



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

BRIDGES

Weekly Trade News Digest

18 April 2000

ISSN 1563-003X

Volume 4, N°15

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NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Dear *BRIDGES* readers:

Due to holidays over the next week, the next issue of *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest will be published on Wednesday, 26 April, instead of Tuesday, 25 April.

Best regards,
ICTSD.

QUAD KEEPS ITS LDC BARGAINING CHIPS; SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS TIMETABLE EMERGES

Following developing countries' disappointed response to a confidence-building package put forward by the Quad Group of countries (EU, US, Canada, and Japan), Canadian Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew on 12 April said the package was meant to send a "positive signal" to developing countries and should not be considered the extent of Quad commitments.

Mr. Pettigrew indicated that the package was more of an opening bid in the negotiations process, and that the Quad had yet to play its full hand. "If you play your cards before the negotiations begin, you have no more concessions to make. It is important to send the right kind of signal but maintain some flexibility for the concessions", Mr. Pettigrew said. The package of trade concessions and technical assistance commitments presented to WTO Members early this month is designed to entice poor countries toward launching a new round of global trade talks. (See *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 4, No. 14, 11 April 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.11-04-00.htm>)

The WTO's Council for Trade in Services met on 14 April to set its agenda for 2000. It was followed by a 'Special Session' of the Council, wherein Members discussed negotiations in services and set up a negotiating timetable that clusters around four so-called 'services weeks' (see <http://www.wto.org/wto/new/Services2.htm>). Members "more or less" agreed on a deadline of "before the end of 2000" to submit proposals for both the modality/structure and the content of market access negotiations in services. They also considered a proposal to begin actual negotiations in March 2001; Members are expected to finalise these deadlines at the next convening of the Services Council Special Session, on 25 or 26 May. Not surprisingly, these dates mirror the negotiating timetable set out for agriculture (see <http://www.wto.org/wto/new/Press172.htm>).

At the Special Session, most developing countries (including Venezuela, Pakistan, Dominican Republic, India, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala and Cuba) expressed their dissatisfaction with a WTO Secretariat Assessment of Trade in Services. According to these countries, the Secretariat Report lacks sufficient statistics, and they want the issue kept on the Services agenda until the Secretariat produces a report that better explains the impact of liberalisation of trade in services on developing countries.

A submission by the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Honduras that proposes adding an annex on tourism to the WTO Services agreements was also discussed, though it met with lukewarm support in the Council. Sources say that the need for an annex on tourism is questionable as most everything can be achieved already in forthcoming negotiations through scheduling of commitments. Tourism accounts for a large proportion of services exports in developing countries, evidenced by the fact that services accounted for 64.1% of Egypt's exports in 1998 and 63.1% of Greece's (as opposed to 26.3% of US exports and 12.7% of Germany's). Tourism accounts for a third of global trade in services.

WTO Director-General Mike Moore said on 13 April that consensus on a new round remains out of reach, as members continue to disagree on the scope of issues to be addressed in a new round of

trade talks, including environment, labour, competition and investment, antidumping measures and tariff peaks. "Consensus is elusive", Moore said. "On the environment and labour, there is no consensus yet or even on the horizon."

Mr. Moore also said that he hoped the US Congress would pass proposed legislation promoting trade, investment, and increased development in Africa and the Caribbean. "The Africa-Caribbean bill is a worthwhile effort...It would do a lot to restore confidence, it would do a lot to build impetus up so that other important areas like agriculture and services can continue." However, Mr. Moore is reportedly less than satisfied with the bill in that it falls short of his and many WTO Members' expectations regarding confidence-building measures.

The US Senate and House of Representatives are currently working out differences in the Africa-Caribbean bill regarding market access for textiles; the bill is not expected for a vote until after Congress votes on extending Permanent Normal Trade Relations for China later this spring.

In other news, Japan and Switzerland on 11 April announced a joint initiative to push for an early launch of a new round of global trade talks. Japan has a similar agreement with the EU.

"US needs to take reins of trade talks," DOW JONES NEWSWIREs, 10 April 2000; "Japan, Switzerland in unison on early free trade talks," JIJI PRESS, 11 April 2000; "Moore sees little flexibility on differences for launch of a round;" "Africa-CBI conferees strike tentative deal; staff to work out details," INSIDE US TRADE, 14 April 2000. "Services Council adopts negotiating timetable for this year," WTO PRESS RELEASE, 17 April 2000; "Trade in services," THE ECONOMIST, 1 April 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

G-77 SUMMIT: CALLS FOR UNITY, GREATER VOICE IN TRADE

Ministers from the Group of 77 developing countries plus China (G-77, comprised of 133 developing countries) met from 10-14 April in Havana, Cuba for the first ever South Summit since the creation of the G-77 in 1964. The summit focused on, *inter alia*, ways to strengthen cooperation among G-77 member states, redefining North-South relations, and the role of the South in the world trading system.

A number of ministers made urgent calls for unity amongst developing countries, arguing that unity is the best way for a pro-South agenda to move forward. "To get united is the only way for developing countries to enhance our position in the North-South dialogue, effectively participate in economic decision making and safeguard our own interests to the maximum in the course of globalisation", Chinese Vice Premier Li Lanqing told G-77 ministers.

The calls for increased South-South cooperation came as divisions amongst developing countries emerged between those countries favouring a radical overhaul of the world economic order (Cuba and Malaysia) and those favouring a constructive engagement approach (championed at the summit by Nigeria and Indonesia). "If we quarrel about approaches to be made, then all will face losses", said Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, chairman of the G-77, called for South-South unity toward reshaping the multilateral trading system. "The multilateral rule-based trading system, anchored on the Uruguay Round agreements, is in serious crisis, as manifested by the failure of the Seattle conference", Mr. Obasanjo said. "The enthusiasm and high expectations which motivated developing countries to sign the Uruguay Round agreements have been shattered by the inability of the WTO to take into consideration the legitimate interests of the countries of the South, especially Africa.

"Given the failure in Seattle, we should at this Summit evolve fresh approaches for the equitable management of global trade relations that would be supportive of development and prosperity for all. In this regard I strongly recommend that this Summit agree on a common platform of action for our Trade Ministers to facilitate the attainment of the implementation of the development dimensions in the various WTO agreements", Mr. Obasanjo said.

The meeting's final Declaration calls for G-77 members to seek "effective participation" in the WTO and to "promote their common interests by shaping and directing multilateral trade negotiations to take into account the needs of developing countries." The Declaration noted that previous attempts at South-South co-operation had failed because of "a lack of effective follow up and implementation" and called for follow-up measures in its G-77 Havana Plan of Action.

Regarding North-South co-operation, some ministers expressed strong resentment against developed countries in the North for their failure to respond on many levels to the trade and development needs of developing countries. According to one minister, "[we] are asked to trade on equal terms with the North, when we don't even have the goods to trade; we must not become a dumping ground for theirs."

Cuba's Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque called on ministers to continue the "rebellion of Seattle". "I don't mean just the rebellion in the streets but also the rebellion inside the [Seattle] conference centre against attempts to carry out an event that was not transparent and favoured the interests of the few and not the majority", said Mr. Perez. "We need a North-South dialogue in which the North listens to our opinions."

The final Declaration took a measured approach toward globalisation. It called globalisation "a process which can be uneven and unpredictable," but a process that "presents opportunities as well as risks and challenges... [If] properly harnessed and managed, the foundations for enduring and equitable growth at the international and national levels can be laid."

In the Declaration, ministers called for improved market access for developing country exports. It also stated that "preservation and full implementation of special and differential treatment for developing countries should be firmly entrenched in the multilateral trading system." (WTO agreements contain provisions on special and differential treatment for developing countries, taking into account differing levels of development, trade capacity, food security, and other matters.) The Declaration rejected any attempts to link trade to labour or environmental standards. "We firmly oppose any linkage between trade and labour standards. We are also against the use of environmental standards as a new form of protectionism", according to the document.

Key aspects of the G-77 are likely to be proposed for incorporation into the UN Millennium Summit from 6-8 September 2000, where UN members are expected to agree on the UN vision and role in the coming century. In addition, Obasanjo indicated that he and South African President Thabo Mbekei would present the conclusions of the Havana G-77 conference to a planned conference of the G-7 industrialised states in Japan this summer.

G-7 MEETS IN WASHINGTON AMID PROTESTS

While G-77 ministers were meeting in Cuba, G-7 delegates attended the spring sessions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington D.C. As the meetings concluded on 17 April, delegates had agreed to push for extra debt relief, review lending rules, improve monitoring of member countries' economies, and increase funding for the fight against AIDS.

In what was almost a replay of the Seattle WTO Ministerial last November/December, protesters and police clashed on numerous occasions during the week-long meeting. Thousands of protesters converged on Washington to oppose the forces of globalisation. The protesters accused the World Bank and IMF of failing to relieve developing countries of their crushing debt payments, and implementing policies that contribute to unsafe food, environmental degradation, and unfair labour practices.

"Foreign ministers in Havana call for democratisation of United Nations, enlargement of security council," G-77 PRESS RELEASE, 12 April 2000; "G-77 summit stresses South-South co-operation," IPS, 12 April 2000; "Divisions showing at G77 Third World summit," REUTERS, 13 April 2000; "G77 leaders seek access to world markets, reduction in debt burden," ECONOMIC TIMES (India), 13 April 2000; "Highlights of the draft final declaration of the G77 Havana summit," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 9 April 2000; "Cuba says Third World will pursue Seattle revolt," REUTERS, 10 April 2000; "Trading system in serious crisis, says G77 chair," SUNS, 12 April 2000; "G-77 states seek to speak with one voice," FINANCIAL TIMES, 17 April 2000; "Protests Hit IMF and World Bank During Meetings in Washington," WALL STREET JOURNAL 17 April 2000; "World Bank, IMF conclude Washington meetings amid protests," CNN.COM 18 April 2000.

CITES COP-11 REJECTS WHALE TRADE

The 11th Conference of Parties (COP-11) to the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is underway in Gigiri, Kenya from 10-20 April. Delegates from 138 countries are meeting to take up a number of issues, including: 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.

During the first week of talks, delegates rejected proposals from Norway and Japan to relax a 14-year ban on commercial whaling. Both Japan and Norway had argued that their respective whale stocks were healthy and that adequate safeguards (including in the case of Norway, DNA tracking) were in place to safeguard against illegal trade in whale products, and further, that there is no evidence of illegal trade in whale products. Specifically, Japan and Norway asked that stocks of grey and minke whales be downlisted from CITES Appendix I to Appendix II. Trade is prohibited in species listed in Appendix I. Species listed in Appendix II are considered endangered but may be traded with strict controls.

Countries opposed to the downlisting measures (including the EU, US, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Australia, Monaco, Slovakia, Vanuatu, and Fiji) were reluctant to downlist stocks subject to a moratorium under the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which oversees management and conservation of world whaling stocks. These countries noted that the proposals would undermine the work of the IWC and challenge its authority on whaling matters. The IWC has rejected similar proposals by Japan and Norway, arguing that a revised management scheme must be developed before commercial whaling can resume. The IWC is currently undertaking efforts to establish such a scheme. Conservation groups, including Greenpeace, WWF, and The World Conservation Union (IUCN) opposed the downlisting proposal.

Those in support of downlisting proposals by Japan and Norway included the Eastern Caribbean countries of Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, St. Kitts-Nevis, and Grenada. Food security concerns and scientific data collected by an IWC panel of experts that supports Japan and Norway's proposal for the resumption of whaling were cited as reasons backing the Japanese and Norwegian requests.

"The IWC simply refuses to accept the work of its own scientists. There is clear evidence that the minke whale can be harvested under strict conditions, so there isn't a need to wait any longer", said Davon Joseph, the chief representative of Antigua to COP-11. Others argued that the IWC risked losing its credibility by refusing to accept the work of its own scientists.

During the week of 17-20 April, COP-11 will take up proposals by South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia to allow continued limited trade of ivory stocks. (See *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 13, 4 April 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.04-04-00.htm>) *BRIDGES* will report on the outcome of those talks in the next issue.

"Caribbean nations stand firm on whaling issue," 14 April 2000; "COP-11 highlights," *EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN* (IISD), 17 April 2000; "Get whales off the CITES table says WWF," WWF PRESS RELEASE, 10 April 2000.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REJECTS GMO LIABILITY REGIME

The European Parliament (EP) on 12 April rejected proposed legislation that would have established civil liability for producers of genetically modified foods (GMOs) for any damage to human health and the environment from GMOs. Biotechnology companies had argued that such a regime would have significantly increased insurance and regulatory costs. The EP also rejected

proposals designed to combat genetic pollution, (e.g. accidental cross-pollination of GMOs with other plants). Environmental groups -- including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth -- condemned the EP decisions. EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom has promised to bring forward a broader liability regime to cover environmental damage from a wide range of products, noting that a GMO-specific liability regime would be confusing and difficult to regulate.

The EP did approve legislation outlining licensing rules for GMOs. The regime requires GMO licences to be renewed periodically, mandates improved public consultation on granting licences, and clarifies labelling of GMO products.

Monsanto last week announced it would donate its "working draft" of the genetic structure of rice to the International Rice Genome Sequencing Project (IRGSP). IRGSP is an initiative to develop new rice varieties via traditional methods and biotechnology; as part of that initiative IRGSP issues all its findings on databases that are accessible to the public. Monsanto's contribution is expected to reduce by 5 years the time necessary to complete decoding of the entire rice genome, now expected to take 2-3 years to complete. Half of the world's population is dependent on rice as its main food staple.

New laws requiring labelling of GMOs entered into force on 10 April in England and Scotland. The labelling regime is administered under the newly formed UK Food Standards Administration (FSA). FSA officials said the labelling regime, which will come into force in Wales and Northern Ireland at a later date, are designed to foster informed consumer choice.

Sri Lanka on 10 April announced an immediate ban on all imports of GMO foodstuffs. Sri Lanka, a significant importer of wheat and sugar, said it wanted to wait "until the controversy surrounding [GMOs] has cleared" before allowing GMO imports. Sri Lanka does not produce any GMO crops.

"New GM food labelling laws come into force in UK;" "Sri Lanka bans import of genetically modified food," REUTERS, 10 April 2000; "Europe rejects tougher GM curbs," 13 April 2000, "EU rejects strict GM food controls," BBC NEWS, 12 April 2000; "Monsanto opts to work with the grain," FINANCIAL TIMES, 11 April 2000.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: LATIN AMERICA

The EU and the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur, comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and associate members Chile and Bolivia) held bilateral trade talks from 6-7 April. The talks stalled amidst differences between the two sides over intellectual property rights and government procurement. Negotiators will meet again in June.

In advance of the talks, Mercosur officials signalled a shift in their singular focus in ongoing EU-Mercosur free trade talks on reducing/eliminating EU agricultural subsidies. Mercosur countries instead will turn their attention towards gaining market access for bloc exports. Talks between the EU and Mercosur began last year, but quickly stalled over Mercosur insistence on EU agricultural liberalisation. Mercosur is a major agricultural exporter and has long argued that EU farm subsidies

undermine the competitiveness of Mercosur agricultural commodities on the world market. Various Mercosur officials said that the grouping would push hard for market access in other sectors important to the region, including energy and services. EU-Mercosur trade totalled an estimated US\$46 billion in 1998.

Argentina on 3 April announced plans to boost value-added exports from the country. The government intends to spend about US\$55 million in rebates to exporters for goods sent outside the Mercosur bloc, and US\$45 million in tariff cuts on certain imports. The measures are designed to decrease Argentina's dependence on exports to neighbouring Brazil, and to move Argentina's export base from low-value commodities to value-added goods such as assembled technology products.

Argentina is expected soon to lift safeguards against imports of Brazilian textiles. The move comes after the WTO on 20 March established a dispute settlement panel regarding a complaint by Brazil against Argentine restrictions on cotton textiles.

On 29 March, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced a five-year, US\$30 million programme agreement with the Caribbean Community, designed to foster economic development in the Caribbean. The program will place special emphasis on Windward Islands countries (St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, and Dominica) that are adversely affected by the loss or potential loss of preferential EU market access for bananas. The program also includes an environment component, which will allow countries to identify and act upon environmental problems that are closely linked to the region's growth potential.

Japan and Mexico are expected to meet on 20 April for high-level bilateral discussions that will address, among other issues, the possibility of launching free trade talks. A Japan-Mexico free trade agreement could help further diversify Mexico's export base, which is currently dominated by the US market. An EU-Mexico free trade agreement is scheduled to launch from 1 July.

In related news, a report by the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching stated that the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) between the US, Mexico, and Canada, has resulted in a concentration of industrial development in Mexico's northern states, increasing the income gap between northern and southern Mexican states. Also according to the report, Mexico has been able to diversify its export base away from a dependence on oil to other goods, driven by a 137 percent increase in exports to the US.

"South American exporters switch tack on EU relations;" "Argentine push for global exports, imports," REUTERS, 3 April 2000; "Argentina to lift safeguards on Brazil textiles - report," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 11 April 2000; "Mexico calls for Japan-Mexico FTA," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 5 April 2000; "Albright signs \$30 million agreement to help Caribbean," TRADE COMPASS, 30 April 2000; "NAFTA swells gap between rich and poor regions of Mexico," IPS, 4 April 2000.

ACCESSION UPDATE: JORDAN BECOMES 136TH WTO MEMBER

Jordan on 11 April became the 136th Member of the WTO. Under terms of its accession package, Jordan will reduce customs duties from 35 to 20 percent over the next ten years and reduce price controls on a number of goods, including gasoline and medicine. In anticipation of WTO membership, Jordan undertook major reforms of its economy, laws (including intellectual property rights legislation) and institutions in order to promote greater trade and investment. Oman and Saudi Arabia remain the only two Arab states outside the WTO.

On 13 April, Taiwan signed a bilateral WTO accession agreement with Brazil, the last remaining country with which Taiwan needed to negotiate an accession agreement. Taiwan is now technically eligible for WTO membership pending approval of its full accession package at the next meeting of the WTO working group on Taiwan. However, that meeting is not likely to occur until after China completes its accession. China has been adamant that it should be admitted to the WTO before Taiwan.

China on 12 April signed a bilateral WTO accession agreement with Malaysia. China must still conclude agreements with seven WTO Members (the EU, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Latvia, Mexico, and Switzerland) before it can join the WTO. Regarding the EU-China process, on 10 April EU foreign ministers (representing the 15 EU member-states) said they could tolerate some flexibility in the EU negotiating position with China. This could signal progress for the EU-China talks, which stalled last month after China refused to bend to EU demands for higher levels of European ownership of telecom firms and 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. It is not clear when EU-China talks will resume.

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy reportedly warned EU foreign ministers that China could try to delay an EU-China agreement until after the US votes on extending Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) to China (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 10, 14 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.14-03-00.htm>). Such a delay could hurt the EU's attempt to gain concessions beyond those negotiated by the US, Mr. Lamy reportedly told ministers.

The US Congress is expected to vote on PNTR on 23 May. US President Clinton has made PNTR a high priority for his administration and last week warned legislators of the "extremely harmful" consequences should they reject the PNTR bill. "China will join the WTO regardless of what we decide to do", President Clinton said in a statement. "The decision before Congress is whether the United States will receive the same trade benefits from China as will our trade competitors."

Russia late last month tabled a new market-access offer in an attempt to revive its bid to join the WTO. While some observers note that the offer still falls short, it is a noticeable improvement over its last bid, made in 1998. The newest offer includes all tariff lines in Russia's customs duties roster and reduces average weighted tariffs for agricultural and industrial goods to between 17 and 22.3 percent.

"Jordan becomes 136th Member of WTO," BLOOMBERG, 11 April 2000; "China, Malaysia sign WTO deal," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 14 April 2000; "Taiwan signs bilateral trade deal with Brazil, paving way for accession," WTO REPORTER, 14 April 2000; "EU pushes for China/WTO terms," FINANCIAL TIMES, 11 April 2000; "China may try to stall EU WTO pact until after US vote," BLOOMBERG, 10 April 2000; "Clinton warns of dire consequences if PNTR defeated," WHITE HOUSE PRESS RELEASE, 11 April 2000; "Russia renews WTO bid with market access offer," STRAITS TIMES, 29 March 2000.

WTO REPORT POINTS OUT STRONG DEVELOPING COUNTRY TRADE GROWTH

A preliminary WTO report on trade developments in 1999 and the outlook for 2000, released on Thursday 13 April, shows that the volume of world merchandise trade grew in 1999 by 4.5 percent - mirroring growth in trade for 1998 -- and amounted to USD 5.45 trillion in value. The stability in this growth rate conceals intra-year downturns in the last two years and significant shifts in the geographic distribution of demand. In particular, import demand in Asia, Latin America, and the economies of the Commonwealth of Independent States turned steeply downward throughout 1998 mainly due to the combined effects of the East Asian, Russian and Brazilian crises. Also, increases in North American and EU imports were offset by a drop in demand in developing countries.

Developing countries' merchandise exports expanded by 8.5 per cent in 1999, compared to world merchandise growth of 3.5 percent. In 1999, the share of developing countries was 27.5 per cent for merchandise exports and 23 per cent for commercial services exports, both figures 4 percentage points higher than in 1990.

Developing countries' merchandise exports in 1999 are reported by the WTO to have expanded by 8.5 percent, or about two times faster than the global average. The definition of "developing countries" used in this case comprised Latin America (including Mexico), Africa (including South Africa) and the Middle East, and Asia (including China but excluding Japan, New Zealand, and Australia). The most important factor in this expansion is undoubtedly the rapid recovery in East Asia. Table II.2 in the report, "Growth in the Volume of World Merchandise Trade by Selected Region, 1997-9" (see <http://www.wto.org/wto/new/Press175.doc>), shows how percentage points would have been added not only to developing countries' but also to world imports this year: the table reflects a shift from a large decline in Asian import volumes (including Japan) in 1998 to an increase in growth in 1999 of 9 percent. Amongst the least-developed countries (LDCs), oil exporters increased exports by more than 33 percent, exporters of manufactured goods including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Haiti, and Myanmar expanded exports faster than world trade, while non-fuel commodity exporters lagged behind.

Global economic prospects for 2000 are positive according to the report (also see the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook Report, Spring 2000 and the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects And The Developing Countries - 2000 in RESOURCES, this issue). Economic output is expected to pick up from 3 percent in 1999 to about 3.5 percent in 2000, while the volume of world merchandise trade growth should reach 6.5 percent. Higher growth is forecasted for

transition and African economies, a strong acceleration for Latin America and the Middle East, and an expansion of as much as 3 percent for the GDP of industrialised countries. Several long-term prospects should advise the reports' crediting of US demand and Asian recovery and its overall positive outlook on global economic output in coming years. Among these is the still-rising cost of restructuring the Indonesian bank balance sheets, the ongoing difficulties that China is experiencing with its commercial banks and their links with ailing state-owned enterprises (which has also influenced inward investment), and uncertainty regarding the continued softening of the US dollar that is required to flatten import prices and increase global trade flows.

WTO PRESS RELEASE (175), 13 April 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

IN BRIEF

China on 5 April formally joined the Bangkok Agreement, a preferential tariff arrangement aimed at promoting intra-regional trade. The Bangkok Agreement covers trade between China, Republic of Korea, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Laos, and marks China's first foray into regional trade accords. "China joins Bangkok Agreement," *TRADE COMPASS*, 11 April 2000.

A US federal judge on 11 April ruled that the US Commerce Department "acted contrary to the law and abused [its] discretion when [it] triggered a change in the 'dolphin safe' label standard." A coalition of US environmental groups last year filed suit in federal court trying to stop plans for changes to "dolphin safe" tuna labelling from moving forward, arguing that broader guidelines for dolphin safe tuna fishing -- approved by the US Commerce Department, fail to adequately protect dolphins. (See *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 3, No. 18, 10 May 1999, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/story9.10-05-99.htm>) "Judge says tuna must remain dolphin safe," *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, 12 April 2000

Starbucks, the international coffee chain, announced on 10 April that it would sell Fair Trade Certified coffee in more than 2,000 cafes across the US beginning in fall, 2000. The Starbucks' coffee contract represents the largest purchase of Fair Trade Certified coffee in the US. Fair Trade Certified indicates that the coffee was grown by farmers earning a living wage from their harvest. The Starbucks announcement came as human rights activists launched a campaign to get major coffee companies to offer socially responsible coffee. "Starbucks agrees to offer its customers Fair Trade Certified coffee by the end of the year," *GLOBAL EXCHANGE PRESS RELEASE*, 10 April 2000.

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy on 6 April held a dialogue with members of EU non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society to discuss post-WTO Seattle Ministerial issues and ways to improve dialogue between the EU and civil society. The meeting brought together social, environmental, consumer, and development NGOs, as well as representatives from business, unions, and agriculture. Another meeting is scheduled for 19 April. "DG Trade - civil society dialogue," *ICDA*, 12 April 2000.

This year's session of the Commission of Sustainable Development of the UN (CSD-8) will focus its High-Level Segment on trade and investment and on agriculture. As usual, parallel events are being organised by

NGOs and intergovernmental bodies. Some of them will include: 25 April: "Green Politics: Southern perspectives on Trade and Environment" organised by the Centre for Science and Environment; 25 April: ICTSD's dinner-discussion on trade and sustainable development with the participation of the Chair of the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment, Amb. Yolanda Bide and several ministers, academics and NGOs; 27 April: "Greening of Capital Markets" organised by the Government of Norway; and 27 April: a High Level Panel Discussion on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the WTO convened by the UN Environment Programme.

WTO IN BRIEF

Two new experts have been named to the WTO Appellate Body, replacing two departing members. India's former chief trade negotiator Arumugamangalam Venkatachalam Ganesan, and Egyptian law professor Georges Abi-Saab were selected from amongst eight candidates. Other candidates included nominees from Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Bulgaria, and Israel. Still one more trade expert must be appointed to replace Christopher Beeby, who died in March. The Appellate Body reviews dispute settlement cases and is charged with upholding, modifying, or reversing the legal findings and conclusions of WTO dispute settlement panels. "Egyptian and Indian to join WTO appeals body," STRAITS TIMES, 9 April 2000.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

- **Events**

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

- **Coming Up This Week**

19 April: Geneva, Switzerland: ICTSD "CAFÉ & CROISSANTS" MEETING WITH WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL MR. MIKE MOORE.

24 April - 5 May, New York, NY: EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-8).

25-26 April, Washington DC, USA: INNOVATIVE POLICY SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE. Hosted by The Pew Centre on Global Climate Change and The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

- **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.

4 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO NGO-BRIEFING ON 3rd MAY FORMAL GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING. For information contact: Bernie Kuiten, External Relations Officer, WTO, tel: (41-22) 739-5676; fax: (41-22) 739-5777; email: bernard.kuiten@wto.org

4-5 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WORKING PARTY ON GATS RULES. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

- **Other Events**

10-11 May, Buenos Aires, Argentina: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDISATION CONGRESS. Hosted by The Argentinean Standardisation Institute (IRAM), this conference includes topics such as: Standardisation and Sustainable Development, Contributions of Standardisation, and the Evaluation of Conformity and Standardisation. The conference will be attended by the presidents of the IRAM and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and various representatives of standards associations. For information contact: Argentinean Standardisation Institute, email: eaadas@sminter.com.ar

12-13 May, Nijmegen, the Netherlands: PALLAS CONFERENCE ON "ENVIRONMENTAL LAW FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM." This conference is sponsored by the DG Environment of the European Commission, Oxford University Press, and the Yearbook of European Environmental Law. Organised by the Pallas Consortium, the conference will discuss major challenges determining the nature and effectiveness of the environmental policy of the EU over the next decades. For information contact: The Pallas Consortium, tel: (31-24) 361-3090; fax: 361-5838; email: pallas@cpo.kun.nl; web: <http://www.pallas.llm.nl>

15-26 May, Nairobi, Kenya: FIFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (COP5). For information contact: <http://www.biodiv.org/cop5/>

31 May - June 1, New York, USA: INTERNATIONAL AID & TRADE EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE 2000. Hosted by IAT and the UN Office for Project Services, this conference brings together the UN, NGOs and governments to help build business partnerships with commercial companies. For information contact: tel: (44)-(0) 1702-551-556; fax: 1702-551-511; web: <http://www.aidandtrade.com>

- **Resources**

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW. Volume 3, Number 1, March 2000. The March edition includes articles entitled: "A Perspective on Trade and Human Rights", "Trade Liberalisation and Cultural Policy", "Procedural Overview of the WTO EC-Banana Dispute", and "An Environmental Perspective on Seattle." ISSN 1369-3034. To obtain contact: email: jiel@law.georgetown.edu; web: <http://www.jiel.oupjournals.org>

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TRADE EXPANSION: A REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL STATE OF AFFAIRS. 2000. By Aaron Cosbey. This paper surveys some of the key trade-sustainable development issues likely to be addressed in the coming years at the multilateral level that may have implications for the Americas. The study looks further to opportunities and threats at the domestic level and recommends a number of ways in which sustainable development might be advanced, striving to achieve environmental improvement and improved development prospects North and South. ISBN 1-57454-080-7. To obtain contact: The North-South Center, tel: (1-305) 284-8912; email: mmapes@nsc.msmail.miami.edu; web: <http://www.miami.edu/nsc/pub/nscpaper.htm>

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND'S WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK REPORT, SPRING 2000. Issued twice a year, this report states that the global economy improved dramatically during the past year as strong growth continued in the United States, European prospects improved, and several countries recovered from deep crises. To obtain contact: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2000/01/index.htm>

GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES - 2000. Published by the World Bank, this report was put together by the Development Prospects Group. It focuses on trends in poverty levels, growth and welfare impacts of crises on Russia, Brazil and East Asia, and the adverse effects of commodity price cycles. ISBN 0-8213-4550-8. To obtain contact the World Bank, tel: (1-800) 645-7247 or (1-703) 661-1580; fax: 661-1501; web: <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/abshtml/14550.htm>

THE IMF: SELLING THE ENVIRONMENT SHORT. March 2000. By Dawn Montanye and Carol Welch. This report examines the impact of IMF policies in eight IMF borrowing countries: Brazil, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guyana, Indonesia, Nicaragua, the Philippines, and Thailand. These cases provide snapshots of how IMF policies affect the environment; each country study generally focuses on one environmental implication of the IMF's programmes. To obtain contact: Friends of the Earth, tel: (1-202) 783-7400; fax: 783-0444

THE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL: AN ANALYSIS. March 2000. By Pete Hardstaff. This briefing, published by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, provides a detailed interpretation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It also analyses the key successes and flaws of the agreement and looks at the issues that are left unresolved such as the relationship between the Protocol and WTO rules. To obtain contact: the RSPB, United Kingdom, tel: (44)-(0) 1767-680551; fax: 1767-691178; email: anne.philp@rspb.org.uk

"REGULATING BIOTECH TRADE: THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY". By Robert Falkner. Vol. 76, No. 2, April 2000, pp. 299-313 in the periodical *International Affairs*. This article traces the history of international biosafety regulation and analyses the Montreal negotiations (January 2000) that led to the adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It also reflects on the implications of the Biosafety Protocol for the trade-environment interface. To obtain contact: Blackwell Publishers Journals, PO Box 805, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1FH, UK; tel: (44)-(0) 1865-244083; fax: 1865-381381; email: jninfo@blackwellpublishers.co.uk; web: <http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk>

BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) with support from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). This issue has been researched at ICTSD by Dara Edmonds and Jay Wilkinson; written by Judy Brienza (IATP) and edited by Hugo Cameron, hcameron@ictsd.ch. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 13, ch des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: (41- 22) 917- 8492; fax: (41-22) 917- 8093..

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ISSN 1563-003X