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GOODS COUNCIL FAILS TO REACH AGREEMENTS ON WAIVERS

On 7 July the WTO Council for Trade in Goods met to discuss, *inter alia*, requests for waivers of obligations under Article 3.4 of GATT and requests for the extension of the transition period pursuant to Article 5.3 of the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs).

The EU submitted waiver requests for preferential treatment of the Western Balkans and the new ACP-EC partnership. Neither request was approved, however, and according to trade officials, the request pertaining to the ACP-EU partnership will most likely be on the agenda for a long time to come. The EU's request was blocked by its opponents in the ongoing banana dispute (see related story, this issue). The EU also made a request on behalf of France for a waiver pertaining to French trading arrangements with Morocco. This request was approved and will be sent to the General Council for adoption on the 17 July. There was also a request for a WTO waiver by Turkey pertaining to its preferential treatment of Bosnia-Herzegovina; however, this was not discussed at the meeting and will be addressed the next time the Council for Trade in Goods meets.

Requests for extension of TRIMs were submitted by Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Romania, and Thailand. The requests ranged from 5 months in the case of Chile to 7 years in the case of Argentina, Colombia and Pakistan. Most of the requests were from countries seeking to preserve domestic content and other investment restrictions aimed at

promoting local auto and auto parts manufacturing. Informal and formal consultations have been held on many of these requests since the beginning of the year. However, no draft decisions were submitted prior to this meeting, and no formal extensions were granted. Of the nine requests that were made, two -- from Chile and Romania -- are expected to pass approval in the near future. The requests for 7 year extensions, however -- from Pakistan, Colombia, and Argentina -- have raised eyebrows among some Members. According to trade sources, these will most likely require several more rounds of consultations before any kind of draft decision is formulated.

Under Article 5.3 of the TRIMs agreement, decisions on extensions for developing countries and LDCs must be taken on a country-by-country basis (LDCs have until 2002 to implement the agreement). As a result, developed countries have placed more of an emphasis on the bilateral nature of the negotiations (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 14, 11 April 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.11-04-00.htm>). According to WTO officials, this concerns some developing countries because they fear that developed countries will insist on concessions that are not related to Article 5.3. At the meeting, Malaysia -- speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) -- complained that some Members were attempting to impose bilateral conditionalities that went beyond the TRIMs requirements in exchange for their approval of extension requests.

"Officials Near Agreement in WTO On Deadline Extensions for TRIMs," WTO REPORTER, 10 July 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETS WITH MEAS

WTO Members met last week from 5-6 July at the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) for two full days of discussion and debate on a range of topics. The focus of the meeting was on the linkages between the multilateral environment and trade agendas; to this end an Information Session with four Secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) was held on 5 July, followed by a discussion on the relationship between the WTO and MEAs.

Delegates also broached the issues of export of domestically prohibited goods (DPGs); protection of biodiversity and traditional knowledge; and the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). In addition, discussions were held on the precautionary principle, integrated assessment of trade-related policies, fisheries subsidies and energy subsidies.

According to one delegate, the meeting was very helpful as it served to "re-ignite the MEA debate, highlight the issue of domestically prohibited goods, and engage in fruitful discussions on the precautionary principle." Members pointed to the usefulness of the session in finding out what has been going on in various MEAs over the past year.

MEA Secretariats represented at the CTE were: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. The Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources also circulated a paper for

this session. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) all gave statements on their respective work relevant to the CTE agenda.

In its statement, UNEP emphasised the need to deepen collaboration between UNEP, MEAs and the WTO. To this end it invited interested WTO delegations -- together with representatives from parties to MEAs and relevant Secretariats -- to a meeting in September/October 2000 to address trade and environment problems and potential solutions. The invitation was generally well received among some Members, but others pointed out that any mandate for such a meeting would need to come from UNEP itself, and not from the CTE.

Sparkling a lengthy debate, Switzerland presented a paper advocating an interpretative decision to prevent unnecessary conflicts between the WTO and trade-related measures in MEAs. Several delegations -- including Canada, the EC, Hungary, Iceland, Japan and Norway -- supported the Swiss proposal, while others -- notably Australia, New Zealand and the US -- were of the opinion that WTO agreements are already sufficiently flexible to accommodate MEAs.

A significant event at the CTE involved a presentation by Bangladesh (see WT/CTE/W/141) on domestically prohibited goods (DPGs). According to a WTO official, all Members supported Bangladesh's recommendations (chiefly that Members notify DPG exports in the area of consumer products where there exists a gap in the coverage of other international instruments), and have asked the WTO Secretariat to prepare a study based on Bangladesh's recommendations. A WTO Secretariat report to this effect is expected for the next CTE meeting in October, at which point Members will address whether gaps exist and decide how to act on the DPG notification issue.

In a move that met with little support from other Members, the EU presented a submission on the precautionary principle (WT/CTE/W/147; G/TBT/W/137) arguing for clarification of this principle in the WTO in order to ensure that it is not used in an arbitrary way or as a form of protectionism. While a number of delegations supported the EC's emphasis on science-based decision-making, several Members -- noting the lack of an internationally agreed definition of the precautionary principle -- cautioned against invoking precaution as a means to justify protectionist actions.

The US presented a paper (WT/CTE/W/154) calling for reform of environmentally harmful and trade-distorting subsidies in the fisheries sector. In the paper, the US sets out a framework of categories for identifying perverse subsidies in the fisheries sector. New Zealand, Iceland, Australia, Argentina, Chile, Hong Kong China, Peru, among others, supported the US proposal to establish a "win-win" situation for the environment and trade by eliminating fisheries subsidies. Japan, Korea and the EC argued that discussions in the CTE should await results of relevant work in organisations such as APEC, the FAO, and the OECD. Reference was made to the need to undertake a comprehensive factual analysis on government transfers to the fisheries sector, and a Secretariat paper was requested for the October CTE meeting.

Responding to a Secretariat paper on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the TRIPs Agreement, a number of Members emphasised the need to harmonise approaches in the TRIPs Agreement and the CBD. Other Members were of the opinion

that TRIPs and the CBD are mutually compatible. Representatives from the CBD reiterated their request for observer status in the TRIPs Council and the Committee on Agriculture, while UNEP asked Members to give favourable consideration to its request for observer status in the General Council, the TRIPs Council and the Committee on Trade and Development.

22 out of 23 Secretariat papers for the CTE have been issued as de-restricted and are available -- along with other papers referred to in this article -- on the WTO document dissemination facility at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>. To access a full WTO Secretariat report on the CTE meeting, visit: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/te033_e.htm.

The next CTE is scheduled for 24-25 October 2000. At that time it will, *inter alia*, hold a second MEA Information Session and adopt the CTE's report to the General Council on its work over the past year.

"Trade And Environment Bulletin no. 33," WTO, 7 July 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: NORTH AMERICA

A bilateral free trade agreement between Mexico and the EU signed on 23 March 2000 took effect on 1 July. Mexico hopes the accord will help diversify its export market, now overwhelmingly dependent on the US. The EU hopes the deal will greatly increase the competitiveness of EU products in Mexico and give the bloc greater access to the Canadian and US markets. For full details of the agreement see: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/mexico/fta.htm> (also see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4 No. 12, 28 March 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story7.28-03-00.htm>). A free trade agreement between Mexico and Israel also took effect from 1 July.

Mexico's free trade momentum continued the week of 3 July as free trade talks began between Mexico and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) comprising Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Mexico has also held preliminary free trade talks with Japan, Singapore and recently concluded free trade talks with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Most ambitious yet may be calls made on 4 July by Mexican president-elect Vicente Fox for a North American common market amongst the US, Canada and Mexico. "Our idea is to sell a long-term project where we can move upward from a trade agreement to a community of nations agreement or a North American common market," Mr. Fox said. "It should move in that direction, which implies more than just trading, and more than just facilitating the transit of merchandise, products, services and capital," he stated. Fox's vision includes doubling foreign investment in Mexico and laying the foundation for an economic partnership that would go far beyond the North American Free Trade Agreement. He would even like to find a way for Mexicans to work legally in the US and Canada. "Free trade agreements are good, they're a first step toward intensifying a relationship," Mr. Fox has told reporters. "But I believe more in deepening these agreements. We want to create a real association, a North American common market. Living standards in all three countries need to rise." Mr. Fox noted that such an accord would take at least 20 years to develop.

In other regional news, a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade panel on 26 June issued a partial ruling in a case brought by US-based lumber company Pope and Talbot Inc. against the government of Canada alleging that Canada has discriminatorily applied the US-Canadian softwood lumber quota agreement.

NAFTA Chapter 11 allows an investor to seek compensation if a government acts to directly or indirectly expropriate an investment in that country. The panel considering the case dismissed two of the four complaints made in the suit by Pope and Talbot.

Specifically, the panel ruled on Chapter 11 provisions dealing with expropriation and performance requirements. Regarding expropriation, the panel ruled that Canada did not unfairly expropriate the assets of Pope and Talbot's Canadian subsidiary when it implemented a quota system for exports of softwood lumber in 1996 as part of a US-Canada softwood lumber agreement (a claim worth \$US80 million). Regarding performance requirements, the panel ruled that Canada did not violate a NAFTA provision that performance requirements not discriminate against foreigners (a claim worth \$US125 million). The claims are overlapping, rather than cumulative.

During the proceedings, Canada argued that "non-discriminatory measure of general application" could not be subject to a claim for compensation for expropriation. However, the panel did issue language supporting the notion that under NAFTA Chapter 11 certain measures (including regulatory measures) could trigger government obligation to compensate affected investors but only if "substantial interference" with an investment has been proven. In the Pope and Talbot case the panel found that the alleged interference was not substantial enough. The panel did rule that the remaining two Pope and Talbot complaints under the suit could proceed, dealing with Canada's national treatment obligations under NAFTA and Canada's obligations on minimum standards of treatment for firms.

"Mexican president elect calls for EU-like agreement with EU, Canada," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 4 July 2000; "Mexico becomes leader in free trade," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6 July 2000; "Mexico's President-Elect Outlines Plans for Intensifying NAFTA Ties with US," THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/KRTBN, 5 July 2000; "Canada partially victorious in trade case," NATIONAL POST (Canada), 28 June 2000; "Canada claims victory in NAFTA ruling," REUTERS, 27 June 2000.

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UPDATE: BANANAS AND AIRCRAFT

Resolution of Banana Dispute once again at an impasse

On 5 July the EU announced its latest proposals in an attempt to bring the ongoing banana dispute to a close. The Commission proposed the following strategy: it will continue to study a transnational system of tariff quotas, but at this stage on a "first come, first served" basis for the three tariff quotas. Under this system, licenses to import bananas would be awarded, with certain quotas, to those operators who were in a position to bring their bananas into the European market first. The EU also retained its proposal for a conversion to a tariff- only regime by 1 January 2006.

However, the US has rejected the proposal in favour of one put forth by the Caribbean countries last year, which would establish a tariff-quota regime in Europe that would allocate banana import licenses on the basis of historical trade in the product. Under this plan, bananas from the most vulnerable of the former EU colony Caribbean countries would continue to receive trade preferences.

Due to the fact that no agreement has been reached, WTO Members agreed on 5 July to postpone further consideration of an EU request to exempt a new preferential market access agreement with the ACP countries. Latin American banana-producing countries -- namely Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama -- insisted that the new agreement must contain details on the EU banana regime; thus far the EU is not yet prepared to provide these.

Canada-Brazil Aircraft Dispute Coming to a Close

In an effort to resolve an ongoing dispute with Canada over subsidies payments to airplane manufacturers, Brazil has announced that it will eliminate all subsidies to its regional producer, Embraer. Alcides Tapias, Brazil's foreign trade minister, said that low cost loans to subsidise the company's exports would be ended.

"Brazil abolishes planemaker subsidies that upset Canada," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 6 July 2000; "WTO at Impasse Over EU Waiver Request For ACP Pact Because of Banana Dispute," WTO REPORTER, 7 July 2000; "U.S. Turns Down European Offer to Settle Dispute Over Trans-Atlantic Banana Trade," WTO REPORTER, 7 July 2000; "EU makes new proposals to break down banana deadlock," REUTERS, 5 July 2000; "EU Commission Offers New Banana Regime; Licensing on First-Come, First-Served Basis," WTO REPORTER, 6 July 2000.

AGRICULTURE BRIEFS: US, EU, MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

US agriculture aid

On 30 May, the Australian government foreshadowed a WTO challenge over the latest US farm aid legislation. The legislation, passed by the US Congress in late May, provides US farmers with an US\$8.2 billion crop insurance program and US\$7.1 billion in financial aid. According to Australian Agriculture Minister Warren Truss, "what it in practice has done has meant that the US' level of farm support is now back to similar levels, in fact perhaps even higher than when the GATT round of trade reform began." This behaviour, he has said, "is completely unacceptable; they forfeit their right to be considered to be leaders in trade reform when they behave in this way." At this time, most of the details of the aid are not available yet, i.e., into which categories the aid will fall. However, according to officials, Australia will continue to monitor the situation to decide if a WTO challenge is necessary.

EU regional agriculture agreements

The EU has finalised new agriculture trade liberalisation agreements with nine Central and Eastern European countries. The agreements apply to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the

Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Slovenia. Notably, Poland will be left out, as it has increased tariffs on certain EU products. The agreements will eliminate tariff and export refunds on some 400 "least sensitive products," such as citrus fruits, olive oil, and horse meat. It will also implement a 'double-zero' approach, eliminating import tariff and export refunds within the framework of tariff quotas on products for which the EU's Common Agriculture Policy provides border protection, such as pig meat, poultry, cheese, and some fruits and vegetables. On 29 June, EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries Franz Fischler welcomed the announcement, saying "this is a firm step forward in increasing free trade between us. And it is a necessary step which prepares the applicant countries for the single market." The agreements were set to be implemented as of 1 July.

French EU Presidency to tackle tough agriculture issues

Now that France has taken over the rotating EU presidency, Paris faces a full farming agenda. It takes over several issues that Portugal was unable to resolve, including reformation of the EU rice regime, the putting into place of a meat labelling system, and resolution of the ongoing beef and banana disputes at the WTO. French Farm Minister Jean Glavany has indicated that France plans to focus its efforts on reforming the regimes for sugar, fruit and vegetables, and the pork sector. Domestic farmers hope that the presidency will bring progress on issues ranging from EU grain subsidies to sugar quotas. According to Luc Guyau, the head of the FNSEA union, "the French presidency must be an ambitious one, since French agriculture is the leader at the European level." However, Glavany has warned that "the presidency of the Union is not 'Father Christmas' time, in fact it is sometimes the contrary, when the obligations it entails lead one to stand back from strictly national preoccupations in order to reach agreement."

Conference on Multifunctionality

At an international conference in Norway this past week attended by 39 developing and developed countries and economies in transition, attendees agreed that every country should have a sovereign right to pursue non-trade objectives such as strengthening the socio-economic viability and development of rural areas, food security and environmental protection. There was a broad agreement among the participants that in the WTO negotiations on trade in agriculture there is a need to acknowledge and secure the continued existence of various types of agriculture based on each country's specific production conditions and potential as well as its historical and cultural background. There was also agreement that the impact of new production methods and possibilities for transfer of technology should be examined in a WTO context. It was also noted that specific and multifunctional characteristics of agriculture must be taken into account in further trade reform within WTO. According to press releases issued following the conference, "the discussions initiated at this conference will be pursued in further meetings during the WTO negotiations on agriculture." The press release, discussion papers and list of participants to the conference are available at: <http://www.odin.dep.no/ld/engelsk/p10001664/020061-990057/index-dok000-b -n-a.html>

OECD farm support increases

Government support for agriculture in OECD countries rose nearly 3 percent in 1999. The OECD warned its member governments that farm subsidies had been raised to levels last seen more than a

decade ago, distorting both production and trade. On average across OECD countries, farmers earned about two-thirds more in 1999 than they would have had they sold their produce at world market prices.

GFAR Meet

On 19-20 May, about 100 representatives of different NGOs and small farmer organisations (SFOs) met for a workshop entitled "Food for All: Farmers First in Research," held prior to the Dresden conference of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). The main aims of the workshop were to discuss issues of agricultural research for development (ARD) of concern to NGOs and SFOs and to prepare a joint strategy for the GFAR. One of the main areas discussed was biotechnology and resources management. Following discussions, a separate declaration was prepared on plant genetic resources and discussed in the subplenary session. The GFAR decided to attach the five recommendations from this declaration to its Global Vision. In the Global Vision, the GFAR urged national governments to complete the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; to ensure farmers' rights to save, exchange and improve seed; and to include multilateral arrangements in the national access legislation. However, with regard to genetic engineering, the NGOs and SFOs felt that the GFAR's potential to alleviate poverty was being presented in too positive a light. The papers and reports officially presented at GFAR2000 and the follow-up reports can be accessed at: <http://www.fao.org/nars/gfar2000>. Information about NGO activities around the GFAR can be accessed at: <http://www.GFAR2000-NGOactivities.de>. A paper outlining the issues and proposed actions is available from <http://www.ukabc.org/iu2.htm> and <http://www.evb.ch/bd/food.htm>.

"Australian govt foreshadows WTO challenge to US farm aid bill," BRIDGENEWS, 30 May 2000; "For farmer-led research for development: NGOs and small-farmer organisations in Dresden, May 2000" Report by: Jean Marc von der Weid (AS-PTA, NGO representative on GFAR Steering Committee); Ann Waters-Bayer (AGRECOL e.V., Co-Chair, CGIAR NGO Committee); Susanne Gura (Forum Environment and Development, Co-ordinator of international NGO activities around the GFAR); NGO Campaign Under Preparation," from SEEDLING, the newsletter of Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), June 2000; "EU, 9 CEEC Nations to Liberalize Ag Trade As Of July 1," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES, 29 June 2000; "Agriculture trade liberalisation with candidates for EU membership," EC COMMUNICATION, 30 June 2000; "France faces full farm agenda during EU presidency," REUTERS, 29 June 2000; "International conference calls for inclusion of non-trade concerns in WTO farm talks," EU 4 July 2000; "WTO and Agriculture: International Conference on Non-Trade Concerns," PRESS RELEASE No. 31, Norwegian Landbruksdepartementet, 3 July 2000; "Farm Subsidies," THE ECONOMIST, 24 June 2000; "OECD warns of high level of farm subsidies," FINANCIAL TIMES, 8 June 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

IN BRIEF

The US on 6 July announced that Belarus had been suspended from the list of countries enjoying duty-free access to the US market under the US Generalised System of Preferences. US President Bill Clinton said the suspension was triggered when it was determined that "Belarus has not taken

and is not taking steps to afford workers internationally recognised workers rights." "US suspends duty-free access to Belarus," REUTERS, 6 July 2000.

The UN Security Council on 5 July voted to prohibit trade in so-called "blood diamonds" from Sierra Leone. Illicit trade in diamonds is believed to be funding arms purchases by rebel forces in the country in violation of a two-year-old arms embargo against the country. The ban will be in force for at least 18 months, during which time the UN will help establish a "certificate of origin" system to verify that diamond exports from Sierra Leone originate from government controlled (versus rebel controlled) sources. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is also conducting an inquiry into the illicit diamond trade in Sierra Leone. "Banning 'blood diamonds' exports from Sierra Leone," IPS, 6 July 2000; "UN backs diamonds 'blood trade' measures," FINANCIAL TIMES, 5 July 2000.

The International Whaling Commission (IWC), which oversees management and conservation of world whaling stocks, on 5 July voted to maintain a 14-year-old ban on global commercial whaling. Japan announced it would expand its scientific whaling program to include Bryde and Sperm whales, despite pressure from the US, UK and environmental groups. Japan, supported by some Caribbean countries, said the expansion was necessary to ensure the survival of fisheries around the world. In related news, Dominica's agriculture and fisheries minister Atherton Martin resigned on 6 July in protest over what Mr. Martin alleged was "international extortion" by Japan, saying that Japan had coerced Dominica into supporting its commercial whaling proposals at the IWC. Mr. Martin accused Japan of threatening to withhold development funds from Dominica if the country did not support Japan's efforts to block the establishment of a South Pacific whale sanctuary (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 26, 4 July 2000). Japan has been criticised for leveraging its aid influence in other Caribbean countries in exchange for pro-whaling support at the IWC. "Another year passes and the IWC makes no progress on RMS," HIGH NORTH WEB NEWS, 5 July 2000; "Japan accused of whaling extortion," FINANCIAL TIMES, 7 July 2000; "Commercial whaling may get go ahead," FINANCIAL TIMES, 4 July 2000; "IWC reaffirms commitment to whaling moratorium," WWF PRESS RELEASE, 6 July 2000.

Finance ministers from Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, the United Kingdom and the US met on 8 July in advance of the 21-23 July meeting of leaders from the Group of Eight leading industrialised countries (G-8, comprising the above plus Russia). Ministers discussed a range of issues, including: regional cooperation, the impact of the information technology revolution, and the strengthening of the international financial architecture, including the reform of the IMF and the World Bank, as well as other multilateral lenders. Ministers also reaffirmed the G-7's commitment to the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. The group noted the "importance of equitable economic growth for poverty reduction and need to promote both a sound macro-economic framework and the right social policies." "Main Points of G7 statement," AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE, 8 July 2000; "G7 finance chiefs to mull IT, IMF as economy hums," REUTERS, 5 July 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

A joint meeting between six core international agencies - the WTO, International Trade Centre (ITC), IMF, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Development Program (UNDP), and World Bank and WTO yielded agreement on a series of measures designed to boost the so-called Integrated Framework for trade-related technical assistance to least-developed countries (IF). The grouping agreed, *inter alia*, to support a "mainstreaming process" to support the integration of trade, trade-related technical assistance, and capacity-building into the national development strategies and plans of LDCs; establish a steering committee, including representatives from both LDCs and donor countries, to help ensure proper oversight, policy guidance, adequate funding, and ownership of the IF for trade-related technical assistance; and established the Integrated Framework Trust Fund (IFTF) for the purpose of "mainstreaming trade and trade-related assistance into development architecture," according to a joint statement by the grouping. The UNDP will administer the IFTF. The grouping said it hopes to raise US\$20 million toward IFTF initiatives between 2001- 2003. "Joint statement on the mandated review of the integrated framework for trade-related technical assistance to least-developed countries (IF) by the six core agencies," WTO PRESS RELEASE, 6 July 2000.

The WTO Working Party on Oman's Accession concluded talks on 6 July. Oman must still implement several conditions to bring its domestic legislation in line with WTO rules before the WTO General Council votes to approve its membership. Oman officials expect the legislative changes to be implemented shortly, with a WTO General Council vote on its membership expected for October 2000. "Oman completes negotiations on WTO accession," WTO REPORTER, 7 July 2000.

At a meeting held on 10 July, a WTO working party began negotiations on Macedonia's accession to the WTO. Macedonia presented an overview of its trade regime and entertained questions and comments about its readiness to comply with WTO disciplines in areas such as import licensing, investment policy, customs valuation, and TRIPs. The meeting concluded quickly after only one morning of discussion because the Macedonian delegation wanted to conduct more research on other Members' inquiries into its trade regime. Most delegations reacted favourably to the accession meeting, stressing the importance of Macedonia's WTO membership as a contribution to regional peace and prosperity. ICTSD Internal Files.

The 29th session of the Committee on Trade and Development (CommTD) on 10 July picked up its deliberations from where it had left off last week (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4 No. 26, 4 July 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story7.04-07-00.htm>). Discussions on participation of developing countries in world trade and on technical cooperation were resumed. Members agreed to hold a special session of the CommTD in September to consider discussions to be held during two 'Days of Reflection on Technical Cooperation' on 18 and 19 July. Papers were presented by the EC and Japan on trade-related technical assistance (WT/COMTD/W/69) and trade-related capacity building (WT/COMTD/W/75), respectively. Members agreed that any general decision by the CommTD on the derestriction of documents should await the decisions taken in the General Council in its ongoing discussions on derestriction. Delegates agreed to derestrict document WT/COMTD/W/65 on the "Participation of Developing Countries in International Trade". Following a statement by Zambia on technology transfer, it was agreed that the CommTD

would give further thought on how best to proceed with work on the transfer of technology. ICTSD Internal Files.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

EVENTS Coming Up This Week

11 July, Geneva: FOLLOW-UP SESSION ON WTO INFORMAL GENERAL COUNCIL (preparatory meeting for 17 July formal General Council). For information contact: Keith Rockwell, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5015.

11-13 July, Geneva: WTO COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT. For information contact Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5374.

11-13 July, Kathmandu, Nepal: SOUTH ASIA CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON FOOD SECURITY. Organised by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Forum for Protection of Public Interest (PRO PUBLIC) and Consumer International - Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (CI-ROAP). For information contact: Ratnakar Adhikari/Dhrubesh C. Regmi, SAWTEE/PRO PUBLIC, P.O. Box 14307, Gautam Buddha Marg, Anam Nagar, Kathmandu, Nepal; tel: (977-1) 268681; fax: 268022, email: rmadi@propublic.wlink.com.np or fppi@fppipc.wlink.com.np.

12 July: INTERNET CHAT WITH EUROPEAN TRADE COMMISSIONER PASCAL LAMY. Commissioner Lamy will discuss how the accession of China to the WTO reinforces the need to reflect on how to reform the multilateral trading system in order to be better organised and further liberalised in the interest of the citizen and businesses of all sizes. Mr. Lamy will be online between 6:00 and 8:00 pm (Central European Time, which is between 1pm and 3pm Washington Time and 13 July 2000 between 0am and 2am Beijing Time) For more information visit: http://europa.eu.int/comm/chat/lamy3/index_en.htm.

12 July, Geneva, Switzerland: IS ASIA STILL IN CRISIS? ANY ROLE FOR THE WORLD BANK? The World Bank Office in Geneva has established a series of dialogues entitled: "An Exchange on Development: A Seminar Series". The main objective is to provide an additional opportunity to exchange views with those who make decisions at the World Bank on issues of common concern. Due to the limited number of seats please confirm your attendance at: tel: (41-22) 799-8872; fax: 799-7694; email: vkeller@worldbank.org.

12 & 14 July, Geneva: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW OF THE EU. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

12 July, Geneva: WTO ACCESSION WORKING PARTY FOR UKRAINE. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5412.

13 July, Geneva: WTO FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5393.

13-14 July, Geneva: WTO SERVICES COUNCIL - SPECIAL SESSION. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5393.

14 July, Geneva: WTO SERVICES COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5393.

15-16 July, Paris, France: EU ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL INFORMAL MEETING. For information contact: Monika Luxem, EC DG-11 (Environment); tel: (32-2) 296-7161; email: monika.luxem@dg11.cec.be.

17 July, Geneva: FORMAL MEETING OF THE WTO GENERAL COUNCIL. The General Council will among others deal with procedures for the appointment of the Director-General; observer status of intergovernmental organisations; review of procedures for circulation and derestriction of WTO documents; internal transparency and effective participation of Members. For information contact: Keith Rockwell, WTO Information and Media Relations, (41-22) 739-5015.

18 July 10:00, Geneva: WTO-NGO BRIEFING ON THE 17 JULY MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL. This briefing will take place at the WTO building, Geneva, Room 64. For information contact: Bernie Kuiten, WTO External Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5676.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/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.

19 & 20 July, Geneva: WTO APPELLATE BODY. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5393.

19 - 21 July, Geneva: WTO TEXTILES MONITORING BODY. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

19 & 20 July, Geneva: WTO WORKSHOP ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

21 July, Geneva: WTO COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

21 July, Geneva: WTO SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations, tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

Other Forthcoming Events

23 - 26 July, Saint John, Canada: RISING TIDE: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR A CHANGING WORLD. This conference highlights the rising importance of community development not only for communities themselves but for co-operative efforts involving businesses, government, non-profits, higher education, and citizen groups. For information contact: Gwen Lister, tel: (1-506) 364-2394; email: glist@mta.ca; Internet: <http://www.comm-dev.org/>.

24 - 26 July, Geneva, Switzerland: UNCTAD EXPERT MEETING ON IMPACT OF THE REFORM PROCESS IN AGRICULTURE ON LDCs AND NET FOOD IMPORTING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THEIR CONCERNS IN MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. The principal objective of this meeting is for experts to exchange views on the impact of the agricultural reform process, in particular the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, as experienced by individual LDCs and net food-importing developing countries, and to discuss how the concerns of those countries could effectively be addressed in the continuation of the reform process. For information contact: UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Support Services, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; tel: (41-22) 907-5007; fax: 907-0056, e-mail: correspondence@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/en/special/clem11no.htm>.

24 - 28 July, New York, New York, USA: UNCTAD INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR LDC III (first part). The Committee is expected to consider the following matters: (a) Review of progress in the preparatory process of the Conference; (b) Substantive preparation for the Conference; (c) Assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action during the 1990s at the country level; (d) Provisional agenda and organisation of work for the Third United UN Conference on the LDCs. For information contact: UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Support Services, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; tel: (41-22) 907-5007; fax: 907-0056, e-mail: correspondence@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/en/special/ldc3p1no.htm>.

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. Submissions of publications to ICTSD's documentation centre would also be welcome (contact mgalvin@ictsd.ch).

Electronic Resources UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2000. Available on the web at <http://www.undp.org/hdr2000/>. Dragged down by the AIDS epidemic and by wars, Africa maintained its monopoly on the bottom places in a quality-of-life rating released last week by the UNDP. Mozambique is number 168 and Sierra Leone was ranked last in the 174-country Human Development Index that considers income, education, life expectancy and health care. The bottom 24 countries were all in sub-Saharan Africa.

AGROWEB, a network of country Websites in Central and Eastern Europe, is helping to close the information gap in agriculture and related topics in the region. The network initiative is the result of

an on-going collaboration between the FAO Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe, 19 countries, and the Central and Eastern European Chapter of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD) (<http://www.iaaldcee.hu/>). There are 19 individual country sites in place and others in the pipeline. To view the Agroweb country sites in development, click on the relevant link below: Azerbaijan (<http://agroweb.bstc.azeri.com/>); Armenia (<http://www.tech.org.ge/agroweb/armenia/index.html>); Belarus (<http://www.cnsnb.ru/agroweb/belal/belal.htm>); Bosnia and Herzegovina (<http://www.agr.hr/agroweb/ba/>); Bulgaria (<http://www.uni-sz.bg/agroweb>); Croatia (<http://www.agr.hr/agroweb/>); Czech Republic (<http://www.uzpi.cz/agw/awcz.htm>); Estonia (<http://www.agronet.ee/fao/>); Georgia (<http://www.tech.org.ge/agroweb/>); Hungary (<http://www.gak.hu/aw/>); Latvia (http://www.llu.lv/agro_web/); Lithuania (<http://www.zum.lt/agroweb/index.htm>); Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (<http://www.vetinst.ukim.edu.mk/agroweb/index.htm>); Moldova (<http://www.agro.net.md>); Poland (<http://www.gak.hu/aw/poland/>); Rumania (<http://www.newsyst.ro/agroweb/>); Russian Federation (http://www.cnsnb.ru/agroweb/agroweb_e.htm); Slovakia (<http://www.uvtip.sk/english/awsk/>); Ukraine (<http://www.awu.kiev.ua/>); Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEUR) (<http://www.fao.org/Regional/SEUR/DEFAULT.HTM>)

CORRIGENDUM ON AGRICULTURE

BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest published a story in Vol. 4, No. 26 (4 July 2000) reporting on the meeting at the WTO of the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture. In our reporting on topics of discussion at the meeting, we stated: "One of the most fractious debates at the WTO -- that over export subsidy payments to farmers -- emerged at the meeting." To clarify, export subsidy payments are not usually paid directly to farmers; payment schemes tend to be country-specific and depend on the marketing and export setup for agriculture in each country. In addition, there are actually two ongoing, equally fractious debates at the WTO: one over domestic support payments to farmers, which is current practice in the US, and another over export subsidies, over which the EU has been targeted by the Cairns group of agriculture-exporting countries.

We apologise for the errors.

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