO Council on Services -- said that progress in mandated talks on agriculture and services would be the key to launching a new round of trade talks. "[In] a post-Seattle scenario where we did not launch a new round, I think a good number of people will be judging the WTO in these early days by what we do or don't do on the mandated-negotiations front", Mr. Marchi said in a press interview last week. The agriculture and services talks "should be seen as a positive down-payment for eventually launching a round."

Britain's environment minister Michael Meacher has warned those countries eager to launch a new round of WTO negotiations soon not to do so until the lessons from Seattle have been learned. Speaking at a conference at London's Royal Institute for International Affairs on 27 March, Meacher emphasised that more needed to be done to assure developing countries that their demands from a new round would be met. "Just to rush ahead bull-headed as soon as you can when you haven't got these assurances in place, I think, is self-destructive," he said.

The environment minister said that one lesson from Seattle was that developed countries needed to do much more to build bridges with developing ones and to explain to them the benefits of linking trade and environment policies more closely. Meacher pointed to the EU's "deplorable record" on agricultural and fishing subsidies as a reason for concern from developing countries about the potential for green protectionism. He focused on the need for reducing European agricultural and fisheries subsidies as a win-win means to end trade distortions and open markets for developing countries while benefiting the environment.

For the latest information issued this month about the EU's New Round post-Seattle strategy, trade-related WTO technical assistance and a paper on improving the functioning of the WTO, please visit: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/2000\\_round/ecwto.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/2000_round/ecwto.htm)

In related news, high-level officials from the 'Quad' countries of Japan, EU, US and Canada will meet from 1-2 June in Boston, US, to discuss the launch of a new round of trade negotiations under the WTO. Though the meeting is intended to draw deputy ministers from the Quad, it could be

elevated to the ministerial level. The Boston meeting is intended to allow officials to iron out differences in advance of a meeting of trade ministers from the Asia-Pacific region in Darwin, Australia from 6 to 8 June. The four countries are hoping to muster developing country support at Darwin for the launch of a new round at the Asia-Pacific meeting.

"Pacific business leaders call for flexibility in global trade talks bid," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 20 March 2000; "Trade round launch possible this year-WTO's Moore," REUTERS, 17 March 2000; "Launch of new WTO round may depend on progress in agriculture, services talks," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 23 March 2000; "EU Trade Ministers meet in Portugal to review trade issues," Press Release from Trade Directorate-General of the European Commission, 21 March 2000; "WTO urged to break barrier of mistrust," FINANCIAL TIMES, 28 March 2000; "Japan, US, EU, Canada to meet to work out plans for WTO," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 24 March.

### **AG TALKS BEGIN, MEMBERS DIVIDED OVER CHAIR**

WTO Members on 23-24 March launched mandated talks on trade in agriculture. Members discussed general organisational details (e.g. timetables) and did not take up any new proposals from Members. WTO talks on agriculture are mandated under Article 20 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), which 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".

Talks got off to a contentious start as Members failed to agree on a permanent chair for the talks. The EU and Japan blocked the appointment of Brazilian Ambassador to the WTO, Celso Amorim. Mr. Amorim's candidacy was supported by the US and the Cairns Group of agriculture exporting countries, of which Brazil is a member. EU Ambassador to the WTO Rod Abbott said the EU could not support Mr. Amorim because Brazil is a Cairns Group member. Cairns Group countries criticised the EU's stance, arguing that WTO practices dictate that a candidate for a position be selected based on a candidate's merit rather than on whether they belong to a particular grouping. The Cairns Group has been vocal in calling for the EU to demonstrate more flexibility in breaking down its trade barriers in agriculture, arguing that EU agricultural export subsidies subvert competition and create artificially high prices for consumers.

In the absence of a permanent chair, the current chair of the Council for Trade in Goods, Roger Farrell of New Zealand, oversaw the two-day meeting on a one-time basis only. (The Council for Trade in Goods oversees the Committee on Agriculture.) It was not clear when Members would again address the issue of selecting a permanent chair. Some Members speculated that the failure to agree on Mr. Amorim could jeopardise the appointment of Finland's Ambassador to the WTO, Pekka Huhtaniemi, to the chair of the Council on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, as Mr. Huhtaniemi's appointment was considered by some Members to be a trade-off for the appointment of Mr. Amorim.

Although no agreement was made on selection of a chair, Members did agree to a work programme for the first phase of agriculture talks. Members will meet in June, September, and November of 2000 and negotiating proposals are to be submitted by the end of December 2000. The Cairns Group noted their interest in an additional January 2001 meeting in order to let Members present and discuss proposals. No deadline has been set for the conclusion of negotiations.

The quarterly meetings could affect the pace of WTO negotiations in services: MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) has called for services talks to proceed in parallel to talks in agriculture in an attempt to ensure that progress in services is contingent on progress in agriculture. Other Members such as the EU and Japan believe that progress on the agriculture negotiations will depend upon the launch of a comprehensive round of trade talks.

Members also agreed to a schedule of background papers to be prepared as part of the negotiations, including inter alia an updated background paper on the agricultural trade performance of developing countries.

Although no new proposals for reform were submitted, Members did reiterate their well-entrenched positions on the issues. The EU stated its commitment to further liberalisation of agriculture, but warned it was not willing to sacrifice the "European model" of agriculture, i.e. multifunctionality. Japan added that balanced results would only be achieved if the diverse nature of agriculture was taken into account. In the area of subsidies, EU senior negotiator David Roberts advocated for the continuation of domestic support through the continued existence of trade-distorting ("blue box") and trade-neutral ("green box") categories. Franz Fischler, EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, and Fisheries, noted that the reduction of all forms of export subsidies would be a core issue in the negotiations. The US, meanwhile, advocated that the burden was on Members to identify interests and "provide compelling arguments for reform proposals." On the subject of genetically modified foods, the US stressed its interest in increasing market access for GMOs while the EU stressed the need for better consumer product labelling.

In spite of the shaky start and the continued division of Members' positions, trade sources have observed that the talks had a "constructive" atmosphere.

"WTO tackles agriculture's future," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 23 March 2000; "WTO agriculture negotiations begin despite failure to appoint chair;" "WTO work program on agriculture negotiations for the next twelve months," INSIDE US TRADE, 24 March 2000; "WTO ambassadors fail to name permanent chairman for agricultural talks," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 23 March 2000; "WTO: Timetable commitment kicks off farm trade talks," BRIDGE NEWS, 27 March 2000; "WTO ambassadors agree broad timetable for trade talks this year," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 24 March, 2000 "EU to stand firm on WTO agricultural trade talks," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 25 March 2000.

## **POPS TALKS MARKED BY SLOW PROGRESS**

Delegates from 115 countries met from 20-25 March in Bonn, Germany for negotiations to prepare an internationally legally binding agreement on certain persistent organic pollutants (POPs). This fourth session of the international negotiating committee (INC-4) was attended by 501 representatives from governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), intergovernmental organisations (including the WTO) and industry.

According to the UN Environment Program (UNEP), under whose mandate the negotiations are held, POPs "are chemical substances that persist in the environment, bioaccumulate through the food web, and pose a risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment." Scientists have linked POPs to immune system and neurological defects, reproductive abnormalities, low sperm counts, and cancer.

It was agreed in 1996 that international action was required to minimise the risks from 12 targeted POPs when evidence that long-range transport of these substances to regions where they have never been used or produced posed threats to the global environment.

INC-4 was marked by relatively slow progress on key issues, as divisions were clearly evident over whether to push for the complete elimination of certain POPs or work towards the more limited goal of controlled use. Heated debate also took place between developing and industrialised countries over the scope and mechanisms for financial and technical assistance to be provided to developing countries to facilitate implementation of a POPs agreement. Debate addressed whether a potential financial funding mechanism should be based on voluntary or mandatory contributions. The issue is expected to be the focal point for the next round of negotiations (INC-5) scheduled for 4-9 December 2000 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Delegates also continued debate on whether a POPs agreement should seek to completely eliminate the production and use of all 10 intentionally produced persistent organic pollutants - (which include pesticides, industrial chemicals, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) ), or to target controlled production and use of these chemicals. Environmental groups criticised some industrialised countries, including US, Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand for what they characterised as efforts to weaken the proposed text of a POPs agreement.

"The US and a few other governments risk burying the treaty under a blanket of loopholes and arcane language", said Clifton Curtis, Director of WWF's Global Toxics Initiative. "These chemicals are at the top of their class when it comes to the havoc they wreak on the Earth and human health. If they can't be eliminated, what can?" These environmental groups allege that the US, and some other industrialised countries are trying to undermine efforts supported by developing countries and the EU that call for the ultimate elimination of use and production of POPs. The US, et al are pushing instead for limited reductions.

The US position was sharply criticised by American environmental and health groups as "confused and weak". These groups noted that the Clinton Administration was essentially promoting the US chemical industry's interests in the negotiations. The criticism was precipitated by a letter from the

US Department of State to the EU leaked last month, in which the US appealed to the EU to support the US in its efforts to scale back expectations about the scope of financial assistance the US and other industrialised countries would be willing to commit. In the letter, the US remarks that developing countries "must also accept that the POPs issue is not a global commons issue to the same degree as ozone depletion or climate change."

In a joint letter, environmental groups called on the US to take a leadership role in providing technical and financial assistance toward the elimination of POPs. "Financial and technical assistance for treaty implementation in developing countries (for example to put in place safer alternatives to DDT in malaria control) will be essential", the letter said.

Negotiators continued to favour proposals eliminating the production and use of DDT but called for a POPs agreement to include a public health exemption as countries adopt alternative chemical and non- chemical strategies and reduce reliance on DDT. DDT is used primarily in developing countries and is considered to be one of the most effective ways to control mosquitoes that spread malaria.

"Progress made in negotiating global treaty on persistent organic pollutants; 121 countries participate," UNEP PRESS RELEASE, 27 March 2000; "WWF: loopholes, funding impasse jeopardise global toxics treaty," WWF PRESS RELEASE, 25 March 2000; "POPS INC-4 highlights," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN (IISD), 23 March 2000; "Clinton attacked over chemicals policy," FINANCIAL TIMES, 21 March 2000; "Bonn talks on toxic free world open," IPS, 21 March 2000.

## **TRIPS MEETING LEAVES REVIEW QUESTIONS UNANSWERED**

At the year's first meeting of the WTO's Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), delegates addressed, among other topics, the review of article 27.3(b) (on intellectual property protection for plant varieties), the mandated review of the TRIPs Agreement itself, and the status of non-violation complaints.

With respect to Article 27.3(b), the session focused primarily on procedural issues. Members debated whether they should continue with wide-ranging discussions or organise more structured sessions that would focus on specific issues such as how to address traditional knowledge, community rights, biodiversity, and ethical questions of IP protection for life forms. Most speakers favoured a topic list, but a few delegates commented that some of the suggested issues might not fall under Art. 27.3(b). The US said it was willing to consider other Members' comments but questioned the need to continue the review of this article.

According to Article 71 of the TRIPs Agreement, Members are mandated to review the implementation of TRIPs starting in 2000. TRIPs chair Amb. Carlos Perez del Castillo of Uruguay invited written suggestions from Members and said he or his successor will consult informally on how to proceed and report back at the next meeting, scheduled for 26-30 June. The Council meeting was del Castillo's last as chair. Due to ongoing deliberations on the selection of the chair for the

Committee on Agriculture (see related story, this issue), the TRIPs Council concluded without the nomination of a replacement chairperson.

Most speakers at the Council -- including the EU, Canada, Poland (on behalf of a large group of Central and Eastern European countries), S. Korea, Australia, Singapore, Japan, India and Pakistan -- took the position that a moratorium on non-violation complaints should remain in effect until new provisions on "scope and modalities" of these complaints are agreed upon. Non-violation complaints refer to the ability of a Member to bring a complaint to the WTO dispute settlement system based on the loss of an expected benefit as a result of another Member's actions even if no agreement or commitment has actually been violated.

Contrary to this approach, the US argued that the moratorium on non-violation complaints automatically expired on 1 January 2000. Nevertheless the US delegate pointed out that the US is not preparing non-violation dispute cases for the near future, indicating that for the moment the US would focus complaints regarding TRIPs based on violation only.

The United States has previously indicated that its position on transition periods expiring at the end of 1999 (such as those in TRIPs) "should be taken up on case-by-case, country-by-country basis, so as to ensure that the real concerns of Members - and the balance of rights and obligations - [is] preserved". Thus while the US has notified WTO Members that it will exercise restraint in bringing countries to heel over their TRIPs obligations, it reserves its rights to do so in the event that others fail to make credible attempts at meeting their TRIPs commitments.

According to the TRIPs Agreement, developing countries are obliged to ensure that patent protection mechanisms are in place as of January 2000, though at a 17 December 1999 meeting of the General Council, Members agreed to "exercise restraint" with respect to expiring deadlines (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, Number 1, 10 January 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.10-01-00.htm> ). While talks on deadlines are ongoing in both the Committee for Trade- Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) and in the Committee on Customs Valuation, the topic has yet to be tackled in the TRIPs Council.

In related news, representatives from a number of non-governmental organisations in Indonesia urged the government in Jakarta to delay the enforcement of IPRs in the country. At a workshop on the piracy of biological resources, or biopiracy, activists asserted that the interests of local communities, who some argue own these resources, had yet to be protected by law. The Indonesian government is currently in the process of drafting patent legislation.

Addressing the workshop, Tini Hadad, an executive board member of the Indonesian Consumers Foundation, said, "people aren't ready to use patents, and developed countries are abusing this for their own interests." Echoing Hadad's comments, State Minister of Environment Sonny Keraf described biopiracy as a new form of imperialism. Keraf noted that developed states benefit from developing countries' slow anticipation of patents. The minister said a patent is an acknowledgement of intellectual rights, but added it was not fair to patent biological diversity.

"NGO seminar urges campaign against 'unfair' biopiracy," POSTED BY biotani@rad.net.id ON WTO AGRICULTURE IMPACT LIST, 19 March 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

## **DSB UPDATE**

WTO Members on 20 March agreed to establish a dispute settlement panel to rule on whether US antidumping measures violate international trade rules. Japan brought the complaint against the US in response to US anti-dumping duties levied on Japanese hot-rolled steel imports. This is the latest in a series of challenges brought against US anti-dumping measures. A Dispute Settlement Panel was established in November to consider a South Korean complaint against US duties on imports of South Korean stainless steel; and the WTO ruled in December that the US violated world trade rules by imposing countervailing duties on imports of steel from a steel firm that was formerly owned by the British government.

The 20 March meeting also saw the WTO establish a dispute settlement panel regarding a complaint by Brazil against Argentine restrictions on cotton textiles. Argentina and Brazil are trading partners in the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) - this is the first case between MERCOSUR partners to be referred to the WTO.

Also at the DSB meeting, the EU reported on its efforts thus far to comply with a WTO ruling against its banana import regime. The EU, as it has in earlier updates on the matter, emphasised the difficulties it had encountered in finding a satisfactory compliance package because of the divergent views amongst the complainants. Panama and Guatemala (co- complainants in the dispute) criticised the EU for its lack of progress in the matter. Separately, Eastern Caribbean banana producers called on all parties to resolve the dispute, and warned that if each of the complaining parties were to have their way in revising the EU banana regime, the result would be an over-supply of bananas and a collapse in banana prices.

Australia announced it would not appeal a February WTO ruling which found that Australia had failed to comply with a previous WTO Appellate Body ruling against an Australian ban on the importation of untreated fresh, chilled or frozen salmon from Canada. The decision not to appeal sparked a heated domestic dispute between federal Australian trade officials and the Australian state of Tasmania.

Tasmanian officials vowed to defy the WTO ruling, arguing that to allow the importation of uncooked Canadian salmon could expose Tasmanian fish stocks to disease and pose a threat to its US\$120 million annual aquaculture industry. "There's a lot at stake for Tasmania, frankly, and I'm as concerned for our native fish species, some of which are related to salmon-salmonoid species," Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries David Llewellyn said. "Many of them are rare, threatened and endangered, and if any of these diseases, major diseases, come into the country, they'll be decimated," Mr. Llewellyn said.

Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile defended the government's decision not to appeal the WTO ruling, arguing that the ruling upholds Australia's right to enforce the toughest quarantine standards



on imported salmon amongst any WTO Member. "Nobody has been sold out by the Federal Government. We've fought this from day one in the WTO. We believe on balance, we have a good outcome. The WTO has given a stick, has signed off on the scientifically-based quarantine process we have in Australia to a higher than international standard in this regard," he said.

"DSB establishes two new panels, adopts salmon and FSC reports," WTO PRESS RELEASE, 20 March 2000; "WTO agrees to establish dispute panels on U.S. antidumping duties on steel," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 23 March 2000; "Salmon war looming after WTO decision," AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 21 March 2000; "Australia govt faces battle with Tasmania over salmon imports," BLOOMBERG, 21 March 2000; "Panels on US anti-dumping, Argentina textiles safeguards," SUNS, 20 March 2000.

### **NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: EAST ASIA; EU-MEXICO FTA**

Taiwan on 21 March announced it would allow direct trade, sea, and air links between mainland China and three Taiwan-controlled islands. Taiwan has banned direct trade with China since 1949 - currently, trade between China and Taiwan flows through Hong Kong. Newly elected Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian announced the measure on a trial basis. This is seen as a goodwill gesture by Taiwan to ease political tensions between Taiwan and China. Mr. Chen also said that Taiwan "would welcome the normalisation of US-China trade relations, just like we hope the cross-strait relations (between China and Taiwan) can be normalised. We look forward to both the People's Republic of China's and Taiwan's accession to the WTO." Both China and Taiwan are eager to accede to the WTO: China has been adamant that it must be admitted before Taiwan, which it considers a rogue state.

Japan is considering the feasibility of engaging in negotiations toward bilateral free trade agreements with Singapore, Mexico, and Korea in the coming months. Japan has a long-held policy of shunning bilateral accords in favour of multilateral agreements (e.g. WTO agreements), but is reportedly looking at bilateral accords as a way to build momentum for the stalled multilateral trade process. Free-trade talks with Singapore offer the most promising prospects, both in terms of being achievable and with regard to the benefits such an accord would deliver. Singapore, a member with Japan in the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum, is expected to sign a free trade agreement with New Zealand later this year, and is expected to launch talks with Chile and Mexico.

The EU and Mexico on 23 March signed a bilateral free trade accord that will take effect from 1 July 2000. Mexican exports to the EU accounted for only four percent of its total exports in 1999 - US\$5.3 billion. EU exports to Mexico totalled US\$12.7 billion for the same period.

Under the agreement, Mexico would phase out import tariffs on all EU industrial goods by 2007 while the EU would extend duty-free access to Mexican industrial products by 2003. Industrial goods account for about 93 percent of annual EU-Mexico trade. The agreement offers more modest liberalisation in agricultural goods, which account for essentially the remaining seven percent in EU-Mexico trade. While 62 percent of bilateral trade in agriculture will be fully liberalised by 2010,

the deal excludes key products such as sugar, dairy, beef, and grains. The agreement allows EU banks and insurance companies to operate directly in Mexico and includes a commitment to liberalise investment rules.

The Mexican Senate and EU Parliament approved the agreement, despite some dissension within both bodies. Some EU members expressed concern over Mexico's human rights record, and others expressed concern that the agreement would adversely affect EU interests in textiles, clothing, and footwear. Mexican opposition centred on concerns that the EU-Mexico accord would threaten certain Mexican sectors already struggling since NAFTA began. However, Mexican Commerce Minister Herminio Blanco said the agreement would likely yield an increase in Mexican exports of automobiles and auto parts, textiles, footwear and electronics - sectors which also benefited from Mexico's membership in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the US and Canada.

Next week in News From the Regions: Africa

"Taiwan eases ban on trade with mainland," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 22 March 2000; "Taiwan leader backs WTO for China," REUTERS, 22 March 2000; "Mexican Senate ratifies agreement on free trade with European Union," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 21 March 2000; "Japan breaks with past on trade policy," REUTERS, 9 March 2000. "Trade treaty means jobs and money for Mexico, new-world entry for EU," WALL STREET JOURNAL, 24 March 2000; "EU signs trade pledge with Mexico," IRISH TIMES, 24 March 2000; "Lisbon declaration on the new partnership between the European Union and Mexico," EU PRESS RELEASE, 23 March 2000; "EU Parliament approves trade provision of pact with Mexico, despite misgivings," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 23 March 2000.

## **IN BRIEF**

Japan announced it would launch the world's first futures contracts on GM-free soybeans (non-genetically-modified) from May 2000. The contracts will be available on the Tokyo Grain Exchange. Japan imports about 5 million tonnes of soybeans annually, mostly from the US. "Japan starts first GM-free futures contract," FINANCIAL TIMES, 22 March 2000.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) on 15 March released a report that provides a blueprint for protecting the Great Lakes Basin, the world's largest freshwater ecosystem, from the potential impacts of water removals and consumptive uses. In its report, the IJC recommends that Canadian and US federal, provincial, and state governments should not permit the removal of water from the Great Lakes Basin unless the proponent can demonstrate that the removal will not endanger the integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem. The report said that obligations under trade agreements -- including bilateral, NAFTA or WTO agreements -- do not prevent either country from taking measures to protect the Great Lakes as long as the measures are applied in a non-discriminatory manner. The JCI is a bi-national Canada-US organisation established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. The report is available at: <http://www.ijc.org>. "IJC recommends comprehensive

measures to governments for protecting waters of Great Lakes Basin," IGC PRESS RELEASE, 15 March 2000.

The US Supreme Court on 23 March heard arguments in an appeal by the state of Massachusetts against a 1998 ruling by a US federal appeals court that found the Massachusetts "Burma Law" unconstitutional, arguing that it intrudes on the federal government's exclusive authority to conduct foreign affairs. The Massachusetts law assesses a "pricing penalty" in the government bidding process against foreign firms doing business with Burma (Myanmar) (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 7, 22 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/inbrief.22-02-00.htm> ). The ruling could determine whether all 50 states and thousands of localities can implement similar procurement measures, affecting US\$700 billion in state and local purchases. "Justices weigh issue of states' making foreign policy," NEW YORK TIMES, 23 March 2000; "Supreme Court to rule on Burma boycott," FINANCIAL TIMES, 22 March 2000.

## **WTO IN BRIEF**

Caribbean banana-producing countries on 23 March called on WTO members to approve a waiver allowing the EU to continue its preferential market access arrangement (known as the Lomé Agreement) with 71 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. The banana-producing countries urged WTO Members not to block the waiver in retaliation for the ongoing battle between the EU and five Latin American countries over the EU banana import regime. "There's relatively few benefits for banana producers [in the Lomé waiver]," ACP President John Horne said. "How can we hold up this much broader agreement because of bananas? It's not fair to use something so narrow as a wedge to block the waiver." "Caribbean states seek WTO waiver for ACP countries," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 23 March 2000.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

Christopher Beeby, a Member and former Chair of the WTO Appellate Body, died on 19 March in Geneva. In addition to a long and distinguished career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the Government of New Zealand, Mr. Beeby was a highly recognised public international lawyer who participated in eight sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, in the United Nations Law of the Sea negotiations and in a wide range of other international meetings on legal and political issues involving subjects such as marine pollution, fisheries, human rights, international humanitarian law, environment, arms control, Antarctica and climate change. Mr. Beeby was 64. "DG Moore notes with sadness the passing of Appellate Judge Beeby," WTO PRESS RELEASE, 20 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.

14 April, Geneva: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES - Special Session. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5393; email: [nuch.nazeer@wto.org](mailto:nuch.nazeer@wto.org)

- **Other Events**

30-31 March, Paris, France: COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL SUR LA DIVERSITE BIOLOGIQUE ET LE DROIT DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT, EN HOMMAGE A CYRILLE DE KLEMM. Registration fee: FF400. For information contact: Laurence Renard, 11, rue Marechal Juin, B.P. 68-67046 Strasbourg CEDEX, France; tel: (03-88) 14 30 42; fax: 14 30 44.

30 mars, 6, 13 & 17 avril, de 18h00 à 20h30, Genève, Suisse: COURS DE FORMATION: LE CONSOMMATEUR FACE A LA MONDIALISATION: QUELLES ACTIONS POSSIBLES? Ce cours aura lieu à l'Université ouvrière de Genève: Centre de formation continue des travailleurs. L'objectif est d'étudier les mecanismes liés à la mondialisation de l'économie; présenter les actions possibles pour le citoyen consommateur face aux systèmes commerciaux. Intervenants: Caroline Dommen, juriste, et Thierry Pellet, economiste. Prix: CHF 90.00. Pour avoir plus d'informations veuillez contacter: UOG, 3, place des Grottes, 1201 Genève, tel: (41-22) 733-5060; fax: 733-3519.

30 March - 4 April, Cairo, Egypt: PREPARATORY WORKSHOP FOR EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS (30 March); CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM (31 March-1 April); SUMMIT OF THE AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENTS (3-4 April). For information contact: European Commission Directorate-General for Development, 200, Rue de la Loi, B-1049, Brussels; tel: (32-2) 299-1111; fax: 299-2872 / 73.

3-4 April, London England: BIODIVERSITY & BUSINESS: PUTTING INTO ACTION. For information contact: Georgina Wright, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE, UK; tel: (44-20) 7957-5754; fax: 7957-5710; email: [conferences@riia.org](mailto:conferences@riia.org)

3-7 April, Geneva, Switzerland: 16th SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP OF THE BASEL CONVENTION. For information contact: Basel Convention Secretariat, tel: (41-22) 917-8213.

4 April, Athens, Georgia, USA: UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONFERENCE: "GOVERNING THE GLOBAL OCEAN." For information contact: Dorinda Dallmeyer, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, USA; tel: (1-706) 542-5141; fax: 542-7822; email: [dorindad@arches.uga.edu](mailto:dorindad@arches.uga.edu)

5 April, London England: GM PRODUCTS: CORPORATE CHALLENGES FOR BIOTECH COMPANIES AND THE NEW POLICY AGENDA. Organised by The Royal Institute of International Affairs. For information contact: Georgina Wright, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE, UK; tel: (44-20) 7957-5754; fax: 7957-5710; email: [conferences@riia.org](mailto:conferences@riia.org)

6-7 April, Akureyri, Iceland: COMPETITIVENESS WITHIN THE GLOBAL FISHERIES. Hosted by the Faculty of Fisheries Studies and the University of Akureyri. For information contact: email: [eyjolfur@unak.is](mailto:eyjolfur@unak.is); web: <http://www.unak.is/deildir/sdeild/conf/>

6-8 April, San Salvador, El Salvador: FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM -- "COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA." Organised by the Central American Foundation on Environment and Development (ECOFU-TURO) and the Salvadorean Foundation for Economic and Social Development. For information contact: Organising Committee, tel: (1-503) 264-6118; fax: 264-5051; email: [ecofuturo@hotmail.com](mailto:ecofuturo@hotmail.com)

10-13 April, Geneva, Switzerland: LEGAL WORKING GROUP OF THE BASEL CONVENTION. For information contact: Basel Convention Secretariat, tel: (41-22) 917-8213.

10-14 April, Havana, Cuba: THE SOUTH SUMMIT OF THE GROUP OF 77. This will be the first ever G-77 South Summit. For information contact: Office of the Chairman of the Group of 77, United Nations Headquarters, Room S-3959, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA; tel: (212) 963-0192 or 963-3816; fax: 963-3515 or 963-1753; email: [g77off@undp.org](mailto:g77off@undp.org); web: <http://www.g77.org/summit/summit.html>

13-14 April, San Francisco, California: CERES 2000 CONFERENCE: NAVIGATING THE NETWORKS OF CHANGE. This is the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES)'s annual conference. The conference will offer presentations, networking, and innovative discussions that focus on some of the most significant environmental issues facing our world. For information contact: web: <http://www.ceres.org/eventsandnews/events/2000conference.html>

13-14 April, Yorkshire, England: 6th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE. Sponsored by ERP Environment. For information contact: Elaine White, ERP Environment, tel: (44) 1274- 530408; fax: 1274-530409; email: [elaine@erpenvironment.demon.co.uk](mailto:elaine@erpenvironment.demon.co.uk); web: <http://www.erpenvironment.org/cfrence/sd.htm>

13-15 April, Jaipur, India: REGIONAL SEMINAR ON COMPETITION LAW AND POLICY FOR ASIA-PACIFIC. Organised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Commission of India, and Consumer Unity and Trade Society (CUTS). For information contact: Philippe Brusick, email:

philippe.brusick@unctad.org; or Ujjwal Kumar, Consumer Unity & Trust Society, tel: (91-141) 202-940 or 205-202; fax: 202-968 or 203-998; email: cutsjpr@jp1.dot.net.in; web: <http://www.cuts-india.org>

16-17 April, Jaipur, India: CUTS/CI-ROAP ASIA-PACIFIC WORKSHOP ON COMPETITION LAW. For information contact: Ujjwal Kumar, Consumer Unity & Trust Society, tel: (91-141) 202-940 or 205-202; fax: 202-968 or 203-998; email: cutsjpr@jp1.dot.net.in; web: <http://www.cuts-india.org>

17 April, Brussels, Belgium: BUILDING ADVOCACY WORK IN NORTH AND SOUTH. CIDSE, the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, is organising an NGO strategy meeting on Biopatenting and Food Security. For information contact: Bob van Dillen, fax: (32-2) 230-7082; email: vandillen@cidse.be; web: <http://www.cidse.be>

17 April, Brussels, Belgium: EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FREE TRADE ZONE: CAN IT BE SUSTAINABLE? This conference will raise awareness of potential environmental implications of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Zone and will present and discuss policy recommendations. The conference is organised by Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) and Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE) in co-operation with Global Legislators Organisation for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE) EU, Friends of the Earth Mednet Programme, and Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL). For information contact: Alexandra Wandel, FoE Europe, fax: (32-2) 537-5596; email: mftz@foeeurope.org or Friends of the Earth-Middle East, fax: (962-6) 586-6604; email: mftz@foeme.org; web: <http://www.foeeurope.org/trade/about.htm>

19 April: Geneva, Switzerland: ICTSD "CAFÉ & CROISSANTS" MEETING WITH WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL MR. MIKE MOORE. The topics covered will be a post-Seattle assessment of stakes in the context of the future WTO negotiating processes from a trade and sustainable development approach, and perspectives for strengthening dialogue and exchange processes between the multilateral trading system and civil society. For information contact: Oscar Haro; tel: (41-22) 917-8492; email: oharo@ictsd.ch

26-27 April, Washington DC: ENVIRONMENT IN THE FTAA PROCESS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE NAFTA MODEL? Hosted by the Yale Center for Environmental Law and the National Wildlife Federation. Deadline for registration is 1 April. For information contact: Juliette Moussa, National Wildlife Federation, 1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 502, Washington, DC 20036, USA; tel: (202) 797-6669; fax: 797-6646; email: juliettenwf@hotmail.com

12-14 May, Nairobi, Kenya: SHARING THE BENEFITS FROM BIODIVERSITY: 15th SESSION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM. The deadline for abstracts is 1 April while registration is 20 April. For information contact: Laurence Christen; fax: (41-22) 999-0025; email: lac@hq.iucn.org; web: <http://iucn.org/themes/gbf/index.html>

21-24 June, Montreal, Canada: THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT. The deadline for abstract submission and participation is 15 April. For information contact: INTERDISCIPLINARY ENVIRONMENTAL

ASSOCIATION (IEA) c/o Demetri Kantarelis & Kevin L. Hickey, 500 Salisbury Street, P.O. Box 15005 Worcester, MA 01615-0005, USA; tel: (508) 767-7296 or 767-7557; fax: 767-7382; email: [khickey@assumption.edu](mailto:khickey@assumption.edu) or [dkantar@assumption.edu](mailto:dkantar@assumption.edu); web: <http://www.assumption.edu/HTML/Academic/conf/IICEcall.html>

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AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS 2000. December 1999. 192 pp. Drawn from World Bank Africa Database. This detailed collection presents data from over 50 African countries in separate tables or matrices for more than 500 indicators of development. ISBN 0-8213-4550-8. To obtain contact: The World Bank, fax: (703) 661-1501; email: [books@worldbank.org](mailto:books@worldbank.org); web: <http://www.worldbank.org/publications>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY: POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR A DURABLE EQUILIBRIUM. February 2000. By Jose I. dos R. Furtado, Tamara Belt. 127 pp. This book explores a broad range of practical issues related to environmental management, including wealth creation, institutions, equity, energy, trade, human health, and ecological sustainability. ISBN 0-8213-4573-7. To obtain contact: The World Bank, fax: (1-703) 661-1501; email: [books@worldbank.org](mailto:books@worldbank.org); web: <http://www.worldbank.org/publications>

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