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INTERIM REPORT ISSUED IN CANADA-FRANCE ASBESTOS CASE

Environmentalists have welcomed a leaked WTO interim report on a case between France and Canada involving a French ban on imports of Canadian chrysotile (white) asbestos. In the report, the adjudicating panel has rejected Canada's claim that the ban constitutes an unnecessary obstacle to trade under Article 2 of the WTO agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, arguing that the ban is not a technical regulation and therefore does not fall under the scope of the agreement. The ruling favours the position of the European Union (EU), which represents France at the WTO.

The panel has stated that although the French ban was incompatible with national treatment provisions outlined in Article III of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), France nevertheless had a right to apply the ban under GATT Article XX (b) (General Exceptions). According to one specialist in international environmental law, "The finding is important. It's one thing to say that a health measure does not violate WTO rules. It's quite another to say that it does violate WTO rules but that it qualifies for an exception, where the burden of proof is higher."

According to Article XX (b), there is nothing in the GATT that prevents "the adoption or enforcement by any contracting party of measures...necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health." Until now, no WTO dispute settlement panel has allowed a WTO Member to use this article to impose trade measures.

The case dates back to 1996, when France banned imports and use of chrysotile asbestos. In 1998, Canada moved to challenge the ban at the WTO on behalf of its Quebec-based asbestos industry, which is the world's second largest producer and the largest exporter of chrysotile asbestos. The interim report is only a preliminary decision, but no WTO panel to date has reversed interim findings in the final ruling. The final decision is expected to be forwarded to Canada and the EU sometime in July. It will be circulated to other WTO Members and made public several weeks thereafter. The panel had originally been expected to decide the case in December 1999, but the panel's chairman Adrian Macey (New Zealand) indicated on 7 March that the panel needed more time to complete its work.

Throughout the dispute, Canada has argued that France's outright ban is not based on adequate science and that the ban is contrary to international trade rules. The Canadian government has also argued that chrysotile asbestos is safer than many alternative products, and that it is perfectly safe to use and install if adequate safety measures are taken. Canada also contends that other uses of the asbestos -- such as incorporating the fibres into asbestos cement -- are safe.

The EU argues that asbestos claims the lives of about 2,000 people in France each year. The EU also conducted a risk assessment of using asbestos in cement, and found that other fibres pose less of a health risk. According to trade officials, the five scientific experts consulted by the panel unanimously agreed with the EU that chrysotile asbestos is carcinogenic and dangerous to human health.

Though a ban on white asbestos is already in place in nine of the 15 EU member states, and while France represents only about five percent of Canada's asbestos exports, Canada is most concerned about other countries taking up a ban, particularly its Latin American and Asian trading partners.

Environmentalists welcomed the decision by the WTO panel. Remi Parmentier, the head of the political unit for Greenpeace International, has said that a final ruling in favour of the French asbestos ban would set an important precedent in favour of environmental and public health concerns, but that it should not be interpreted as a sudden "greening" of the WTO. Geneva-based legal experts remarked that "WTO panels are now doing their job: interpreting Article XX exceptions in the way the Dispute Settlement Understanding indicates" and that "this ruling could open up a big window of opportunity. Article XX (b) applies to human, animal, and plant life, which can just about cover anything."

Labour bodies also recognise this decision as one in their favour. The Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has said that the finding, if confirmed, would give new impetus to a worldwide workers' campaign for a global ban on chrysotile asbestos.

"WTO upholds white asbestos ban," FINANCIAL TIMES, 15 June 2000; Canada said losing WTO asbestos case against France," REUTERS, 14 June 2000; "WTO Interim Panel Report Said to Find Against Canada in French Asbestos Case," WTO REPORTER, 14 June 2000; "WTO panel rules

against Canada on French asbestos ban," UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 13 June 2000; WTO Ruling on Asbestos Ruling Welcomed By Environmentalists, But Lawyers Doubtful," WTO REPORTER, 16 June 2000; "EU wins right to keep asbestos ban against Canada," BRIDGE NEWS, 13 June 2000; "Health Tops Free Trade in WTO Ruling," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 16 June 2000; "Global labour body hails WTO asbestos ruling," REUTERS, 15 June 2000; "WTO Upholds French Ban on Canadian Asbestos," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 14 June 2000. ICTSD Internal Files.

ENVIRONMENTAL, CITIZENS' GROUPS CLAIM VICTORY AFTER NAFTA ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS MEET

Environment ministers from the US, Canada and Mexico met from 11-13 June in Dallas, Texas for the Seventh Regular Session of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). The CEC Council is composed of the environment ministers from the US, Canada and Mexico. At the meeting ministers discussed, *inter alia*: Citizen Submissions; Environment; Economy and Trade; Conservation of Biodiversity; Pollutants and Health; and Law and Policy, as well as issues related to Children's Health and the Environment. The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) to the CEC also met in a parallel session where members discussed a variety of issues, including co-operation on enforcement matters.

The meetings were marked by what some observers characterised as a very serious crisis of legitimacy facing the CEC Council. At issue were attempts by the Council to revise procedures under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that allow for citizens to submit complaints that NAFTA parties are not enforcing their environmental laws.

Citizen Submissions Status Reaffirmed

In a clear victory for public participation in the free trade process, the CEC Council in Dallas reaffirmed its "commitment to the citizen submission process and to a transparent process for engaging the public on issues related to the implementation of this mechanism," according to a Council communiqué. Under Article 14 of the NAAEC, the CEC may consider a submission from any person or non-governmental organisation asserting that a Party to the NAAEC is failing to effectively enforce its environmental legislation. Article 15 of the NAAEC establishes, *inter alia*, a mechanism to allow the public and the JPAC -- established to advise the CEC Council and to help promote public participation in the activities of the CEC -- to track the status of submissions.

At the Dallas meeting, ministers agreed to refer to the JPAC any questions concerning the implementation and further elaboration of Articles 14 and 15. This process would also allow any party, the CEC Secretariat, and the public to refer such questions of interpretation to the JPAC. As part of the process, the JPAC will now undertake a period of public consultation on each issue and then make recommendations to the Council. The Council will also consider the JPAC's recommendations in any decisions related to Articles 14 and 15 of the NAAEC and make public the reasons for such decisions.

The CEC was created as part of an environmental side agreement to NAFTA, known as the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). As part of its charter, the CEC is

required to foster public participation in NAFTA affairs, including the review of US, Mexican and Canadian citizens' complaints that NAFTA parties are failing to effectively enforce their environmental laws

On 27 April a coalition of more than 90 environmental groups from the US, Mexico and Canada called on the CEC environment ministers to suspend immediately secret negotiations regarding changes to Articles 14 and 15 (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 18, 9 May 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story5.09-05-00.htm>). Amongst the proposed revisions was one that would require citizens to provide proof that environmental harm has occurred before the CEC would investigate a complaint. This, according to critics, could seriously impede the complaint process for grass-roots organisations unable to afford the costs for legal and scientific experts, critics charge. Another proposed revision would have kept more of the complaints procedure secret.

The guidelines for citizen submissions were last revised at the June 1999 CEC Council meeting, despite what observers note as nearly universal public opposition to any changes and against the advice of JPAC and the national advisory committees of Canada and the US.

Environmental groups hailed the Council's actions at the 11-13 June session. "This is a victory for people who care about the environment in North America. The right of citizens to be involved in a critical NAFTA process has been vindicated," said David Schorr of the World Wildlife Fund. Stated Jake Caldwell of the US-based National Wildlife Federation, "at a time when the public's confidence in international trade institutions is in crisis, environment ministers have responded with an appropriate commitment to openness. The end result will be a strengthened institution."

CEC Releases Fisheries Factual Record

The CEC Council also agreed to release its factual record regarding a submission by the British Columbia Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, which alleges the Government of Canada is failing to enforce aspects of its federal Fisheries Act "to ensure the protection of fish and fish habitat in British Columbia's rivers from ongoing and repeated environmental damage caused by hydro-electric dams." The CEC Council had agreed to establish a factual record on the fisheries request at the June 1998 Council meeting but agreed to release the record to the public now only after what some observers note was much delay and a number of revisions.

Canada was largely criticised for its efforts to revise the citizens' submissions process. Observers noted three main reasons for Canada's recent backing away from the submissions process. First, certain citizens' submissions, such as the complaint made by the British Columbia Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, could prove embarrassing for Canada's government. Second, Canada's federal government faces some difficulty enforcing CEC decisions and outcomes at the provincial level, as only three of Canada's 10 provinces are signatories to the CEC side agreement (although all of the provinces have pledged co-operation with the accord). Third, informed sources note a lack of leadership from Canada's environment ministry, which was accused of downplaying the importance of the submissions process and the parties' attempts to revise the guidelines for submissions.

The Council also agreed to have JPAC review all past submissions -- both investigated and quashed -- from which JPAC will "provide a report identifying the lessons learned." The Council agreed to make available the information necessary for JPAC to conduct an informed review of past decisions on submission.

"CEC publishes factual record on 'BC Hydro' submission," CEC PRESS RELEASE, 12 June 2000; "Taking the green out of NAFTA," BUSINESS WEEK (International Edition), 29 May 2000; "How to wreck trade," WASHINGTON POST, 10 June 2000; "Council Resolution 00-09," CEC, 13 June 2000; "Final Communiqué: CEC Council Session in Dallas, 12-13 June 2000," CEC, 13 June 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO UPDATE: REPORT ON TRADE & POVERTY; WG ON COMPETITION POLICY

WTO Releases Report on Trade and Poverty

In what even WTO Director-General Mike Moore admits as a strategically timed move before the UN's second World Summit for Social Development in Geneva next weekend, the WTO on 19 June released a report on trade and poverty -- entitled "Trade, Income Disparity and Poverty" -- wherein it affirms that trade liberalisation in the long run contributes to poverty alleviation.

"This report confirms that although trade alone may not be enough to eradicate poverty, it is essential if poor people are to have any hope of a brighter future," said Moore. As a case in point, Moore pointed to the instance of South Korea, who 30 years ago was as poor as Ghana but who now -- thanks to trade, says the WTO chief -- is as rich as Portugal.

The authors of the study, Dan Ben-David of Tel Aviv University and L. Alan Winters of Sussex University, present a range of economic data from which they draw a range of conclusions. The authors find that while living standards in general in developing countries are not catching up with those in developed countries, poor economies who are open to trade stand a better chance of catching up to rich countries than those who maintain trade barriers.

The report also looks at the effects of trade reforms on the poor, and finds that people in poverty -- in this instance those living on approximately a dollar a day -- generally benefit from trade liberalisation. The report makes a strong correlation between increasing volumes of trade and higher growth rates and argues that trade can play an important part in reducing poverty by boosting overall economic growth. Referring to a recent World Bank report ("Growth is Good for the Poor" by David Dollar and Art Kray, available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/research/growth/absdolakray.htm>), the authors posit that trade liberalisation assists the poor by allowing people to exploit their productive potential, by curtailing arbitrary policy interventions, and by helping to insulate against shocks from smaller markets.

The WTO study attributes poverty to a variety of causes, among them the lack of access to education -- especially for girls and women -- and lack of proper health services, as well as the unequal distribution of production factors, including land, livestock and credits.

The report came under close scrutiny by a number of experts during a 19 June WTO symposium at which it was presented. Some observers questioned the legitimacy of the report's claim to establish a causal link between greater levels of trade liberalisation and higher growth, particularly when the examples used focused primarily on the experience of advanced industrialised economies.

The full text of the report is available from the WTO homepage at: <http://www.wto.org>.

"WTO Prescribes More Liberalisation to Reduce Poverty," IPS, 19 June 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO WG on Trade and Competition Meets

The WTO Working Group on the interaction between Trade and Competition Policy met from 15-16 June, where it continued with its educational work as mandated by the General Council decision of December 1998. Members' positions have not noticeably shifted from before Seattle on the issue. As with the topic of investment, the EU, Japan and Korea remain the most ardent supporters of establishing a formal negotiating group on competition rules. Most developing countries do not support such a proposal, and the US has not come out in favour of negotiating competition rules either.

In a paper presented to the meeting (see paper # WT/WGTCP/W/140 at <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>), the EC addressed some development-related aspects of trade and competition policy.

Issues addressed by the EC paper included the role which competition law can play in economic and regulatory reforms in developing countries; the impact which anti-competitive practices have on developing country imports and/or exports; the practical difficulties that competition authorities in developing countries are faced with and how international cooperation in the competition field would assist developing countries in better addressing anti-competitive practices; and how a multilateral framework agreement on competition may reinforce the role of competition authorities in developing countries. The EC stressed the need to establish core principles rather than harmonising competition policies at a multilateral level.

The US put forward its views on how a country might want to establish competition legislation, using its own experience as an example.

Malaysia and Pakistan were of the opinion that the Working Group should continue its educational work and that competition should not be included as a negotiating issue. They reminded the session that approximately half of WTO Members do not have competition policy, and those that do have a wide diversity of legislation.

In its intervention, India pointed to the usefulness of industrial policy -- as opposed to exclusively competition policy -- as a valuable tool to foster economic growth.

Currently, only the EC paper is available on the WTO site. Other papers submitted included Hong Kong-China (WT/WGTCP/W/141); Japan (WT/WGTCP/W/145); and the US (WT/WGTCP/W/142).

ICTSD Internal Files.

TRADE LURKS IN BACKGROUND AT UNFCCC MEETINGS

The intergovernmental meetings of the twelfth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation [SBSTA and SBI, respectively] of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) met in Bonn from 12 to 16 June. The meetings drew some 1,700 delegates and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs). The sessions were a first round to discuss the principles, modalities, rules and guidelines for the three 'Kyoto mechanisms' (Joint Implementation, emissions trading, and Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)) pursuant to Articles 6, 12 and 17 of the Kyoto Protocol expected to be adopted by the sixth Conference of the Parties (COP-6) in The Hague, Netherlands from 13 to 24 November 2000. (The COP-6 meeting is likely to attract up to 10,000 participants and will represent a first milestone towards the implementation of the Protocol opened for signature in December 1997.)

The underlined goal of the Bonn meetings was to move towards a final text for the Kyoto mechanisms in order to render credible emissions reduction targets outlined in the Protocol. The 'rulebook' text for operating these mechanisms was discussed exhaustively but much still remains to be agreed upon before the end of COP-6. As such the real discussion of potential trade implications of the Protocol has still to take place. One key issue that remains to be resolved is the "capping" in the use of the Kyoto mechanisms vis-à-vis the introduction of domestic policies and measures (PAMs).

Although many believe that they are inevitable, trade implications of the Kyoto mechanisms and the implementation of domestic mitigation PAMs were not discussed openly at the Bonn meetings. On the one hand, there seemed to be a consensus that the UNFCCC is a unique regime that seeks its own compliance system provided in the Convention Articles 14 and 19 of the Protocol. In that sense, some believe that if a trade-related dispute was ever to arise, the FCCC regime should be able to solve it within its own jurisdiction by applying Article 3 par. 5. On the other hand, there exists an underlying concern for potential conflict with WTO rules if and when the Protocol enters into force. Such concern seems to be behind the establishment of a contact group on "best practice" PAMs. Among other issues, this group would discuss the formulation of a framework for PAMs that would prevent unnecessary conflict with trade rules.

While some leading EU countries consider that Certified Emissions Reductions (CERs) are neither a commodity nor a service -- hence deemed irrelevant as far as WTO rules are concerned -- others consider that it is still too early to discuss trade implications of the Protocol. Most parties seem to converge around the need to have a Protocol that goes beyond sheer rhetoric, which means that at the moment Parties should concentrate on the search for efficient greenhouse gas emissions mitigation strategies.

While Non-Annex 1 (developing country) Parties do not have specific emission reduction targets under the Protocol, some seem to be aware of potential discrimination against their exports if one considers, for example, the use by Annex 1 (developed country) Parties of subsidies and countervailing measures, which could be WTO-inconsistent. Non-Annex 1 Parties' products could also be discriminated against in a number of indirect ways depending on the layout of the Kyoto mechanisms. For instance, if the CDM -- which, *inter alia*, enables transfer of financial resources and technology from Annex 1 to non-Annex 1 Parties -- leads to unrestricted foreign direct investment, it could result in a direct impact on competition policies.

With respect to emissions trading, efforts are underway to ensure that an emissions trading system is set up in a way that guarantees the environmental integrity of the Protocol. The EU seems to favour a limitation of transfers in CERs. "Overselling" is also an EU concern that could be addressed through some form of buyer liability scheme proposed by Switzerland. The mechanisms text is therefore still open, requiring from delegates a narrowing of differences at the next meeting of the SBI and SBSTA in Lyon from 11-15 September. For many, the US' intention to meet up to 90 percent of its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets through the purchase of CERs is seen as dangerously compromising the environmental goals of the climate regime.

Some delegates were of the opinion that trade-related issues will not likely be raised after COP-6, though some suspect that the Lyon sessions might be the first meetings in which "trade echoes" clearly arise.

Information on the daily evolution of the UNFCCC negotiations can be obtained on-line from the IISD Earth Negotiation Bulletin at: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate>. Also see <http://www.unfccc.de> for further information.

ICTSD Internal Files.

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UPDATE

Implementation Report Submitted in EC Banana Case

In a Status Report to the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on 19 June, the EC reported that while it has held bilateral discussions with the WTO Members concerned in the case, "no agreed conclusions have been reached so far." The EC blames the failure to come to a conclusion on continuing "divergent views expressed by the main parties concerned" (including Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and the US) as well as the fact that "differences continue to emerge regarding the details, even when there is apparent agreement." The DSB on 25 September 1997 adopted the Appellate Body report which ruled that the EC's preferential market access regime for bananas from its Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) suppliers was not in conformity with the WTO agreements. Since that time the complainants have successfully sought compensation through WTO-authorised retaliatory measures; this latest EC report reconfirms that the EC has yet to resolve the dispute with its trading partners.

Implementation Report Submitted in Canadian Milk-Dairy Case

According to Canada's implementation Status Report on its dispute with the US and New Zealand over Canadian support to dairy exports, "it has met the terms of the Implementation Agreement with respect to each element of the staged implementation process that has come in to effect to this date." According to trade officials, however, at the 19 June DSB the US expressed concern over "information that Canada has shared recently about new export schemes being discussed in Ontario, Quebec, and other provinces." New Zealand also expressed concern over what it called "efforts at the sub-Federal level within Canada to develop new dairy export mechanisms that would allow for export volumes over and above Canada's subsidised export commitment levels." According to trade officials, the US believes that only the form of government action would change in Canada's new export schemes. The US alleges that the nature of that action would remain the same and would remain incompatible with WTO regulations. Canada must complete the implementation process no later than 31 December 2000.

US/Australian Complaints Against Korean Beef Curbs Upheld

A WTO panel has issued a final ruling upholding a complaint by the US and Australia against South Korea's restrictions on imported beef. In the decision, the panel found that Korean restrictions on the importation, sale, and distribution of fresh, chilled and frozen imported beef were inconsistent with Article III of GATT (national treatment). The decision has been forwarded to the three countries, and South Korea now has 60 days in which to decide whether it will appeal.

US Asks for WTO Review of Brazil's Customs Declarations

Brazil's customs declarations have become a point of contention with the US. The US Trade Representative has requested that officials in Brazil provide the WTO with its system of verification of declared values of imported goods, specifically textile products. The current system in Brazil is in place to prohibit the import of products with declared values below the established minimum prices. As such, it could be found to violate provisions in the WTO Agreement on Customs Valuation, the GATT 1994, the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures, the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, and the Agreement on Agriculture. Brazilian officials are expected to respond by 31 July 2000.

Trade Dispute Between Australia and the Philippines Takes Another Turn

A trade dispute between Australia and the Philippines that started with Australia's policy toward the importation of Filipino fruit (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4, No. 21, 30 May 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/wtoinbrief.30-05-00.htm>) has become even more tense. Manila has announced a 20 percent cut in Australian cattle imports over the next five years. According to Bruce Mills, spokesperson for Australia's Trade Minister Mark Vaile, Australia is very concerned about these new restrictions, but "the Philippines has clear international obligations not to discriminate against particular trading partners, and it appears to be violating these obligations." In spite of the new pressures, the quarantine rules at issue "would not be compromised." Australia has, however, made an attempt to rectify the situation: Trade Minister Vaile has written to the Filipino government in what Australian officials are calling "a new bid to diffuse the matter."

US Requests Establishment of a Panel in India Autos Dispute

On 15 May the US submitted its official request for the establishment of a WTO panel to investigate Indian measures affecting trade and investment in the Motor Vehicle sector. This was reviewed and finalised at the 19 June DSB. The measures that the US considers violative, according to the official request, "require manufacturing firms in the motor vehicle sector to achieve specified levels of purchase or use of domestic content." Consultations in this matter were held on 20 July 1999, but while they "provided some helpful clarifications, failed to resolve the dispute."

Panel Report Issued in Canada Patent Protection Case

The final panel report has been issued in the Canadian Patent Protection case. The EU originally brought the case to the WTO, complaining that the EU argued that Canada's regime violated TRIPs by favouring pharmaceuticals over other technologies (Article 27.1); by allowing the manufacture of patented product without the patent holders approval (Article 28); and by failing to protect patented products for 20 years after filing (Article 33). (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 4, No. 5, 8 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story3.08-02-00.htm>). At the time of the issuance of the interim report, the dispute settlement panel found that Canada is was not in violation of global intellectual property rules by allowing domestic generic pharmaceutical makers to carry out preparations for producing a drug before its patent expires. The final report now issued contains the same finding.

"WTO Issues Final Ruling Upholding U.S., Australia Complaints on Korean Beef Curbs," WTO REPORTER, 16 June 2000; "WTO Looks into Brazil's Customs Declarations," NEWS & ANALYSIS @ TEXTILEWEB, 9 June 2000; "Australia in new bid to end Philippine trade row," REUTERS, 15 June 2000; "Manila's cut in cattle imports fuels Australia trade dispute," FINANCIAL TIMES, 12 June 2000; "US slams India's auto policy," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 13 June 2000; ICTSD internal files.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: ASIA

South Korea-China Trade Row

South Korea from 1 June imposed a 315 percent tariff on imports of Chinese garlic, saying the measure was necessary to protect South Korea's domestic garlic producers. South Korean farmers blamed cheap imports of Chinese garlic for a 30 percent drop in domestic garlic prices last year. China on 7 June retaliated by banning imports of South Korean polyethylene and cellular phones.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry called the Chinese ban a disproportionate response, noting that exports of South Korean polyethylene and cellular phones to China totalled US\$201 million for the first four months of 2000, while South Korean imports of Chinese garlic totalled US\$8.9 million for the entire year 1999. South Korea noted that its tariff on garlic was permitted under the WTO agreement on safeguards.

South Korea also warned that China's retaliatory move was not consistent with WTO rules. "The import suspension recently announced by the Chinese government constitutes a unilateral

retaliatory measure prohibited by the WTO," South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. "The [South Korean] government expresses deep regret that China, which is about to join the WTO, has taken this unfair measure," the statement said. South Korea called on China to negotiate a settlement to the dispute. Total trade between China and South Korea was US\$32.5 billion in 1999.

ESCAP Meeting

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) met for its 56th annual Commission Session in Bangkok from 1-7 June. Members discussed issues around the theme "Development through globalisation and partnership in the 21st century: an Asia Pacific perspective for integrating developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system on a fair and equitable basis."

Regarding trade, ESCAP members agreed that the WTO was "of paramount importance to the expansion of trade, continued economic prosperity and all-round balanced development," according to an ESCAP statement. Members called on ESCAP to give high priority to technical assistance necessary to help facilitate entry into the WTO for a number of developing countries in the ESCAP region.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed the conference, noting that globalisation must go beyond merely creating bigger markets. "[Globalisation] must be about the inclusion and integration of all countries and all people into the global economy, the international trading system, and global society in general," Mr. Annan said.

Thai Subsidies

Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and WTO Director-General in-waiting Supachai Panitchpakdi on 12 June warned that a trend toward higher agricultural subsidies in Thailand could result in Thailand failing to meet its WTO commitment to reduce agricultural subsidies to a US\$500 million annual level by 2004. Mr. Supachai said that Thailand must devise production and marketing strategies to reduce subsidies while improving Thailand's competitiveness in the agricultural sector. Mr. Supachai noted that Thailand could also utilise WTO-consistent mechanisms to help protect its agricultural producers, including price stabilisation schemes. In addition, Supachai said that China's admission to the WTO would help boost Thai agricultural exports, especially for vegetables, rubber and potatoes.

Bangladesh Looking to Speed Customs

Bangladesh on 12 June announced it would modernise its customs procedures in 2001 as part of a trade facilitation plan. Finance Minister S.A.M.S. Kibria told Bangladeshi legislators that a customs administration modernisation program was underway, and would soon implement changes aimed at streamlining import duty assessments and customs clearance measures. Bangladesh will also expand its mandatory preshipment inspection program aimed at simplifying customs clearance.

"South Korea, China in garlic, cell phone war," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 15 June 2000; "S Korea denounces China trade restrictions; propose talks," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 8 June

2000; "Ministerial segment of ESCAP's 56th Commission session (5-7 June) gets down to business," UN PRESS RELEASE (G/18/00), 5 June 2000; "ESCAP's 56th Commission Session Ends on Optimistic Note," UN PRESS RELEASE (G/22/00), 7 June 2000; "Thai govt says ag subsidies set to exceed WTO agreement," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 12 June 2000; "Thai agriculture least hit by WTO schemes: Supachai," BUSINESS DAY (Thailand), 15 June 000; "Bangladesh vows to speed up customs clearance," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 12 June 2000.

EC, EU MEMBERS TALK TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

On 13 June the European Commission held an informal meeting on trade and environment together with representatives from the trade and environment ministries of the EU member states. The objective of the session was to conduct an exchange of views on the post-Seattle situation with respect to trade and environment issues.

Delegates discussed a range of topics relating to sustainability impact assessment (SIA) of a potential new round of WTO negotiations and preparatory work for the forthcoming WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) meeting next month. The CTE is scheduled to hold its annual information session on 5-6 July with representatives from a number of secretariats for trade-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

No concrete conclusions emerged from the informal EC-EU meeting, but EU members soundly endorsed their pre-Seattle position on trade and sustainable development and SIA (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 3 No. 8, 1 March 1999, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/story3.01-03-99.htm>; and EC WTO paper on trade and environment in the new WTO round at <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>, doc. # WT/GC/W/194).

EU representative called for more detail in any further impact assessment, and discussed breaking any future SIA down into a sector-by-sector approach. As most members expressed pessimism over prospects for a new comprehensive round, they suggested conducting an SIA first on Agriculture and Services, then taking it further if necessary. Targeted sectors for further assessment included forestry and fisheries -- both part of the Accelerated Trade Liberalisation initiative forwarded by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum at Seattle -- and the service sectors of tourism and transport. Member acknowledged that trade liberalisation in these latter areas can have significant implications both on an environmental level and a development level.

Attendees were also careful to stress that they were not in favour of 'multilateralising' the SIA process, and emphasised that the SIA process was not meant to be a prescriptive one with respect to developing countries. Many developing countries are sceptical of SIAs as they perceive them to be a potential mechanism for developed countries to impose standards or barriers on the entry of goods and services from developing countries. Delegates indicated that the trade-sustainable development process should therefore also include capacity-building measures for developing countries, saying that these may be taken outside the scope of the WTO.

ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO ACCESSIONS IN THE PIPE

WTO Membership Increases to 137

On 14 June, the former Soviet republic of Georgia became the 137th Member of the WTO. It is the fourth former Soviet republic to do so, following Estonia, Latvia, and the Kyrgyz Republic. "This accession is particularly noteworthy given Georgia's remarkable transition to a market economy. Georgia is the fourth former Soviet republic to join the WTO and has done so in less than 4 years after applying for membership," said Director-General Mike Moore. According to Shalva Pichkhadze, an aide of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, "Georgia's entry into the WTO is a recognition of the fact that the country is coming closer to meeting international standards in the legislative and economic spheres."

In Spite of WTO Entry Bid, Croatia Faces Tough Times Ahead

Now that a dispute between Croatia and the US and EU over audiovisual products has been resolved, Croatia is poised to enter the WTO this summer. However, government officials and economists warn that Croatia's economy is unprepared for the free market competition that WTO membership would bring. They point to the agriculture sector, which is already feeling the effects. According to Croatia's Agriculture Minister Bozidar Pankretic, "the new government (that took power in January) could not solve all those problem which have piled up over the past ten years. Our admission to the WTO is the goal we must achieve. But our farmers and agriculture as a whole are not ready to join the WTO." Croatian officials note that while consumers in Croatia can buy competitively priced, good quality, imported agricultural products, Croatian farmers cannot compete in international markets because their prices are too high.

Saudi Arabia: "Unique Status" to Blame for Delay in Joining WTO

According to Osama al-Faqih, Saudi Arabia's commerce minister, Saudi Arabia's entry into the WTO is being delayed because of other countries' refusals to make special provisions for its 'unique status.' Islam's two holiest shrines, Mecca and Medina, lie on Saudi territory. Thus, "under no circumstances will we allow the importation of pork, pork items, or alcohol which are traditionally prohibited by our religion and our culture, nor will we allow access of audio-visuals which offend our public morals," according to Mr. Al-Faqih. According to Western observers in Riyadh, however, the difficulties for Saudi Arabia's accession are also due to a range of other factors. These include resistance by conservative vested interests to redressing economic and bureaucratic imbalances such as monopoly agencies, a lack of government transparency, and high trade barriers. Each of these, according to observers, are as responsible for the accession delays as the demands for special concessions on the grounds of religious or public morality.

Oman Officials See Membership in November

According to Said al-Riyami, the head of Oman's negotiating team and a Commerce Ministry official, Oman expects to be admitted as a full Member to the WTO in November. The state has taken steps to reduce restrictions on foreign investment and foreign ownership. It has also lifted fees levied by import agents on imported goods and has intensified its crackdown on copyright piracy.

According to Mr. al-Riyami, "the working party report and the protocols of Oman's membership will be adopted on 6 July."

Chinese Accession Update

Meetings of the WTO Working Party on Chinese Accession are taking place throughout this week, with a final wrap-up taking place on Friday, 23 June. The purpose of the meetings is to take stock of developments on China's draft accession protocol and related issues, as well as in bilateral market-access negotiations, and to decide on the future work programme for the Working Party. Mexico and China have failed to come to an agreement on market access and other issues. According to the Mexican Commerce Ministry, "There were significant advances, though a few issues remain unresolved." China must still complete bilateral agreements with Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Switzerland by the end of June. According to Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng of China, only the agreements with Mexico and Costa Rica are significant. The two parties have agreed to meet again.

"Georgian aide says WTO access is recognition of econ reforms," BRIDGENEWS, 14 June 2000; "WTO Welcomes Georgia as 137th Member; Moore Praises Transition to Market Economy,": WTO REPORTER, 15 June 2000; "Georgia joins WTO," FINANCIAL TIMES, 14 June 2000; "Croatia's economy unfit for WTO membership," BRIDGENEWS, 13 June 2000; "Saudis blame 'unique status' for delays in joining WTO," FINANCIAL TIMES, 14 June 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

IN BRIEF

US Supreme Court Strikes Down Massachusetts "Burma Law". In a 19 June ruling, the US Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional a Massachusetts state law (the "Burma law") barring state entities from buying goods or services from companies that did business with Burma (Myanmar). The court ruled that the Burma law is "invalid under the Supremacy Clause of the National Constitution owing to its threat of frustrating federal statutory objectives." The Supremacy Clause states that state law must yield to federal law if the federal government intends to "occupy the field." Massachusetts enacted the law in 1996. Subsequently, the US Congress imposed sanctions on Burma. The National Foreign Trade Commission (FTC) thus attempted to have the Massachusetts law declared invalid, as a comparable federal law was now in place. The US Supreme Court on 23 March heard arguments in the appeal by the state of Massachusetts against the FTC (see *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest, Vol. 4, No. 12, 28 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/inbrief.28-03-00.htm>). *National Foreign Trade Commission v. Crosby, Secretary of Administration and Finance of Massachusetts*, 530 US (2000).

Iran Picks Up Asian Endorsement. Iran has received early endorsement by the Asian Group as the next chair of the Group of 77 (G-77) developing countries. According to a system of geographical rotation, it is Asia's turn to claim the chairship next year. Iran's early assurances of Asian support in effect mean that there are no other Asian candidates vying for the position at this time. Currently Nigeria is chair of the 133-country grouping. "Through the Grapevine," IPS/TERRAVIVA, 12 June 2000.

Canada Says No To Linkages To Trade. Canada's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Pierre Pettigrew, has argued for progress on liberalising trade to continue separately from concerns over the environment, labour, and human rights. "We should not link these things together at all costs," he said in a testimony to a Canadian parliamentary committee on foreign affairs and trade. Minister Pettigrew also insisted that trade is the first step to improving living conditions and government standards. In response to a question about labour standards, Mr. Pettigrew said, "We can't step in and tell other countries to give their workers the same standards. One of the advantages of the southern hemisphere countries is their cheap labour." "Don't link trade to other issues, says minister," FINANCIAL POST, 15 June 2000.

Statement Released by TAED on Agriculture Multifunctionality. In a statement prepared by the Food & Agriculture Working Group of the Transatlantic Environmental Dialogue (TAED), the TAED outlined essential elements required to ensure that agriculture is both multifunctional and sustainable. The Working Group also states that achieving this will require substantial reform of US and EU farm policy. The paper discusses multifunctionality, and the steps that lead to it: promoting food security, recognising differences, promoting sustainable agriculture, promoting agriculture and rural development (north and south), minimizing trade distortions, and respecting cultural values. For further information contact TAED by visiting <http://www.tiesweb.org/divers/feedback.html>. ICTSD Internal Files.

UNEP To Help MEA Secretariats vis-à-vis WTO. The Economics and Trade Unit of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) is convening meetings with the secretariats of a few multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) invited by the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment, CTE, to its following two sessions this year. The next opportunity for this will be on 5 July, preceding the CTE's second regular meeting for 2000 for which WTO members have requested presentations from five MEAs on trade-related aspects: CITES, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (expected to make a presentation on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety); the UN FCCC (to report on developments towards COP 6 by when Parties are expected to adopt details of the three flexibility mechanisms of its Kyoto Protocol), the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMRL) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT). At that time, UNEP intends to gather the MEA delegates to discuss possible needs for capacity on trade by the secretariats as well as the desirability and possibilities of coordinating the various secretariats responses to the trade body. NGOs, by and large in favour of more transparency and better cooperation between international governance entities, have not been included in either WTO's or UNEP's dialogues with MEAs. ICTSD Internal files.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

• Coming Up This Week

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

21-22 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES. *Inter alia*, Member will discuss: Turkey's ban on imports of live

cattle and beef meat -- statement by Hungary; Australia's restrictions on fresh fruits -- statement by the Philippines; implementation of the provisions for special and differential treatment; statement by the World Bank: Development challenges in standards and agricultural trade; technical assistance and co-operation; and matters of interest arising from the work of observer organisations, including the OIE, IPPC, CODEX, and the WHO. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5412. ICTSD will report on this meeting in the next issue of *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest.

21-22 June, Cairo, Egypt: G-15 SUMMIT MEETING. The 17 members of the Group of 15 developing countries are meeting to discuss a range of issues, including greater dialogue between developing countries and the industrialised world; better coordination among themselves; boosting *intra* G-15 trade; and pushing more regional trade agreements. ICTSD will report on this meeting in the next issue of *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest.

22 June, Geneva: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL SPECIAL SESSION ON IMPLEMENTATION. Members will discuss programme and calendar of work; and implementation issues in general. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5393. ICTSD will report on this meeting in the next issue of *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest.

22-25 June, Geneva, Switzerland: INTERNATIONAL NGO GATHERING PRIOR TO UN WORLD SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. The principle objective of this parallel summit is to further enlarge the number of organisations acting and working together internationally. Meetings will be used to discuss the major questions being raised by corporate globalisation today. The objective is to produce a common plan of action for the future. For information contact: ComitéSuisse de l'Appel de Bangkok, c/o Maison des Associations, 15 rue des Savoises, CH-1205 Geneve, Switzerland; fax: (41-22) 320-4261; email: bangkok.ch@europe.com.

23 June, Geneva: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF CHINA. For information contact: Hans-Peter Werner, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5286.

23 June, Geneva, Switzerland: IS GENUINE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE UNDER GLOBALIZATION? Organised by the International South Group Network, Resource Centre for People's Development, ATTAC. This conference will investigate the question of poverty and social development from the perspective of alternatives to globalisation. For information contact: Alice Raymundo, Resource Centre for People's Development (RCPD), 24 Unit-7 Mapang-akit St., Brgy. Pinyahan, Quezon City, Philippines; tel: (63-2) 435-08-15; tel/fax: 436-18-31; email: rcpd@info.com.ph and alice@info.com.ph (use both).

23 June, Brussels, Belgium: 5th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN THE WTO. Sponsored by Ashurst Morris Crisp. This conference will include speakers from the WTO, officials from the EC, and ambassadors from major trading blocs. For information contact: Cameron May, Ltd., 69-71 Bondway, London SW8 1SQ, UK; tel: (44-0) 207-7582-7567; fax: 20-7793-8353; email: conferences@cameronmay.com; Internet: <http://www.cameronmay.com>.

26 June, Coimbra, Portugal: EU-CANADA SUMMIT. For information contact: European Commission, Trade DG, Information Unit; fax: (32-2) 296-9854; email: eis@dg1.cec.be; Internet: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade>.

26-27 June, Brussels, Belgium: DG TRADE ISSUES GROUP MEETINGS. This is the second in a series of meeting focusing on health, services, agriculture, environment and sustainable development. For information contact: Haitze Siemers, Trade DG-1, European Commission CHAR 15/16, Rue de la Loi 200 1049 Brussels, tel: (32-2) 299-0185; fax: 299-0900; email: Haitze.Siemers@cec.eu.int; web: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade/2000_round/fmig.htm.

26-27 June, Paris, France: OECD COUNCIL MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. The OECD Council will meet under the chairmanship of Australia. For information see Internet: <http://www.oecd.org>.

26-28 June, Paris, France: OECD/OCDE FORUM 2000 "PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NEW ECONOMY." Sponsored by the OECD. The Forum's objective is to impart and share information, improve communication and foster a climate of enlightened policy-making in the global public interest. For information contact: Caroline Stevens, Touchstone Exhibitors and Conferences Ltd., 4 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW UK; tel: (44-0) 20-8-322-0044; fax: (44-0) 20-8-322-0874; Internet: <http://www.oecd.org/forum2000>.

26-30 June, Geneva Switzerland: UNITED NATIONS WORLD SUMMIT ON SOCIALDEVELOPMENT (Copenhagen +5). The five-year review of the Social Summit in 2000 will survey progress made and setbacks faced in world poverty eradication efforts, as well as analyse the relationship between poverty, human rights and development. For information contact: Division for Social Policy and Development, 2 United Nations Plaza, Room C2-1370 United Nations New York 10017 USA; tel: (1-212) 963-5855; fax: 963- 3062; email: esa@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev>.

26-30 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRIPs COUNCIL MEETING. On the agenda (*inter alia*): observer status for international intergovernmental organisations; notifications; technical cooperation; review of Article 27.3(b); review of the implementation of the agreement under Article 71.1; and non-violation complaints. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, Information and Media Relations Division, WTO, 154 rue de Lausanne, 1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 739-5412; email: peter.ungphakorn@wto.org; Internet: <http://www.wto.org/wto/intellect/intellect.htm>.

- **WTO Events**

An updated list of forthcoming World Trade Organisation meetings is posted at <http://www.wto.org/wto/about/meets.doc>. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of different WTO bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, Rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

27-28 June: WTO COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5374.

28 June: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5412.

28 June: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5075.

29 & 30 June: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE - SPECIAL SESSION. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5412.

- **Other Forthcoming Events**

27 June 2000, Buenos Aires, Argentina: NGO MEETING ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE MERCOSUR SUB-GROUP 6. Convened by Fundación ECOS. Civil society organisations from Mercosur countries will propose a common action to be adopted by the representatives of government bodies in the areas of foreign trade and environment. For information contact: Miguel Reynal or Maria Lechner; tel: (59-8) 427-712-52; email: ecos@adinet.com.uy; Internet: <http://www.fundacionecos.org>.

30 June, Geneva, Switzerland: THE CONTROVERSY OVER LABOUR/TRADE ISSUES IN THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM: THE ROLE OF THE WTO, ILO, EU, & OECD. Sponsored by the project on International Organisations and the Social Aspects of Trade Liberalisation of the PSIO and IUHEI. This meeting will include two roundtable discussions for participants in the Geneva 2000 Forum. For information contact: Philippe Borel, Geneva, tel: (41-22) 731-1730.

1-7 July, Brighton, England: WORLD RENEWABLE ENERGIES CONGRESS. Hosted by the World Renewable Energy Network, the meeting is being co-sponsored by several organisations, including UNESCO, UNDP and the European Economic Commission. For information contact: A. Sayigh, 147 Hilmanton, Lower Earley, Reading RG6 4HN, UK; tel: (44-1189) 611-364, fax: 611-365; Internet: <http://www.wrenuk.co.uk/brighton/topics.html#topics>.

4-7 July, St. Petersburg, Russia: UNEP REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ALTERNATIVES TO POPS PESTICIDES. For information contact: Murray Newton or Heidi Fiedler, UNEP Chemicals (IRPTC); tel: (41-22) 979-9111; fax: 797-3460; email: mnewton@unep.ch or hfriedler@unep.ch; Internet: <http://irptc.unep.ch/pops>. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.ictsd.ca/linkages>.

5-8 July, Canberra, Australia: ISEE 2000: PEOPLE AND NATURE - OPERATIONALIZING ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS. sponsored by The International Society for Ecological Economics. The conference will focus on operational applications and achievements of ecological economics, dealing with major conceptual challenges and practical problems. For information contact: Beth Stoodley, Centre for Continuing Education, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200, Australia; tel: (61-2) 6249-3806. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.ictsd.ca/linkages>.

7-11 July, St. Petersburg, Russia: FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL INDICES, SYSTEMS ANALYSIS APPROACH. Co-sponsored by Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS). The first objective of the Conference is to discuss the possible ways to harmonise national efforts in the field of environmental indicators. The second objective is to examine the existing methods of indicators' transformation into highly aggregated indices, including systems analysis, statistics, conceptual and computer models, etc. For information contact: Dr. Irina G. Malkina-Pykh, Center INENCO, Russian Academy of Sciences,

14 Kutuzova nab., St Petersburg, 191 18, Russia; tel: (812) 232-9772 or 272-16-01; fax: 272-42-65; email: pykh@inenco.spb.su.

- **Calls for Papers**

15 July: PROPOSAL AND ABSTRACT DUE FOR THE HALIFAX INITIATIVE. Through this collection of short essays, the Halifax Institute would like to foster analysis and insight about how the international financial system can be altered to better ensure sustainability and security for all. The collection will be published prior to the G-20 Ministerial meeting, 24-25 October 2000. The submissions should be from academic and NGO researchers based in the South and North on any of the following topics: Financing Pro-Poor, Pro-Environment Development, Appropriate International Institutions, or Reform of the Global Financial Architecture. The full paper will be due 15 September, and the expected date of publication 15 October 2000. For information or to send submissions contact: Halifax Initiative, Suite 1200, 1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa ON Canada, tel: (1-613) 789-4447; fax: 241-5302; email: halifax@web.net; Internet: <http://www.web.net/halifax>.

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy for review by the *BRIDGES* staff to hcameron@ictsd.ch. Donations of publications to ICTSD's Documentation Centre would also be welcome (please contact mgalvin@ictsd.ch).

ECONOMIC REFORM, TRADE LIBERALIZATION, AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS: THE CASE OF COLOMBIA'S APPAREL INDUSTRY. By Jerry Haar and Sylvia Reyes (ISBN 1-57454-081-5), May 2000. Using the apparel industry as a case study, the authors determine the degree to which Colombia has pursued "competitive" (public policy facilitation) versus "standard" (market forces alone) strategies of economic adjustment and trade liberalisation. In addition, they analyse the political and economic variables that have shaped Colombia's global competitiveness in textiles and apparels. To obtain contact: The Dante B. Fascell North-South Center; tel: (1-305) 284-8912; email: mmapes@nsc.msmail.miami.edu; Internet: <http://www.miami.edu/nsc/>.

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TRADE EXPANSION: A REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL STATE OF AFFAIRS. (ISBN 1-57454-080-7) By Aaron Cosbey, April 2000. This paper surveys some of the 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. To obtain contact: The Dante B. Fascell North South Center; tel: (1-305) 284-8912; email: mmapes@nsc.msmail.miami.edu; Internet: <http://www.miami.edu/nsc/>.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: A SURVEY. Available in *Ecological Economics*, 2000, Vol. 32, No.2, pp. 175-194, by R. Jayadevappa and S. Chatre. The authors attempt to establish some of the links between international trade and environmental quality by performing a comprehensive literature review.

- **Electronic Resources**

"The Institutional Balance Between the Judicial and Political Organs of the WTO" by Friederich Roessler. According to the author -- a former head of the GATT legal division and a leading figure in the design of the Dispute Settlement Understanding during the Uruguay Round -- the WTO must ensure that its judicial organs (panels and Appellate Body) exercise their powers with due regard to the jurisdiction assigned to other parts of its institutional structure. The paper was presented at a seminar (1-2 June) honouring Prof. Raymond Vernon at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass., USA). This paper and that of other participants can be found at: <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/cbg/trade>.

The OECD has just launched a database of information about environmental taxes. The database, which will be regularly updated, can be accessed -- free of charge -- at <http://www.oecd.org/env/policies/taxes/index.htm>.

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