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'DEVIL IN THE DETAILS' IN WTO TRANSPARENCY TALKS

WTO Members met on 28 March for an informal meeting of the General Council to review internal transparency and other "post-Seattle" issues. Members discussed ways to improve/alter the WTO decision-making process in light of the failure of the Third WTO Ministerial meeting in Seattle last November/December.

The overall view during the meeting was that the current system is not broken nor in need of radical reform. The failure to reach agreement at Seattle was widely seen as due to substance, and not procedure. Nevertheless it was apparent that that Members shared a desire to improve the working methods of the WTO, though they are not yet in agreement on the specifics of how to formulate mechanisms by which consensus might be built. One delegate stressed the ongoing tension between efficiency in decision-making and establishing a democratic process, acknowledging that while decision-making should be open to all Members, "the devil is in the details."

At the Seattle Ministerial, developing countries balked at the so- called Green Room process used by WTO Director-General (D-G) Mike Moore to build consensus among leading WTO Members. Some developing countries -- particularly the smaller delegations -- argue that the process lacks transparency, effectively excluding them from much of the bargaining process. This results in agreements being handed to them as a *fait accompli* by major trading powers.

At the meeting, Members discussed ways to better include all WTO countries in the decision-making process, including video conferencing and reporting on the outcomes of informal meetings at formal meetings of WTO Members to ensure fuller participation on issues by all Members. India suggested "de-glamourising" Green Room processes by announcing them beforehand, inviting submissions from Members to feed into Green Rooms, and informing the General Council of decisions taken.

Canada submitted a proposal to rationalise the WTO meeting schedule by folding some meetings in with other related ones in order to reduce the number of time commitments put onto Members with smaller numbers of Geneva-based staff. The WTO schedule is often overwhelming for smaller (mostly developing-country) delegations, many of whom find it difficult to prepare for, attend, and follow up on all formal and informal meetings at the WTO. The Canadian proposal was met with a large degree of support from the Membership.

On the topic of external transparency, the EU, the US and Canada proposed an improved exchange of information between the WTO and non- governmental organisations. Industrialised country Members are pushing for a linkage between internal and external transparency, with one developed country delegate calling them "flipsides of the same coin". For its part, the US says that the WTO is not yet "a product we can sell" to the general public. The issue did not garner much support from other Members, however, as many (notably Mexico, Pakistan and Egypt) believe the WTO in its current form is sufficiently structured to allow for appropriate levels of external transparency. The last transparency meeting on 29 February 2000 (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, Number 9, 7 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.07-03-00.htm>) met with similar divergences of opinion on linking internal with external transparency.

Director-General Mike Moore addressed the informal meeting, giving an interim report to Members on a series of consultations underway on transparency and other post-Seattle issues. In February, the WTO General Council mandated a programme of consultations, directed by Mr. Moore, on, *inter alia*, producing agreement on measures in favour of least-developed countries (LDCs), improving the funding and planning of WTO technical assistance activities, improving internal transparency, and the fuller participation of all Members.

Regarding LDCs, Mr. Moore said WTO Members "need to make a more substantial and lasting contribution to the development of our poorer Members - within our mandate - through our programme of technical assistance and training." Mr. Moore said he would continue to work with WTO Members on ways to ensure the long-term financing of a technical assistance programme, estimated to cost US\$6 million annually.

Regarding fuller participation of all WTO Members, specifically smaller WTO Members without resident missions in Geneva, Mr. Moore reported that he had appointed a WTO Secretariat staff member as liaison with non-resident delegations and that further measures to increase the presence of non-resident Members would be announced soon. Non-resident delegations include 28 WTO Members and 9 Observers who do not maintain permanent offices in Geneva. Mr. Moore said also that the WTO was planning a second Geneva Week conference (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 3, No. 44, 8 November 1999, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story3.08-11-99.htm>) to help keep non- resident delegations informed about the work going on in the WTO. General Council Chairman Kare Bryn stated that he would focus on shorter-term issues where consensus might be more easily achieved, and it was agreed that the WTO Secretariat would produce a summary of the main points raised in the discussion.

"WTO General Council informal meeting," WTO PRESS RELEASE (173), 28 March 2000; "WTO starts discussing reform of decision-making process," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 29 March 2000; "WTO's Moore sees progress on package of measures to build poor country support," REGULATION, LAW & ECONOMICS, 29 March 2000; "Japan, EU agree to get developing nations in on WTO round," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 27 March 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

GROUPS VOICE RESISTANCE TO AGRICULTURAL LIBERALISATION

Trade experts from Africa and Asia attended a 27-31 March conference on agricultural trade hosted by the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Initiative (SEATINI). The conference was intended to facilitate common negotiating positions amongst developing countries following the failed WTO Ministerial meeting in November/ December. Delegates discussed WTO negotiations on agriculture, which were launched on 23-24 March.

An informal paper circulated at the conference noted that the WTO Agreement on Agriculture puts developing countries at a disadvantage: while one of its main goals is to reduce subsidies in developed countries, the paper stated, the Agreement also has the effect of disallowing the implementation of subsidies by developing countries.

Delegates pointed to the lack of a level playing field between developed and developing countries in agriculture. While only five to 10 percent of the population in developed countries is involved in farming, agriculture is the source of income/employment for 50 to 80 percent of people in developing countries.

"Any slight reduction in food supply and the lowering of tariffs in developing countries, poses a threat to the livelihood of small farmers", according to Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network (TWN), a non-governmental organisation. "Most of our farmers in developing countries don't have money to subsidise", he said.

Also in the news, French farming activists José Bové and François Dufour on 28 March announced the launch of a new WTO watchdog group intended to exert "democratic control" over the world

trade body. The "Global Citizens' Initiative," expected to launch in June 2000, would provide an additional forum for agricultural, labour, consumer and environmental groups to monitor WTO activities. Messrs. Bové and Dufour lead the Confédération Paysanne, a grouping of French farmers.

"The idea is to have a giant microscope above the WTO with an associated network of lawyers, economists and finance specialists", Bové said. "We know that a lot of things are going to happen at WTO Geneva headquarters in the next few years, and we need to keep a close watch on that on the spot." Critics of Mr. Bové note that the farmer- activist is driven by concern that agricultural liberalisation would bring an end to large subsidies enjoyed by European farmers.

In other news, 2500 US farmers, ranchers, rural businesses, and organisations converged on Washington, D.C. on 20-21 March for a "Rally for Rural America." Participants called on the US Congress to reform the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act liberalising US agriculture - which critics generally dub the Freedom to Fail Act. Rally participants called for measures to ensure that US farmers enjoy a larger share of the food dollar, noting that they currently receive US\$0.23 out of every dollar versus US\$0.37 in 1980. They also warned against the US food supply coming increasingly under the control of transnational agribusiness firms. Towards this, participants called for anti-trust legislation to allow the US Department of Agriculture to participate in reviews of mergers and acquisitions in agribusiness.

"José Bové veut créer à Genève un observatoire permanent de l'OMC," TRIBUNE DE GENEVE, 28 March 2000; "Rally ends as farmers look for results in Washington," SUCCESSFUL FARMING, 23 March 2000; "Leveling The Playing Field," IPS, 28 March 2000.

EUROPEAN HIGH COURT OFFERS MIXED DECISION ON GMO LICENCES

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.

Delegates agreed on a programme of work that focused on the broad area of risk analysis, including work on science-based decision-making, pre-market assessment, transparency, post-market monitoring (including traceability), and labelling. Within the work programme, the Task Force will also consider the precautionary principle, religious and cultural considerations related to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), food security, and international trade.

Delegates also referred a set of questions for joint FAO/WHO expert consultation. Issues to be considered by the joint panel include, *inter alia*: outlining the over-arching scientific principles to be applied to safety and nutritional assessments; the role and limitation of substantial equivalence in safety and nutrition assessments; and outlining scientific approaches to monitor and assess possible long term health effects or unintended/unexpected adverse effects from biotechnology. The Second Session of the Task Force will be held in March 2001.

In other news, the European Court of Justice on 21 March ruled that EU member-states could not withhold licences for GMO products after a licence has been approved at the EU-level (e.g. by the European Commission (EC)). The case, referred to the Court by the French Council of State, dealt with a lawsuit brought by the environmental organisation Greenpeace and farm groups against the French government's February 1998 decision to allow Novartis' Bt maize to be grown on approximately 30,000 hectares in France.

The Court also ruled that a licence could be suspended at the EU-level if new information about the danger of a GMO product is presented and held that the Court had the authority to overturn an EU-level decision if it found the initial examination of a GMO product by an EU member state was mishandled.

In its case, Greenpeace et al. argued that serious scientific doubts remain regarding the health and environmental risks associated with the use of GMOs in food production and argued that the French Ministry of Agriculture ignored the "principle of precaution" when approving Novartis' Bt corn licence. The precautionary principle -- often cited in international environmental policy -- is a mechanism used to allow governments to take preventive measures, such as a ban, before approving a product for use when scientific evidence is lacking regarding public health and environmental ramifications.

Greenpeace and Confédération Paysanne, a party to the lawsuit, called the Court ruling a victory for the precautionary principle and called on the Court to ban the Novartis Bt maize. The groups said the Court ruling mandates that the precautionary principle be considered in EU-level decisions on GMO licences. Monsanto, the US life sciences company, said the ruling upheld the position of biotech companies that France, or any EU member-state, was obligated to issue a GMO licence once EU approval had been granted.

"Report of the first session of the Codex ad hoc intergovernmental task force on foods derived from biotechnology," CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, March 2000; "Une victoire importante pour les opposants aux OGM," CONFEDERATION PAYSANNE PRESS RELEASE, 21 March 2000; "European Court rules on GM food licensing," FINANCIAL TIMES, 22 March 2000; "Greenpeace, ally warm to GM crop ruling," REUTERS, 22 March 2000.

IVORY TRADE EXPECTED TO DOMINATE CITES MEET

Delegates will convene in Gigiri, Kenya from 10-20 April for the 11th Conference of Parties (COP-11) to the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Delegates are expected to discuss, *inter alia*: allowing the limited sale of ivory stocks by South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia; a request by Norway and Japan for limited commercial whaling of grey and minke whales; and potential risk of wildlife trade to the tourism industry.

Regarding ivory, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia are looking for CITES members to allow continued limited trade of ivory stocks. Specifically, South Africa would like to

down-list its elephant population from Appendix I to Appendix II of the CITES convention, and has requested to sell a single quota of 30 tonnes from its ivory stockpile. Trade in species listed in Appendix I is prohibited while those species listed in Appendix II are considered endangered but may be traded with strict controls. In 1997, CITES agreed to allow Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Botswana to engage in "experimental" one-time sales of its ivory stockpiles. All four countries argue that they have effective elephant management programmes in place, successful anti-poaching records, and a strong record of protecting ivory stockpiles. They also stress that ivory stocks have grown as a result of natural mortality and problem-animal control measures.

The countries propose that marketing of their ivory would be transparent and open to international monitoring and would exclude any ivory seized by illegal traffickers. The revenue raised from ivory sales would continue to be used to raise funds for the countries' conservation and community development programs. The 14-member Southern African Development Community, of which the four countries are members, has agreed to take a unified position at the CITES talks, backing the four countries' proposals.

Kenya, joined by India, is highly opposed to allowing trade in ivory. The two countries have put forward a proposal to reinstate the ban on trade in ivory products. Kenyan officials cite mortality records for the last year, which indicate an increase in poaching since the sales of ivory stockpiles by Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. Kenya and India argue that allowing any trade in ivory products sends the wrong message to poachers and those engaged in black market sales of endangered wildlife that the door to ivory sales is open again.

South African officials criticised Kenya for its opposition to ivory trade, arguing that Kenya has an inadequate wildlife protection programme. "We've looked at the Kenya situation and the [wildlife] management is not as good as it could be...and that's what we would say is really the problem", said Vaill Moose, South Africa's Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister.

CITES officials indicated that the proposal could fare well amongst CITES members, noting that CITES monitors had found no evidence that the experimental sales (which took place in 1999) led to an increase in poaching. However, TRAFFIC, a conservation-monitoring group, warned that there is not yet enough data to adequately monitor poaching and have recommended a two-to-three year delay before allowing any additional sales. The European Commission on 30 March said it would oppose allowing increased ivory sales, also citing the lack of information on the impact from the 1999 sales.

Japan and Norway are expected to ask COP-11 to allow limited whaling of grey and minke whales. Members will consider whether the whale stocks should be removed from Appendix I with the provision that there be a zero quota for international trade in those whale stocks. Japan and Norway argue that the removal from Appendix I would allow researcher to undertake "scientific" catches. Conservationists are opposed to the measure, arguing that the countries are looking to exploit a loophole in the CITES convention while putting the endangered species at further risk. Advocates for removing minke whales from Appendix I note that whale stocks are healthy and point to the existence of safeguards such as an unprecedented DNA scheme to control international trade in minke whale products.

"Elephants: African Countries Support Ivory Sales," UN WIRE, 24 March 2000; "Documents for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties," CITES SECRETARIAT (2000/026), 26 March 2000; "EU Commission urges opposition to more ivory sales," REUTERS, 31 March 2000; "Joint strategies for CITES agreed between four SADC states," NRMP BULLETIN (Southern Africa), March 2000; "Thriving black market in ivory demolishing African elephants," ENS, 29 March 2000; "Elephants, whales set to raise passions at UN meet;" "S.Africa slams Kenyan criticism of ivory sales bid," REUTERS, 29 March 2000; "Lobbying to sell stockpiled ivory," IPS, 14 February 2000 ; "CITES Secretariat performs U-turn," HIGH NORTH WEB NEWS, 30 March 2000.

EU-CHINA ACCESSION TALKS FLOUNDER

Despite high expectations that WTO accession talks between the EU and China would be concluded during EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy's visit to Beijing from 27-31 March, the two sides failed to reach agreement.

EU officials said the EU-China talks were characterised by a "constructive spirit, with positive movement on both sides", according to an EU statement. Both EU and Chinese officials emerged from talks more optimistic than after previous rounds of talks. Both sides noted that talks were substantive, but failed after China refused to give in to EU demands for majority (51 percent) foreign ownership of Chinese telecom firms and EU demands for greater market access in the insurance and automotive sectors. EU demands in these areas exceed concessions given by China to the US in their November 1999 negotiated trade accord.

Commissioner Lamy will be reporting back to EU governments and the European Parliament to assess how a new round of negotiations will be approached. No date has been set for the next round of EU-China talks, but EU officials have stated that negotiations could resume in the next few weeks.

China did conclude accession agreements with Poland and Kyrgyzstan on 24 March. China must still conclude agreements with the EU, Switzerland, Latvia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Malaysia. The WTO Working Party on China's accession will meet from 8-15 May when it is expected to make a major push toward finalising the details around China's accession. However, in light of the failure last week between the EU and China to conclude an agreement, just how much progress could be made at the May meeting is unclear.

In the US, the Clinton Administration continued to push for congressional approval of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 4, No. 11, 21 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story7.21-03-00.htm>). House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt on 28 March called on the Clinton Administration to agree to a mechanism to review China's human rights policies and its compliance with trade agreements. Gephardt advocated that such a mechanism should carry meaningful penalties. "If you're going to have penalties based on some alternative mechanism, you have to have teeth and enforcement, but it has got to be WTO consistent." Mr. Gephardt, who is among Democrats currently opposed to

China's WTO entry, said WTO-consistent sanctions could include leveraging US votes on China-related matters within the International Monetary Fund.

"EU and China yet to conclude deal on WTO accession," EU PRESS RELEASE (IP/00/321), 31 March 2000; "WTO sets mid-May for big push on China entry," REUTERS, 21 March 2000; "China in WTO deals with Poland, Kyrgyzstan before EU talks," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 26 March 2000; "EU's Lamy, China's Zhu held 'substantive' WTO talks, EU says," BLOOMBERG NEWS, 29 March 2000; "China, EU fail to close deal on WTO entry as Lamy ends four days of talks in Beijing," DAILY REPORT FOR EXECUTIVES (BNA), 3 April 2000; "Gephardt calls for new China review mechanism with China PNTR," INSIDE US TRADE, 31 March 2000.

OTHER ACCESSIONS

A senior WTO official on 28 March predicted that Saudi Arabia's accession to the WTO is at least two years off. Saudi Arabia is expected to face difficulties in talks with the US and EU over what the two trade powers allege are unfair subsidies provided to the Saudi petrochemical industry. As part of its efforts to join the WTO, Saudi Arabia has pledged to liberalise its investment laws to foster foreign investment, including investment in the oil sector. Meanwhile, critical observers note that the US and EU, currently focused on China's WTO accession, would be wise to take a more encouraging stance toward Saudi Arabia's accession. Bringing Saudi Arabia into the WTO fold would allow it to diversify its oil-based economy, thus allowing it to be more responsive to its WTO trading partners' oil price concerns. The WTO working party on Saudi Arabia's accession is expected to meet again this week.

Since Jordan has ratified its WTO accession and will become a full WTO Member on April 11, Oman and Saudi Arabia remain the only two Arab states outside the WTO. Oman expects to conclude its accession to the WTO within three months. Oman launched its accession bid in 1996. Since then it has, *inter alia*, liberalised its foreign investment rules and agreed to open its financial services sector from 2003. The Sultanate still must address outstanding issues including intellectual property rights legislation and customs valuation.

Ethiopia is reportedly eyeing accession to the WTO, according to a report to Ethiopia's Parliament by Ato Kassahoun Ayele, Minister of Trade and Industry. The report stated that a committee has been established to study the advantages and disadvantages to Ethiopia in joining the WTO. Ethiopia currently has observer status in the WTO.

Taiwan on 28 March passed wine and tobacco legislation designed to comply with WTO rules. The legislation establishes a tax on wine and tobacco products. Under current law, Taiwan's Tobacco and Wine Board returned a portion of its sales to the government in return for so-called monopoly benefits, that is, the exclusive right to sell wine and tobacco. The tax is designed to allow for competitive sales of the goods in Taiwan. "In order to get a seat in the WTO, the protective shields must be removed, and head-on competition with imports are inevitable", one parliament representative said.

"Saudi membership of WTO still at least two years off," AGENCE FRANCE- PRESSE, 28 March 2000; "Oil makes Saudi a worthier member of WTO than China," FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 March 2000; "Oman removes major obstacles to WTO membership," REUTERS, 21 March 2000; "Ethiopia considering to join WTO," ADDIS TRIBUNE, 24 March 2000; "Taiwan passes wine, tobacco law to meet WTO requirements," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 28 March 2000.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: AFRICA

Leaders from seven of the 16 members in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met 27-28 March for a sub-regional summit in Abuja, Nigeria. The meeting brought together seven neighbouring countries (Nigeria, Togo, Mali, Niger, Ghana, Benin, and Burkina Faso) to discuss ways to accelerate implementation of a customs union, trade liberalisation and a common external tariff at a sub-regional level in order to streamline ECOWAS-wide economic integration. Integration efforts amongst the full ECOWAS membership have been stalled amid disagreements between the francophone and non-francophone countries within the regional grouping.

Nigeria and Ghana said at the summit that they had agreed to spearhead a two-track approach toward ECOWAS integration. This includes efforts to accelerate a sub-regional free trade area and the establishment by 2003 of a sub-regional monetary zone as a counterpart to the CFA Franc zone already in place for ECOWAS francophone countries. Nigerian President Olusgun Obasanjo noted that progress in the sub-region was vital to the future prospects of ECOWAS as a whole. "We in this part of Africa can only survive if we work towards attaining our common goal of socio-economic integration as part of measures for making our economies more competitive," Mr. Obasanjo said.

Officials from all seven countries agreed to measures designed to ease travel within the ECOWAS sub-region, including the adoption of a single ECOWAS passport and the lifting of roadblocks and security checkpoints on cross border roads throughout the sub-region. Officials also agreed to convene a meeting of sub-regional customs officials by 20 April to facilitate streamlined customs documentation and agreement on a common external tariff policy for implementation by 1 January 2001.

In other regional news, trade officials from Malawi and Zimbabwe met last month to discuss the growing trade imbalance between the two countries. The two countries signed a free trade agreement in 1986, which, *inter alia*, affords each country duty free access to the other's market as long as the products contain at least 25 percent local content. Malawi, whose main exports are oil seeds, cotton, tobacco and spices, says it cannot compete effectively with Zimbabwe's exports (including corn, fertiliser, petroleum oils, iron and steel products). The trade agreement has resulted in a nine-to-one trade imbalance in favour of Zimbabwe.

Uganda on 17 March announced a private sector trade policy capacity building project. The project will provide trade-related technical assistance and education to Uganda's private sector to help businesses better understand the business aspects of international trade agreements. The project will

also promote a dialogue process between the Ugandan government and businesses. The US Agency for International Development is funding the project.

"Remove trade barriers, Obasanjo tells leaders," P.M.NEWS (Nigeria), 28 March 2000; "West African mini-summit on free trade zone opens," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 27 March 2000; "West African leaders agree measures to ease travel," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 28 March 2000; "Malawi and Zimbabwe in trade deal talks," AFRICAN EYE NEWS SERVICE, 20 March 2000; "Opio nods trade project," NEW VISION (Uganda), 20 March 2000.

IN BRIEF

Leaders and ministers from the EU and African countries met from 3-4 April in Cairo, Egypt for the first EU-Africa summit addressing political and economic issues. Trade unions, peasant movements and other non-governmental organisations complained in advance of the summit that they had been shut out of the summit after some African governments objected to their presence. *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest will report on the summit in the next issue. "Background: Africa-Europe summit/ Cairo- 3-4 April," EU PRESS RELEASE, 29 March 2000; "NGOs fear being shut out of EU-Africa summit," IPS, 29 March 2000.

At a meeting of promoters of organic, shade-grown, and fairly-traded coffees (29-30 March in Oaxaca, Mexico), promoters requested assistance from the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) to help build a co-operative effort amongst producers and marketers in bringing environmentally and socially sustainable coffee to market. The CEC will advise on, inter alia, whether different certification and labelling schemes currently employed by various groups can be moved towards a co-operative or unified label. "Oaxaca coffee meeting concludes," CEC PRESS RELEASE, 30 March 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

In a 17 March letter to the European Policy Office of the conservation group WWF, EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy responded to a joint statement by 40 NGOs submitted to the EU regarding the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) Report on the EC agenda for a new round of WTO trade negotiations (*BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 4, No. 9, 7 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story7.07-03-00.htm>). Mr. Lamy addressed key points of the NGO statement, which had been critical of the SIA process thus far. Lamy reassured WWF that the EU "will certainly continue to operate the SIA in an open and inclusive manner." He also defended EU interdepartmental co-ordination as "thorough and long established." Commissioner Lamy noted that the EU had established a special group of European Commissioners to consider "the broader interface between trade policy and sustainable development", with respect to WTO work and in preparation for other forums, including the Rio+10 conference. "Pascal Lamy replies to NGOs on SIA," WWF-EPO PRESS RELEASE, 31 March 2000.

Canada and Thailand are to co-operate on a training programme aimed at enhancing Thailand's trade negotiation skills. The project is the first of a series of co-operation projects between Canada and Thailand aimed at increasing bargaining power of developing countries in multilateral trade negotiations. "Canada to help Thailand train trade personnel," XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, 27 March 2000.

In a meeting with Caribbean countries on 29 March, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright reportedly announced US backing for an eight- year WTO waiver allowing the EU to continue its preferential market access arrangement (known as the Lomé Agreement) with 71 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states (see *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 4, No. 3, 25 January 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story5.25-01-00.htm>) "Caribbean nations win US pledge to back WTO waiver," REUTERS, 29 March 2000.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

• Coming Up This Week

For more information on these events please visit ICTSD's online calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/html/calendar.htm>

3-7 April, Geneva, Switzerland: 16th SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP OF THE BASEL CONVENTION

3-7 April, Durban, South Africa: ICFTU 17th WORLD CONGRESS

4 & 5 April: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

5 April: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

5 April, 18:00-20:00 (CET): EU TRADE COMMISSIONER PASCAL LAMY INTERNET DISCUSSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE SYSTEM AND PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

5 April 2000, London, England: CONFERENCE ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED PRODUCTS - THE NEXT TRADE WAR?

5 April, London England: GM PRODUCTS: CORPORATE CHALLENGES FOR BIOTECH COMPANIES AND THE NEW POLICY AGENDA

5 & 25 April, New York, USA: SYMPOSIA: THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION AFTER SEATTLE

6-7 April, Akureyri, Iceland: COMPETITIVENESS WITHIN THE GLOBAL FISHERIES

6-8 April, San Salvador, El Salvador: COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA

7 April: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

- **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.

10-11 May, Geneva: WTO SECRETARIAT SEMINAR ON THE VARIOUS ISSUES RELATING TO GATS AND THE SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS. The seminar will take the shape of briefings followed by discussions on the GATS and the schedules of commitments and on the major current areas of work in the Council for Trade in Services and its subsidiary bodies. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5393; email: nuch.nazeer@wto.org

- **Other Events**

11 April, 09:00-11:00, International Environment House (Room 2), 13, chemin des Anémones, Geneva: ICTSD CAFÉ-CROISSANT INFORMAL DISCUSSION ON ECUADOR'S USE OF CROSS-RETALIATION: "NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES". Speaker: Mr. Cristian Espinosa, First Secretary, Ecuadorian Mission to the WTO; Discussant: Ernst-Ulrich Petersmann, Legal Advisor, WTO & University of Geneva. Mr. Espinosa will comment on the highlights of the WTO banana case and on Ecuador's reaction to the WTO's authorisation for cross retaliation. The dialogue is meant to be interactive and will be opened up to all participants. If you or your organisation would like to attend, please confirm attendance at the soonest date possible to: Stephanie Hanford, ICTSD, tel: (41-22) 917- 8374; email: shanford@ictsd.ch . If you would like to be included in ICTSD's invitation list for the occasional series of Café-Croissants informal dialogues, please contact Marc Galvin, ICTSD, email: mgalvin@ictsd.ch

26-28 April 2000, Denver, Colorado, USA: GLOBALISATION AND ECOMMERCE: THE EXPANDING ANTI-COUNTERFEITING FIGHT. Annual Spring Conference of the International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition, Inc. (IACC). Panels will address internet-related intellectual property infringement issues as well as conventional forms of infringement. For a detailed agenda contact: Richard Wynne, tel: (1-202) 661-7083; email: rwynne@iacc.org; web: <http://www.iacc.org>

10-13 May, Brussels, Belgium: THIRD MEETING OF THE TRANSATLANTIC ENVIRONMENT DIALOGUE (TAED). The meeting will consist of several elements: update on TAED policy action, the open discussion with EU - US officials, a seminar comparing EU and US approaches to environmental policy making, and extensive discussions on substantive issues in the Working Group sessions. Deadline for registration for European NGOs is 10 April. For information

contact: European TAED Coordinator: Ronald Kingham, EEB, 34 Boulevard de Waterloo, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium, tel: (32-2) 289-1090; fax: 289-1099; email: taed@eeb.org. US Coordinator: Rina Rodriguez, Defenders of Wildlife, 1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 1400, Washington, DC 20005, tel: (1-202) 689-9400; fax: 682-1331; email: rrodriguez@defenders.org

- **Resources**

BRÜCKEN ZWISCHEN HANDEL UND ZUKUNFTSFÄHIGER ENTWICKLUNG. ICTSD is happy to welcome *BRÜCKEN*, the German version of *BRIDGES* Between Trade and Sustainable Development. The first issue of the publication was released in February, and others will follow on a bi-monthly basis. *BRÜCKEN*, produced by Germanwatch in collaboration with ICTSD, joins the *BRIDGES* 'family', which also includes *PUENTES* and *PASSERELLES*. All these publications are available from their producers, as well as at the ICTSD website at http://www.ictsd.org/html/arct_sd.htm. For copies contact: *BRÜCKEN*, Germanwatch, Kaiserstrasse 210, 53113 Bonn, Germany, tel: (49-228) 60492-0; fax: 60492-19; email: tradewatch@germanwatch.org; web: <http://www.germanwatch.org>

TRADE, ENVIRONMENT, AND THE WTO: THE POST-SEATTLE AGENDA. April 2000. By Gary P. Sampson, with a Foreword by Dutch Environment Minister Jan Pronk. Published by the Overseas Development Council. Gary Sampson, a former director of the WTO Trade and Environment Division, offers an analysis of the principal issues in the trade and environment debate. In his concluding chapter, Sampson proposes an agenda for action, many of whose elements can be taken forward even in the absence of a new global trade round. A summary of the book can be found at: <http://www.odc.org/publications/pe27bib.html>. Copies of the book can be ordered through Johns Hopkins University Press, tel: (1-800) 537- 5487 (from inside the US), or (1-410) 516-6957 (outside the US).

EFFECTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRICE AND MARKET LIBERALISATION AND OTHER FACTORS ON FOOD SECURITY IN SELECTED DISTRICTS IN UGANDA: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH CARRIED OUT IN ARUA, IGANGA, KITGUM AND PALLISA DISTRICTS. December 1998. By VREDESEILANDEN-COOPIBO, SNV-Uganda, and OXFAM-Uganda. The objective of this study is to isolate the effects of liberalisation policies on food security. It also brings into sharp focus the concept of food security from the viewpoint of communities themselves. To order email: veco-ug@imul.com

EUROPÄISCHE AGRARUMWELTPOLITIK IN DEN GRENZEN DER WTO. By Marita Wiggerthale, University of Oldenburg, Germany. This paper presents the results of a study on "Agri-environmental policies of the EU in the framework of the WTO". For more information contact: Marita Wiggerthale, email: marita.wiggerthale@mail.uni-oldenburg.de

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