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LOW EXPECTATIONS FOR WTO CONFIDENCE-BUILDING PACKAGE

The WTO General Council (GC) is scheduled to meet on 3 May to discuss, *inter alia*, market access for the least developed countries and the increasingly thorny issue of developing country implementation of existing WTO agreements. In advance of that meeting, Members met this past week for informal meetings of the GC and WTO Heads of Delegation.

WTO Director-General Mike Moore addressed the informal General Council on 26 April, where he offered a preliminary update on various consultations underway. Since February, Mr. Moore has undertaken consultations mandated by the WTO General Council to produce agreement on measures in favour of least-developed countries (LDCs) and other developing countries and, hence, re-build confidence in the WTO. Moore and developing country delegations last month indicated their disappointment with proposals made by the Quad Group (US, EU Canada and Japan) toward market access and capacity building. Little movement on the Quad positions has been reported since then, though some developing countries -- notably Chile, Korea and some Eastern European

states -- are expected to join the Quad Group in the LDC initiative. Chair of the General Council Kare Bryn has indicated that there will be no decision on 3 May on the LDC market access initiative; rather, Members are expected to present a report outlining progress made so far on the issue in informal consultations.

According to delegates who attended the meeting, little progress is expected on three of the four elements of the WTO's confidence-building package, namely: improved market access for LDC goods; an increase in the WTO's regular budget for technical cooperation and capacity-building; and increased transparency in WTO decision-making.

Moore did indicate, however, that "the overall implementation issue is one where I have the clear impression that Members are ready to take action on 3 May." According to WTO sources, developing countries, particularly Pakistan and Mexico, are pressing for multilateral/comprehensive agreement on extending the deadlines by which they must implement WTO agreements on trade-related investment measures (TRIMs), intellectual property rights (TRIPs), and Customs Valuation. The US, EU, Canada and Japan have said that implementation issues should be handled on a case-by-case basis (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 3 May GC is expected to see movement on the issue of transition periods, particularly with respect to the Agreement on TRIMs. Article 5.3 of TRIMs mandates the Council for Trade in Goods to extend transition periods for developing country or LDC Members who demonstrate difficulties in implementing provisions of the Agreement. So far a number of Members -- notably Pakistan, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Malaysia, and the Philippines -- are under bilateral consultations on TRIMs extensions, while the US is already planning TRIMs-related action against Romania's investment rules.

Sources indicate that a case-by-case methodology for extending TRIMs and other deadlines is likely to win out at the GC meeting, with the potential for an agreement around the establishment of multilateral guidelines for considering requests for extension of agreements' expired deadlines.

With regard to extension of deadlines for implementation of the Agreement on Customs Valuation, there are currently 11 countries pending approval: Bahrain, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Myanmar, Senegal, and Tunisia. The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Kuwait, Peru, Sri Lanka and Tanzania have all been granted extensions. Thus far, no Members have requested deadline extensions for TRIPs.

Moore also indicated in his consultations report on 26 April that discussions on implementation have increasingly focused on the idea of a 'special mechanism' under the General Council to address the question of full implementation of existing agreements. A paper by the WTO Secretariat outlining possible elements of such a mechanism has been circulating amongst Members since 18 April; its parameters are also expected to be addressed at the 3 May GC. Since the leadup to the Seattle Ministerial in late 1999, many developing countries have expressed concern that developed countries have failed to implement fully their market access commitments under the Uruguay Round agreements. The US has already stated, however, that any 'special mechanism' for

implementation would need to be a universal one, accessible not only to developing country Members but to developed ones as well.

At the informal GC, Pakistan and other developing countries said that developing countries would link their demand for longer transition periods under these agreements to taking up work on issues of interest to developed countries, including an extension of a duty-free moratorium on global electronic commerce. The US took issue with Pakistan, et al, arguing that the countries were mixing political WTO matters (taking up electronic commerce) with their legal obligations to comply with existing WTO deadlines.

In other matters discussed at the informal GC meeting, Members were again unable to reach agreement on who should chair the negotiating committees on Agriculture and TRIPs.

"WTO Members to offer market access, review of LDC demands," *INSIDE US TRADE*, 28 April 2000; "WTO officials play down prospects for early deal on confidence building," *WTO REPORTER*, 27 April 2000; "WTO Members expected to 'take action' at key meet next week," *AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE*; ICTSD Internal Files.

CHINA, EU SCHEDULE NEW SET OF WTO ACCESSION TALKS

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy on 26 April announced plans to hold WTO accession talks with China from 15-20 May in Beijing. The visit is expected to yield a bilateral agreement toward China's membership in the WTO. The last round of high-level EU-China talks broke down in March after China refused to give in to EU demands for majority (51 percent) foreign ownership of Chinese telecom and insurance firms and EU demands for greater market access in the financial and automotive sectors. EU demands in these areas exceed concessions given by China to the US in their November 1999 negotiated trade accord.

Trade observers note that the EU and China are likely to conclude talks during Mr. Lamy's visit, but that the EU would not likely be successful in its demand for majority foreign ownership of Chinese firms. Majority foreign ownership is a highly sensitive political issue in China. However, observers note that China could leverage its demand in this area for other concessions.

The EU-China talks come a week before the US Congress is scheduled to vote on granting Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China. A China-EU deal reached in advance of the 22 May Congressional vote could boost chances of PNTR approval, presumably since the US will not want to be left out of trade with China. In addition to the EU, China must still conclude agreements with six WTO Members: Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Latvia, Mexico, and Switzerland before it can join the WTO.

Taiwan will be closely watching EU and US actions on China's accession. Taiwan has concluded all its bilateral accession talks and 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.

Economists from the Asian Development Bank on 26 April predicted long-term regional benefits from China and Taiwan accessions to the WTO. The economists noted that other smaller Asian economies could benefit from the relocation of labour-intensive industries out of Taiwan and China. Economists also noted that China and Taiwan would likely have to open their agricultural markets to regional imports under WTO rules.

In other news, the Ukraine is accelerating efforts to join the WTO. In April, the country took measures to come into compliance with WTO rules, including ending a ban on certain used car imports and passing intellectual property legislation to combat compact disc piracy. The measures are part of a Ukraine effort to submit application for WTO accession as early as June. However, observers note that issues of land reform, customs valuation and subsidies must be addressed before Ukraine WTO membership would be feasible.

"China hopeful of sealing WTO trade deal with the EU," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 28 April 2000; "China-EU seen reaching WTO deal in May, but without 51 percent access," BRIDGE NEWS, 27 April 2000; "EU, China to renew trade talks; new life for WTO bid," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 26 April 2000; "ADB economists hail benefits of WTO membership for Taipei and Beijing," CHINA TIMES, 26 April 2000 "Kiev steps up push for WTO membership," FINANCIAL TIMES, 26 April 2000.

CSD-8 TACKLES TRADE, AG, INVESTMENT AND THE FUTURE

Meeting from 24 April to 5 May, delegates to the 8th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8) are gathered to discuss a range of issues in the areas of Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources; Financial Resources, Trade and Investment, Economic Growth; Agriculture; and a 10-year review of the 1992 Rio UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio + 10).

Throughout the sessions, many ministers supported the adoption of resolutions on achieving the UN targets of halving the number of people living in absolute poverty and affected by food insecurity by 2015. These recommendations are therefore sure to emerge in the eventual declaration from CSD-8, although -- predictably -- no government came up with firm promises of funds for this.

TRADE

Some general trends emerged in the discussions related to trade. The mantra that trade and environment are mutually supportive was much in evidence, although some governments qualified this by stressing the need for adequate national policies. 'Trade is the engine of growth' was heard countless times. Developing countries and the Cairns Group of agriculture-exporting countries called for subsidy reduction/elimination and condemned multifunctionality.

Regarding multifunctionality, Brazil observed that while a concept can be acceptable in itself, its potential use makes it unacceptable. The same reservation applies to other new approaches, such as the sustainability assessments of trade agreements proposed by several developed countries as a means of ensuring coherence between the multilateral trading system and sustainable development objectives. On this point, the EU encouraged the use of sustainability assessments of trade agreements, particularly in the context of a future round of trade negotiations at the WTO. A new round would also provide a means towards a more open and equitable system, capacity-building and technical assistance, said the EU. This view was seconded by Norway, who urged CSD to offer overall guidelines for trade and investment in support of sustainable development. Ecuador, highlighting a recent government seminar on sustainability assessments of trade co-sponsored by Fundacion Futuro Lationamericano (FLAA) and WWF, stressed that these should in no way become mandated or a conditionality for trade concessions, and that all countries are free to conduct them or not, according to methods chosen by themselves.

The need for confidence-building was highlighted by developed and developing countries alike, but emphasis varied: developed countries favoured making the trade system more sympathetic to social and environmental concerns (Norway, Japan or Germany, for instance), while developing countries largely agreed that market access was the key element of any confidence-building package (Sweden agreed). Pakistan expressed its concern that capacity-building and technical assistance have been shamefully neglected; the Pakistani delegation urged that sustainability assessments of trade agreements should not be used as conditionalities for trade concessions, but were willing to look at the effects of Northern subsidies on the fisheries and agriculture sectors of the South (this point was echoed by Bolivia). According to Pakistan, trade, finance and investment are at the heart of sustainable development, and environmental and social standards that restrain market access work counter to sustainable development.

With respect to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and trade, Japan called for precise guidelines in making WTO and environmental rules 'mutually supportive'; it likened the current situation to just 'waiting for the volcano to erupt' in a major conflict involving MEAs and the WTO. Echoing the EU, Japan emphasised that the best way to move the developing country agenda forward is through a new round.

AGRICULTURE

In agriculture, no real consensus elements emerged, as governments remained on familiar WTO lines between those such as the EU and Japan who support the concept of multifunctionality of agriculture, the Cairns Group of agriculture-exporting countries and the Like-minded Group (India, Egypt, Pakistan and Malaysia) positions. The highlight was Argentina's strong objection to the mention of multifunctionality in one of the draft resolutions, and the request that the term itself be formally banned from the CSD vocabulary. Developing country governments repeatedly stated that financial and technical assistance for sustainable agriculture and rural development -- as well as implementation of Agenda 21 in general -- had been insufficient since Rio. Other interventions were more technical, focusing on sustainable agricultural practices and access to credit and land.

INVESTMENT AND FINANCING

With respect to Investment and Financing, developing countries pointed out the betrayed expectations for sustainable development financing since Rio, particularly decline in ODA, the failure to meet the 1992 0.7 percent of GDP from developed countries target, and debt. Likewise, they repeatedly emphasised that foreign direct investment (FDI), or so-called 'innovate mechanisms' cannot -- and should not -- replace ODA and that 'new and additional' & 'adequate and predictable' financial/ODA flows were necessary for developing countries to reach sustainable development objectives. Many countries highlighted the potential of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) as an 'innovative financial mechanism', but also cautioned that it's not operational yet.

The EU pushed the concept of a multilateral framework for investment, arguing that a stable and predictable investment climate was needed for FDI flows. The EU delegate added that general international investment rules for FDI would be better than special investment provisions under MEAs.

On the financing front, Germany announced that it would cancel all commercial debts of almost 30 of the poorest countries, worth about DM700 million.

RIO + 10

On the topic of Rio + 10, Chair of CSD-8 Juan Mayr's assessment of consensus elements were that Rio + 10 should be held at a high level, possibly as a summit meeting between heads of state; it should be hosted by a developing country; there must be a broad-based participatory preparatory process at the national, regional and international levels; no renegotiation of the Rio agreements; and an implementation review must be carried out before the meeting takes place.

On a side note to the discussions, basic agreement seemed to be taking place to establish a permanent UN Forum on Forests. However, disagreement persists on the need for a legally-binding instrument to enforce compliance. The G-77's (Group of 77, comprised of 133 developing countries) enthusiasm for the latter depends on the prompt establishment of a 'financial mechanism' to promote sustainable forest management in developing countries; other priorities include technology transfer and capacity-building. Costa Rica is vying to host the Secretariat.

ICTSD Internal Files.

FARMERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES CALL FOR PROTECTION

Zambian farmers are calling on WTO Members to allow Zambia to implement farm subsidies to enable its farmers to compete on the global market. Zambia's National Farmers Union (ZNFU) argues that subsidies in place in developed countries such as the EU undermine the competitiveness of Zambian farmers.

"I hope the World Trade Organisation will put in place practices that will help the farmers in the developing countries to continue producing since our countries are denying us subsidies under the auspices of liberalisation," Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) president Ajay Vashee said in late-April. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Assistant Secretary-General Sindiso Ngwenya last month also stressed the need for developing countries to consider subsidising their agriculture sector in order to remain competitive on the global market.

Asian farmer groups have also appealed to the WTO to allow continued protection of agricultural products until developed countries further liberalise their markets. "We, who are also exporters of tropical agricultural products, will ask the WTO to give priority to efforts to make the developed countries open their markets first," Asian Farmers Group for Cooperation (AFGC) President Sutrisno Iwantono said last month. Mr. Iwantono was speaking at a 19 April meeting aimed at developing a common position amongst Asian farm groups toward WTO talks on agriculture.

Mr. Iwantono said food security concerns should take priority and warned that certain food staples for Asian countries, such as rice, should not be subject to accelerated liberalisation. "We cannot let our stomachs depend on food produced by other countries," he added.

In related news, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on 26 April released the OECD Agricultural Outlook 2000-2005 (see <http://www.oecd.org/agr/>). The report forecasts a gradual recovery in some commodity prices (including cereal and dairy) during the period 2000-05, but a less optimistic outlook for sugar and pork product prices. The report noted that commodity price recovery will be driven by increased demand, most notably in developing countries, with an emphasis on growth in feed grain and meat trade as improved consumer spending power and migration of rural populations to urban areas results in up-graded diets.

The report noted, however, that recovery would be contingent on continued liberalisation of agricultural markets, and warned that protectionist policies in place in a number of OECD countries could hinder the pace and extent of agricultural market recovery. The report said that successful WTO talks on agriculture would play a key role in market recovery, noting also that China's accession to the WTO could boost demand for agricultural products.

"The OECD Agricultural Outlook 2000-2005," OECD PRESS RELEASE, 19 April 2000; "Dairy goods and cereals set for recovery," FINANCIAL TIMES, 27 April 2000; "Zambian farmers woo WTO support," TIMES OF ZAMBIA (Lusaka), 25 April 2000; "Asian farmers ask WTO to maintain protection of agri products," ANTARA, 19 April 2000.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: SOUTH AFRICA & SOUTH ASIA

South Africa and China on 25 April signed a co-operation agreement designed to boost bilateral political and economic ties. At the same time, the two countries announced a joint effort to create a "new international political and economic order" designed to combat the negative effects of globalisation on developing countries.

"There were many strategic questions on which South Africa and China agreed. One was the process of globalisation which, although a process that cannot be stopped, calls for interventions in such a way that the developing world also benefits. It cannot happen naturally and some kind of interventions are therefore called for," South African President Thabo Mbeki said. The two countries plan to engage other developing countries in their efforts.

South Africa and Nigeria met from 26-30 April to discuss ways to boost bilateral trade and economic development. Officials were expected to sign an agreement on a range of investment matters, including ending double taxation on companies with operations in both countries. The two countries are expected to discuss a comprehensive trade deal, which if agreed, could have spillover effects for South African trade with Nigeria's trade partners in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nigeria and South Africa together account for 25 percent of Africa's population and for over 50 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's gross national product.

South Africa on 25 April signed a trade and economic co-operation agreement with Vietnam designed to boost bilateral trade. Trade between the two countries is estimated around US\$10 million annually.

In news from South Asia, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar on 27 April agreed to enter into a free trade arrangement to boost imports and exports in the Bay of Bengal region. The grouping will operate collectively as the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand - Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC).

The five countries agreed to establish immediately a series of preferential trade arrangements and to launch a free trade area within six months. The BIMST-EC members hope to benefit from synergies in knowledge-based industries including information technology and telecommunications. They also agreed to take a common approach on WTO-related matters. BIMST-EC could move India closer to becoming a member in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (to which BIMST-EC partner Thailand belongs) and thus enhanced trade ties to regional powerhouses Singapore and the Philippines.

"Afrique du Sud et Chine en partenariat pour un 'nouvel ordre du mondial,'" LA TRIBUNE, 26 April 2000; "S Africa, China aim to combat negative effects of globalisation," SURCE TK, 25 April 2000; "SA and Vietnam sign trade deal in Pretoria," BUSINESS DAY (S. Africa), 26 April 2000; "South Africa and Nigeria look for ways to boost trade," IPS, 27 April 2000; "South Africa seeks to strengthen trade ties with Nigeria," THE NEWS (Nigeria), 26 April 2000; "India, 4 others agree to free trade arrangement," HINDUSTAN TIMES, 27 April 2000; "India gets closer to Asean membership via Thailand," ECONOMIC TIMES, 28 April 2000.

IN BRIEF

The European Commission (EC) on 27 April announced new guidelines for its development efforts. The EC will place poverty eradication as the central focus of its development strategy, and will concentrate its development activities to those areas where the EU "can offer comparative

advantages, added value and contribute to the over-arching objective of poverty eradication." These activities include, *inter alia*: trade for development; regional integration and cooperation; food security and sustainable rural development strategies and institutional capacity building; good governance; and the rule of law. The EU and its 15 member states together account for about 55 percent of all international official development assistance. The EU is also the biggest trading partner with and foreign investor in the developing world. The EU development policy can be viewed at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/document/dev_policy_en.htm. "Commission sets out political guidelines for the future of EC development policy," EU PRESS RELEASE, 27 April 2000; "EU to reform trade policies," 27 April 2000.

Three US public interest groups on 27 April filed suit against the Clinton Administration for the government's failure to appoint a non-industry representative to a chemical trade advisory committee. The suit alleges that the Administration is obligated by law to represent a fair balance of viewpoints on its trade advisory committees, and has thus far refused requests to broaden the chemical advisory committee to include a representative from the environmental community. Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund filed the suit on behalf of Public Citizen, Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange and the Washington Toxics Coalition. "Environmental and consumer groups file new trade lawsuit against Clinton Administration," EARTHJUSTICE LEGAL DEFENSE FUND PRESS RELEASE, 27 April 2000.

The US State Department on 27 April issued its list of 41 countries that meet US requirements for turtle conservation in shrimp harvesting and are thus eligible to export shrimp to the US market. The list includes 16 countries that require the use of so-called Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), which allow sea turtles to escape from nets cast to harvest shrimp. 25 other countries were included on the list because their fishing practices do not put sea turtles at risk (e.g. manual harvesting or harvesting in cold waters). The US in 1996 instituted a ban on wild shrimp imports caught without the use of TEDs (based on the US Endangered Species Act). "State Dept. certifies 41 countries to export shrimp to US," TRADE COMPASS, 28 April 2000.

The UN Environmental Program (UNEP) on 27 April released "Environment and Trade: A Handbook," produced in conjunction with the Canada-based International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). The handbook highlights the relationship between trade and the environment, and is designed to better inform policy makers, media and the general public about existing linkages between environment and trade. The handbook is available at <http://www.unep.ch/etu/>, and will be updated regularly by IISD. "UNEP warns of North-South clash over environment in new trade talks," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 27 April 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

Australia on 26 April committed US\$210,000 to a UN-sponsored program aimed at preparing Laos for WTO membership. The funds will be used to train governmental officials in international economics and trade law toward building Laos' ability to negotiate WTO accession agreements. "Laos gets financial backing to join WTO," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 26 April 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 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL. Issues to be discussed include: Appointment of the Chairperson of the Council For TRIPs and of the Chairpersons of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Council for Trade in Goods; Participation of Acceding Countries as Observers in the Mandated Negotiations on Agriculture and Services; Measures in Favour of Least-Developed Countries; Capacity-Building through Technical Cooperation; Implementation And Transition Periods; Internal Transparency and Effective Participation of Members; Accessions; Review of Procedures for Circulation and De-restriction of WTO Documents; and Accreditation of Permanent Representatives to the WTO. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5393; email: nuch.nazeer@wto.org

4 May, 10:00am, WTO, 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: WTO WORKING PARTY ON GATS RULES. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

8 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

8 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON SAFEGUARDS. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

- **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.

9-11 May, Geneva: COMMITTEE ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING MEASURES. For information contact: Luis Ople, Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739.5374; email: luis.ople@wto.org.

- **Other Events:**

3-5 May, Vienna, Austria: OECD MILESTONE CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND STRATEGIES. This conference will mark the culmination of the OECD project on Environmentally Sustainable Transport and serve as a forum to consider how OECD Member Countries can implement the necessary changes in their transport systems in order to achieve more sustainable development patterns. For information contact: Peter Wiederkehr, OECD Environment Directorate, 2, rue Andre Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France; email: peter.wiederkehr@oecd.org; web: <http://www.oecd.org/env/ccst/est/curract/vienna2000/viennaindex.htm>

28-31 May, Brussels, Belgium. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM - THE IMPACT OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. Sponsored by the Friends of the Earth, Oxfam Solidarity Belgium, and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, this conference examines the impact of modern agricultural biotechnology on developing countries. The conference aims to bring together people and organisations active in the field of rural development and environment on the one hand, and scientists as well as policy makers on the other. It also offers the opportunity to study the relevance of modern biotechnology for developing countries. For information contact: Martin Rocholl, Friends of the Earth Europe, 9 rue Blanche, B-1060 Brussels, Belgium; tel: (32-2) 542-0183; fax: 537-5596; web: <http://www.foeeurope.org/>

11-13 June, Irving, Texas, USA. SEVENTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CEC. On 12 June, a discussion will be held on the various areas of the CEC program: Environment, Economy and Trade, Conservation of Biodiversity, Pollutants and Health, and Law and Policy, as well as on issues related to Children's Health and the Environment. Members of the public will also have the opportunity to make oral presentations to the ministers on matters related to the CEC work program or on issues within the scope of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). In addition, the public is invited to attend the regular session of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) on 11 and 13 June. The agenda of the JPAC session includes a workshop on Enforcement Cooperation. Registration has been extended to 9 May 2000. For information contact: Fabiola Gomez; tel: (1-514) 350-4303; fax: 350-4314; email: fgomez@ccemtl.org; web: <http://www.cec.org>

21-24 June, Montreal, Canada: THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT. Still needed: a presenter, a chair and three people to review the papers presented. 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: (1-508) 767-7296 or 767-7557; fax: 767-7382; email: khickey@assumption.edu or dkantar@assumption.edu; web: <http://www.assumption.edu/HTML/Academic/conf/IICEcall.html>

- **Resources:**

CODES OF CONDUCT FOR TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS: AN OVERVIEW. 2000. This paper provides an overview of attempts to regulate the behaviour of transnational corporations

(TNCs) via charters, codes or guidelines. It discusses both governmental efforts to regulate TNCs; the work of NGOs, trade unions and environmental groups on standards and labour issues relating to TNCs; and the strategies developed by corporations in response to these incentives. To obtain contact: International Restructuring in Industries and Services (IRENE), Stationsstraat 9, 5038 EC Tilburg, Netherlands; fax: (31-13) 535-0253; email: irene@antenna.nl.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE: ISSUES FOR THE SOUTH. 2000. The goal of this paper is to assist developing countries understand, assess, assimilate and use electronic commerce while protecting their basic interests. It explains the main concept of the Internet and e-commerce, questions of technology transfer and standards, and relevant issues for the South before the World Trade Organization (WTO). To obtain contact: South Centre, 17 chemin du Champ d'Anier, 228 CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland; fax: (41-22) 798-8531; email: south@southcentre.org; web: <http://www.southcentre.org>

- **Electronic Resources:**

AGRICULTURAL POLICY ANALYSIS CENTER. This page contains a series of briefings entitled "Policy Matters" that look at grain markets, reasons for the persistence of low commodity prices and the working of the world grain market in relation to US agriculture. Available at: <http://apacweb.ag.utk.edu/>

AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY GROWING PAINS. Access to this survey from The Economist, 25 March 2000, by Shereen El Feki is available at: <http://www.cgiar.org/ifpri/media/innews/2000/032500.htm>

FOURTH REPORT ON THE WORLD NUTRITION SITUATION. This report, released by the United Nations/ International Food Policy Research Institute, highlights the world nutrition situation and calls for immediate action to combat widespread malnutrition in the developing world. The focus is on nutrition throughout the lifecycle and shows that malnutrition starts before birth and continues to have an impact into adulthood with dramatic consequences for overall economic and human development. Available at: <http://www.cgiar.org/ifpri/pubs/pubs.htm#general>

WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE THIRD ASEM (ASIA-EUROPE MEETING) SUMMIT. Priorities for the summit, to be held in Seoul, South Korea on 20-21 October, include security issues, stronger cooperation on trade and economic issues, intensified cooperation on education and consumer protection and a possible enlargement of participation in ASEM. Full working document available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/asem/asem_prio.htm

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