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EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to the Swiss National Holiday on 1 August, *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest Vol. 4, No. 30 was delayed one day. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

CHINA'S ACCESSION PROGRESSES DESPITE DIPLOMATIC HURDLES

The WTO Working Party on the Accession of China concluded its eleventh meeting last week in Geneva, where delegates said they made concrete progress in moving forward with negotiations. Participants reviewed progress on bilateral negotiations, but focused primarily upon China's draft accession protocol, the draft Report of the Working Party and the annexes to the accession protocol.

Outside the Working Party meeting, however, discussions were more heated. China's proposal to include implicit recognition of its sovereignty over Taiwan in the working party report generated considerable media interest, as did ambiguity surrounding China's stance on agricultural export subsidies. In the first case, Members reacted strongly against China's proposed modification of the working party report's language, which would imply recognition of Taiwan as a customs territory of China, integrating the "one China" principle into the accessions agreement. Currently, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong are recognized at the WTO as "separate customs territories." In the second area of controversy, some WTO members expressed indignation at China's alleged retreat from its earlier promise to forgo the use of export subsidies in agriculture.

Sources at the Chinese mission in Geneva downplayed these tensions, expressing confidence that they would be "quickly and satisfactorily resolved." On the Taiwan issue, top Chinese negotiator Long Yongtu assured Members that the situation "should not be dramatized," since China would be able to "handle this issue carefully in the context of the WTO." Regarding agricultural subsidies, Long emphasized that China would "strictly abide by and earnestly implement all the commitments made in the bilateral agreements." Sources in the Chinese delegation reiterated that while China had pledged not to use export subsidies, it would reserve all the rights and privileges accorded to developing countries in the Uruguay Round's Agreement on Agriculture. Above all, noted one source, China would resist other countries' attempts to renegotiate aspects of bilateral treaties to include new issues or demands.

According to one European source, China's 14-year road to WTO membership remains on track, but a few hurdles lie ahead. Bilateral negotiations with the 37 countries that originally requested them are almost complete, but negotiations with Mexico and Switzerland remain stalled over anti-dumping and market access issues, respectively. In addition, some member governments have voiced doubts about China's ability to implement the accession agreements effectively, and are actively requesting concrete information from China about its capacity to fulfil its treaty obligations. China also faces the assembly and review of a new draft Working Party Report, Accession Protocol, and protocol annexes, which will involve the synthesis of all bilateral and multilateral commitments China has negotiated as part of its accessions package. The next meeting of the Working Party will be held in the second half of September 2000.

"China Downplays Differences Emerging from WTO Accession Talks," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 27 July 2000; "Mexico, China Edge Toward Deal on China's WTO Accession," DOW JONES NEWSWIRES 26 July 2000; "WTO 'Snags' on Taiwan," SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, 28 July 2000; "One China Issue Clouds WTO Chinese Talks," REUTERS 27 July 2000; "WTO Reports Progress on China Membership Negotiations," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 27 July 2000; "Substantial Work Remains Undone in Talks On China's Joining WTO," WTO REPORTER, 2 July 2000, ICTSD Internal Files.

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UPDATES: MOTOR VEHICLES, BANANAS, AND TEXTILES

The WTO Dispute Settlement Body met on 27 July 2000. The agenda for the meeting included surveillance of implementation of recommendations already adopted by the dispute settlement body, a review of current disputes, and the establishment of panels for new complaints.

India - Measures affecting trade and investment in the motor vehicle sector

At the 27 July meeting, the US requested the formation of a panel to address certain measures in the Indian automotive sector that the US considers trade-distorting. This was the second request by the United States; under WTO rules, a second request can be blocked only if all the trade body members, including the US, agree to reject the request. The current Indian regulations at issue state that vehicles must contain a certain level of local content. The US claims that these requirements are in violation of the WTO's TRIMs agreements and the GATT. In commenting on the decision of the WTO dispute settlement body, US Ambassador Rita Hayes pointed out that India had adopted these restrictive investment measures almost three years after the TRIMs agreement came into

force. Thus, according to Hayes, the investment measures never qualified for the normal five year implementation delay available to developing countries because the measures were never reported to the WTO as required by the agreement. India's ambassador, Srinivasan Narayanan, said that he was "deeply distressed and saddened" that the US had decided to bring the case, and that the decision disregarded both the December "due restraint" agreement.

Surveillance of Implementation of Recommendations Adopted by the DSB

In its latest report to the dispute settlement body, the EU reported that the Commission had concentrated its efforts on the negotiation of tariff quotas allocated on the basis of traditional trade flows. However, there has been a major stumbling block to reaching an agreement on this method of quota allocation, namely the reference period to be used. Thus, according to the filed report, discussions on this basis are at an impasse. The EC reported that it will now examine managing the proposed TRQs on a first come, first served basis.

Turkey submitted its first status report to the DSB in its dispute with India over restrictions on imports of textile and clothing products. Turkey reported that authorities had held preliminary discussions with Indian authorities in New Delhi in an attempt to find a solution to this dispute. Reportedly, in an attempt to further discussions, Turkey has already informed India of its readiness to meet the Indian counterparts to take up the substance of the ideas suggested during preliminary discussions. However, Turkey also made it clear that, due to its legal obligations and commitments within the framework of the Customs Union with the European Communities (EC), the process would require decisions to be taken together with the EC as well as with India. Thus, according to the documents submitted to the DSB, the Government of Turkey held consultations with the EC on related issues, including alternative solutions to the application of quantitative limits as recommended by the Panel and the Appellate Body.

Other Dispute Settlement News

Japan is reportedly considering acting in tandem with the European Union and filing a complaint at the WTO against the US "carousel provision" law. At the DSB meeting on 27 July, the Japanese envoy at the WTO, Koichi Haraguchi, stated that Japan reserves the right to file a petition. The U.S. envoy, Rita Hayes, previously turned down the Japanese request for "third party" participation in consultations.

In other news, the WTO on 25 July confirmed that France is permitted to maintain its ban on all chrysotile asbestos in a ruling released to the parties for comments. The ruling finalizes a confidential finding issued on 13 July (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4, Number 24, 20 June, 2000; <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.25-07-00.htm>). The ruling is due to be made public within a week.

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"WTO Establishes Panel to Rule on India's Auto Investment Rules," WTO REPORTER, 28 July 2000; "U.S. Takes India to Task at WTO," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 27 July 2000; "World Trade Organization backs French ban on Canadian asbestos," BRIDGENEWS, 26 July 2000; "WTO Upholds French Ban on Asbestos in Canada Dispute," BLOOMBERG, 24 July 2000; "Japan mulls trade action over U.S. 'carousel' trade law," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 27 July 2000;

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETS TO FORGE LDC-III AGENDA

The Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries met from 24 to 28 July in New York, in preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-III) to be held in Brussels from 14-21 May 2001. Delegates discussed country-level programmes of action, international support measures for least developed countries (LDCs), social development and follow-up mechanisms. The delegates also established a conference format for LDC-III and agreed the conference would focus on poverty eradication.

UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero called for "a bold but at the same time pragmatic vision" toward better integrating LDCs into the world economy. "The international community will ultimately be judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable members," Mr. Ricupero said at the opening of the Preparatory Committee meeting on 24 July. Mr. Ricupero warned against letting the LDC-III become a talk-shop, and said the conference must go far to bridge the credibility gap arising from the failure of the international community to live up to its commitments made at the Second LDC Conference in 1990 toward reversing the marginalisation of LDCs. Mr. Ricupero called for a programme of action marked by specific commitments from various development partners, the private sector, municipalities and civil society.

Other officials echoed Mr. Ricupero's call for a more targeted approach toward a final action plan resulting from LDC-III. An EU official called for a concise, operational document to be adopted. The president of the Group of 77 developing countries plus China (G-77) called for the inclusion of clear and measurable targets and implementation timeframes.

Fifty non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from both North and South met in parallel to the Preparatory Committee from 24-26 July. The NGOs also warned against LDC-III yielding "a hollow set of promises," according to an NGO statement. "Simply seeking to include the LDCs in a liberalized world economy without seriously addressing their problems will achieve nothing and will only ensure that the richer countries become even richer, with poorer countries getting poorer even faster," the NGO statement said.

Regarding international support measures, delegates reached consensus on the fact that donors have not honoured the commitment undertaken in the 1990 LDC-II Programme of Action to devote 0.15 percent of their GNP to official development assistance (ODA). Only four countries -Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden - have met or surpassed that target, and ODA to LDCs has actually fallen since LDC-II.

There are currently 48 countries classified as LDCs by the UN, up from 25 when the category was first created in 1971. LDCs account for about 10 percent of world population. Classification as an

LDC is based on a number of criteria, *inter alia*, per capita GDP of less than US \$ 800 and a country's economic diversification (e.g. share of manufacturing in GDP). Draft national programmes of action submitted by LDCs are available at: <http://www.unctad.org/en/subsites/lpcs/document.htm>.

"World's poorest countries targeted for priority international action," UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE (TAD/INF/2852), 28 July 2000; "UNCTAD secretary-general urges international community to take bold, pragmatic approach to poorest countries," UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE (TAD/INF/2851), 25 July 2000; "Conference committee begins prep," UN WIRE, 27 July 2000.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: EUROPE

The EU and South Africa hit another snag in their ongoing efforts to conclude a wine and spirits agreement as part of a larger EU-S. Africa trade deal. The EU-South African agreement, signed in October 1999, covers 90 percent of the US\$20 billion in annual bilateral trade between the EU and S. Africa. Disagreement over the wines and spirits component of the accord forced trade officials to de-couple wines and spirits from the broader agreement that went into effect from 1 July. (See *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 8, 29 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.29-02-00.htm>.)

The remaining disagreements over wines and spirits were thought to have been resolved in June negotiations. However, S. African officials said that when a revised text was forwarded from the EU, it differed markedly from the language agreed at the June talks. S. Africa refused to agree to the accord as forwarded.

The EU warned in response that the delay in concluding the accord would postpone the anticipated 1 September launch date, and indeed could force the EU to re-negotiate the wines and spirits accord all together since the negotiating mandate approved by the European Commission is set to expire. EU Farm Commissioner Franz Fischler urged South Africa to "adopt the texts as they stand," and to work toward desired changes after the agreement had come into force.

S. African Trade Ministry spokesman Edwin Smith noted that while the delay was regrettable, "it is far more important to have an agreement that reflects our wishes and is mutually acceptable... than meeting deadlines that have been hung over our heads."

The main points of disagreement between EU and S. Africa have revolved around the EU's insistence that S. African wine and spirit producers cease the use of "geographical denominations" (e.g. "grappa," "port" or "sherry") protected under EU law. The spirits dispute has served to damage EU-S. African relations and hurt EU credibility with developing countries. Reflecting the strained EU-S. Africa trade relationship, Mr. Smith warned of reverberations in other forums. "We all meet in multilateral international forums - not just South Africa and the Europeans but all the developing countries. That is where their cavalier attitude will rebound on them," Mr. Smith said.

In other news, Poland announced in July it would create a so-called parliamentary super-committee charged with picking up the pace of Poland's efforts to join the EU. Poland, a WTO Member, has targeted 1 January 2003 for EU accession. If it is to meet this timeframe, observers estimate that Poland must pass 180 accession-related laws by the end of 2002. Poland must also conclude talks

on an agricultural regime with the EU. This has thus far proved difficult as Polish farmers -- fearful of losing their livelihood - have expressed scepticism toward EU membership. Poland has 2 million farms employing 25 percent of the workforce, compared to 7 million farms EU-wide. The Polish Peasants' party estimates that only 600,000 Polish farms would survive after Poland joins the EU. Farm talks could stall until after Polish presidential elections in late 2001. The EU has already concluded farm talks with other candidates for EU membership - Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Slovenia and Bulgaria.

In other news, the EU and Japan on 19 July reconfirmed their commitment to co-operate on multilateral trade issues. The two countries reiterated their support for an early round of global trade talks.

On 1 August 2000, the European Commission released its sixteenth annual report on US barriers to trade and investment. The report identifies a "considerable number of impediments" to international trade, including the "carousel" tariff legislation designed to intensify pressure on the European Union to comply with WTO rulings on bananas and beef. The EU condemns US "unilateralism" in the conduct of trade policy, pointing to the extraterritorial Helms-Burton Act, and calls upon the US to

liberalise its government procurement policies, customs barriers and application of technical standards. The full text of the report is available on the European Commission website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/whats_new/ustb_rep.htm.

"EU-S. Africa agreement hits snag," REUTERS, 25 July 2000; "Poland raises tempo of efforts to join EU," FINANCIAL TIMES, 14 July 2000; "EU-Poland fail again to strike bilateral farm deal," REUTERS, 26 July 2000; "EU, Japan to declare close links on trade policies," REUTERS, 17 July 2000.

IN BRIEF

Multinational Corporations Sign UN 'Global Compact'

The heads of 50 multinational companies joined Secretary General Kofi Annan on 26 July to sign the "Global Compact," a United Nations initiative intended to encourage socially responsible corporate behaviour. The compact calls on companies to implement nine "core principles" covering environmental, social and labour concerns, including the elimination of child labour. Signatories also pledge to post reports detailing their progress in applying these principles on a publicly accessible website (<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>). According to sources at the UN, the initiative was designed partly to keep the debate over labour and environmental standards out of the World Trade Organisation, which "was never designed and cannot handle being an arbiter of human rights, labour and environmental issues." Reaction to the compact was mixed. Some observers applauded the UN's attempt to encourage private companies to contribute to social development, especially where national governments have been unwilling or unable to set higher standards. Other groups, including some prominent non-governmental organisations, accused the United Nations of helping corporations whitewash their images without actually binding them to change their behaviour. Annan, however, defended the Compact. "We cannot wait for governments to do it all," he said. "Better to engage corporations than to do nothing at all."

World Intellectual Property Organization Information Workshop on Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge (Geneva, 28 July 2000).

On 24-28 July, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) presented its ongoing work in intellectual property and traditional knowledge at the Annual Meeting of the Indigenous People Working Group. During the 1998-1999 biennium, WIPO took an exploratory approach to its new activities on the Intellectual Property aspects of Traditional Knowledge (TK), which includes knowledge relating to agriculture, biodiversity, science and technology, ecology, medicine, including related medicines and remedies. It also includes "expressions of folklore" in the form of music, dance, song, handicrafts, designs, stories and artwork, elements of languages, geographical indications and symbols, and movable cultural properties.

As part of its work between June 1998 and November 1999, WIPO conducted 9 fact-finding missions (FFMs) to 28 countries in the South Pacific, Southern and Eastern Africa, South Asia, North America, Central America, West Africa, the Arab countries, South America and the Caribbean. The FFMs had the objective of identifying and exploring the intellectual property needs and expectations of new beneficiaries, including the holders of indigenous knowledge and innovations, in order to promote the contribution of the intellectual property system to their social, cultural and economic development. A general report on the FFMs is being prepared by WIPO and a draft has been published on WIPO's website for public comment (<http://www.wipo.int/traditionalknowledge/report>). Comments are welcome until 30 October 2000. The findings of this Report will be discussed with WIPO Member States and others at fora in the course of the 2000-2001 biennium, with a view toward defining and guiding future WIPO activities on the intellectual property protection of traditional knowledge.

UNCTAD Releases Study: "Capital Flows and Growth in Africa"

On 27 July, UNCTAD issued its latest study, "Capital Flows and Growth in Africa." Sixteen sub-Saharan African countries, not including South Africa, were analysed in the report and several scenarios were developed, based on UNCTAD economists' simulations and policy conclusions on lessons from experiences in Asia and South America. The study finds that official inflows, through multi- and bilateral lending can be a catalyst for private flows. However, it also finds that, in Africa, such lending falls away as growth picks up. Several changes need to take place, according to the report, including the regulation and control of short-term capital flows, the curtailing of capital flight and the removal of tight protectionism for home-grown industries. The UNCTAD report also points out that nations must also make investments in infrastructure, education, and other basic human services.

"Multinationals in Labour Pledge," FINANCIAL TIMES, 28 July 2000; "Multinationals Agree on Pact for Labor Rights," REUTERS 27 July 2000; "UN Signs Up With Big Business to Promote Values," CNN, 27 July 2000; "Massive aid needed for growth in Africa: UN report,," REUTERS, 28 July 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

EVENTSComing Up This Week

2 August, Guadalajara, Mexico: CONFERENCE ON E-COMMERCE IN LATIN AMERICA, presented by LatinTrade.com and UPS. This conference will feature industry experts and case studies from successful Internet companies already operating in Latin America, and will take an in-depth look at what makes an e-commerce business successful. For information contact: Mari Naranjo, tel: (1-305) 702-5756; email: mari@latintrade-inc.com; Internet: <http://www.latintrade.com>.

2 - 5 August, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: INVEXPORT2000 - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SECOND INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT, organised by: Dominican Exporters Association (ADOEXPO), Dominican Export Promotion Center (CEDOPEX), Dominican Republic Office for the Promotion of Investment (DROP-IN). The primary objective of this event is to offer exporters, national and international business firms, and industry associations an opportunity to exchange ideas, goods, and services and to establish business relations for advancing trade and investment. Trade and Investment Missions from United States, South and Central America, Caribbean, Europe, and Asia are participating. For more information, contact: Pena Valdez & Asociados, tel: (1-809) 567-1565/2912; email: pvaldez@codetel.net.do.

4 August, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO SPECIAL DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY. For information, contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, (41-22) 739-5393.

4 August, Monterrey, Mexico: CONFERENCE ON E-COMMERCE IN LATIN AMERICA, presented by LatinTrade.com and UPS. This conference will feature industry experts and case studies from successful Internet companies already operating in Latin America, and will take an in-depth look at what makes an e-commerce business successful. For information contact: Mari Naranjo, tel: (1-305) 702-5756; email: mari@latintrade-inc.com; Internet: <http://www.latintrade.com>.

5-11 August, W. Lafayette, Indiana, USA: EIGHTH ANNUAL COURSE IN GLOBAL TRADE ANALYSIS. The Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) is designed to facilitate multi-country, economy-wide analyses of issues relating to trade, technology, resources and the environment. For information, contact: contact Judy Conner, Center for Global Trade Analysis, 1145 Krannert Building, Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN 47907-1145; tel.: (1-765) 494-4267; fax: (765) 494-9176; internet: <http://www.gtapi.org>, select "courses".

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.

Please note that due to holidays the WTO will not be holding meetings over the month of August.

Other Forthcoming Events

25 Aug - 02 September, Basel, Switzerland: IFOAM 2000: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). The Convention is open to everyone interested in organic agriculture and in sustainable development: farmers, scientists, teachers, advisors, certifiers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, consumers, policy makers and officials. The Convention will include lectures, workshops, posters and panel debates. A programme and proceedings will be available at each event. For information, visit: <http://www.ifoam2000.ch/>.

27 Aug - 1 September, Prague, Czech Republic: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NATURE CONSERVATION IN BIG CITIES. The participants in the conference will exchange experience with practical conservation of valuable natural sites in urbanized areas. Strong attention will be paid to environmental education, communication and public relations. For information, visit: <http://www.praha-mesto.cz/praga2000>.

31 August - 5 September, Kitakyushu, Japan: FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC. For information, contact: Nirmal Andrews, Director UN Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP); tel: (66-2)288-1870-4; fax: (66-2)280-3829; e-mail: andrewsni@un.org

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).

THE EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENTAL TAXES ON THE VOLUME OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, by Robert E. Kohn, in *Ecological Economics*, v. 34, no. 1; July 2000; pp.77-87. This paper is a response to Røpke's (1994) question whether environmental taxes increase or decrease the volume of international trade. Using a three-country Heckscher--Ohlin--Samuelson model, the authors show that the effect can be in either direction.

GLOBAL ECONOMY QUARTERLY, a new academic journal introduced by R.T. Edwards, Inc., a recently formed scholarly publisher. This is the first official publication of the International Trade & Finance Association, and is published in cooperation with the Imperial Valley Campus of San Diego State University. For more information, visit: <http://www.rtedwards.com/journals/GEQ/>.

JPAC ADVISORIES. Following the last Regular Session of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) held on 11-13 June 2000 in Dallas, Texas, there were five JPAC advice that were transmitted to the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC): 1. Advice 00-03: Guidance Document for Improving Environmental Performance and Compliance: 10 Elements of Effective Environmental Management Systems; 2. Advice 00-04: The North American Fund for

Environmental Cooperation(NAFEC); 3. Advice 00-05: Children's Health and the Environment; 4. Advice 00-06: A North American Regional Action Plan (NARAP) for Lead; 5. Advice 00-07: Draft CEC Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Plan. All advice to Council and other JPAC documents are available on the JPAC page of the CEC web site at http://www.cec.org/who_we_are/jpac/index.cfm?varlan=english or by request from Jocelyne Morin at the CEC Secretariat, tel: (1-514) 350-4366; fax: 350-4314; email: jmorin@ccemtl.org.

THE REALITY OF SUSTAINABLE TRADE, edited by Sarah Roberts and Nick Robins, 2000. This report contains case studies of experiences in developing countries faced with the twin imperatives of commercial success and sustainable development: in Bangladesh (garments, leather and shrimp), Ghana (cocoa and pineapple), India (textiles), and South Africa (tourism). It reviews the emerging demand-side pressures on developing country producers, and concludes with a progress report on the state of sustainable trade and pointers for future action. To obtain, contact: IIED Bookshop, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK; fax: (44(0)20) 7388-2826; email: bookshop@iied.org.

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