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WTO LOGJAMMED OVER TRIPS

WTO Members continue to wrangle over the contentious issues of Article 27.3(b) (patenting or sui generis protection for plant varieties) and review of implementation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). The issue of Geographical Indications has also become a topic of concern to many countries. Meeting on 21-22 September, WTO Members discussed these and a wide range of other issues on the TRIPs agenda. While delegates moved beyond procedural talks to more in-depth debates, little consensus is emerging on most of the agenda items.

On the Article 27.3(b) review, discussion went into considerably greater depth than previously, with new papers from India, the African Group (proposed by Mauritius), and the US. India and the African Group - - supported by a number of developing country Members including Brazil -- are pushing to have the TRIPs Council take into account issues such as biodiversity, traditional knowledge, benefit sharing, farmers rights to resow and share seeds, and the ethics of patenting of life forms.

For its part, the US focused more on technical discussions and argued that if there is to be any benefit-sharing then this should be at the initial stage of exploring biological materials, rather than after new inventions have been made.

Developing country delegates and a number of non-governmental groups want the WTO to engage in a substantive debate on this topic, as they are concerned that the TRIPs agreement lacks measures to protect traditional knowledge and biodiversity and needs to be altered. Many -- principally those in the G-15 and G-77 -- have asked for harmonisation between the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and TRIPs, which the US is resisting strongly. The African Group is asking to take references to life forms (including plants) out of the Agreement altogether, while India is pushing to have language inserted that would require disclosure of the source of genetic material on any patent applications. The US and other developed countries, on the other hand, prefer to keep the article as is and discuss only technical or procedural aspects. One developing country representative pointed out that regardless of the US position, "there is in effect a substantive debate going on anyways."

Dialogue also took place around the review of the implementation of the TRIPs Agreement as mandated under Article 71.1. Both India and Australia presented papers, with India focusing on 'confidence-building' aspects of the review. India called for the review to focus on Articles 7 and 8 which deal with objectives (creation and technology transfer for socio-economic welfare) and principles (that governments can take vital health and other social issues into account, and can prevent abuse of IP protection), arguing that there should be an assessment of the social, economic and welfare impacts of the Agreement. There was little agreement among Members about how to structure the review, and the process will continue.

Geographical Indications Becoming A Major Issue

Another outstanding impasse revolved around the review of the application of geographical indications. Currently, geographical indicators protection under TRIPs is granted only to wines and spirits, but Article 24 mandates Members to "enter into negotiations aimed at increasing the protection of individual indications under Article 23." Some discussion arose at the last TRIPs meeting in June over whether "increasing the level of protection" means increasing the level of protection for products already covered by Article 23 (wines and spirits) or whether it mandates an expansion to other products.

Switzerland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Iceland, India, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and Turkey have weighed in in favour of extending a higher level of protection to additional products and have proposed a global -- or "basket" -- approach in which all negotiations and reviews on geographical indications would be discussed together. Cuba has also come out in support of expanding geographical indications protection to other products, namely for its tobacco and rum.

New Zealand, Australia, the US, Canada and others said they were not prepared to consider expanding the scope at this stage, and continued to argue that the TRIPs Council does not have a mandate to negotiate expanding the "higher level" coverage and that current experience and potential issues should be examined in detail first.

TRIPs Council Chair Ambassador Chak Mun See of Singapore told Members he would hold consultations (understood to include the possibility of an informal meeting in October) on the whole

range of geographical indications issues. For the first time, specific geographical indications were mentioned, including "basmati" (which is not a place name but is associated with parts of India and Pakistan), and darjeeling tea. India raised the issue of basmati with the Council, in reference to the ongoing dispute it is engaged in with the US over the American company RiceTec's use of a variety of basmati, which India has said is illegally using the basmati name for its product. Members indicated that this issue is unlikely to be resolved at the TRIPs level before the WTO panel rules on the case.

Observer Status for IGOs

With respect to observer status for International Intergovernmental Organisations, Members continued to disagree on whether to give some organisations such as the Secretariat of the CBD ad hoc observer status, or whether to wait until the General Council has finished its own consideration of this question. Again, the US is opposed to linking the CBD -- to which it is not a party -- to TRIPs. No decision was taken on this point either.

ICTSD Internal Files.

EU WILLING TO ADDRESS EXPORT SUBSIDIES AT NEXT WTO AG TALKS

In advance of this week's third WTO negotiating session on agriculture on 28-29 September, the EU released a proposal on 19 September indicating that it would consider making further reductions in its export subsidies provided other WTO Members reciprocated with cuts in agricultural support measures. The move is the clearest signal yet that the EU is prepared to start negotiations on reducing export refunds to its farming sector.

Nevertheless, in a jab at domestic agricultural support programs in the US and at state trading enterprises in Canada and Australia, EC Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler emphasised that any reductions in EU export refunds could only be done if all forms of export subsidisation were made "transparent and subject to agreed disciplines." Fischler said that export credits, food aid and state trading enterprises "can all be used to distort trade," and that they remained "totally uncontrolled" under current WTO rules. The highly distorting -- and in many instances, perverse effects -- of massive dumping of grains in the form of food aid, is highlighted for the first time as an issue for the WTO to regulate.

The EU paper calls for "a profound analysis" of these other export promotion tools in order to better assess their impact on trade. It also responds to accusations that the export refunds it currently uses as part of its Common Agriculture Policy are the only trade-distorting form of export subsidisation.

The US and the Cairns Group of agriculture-exporting countries have in previous proposals called for the elimination of all export subsidies, which they deem the single most abusive trade practice (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4, No. 26, 4 July 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.04-07-00.htm>). According to a study by London's Institute of Economic Affairs US quoted in a recent Wall Street Journal Europe article by US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, trade-distorting supports to farmers in the EU "reduce production of dairy products by nearly half in Africa, Southeast Asia and other developing regions, and cuts livestock production in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union by a fifth."

For its part, the Cairns group -- comprised of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay -- has submitted a proposal on domestic support issues. Inter alia, the group is pushing for reductions in price support and domestic subsidies. The proposal also includes a section on Special and Differential treatment for developing countries, advocating enhanced green box (permitted subsidies) provisions for poorer Members and enhanced technical assistance to assist agricultural and rural development, and food security programs in developing countries. Cairns Group countries have indicated that they will submit a plan to expand market access for farm products at the next negotiating session in mid-November.

Both the EU and Cairns Group proposals can be found on the WTO website at: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/negoti_e.htm.

According to trade sources, Mercosur (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay), together with other Latin American countries, has also submitted a proposal for discussion at the 28-29 meeting, primarily on export subsidies.

The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) sets out three broad areas of commitments from Member states, namely in domestic support, export subsidies, and market access. Under the negotiations begun in 2000, Members are expected to submit their negotiating proposals by 31 December this year.

"Australia min upbeat gains in WTO farm trade talks," DOW JONES, 24 August 2000; "Brussels offers to negotiate cuts in farm export subsidies," FINANCIAL TIMES, 20 September 2000; "The way forward," by Charlene Barshefsky, WALL STREET JOURNAL EUROPE, 7 September 2000; "WTO EU wants disciplines for all forms of export subsidisation," EU D-G TRADE PRESS RELEASE, 19 September 2000; EU seeks to widen WTO ag round talks on export subsidies," DOW JONES, 19 September 2000; ICTSD

Internal Files.

INDIA FOCUSES ON FOOD SECURITY

Speaking at a 13 September meeting of Indian farmers organisations, political parties and non-governmental organisations, India's Agriculture Minister Nitish Kumar outlined Delhi's WTO agriculture strategy. Kumar indicated that the country's primary objective "will be to ensure the continued food security of our people including 100 million farmers and 75 million agricultural labourers." The Minister was holding consultations as part of its process towards preparing its proposals for the WTO agriculture talks.

Seeking to allay fears among farmers that removal of quantitative restrictions (QRs) on agricultural imports under the AoA could engender harmful impacts on domestic agricultural products, Kumar assured participants at the meeting that India had considerable flexibility for imposing higher levels of tariffs within the bound level on import of agricultural produce to deal with possible adverse consequences from removal of QRs. "If other nations dump agricultural products here, the government will raise tariff barriers as it has done in the case of edible oils," he said. Delhi has

recently raised import duties on several agricultural items such as wheat, rice, millet, apples, sugar, skimmed milk powder and edible oils in order to protect domestic producers from cheaper imports.

At a major conference scheduled for 2 October in Karnataka, India, close to 100 farmers' associations from 68 countries will meet to call for, *inter alia*, opposition to the WTO and the need to restore agricultural subsidies. According to M.D. Nanjundaswamy, president the Karnataka State Farmer's Association, the meeting will advocate the rejection of agricultural biotechnology such as genetically-modified seeds, and will stress the need to employ sustainable forms of agriculture to ensure basic human rights, dignity and food for all.

"It had become imperative to fight against the WTO Agreement [on Agriculture] to protect the farmers of the third world," Nanjundaswamy said. "The sole aim of the WTO Agreement was to find new markets for agriculture products produced in the US and the EU."

"Indian govt to protect farmers despite WTO regime," ASIA PULSE, 18 July 2000; "Karnataka farmers plan global meet to oppose WTO," TIMES OF INDIA, 14 September 2000.

EU ANNOUNCES PROPOSAL GRANTING DUTY-FREE ACCESS TO LDCS

In what many trade analysts consider a meaningful effort to garner support for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, last week the EU announced a unilateral trade concession that would eliminate all existing tariffs and quotas on all imports from 48 Least-Developed Countries (LDCs). Dubbed the 'Everything But Arms' (EBA) proposal, the EU intends to extend complete access to all LDC-produced goods except arms and munitions, and would impose a three-year phase-in on 'sensitive' goods -- i.e. bananas, sugar and rice.

EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy has said that the proposal will take effect immediately upon ratification by the European Parliament. Current EU LDC imports are negligible, amounting to approximately 0.003 percent of total EU imports, or 77 million euros. Despite this, the EU remains the largest market for LDC exports with 56 percent of LDC goods ending up in Europe.

The EU has stated that at a time when oil shocks are threatening to slow economic growth in all regions of the globe, improved market access through the EBA will help LDCs adjust to higher global oil prices. But Commissioner Lamy also said that, "We of course recognise that duty free-access alone is not enough to enable the poorest countries to benefit from liberalised trade. We need to help them build their capacity to supply goods of export quality, and we reaffirm this Commission's commitment to continued technical and financial assistance to this end." At the same time that the EBA was announced, the European Commission also announced its intentions to improve the distribution of AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis pharmaceutical products to those countries where such diseases are rampant.

As IMF-World Bank talks get underway in Prague this week, the proposal addresses many of the concerns that will be brought to Prague by protesters who are expected to number as many as 20,000. In the lead-up to last year's WTO Ministerial in Seattle, the market access issue was high on the G-77 trade agenda, which many believe contributed to the failed launch of the Seattle Round. Now, as the public debate around 'globalisation' is set to focus on the events in Prague, the EU proposal appears to acknowledge the marginalisation of the LDCs.

There has been speculation from many quarters, though, that by showing itself sympathetic to the needs of the world's 48 poorest countries, the EU's EBA initiative could effectively divide developing countries' solidarity in opposition to the launching a new round of trade talks. Extending unrestricted market access to the 48 LDCs could dramatically alter this political impasse.

Included on the UN list of 48 LDCs mentioned in the EBA are 39 ACP (African Caribbean and Pacific) countries who, in June of this year, signed the Cotonou Agreement with the EU setting out a trade negotiations agenda scheduled to begin in 2002. The EBA, if ratified, goes well beyond the Cotonou Agreement in terms of inclusivity and could possibly generate friction in the Cotonou negotiations process as ACP countries would experience increased competition from the nine other LDCs listed in the EBA. Other sources of opposition to the EBA might also come from developing countries not currently listed on the UN LDC list. Indian coffee growers, for example, are concerned that they may lose critical market share to LDCs who have the capacity to produce coffee more cheaply and export it duty-free to the EU.

The ACP LDCs are: Sudan, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Togo, Benin, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Comoros, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Haiti, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Samoa.

The non-ACP LDCs are : Yemen, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia.

For a complete list of the products listed in the EBA visit:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/pdf/ebaproductlist.pdf>.

"EU Seeks Duty-Free Access for Poor Nations' Products," BLOOMBERG, 29 September 2000; "EU Calls for Duty-free Market Access for Poorest Countries," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 20 September 2000; "EU May End Duty for Poor Nations," FINANCIAL TIMES, 21 September 2000; "EU Launches Trade, Health Initiatives," REUTERS, 20 September 2000; "Lamy Pushes for Opening Trade with Poorest Countries," WALL STREET JOURNAL, 21 September 2000; "Commission proposes 'Everything but Arms' Access to EU Markets for Least Developing Countries," THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 20 September 2000; "Trekking it Up to the WTO," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 18 September 2000; ICTSD Internal files.

IMPLEMENTATION HELD BACK BY NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES

On 18-19 September 2000, the WTO General Council convened an informal discussion covering ongoing issues in the implementation of the Uruguay Round. The work of the General Council Implementation Special Sessions was laid out in July 2000 when WTO Members mandated a schedule of meetings to address developing country concerns previously identified in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the 19 October 1999 draft declaration for the Seattle Ministerial (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 26, 4 July 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story2.04-07-00.htm>). Last week's discussion was an informal precursor to more formal talks scheduled for 18-19 October 2000.

Some trade analysts regard the implementation dialogue as the central impediment to agreement on a new round of negotiations, and the talks are at an impasse between developing and developed country Members. At last week's discussion, once again very little headway was made as most developing countries pushed to have their implementation concerns resolved at the General Council level, while major industrialised Members argued that most of these issues should be resolved either at the technical committee level -- where historically progress has been very slow -- or in the context of a new round. As one trade official attending the sessions said, "this is...a standoff between the developing countries at a political level and developed countries at a technical level."

Nevertheless, there was a degree of progress on some issues indicating that an offer might be made in the 18-19 October meeting, according to one member official. Some industrialised countries have agreed to consider both the requests to prohibit anti-dumping investigations for one year following the 'finalisation of a previous investigation for the same product' (paragraph 21.a. of the draft Declaration of the Seattle Ministerial) and to formalise more frequent review assessments of the TBT and SPS agreements. In addition to these, a commitment was made to study the relationship between the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It was also mentioned that a "Development Box" might be tabled which would give leeway to developing country agricultural subsidies, but the likelihood of such an offer being formalised remains remote.

"Industrial Nations Balk at Major LDC Implementation Demands," INSIDE US TRADE, 22 September 2000; "Developing Countries are Still More Determined to Put Their Stamp on the Multilateral Negotiating Culture of the WTO," WORLD TRADE AGENDA, 25 September 2000; "Change of style or engagement on implementation?" SUNS, 19 September 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETS ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION

On 22 September 2000, the WTO Committee on Trade and Development CTD convened to continue, *inter alia*, discussions pertaining to technical cooperation. The Committee has focused on technical cooperation in facilitating among developing countries, particularly LDCs, both improved knowledge and capacity to use the multilateral trading system to their benefit, on the one hand, and adequate construction of domestic policy frameworks on the other. As such, discussions revolved around objectives and purposes, programming and coordination, modes of delivery and impact of technical cooperation, monitoring and evaluation, cooperation with other inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), LDCs and the Integrated Framework, and human and financial resources necessary for effective technical cooperation.

With respect to programming and coordination, the Committee acknowledged that presently no coordinated effort exists within the WTO framework to implement technical cooperation activities. To address this, members felt that such a programme should be long-term, should be informed by a clearly articulated strategy, and should embody a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of technical cooperation in meeting its objectives.

In the area of WTO technical assistance and coordination with other IGOs, it was acknowledged that activities must not be duplicated and that the WTO should focus its contributions on its

expertise in disseminating knowledge on rules and procedures, defining approaches to negotiations and the implementation of agreements, specifically use of the DSU.

The CTD also recognised that technical cooperation should be a demand-driven process, and that when assessing developing country requests a clear set of priorities should determine the allocation of scarce resources. As such, it was urged that priority should be given to LDCs, recent Members, and those countries and districts in the accession process. Issues relating to immediate implementation and negotiations in services and agriculture were also targeted.

The CTD's meeting agenda included the question of improved market access for LDCs. At the meeting, the EU reiterated its proposal to allow complete duty and quota free access to European markets for all LDC goods with the exception of arms and munitions (see related story, this issue). Under this agenda item, the Chair had planned also to issue his report on consultations, but this did not happen. Due to time constraints the Chair was unable to meet with the Chair of the Council on Trade in Goods prior to the Committee and therefore will release this report at the next CTD meeting, scheduled for 27 October.

In related developments, at the 21-22 September TRIPs Council meeting, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and some Members submitted reports on their efforts to help developing countries on TRIPs issues, including training and capacity-building. A Secretariat note on its technical cooperation activities in TRIPs was circulated on 30 August 2000, and can be obtained from the on-line documents database on the WTO website at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html> -- search for document IP/C/W/201.

ICTSD Internal Files.

IN BRIEF

TENSIONS MOUNT IN US-JAPAN WHALING DISPUTE. Tensions between Japan and United States continue to mount in the wake of Japan's decision to include the Byrde and sperm whales in its whaling operations (see *BRIDGES* Trade News Digest, Vol. 4, No. 33, 5 September 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story3.05-09-00.htm>). In response to threats of US sanctions under the "Pelly Amendment" of the Fishermen's Protection Act, Japan has issued a retaliatory warning that it will target US wheat imports should US trade sanctions be realised. The threat of Japanese retaliation has prompted Barbara Spangler, head of the US wheat industry's trade education committee, to say that Japanese sanctions would severely damage US wheat exports to its number one export market. "The threat of trade sanctions is very, very worrisome to the wheat industry," Spangler noted. The unilateral move by the US has been praised by environmental groups, including Greenpeace, which is encouraging the US government to "take the next step of imposing economic sanctions." Wednesday's move follows Washington's decisions to boycott last month's environmental meeting of a UN body in Japan and the cancellation of a Japan-US fisheries meeting held last month. "Clinton retaliates against Japan for whale hunting," REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, 14 September 2000. "US makes good on its threat, moves against Japan in whaling dispute," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 13 September 2000. "Japan's whale fleet returns to port," HIGH NORTH WEB NEWS, 20 September 2000. "Japan Sees Whaling Sanctions Possibly Hurting Farm Exports," INSIDE US TRADE, 22 September 2000.

HARVARD BIOTECH CONFERENCE REPORT. On 22-23 September, representatives from academia, non-governmental organisations, industry groups and government agencies met in Cambridge, Massachusetts, US, for a conference on Biotechnology and the Global Economy: Science and the Precautionary Principle. Organised by Professor Calestous Juma at Harvard University's Center for International Development, the conference engaged a wide variety of viewpoints on the role of science, certainty and precaution in public policy. Some participants expressed discomfort with the many different formulations of the precautionary principle, arguing that the principle remains too broad and too vague to inform practicable policies. Others defended the principle as an important ethical criterion for socially and environmentally responsible progress. Some attempts were made to operationalise the principle through case studies and policy analysis, but most participants concluded that further research would be necessary before attempting to agree on a single definition for the principle or to explore its policy implications. Background information on the conference is available at: <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidbiotech/bioconfpp/>, and an independent report on the conference is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/sd/biotech/>. ICTSD Internal Files.

BRAZIL AND EU PLAN TO HARMONISE PHYTOSANITARY REGULATIONS. In an effort to expand its pork, chicken and tropical fruit exports to the EU, Brazil and the EU will begin harmonising their phytosanitary rules. At the same time, Brazil plans to press the EU to rethink its sugar quotas and coffee tariffs. According to Brazilian Agriculture Minister Marcus Pratini de Moraes, "We don't expect to be excluded from markets when we have opened our markets to manufactured products from other countries." "Brazil, EU to Begin Talks on Phytosanitary Accord in October," BRIDGENEWS, 18 September 2000.

CERTIFIED ALASKAN SALMON. The Alaskan Salmon fishery will soon boast the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) logo indicating the fishery's sustainability. With growing global market demand for ecologically benign products, producers are turning to third-party verification schemes such as the MSC to validate the environmental and social benefits generated by their products. Forest and forest management certification has been a very popular market response to over-harvesting, and the MSC proposes a similar scheme for fish products. "Alaska Salmon Earn Landmark Seal of Approval," ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS NETWORK, 7 September 2000.

IMF-World Bank Meetings

CANADA PUSHES FOR DEBT RELIEF IN PRAGUE. Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin on 24 September tabled a debt relief initiative at an International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting that seeks to tie debt relief to performance in poverty reduction and social spending. While the Canadian initiative would not eliminate debt entirely, it would retire interest obligations on existing debt and cap debt levels. In his appeal to the IMF, Martin emphasised that for such an initiative to be effective it would require buy-in from all creditor countries.

COMMODITY PRICE INSURANCE. Also in Prague, the World Bank is discussing its plans to establish a commodity insurance scheme that would safeguard developing countries from commodity price instability. The insurance scheme would basically function as a hedge against downturns in commodity markets, such as cocoa, cotton and oil. Said World Bank President James Wolfensohn, the Bank wants "to pass on the benefits of hedging to the producer."

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FUND. On 22 August the World Bank launched a biodiversity conservation fund intended to fund grassroots work undertaken in the area of biodiversity. The fund, connected to the World Bank's commitment to poverty reduction, is designed to help indigenous populations manage their food production in ways respecting the principles of biodiversity. The fund will total \$US125 million with primary contributions from the Global Environment Facility, Conservation International covering 50 percent, and other donor groups contributing the other 50 percent. "Canada Offers New Proposal to Deal With Crushing Third World Debt," CANADIAN PRESS, 24 September 2000; "World Bank Considers Insuring Poor Against Commodity Prices," BLOOMBERG, 24 September 2000; "World Bank Sets Up fund to Save Areas of Biodiversity," FINANCIAL TIMES, 23 August 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

SWITZERLAND AND CHINA FINALISE DEAL. On 26 September, Switzerland and China finalised a bilateral trade agreement bringing China's WTO accession one step closer to fruition. The only remaining country to negotiate an accession deal with the WTO aspirant -- of the 37 original countries engaged in the accession bilateral process -- is Mexico. Mexico is concerned about the possible dumping of Chinese goods on its market. The agreement follows on the heels of an historic US Senate vote on 19 September approving Permanent Normal Trading Relations with China that was deemed to be a prerequisite for China's full accession to the WTO. ICTSD Internal Files.

OMAN TO BECOME NUMBER 139. Following the approval of the WTO's General Council, expected on 10 October, Oman will formally join the global trade body. Oman indicated in July that after implementing several reforms -- including lifting restrictions on foreign investment -- it expected full Membership status to be finalised by October. "Oman to join WTO on October 10-minister," REUTERS, 24 September 2000.

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/html/calendar.htm>.

Coming Up This Week

25-29 September, Geneva: UNCTAD EXPERTS MEETING TO REVIEW UN COMPETITION CODE. This week competition experts will review the only universal, voluntary instrument on competition in existence --the UN's 1980 Competition Code. The Code's objectives include ensuring that business practices do not "impede or negate the realisation of the benefits that should arise from the liberalisation of tariff and non-tariff barriers affecting world trade, particularly those affecting the trade and development of developing countries." For information contact: Philippe Brusick, UNCTAD; tel: (41-22) 907-5671; fax: 907-0247; email: philippe.brusick@unctad.org; or see the press release at: <http://www.unctad.org> in the press and reference section.

26 September, Geneva: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY. Included on the agenda: status report by EC on banana import regime; report of Appellate Body on US-Anti-Dumping Act of

1916; and proposed nominations for the indicative list of governmental and non-governmental panellists. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5393. *BRIDGES* Weekly will report on this meeting in its next issue.

26 September, Montreal, Canada: GLOBALISATION: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT. Hosted by the International Research Collective (IRC). For information contact: the IRC; tel: (1-514) 937-3200; email: lombrenoire@tao.ca.

26-30 September, Villa Manin di Passariano, Codroipo, Udine, Italy: VII CONFERENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN EUROPE. For information contact: Preliminary Registration Secretariat; Laboratorio Regionale di Educazione Ambientale, Piazza del astello 7, 33010 Colloredo di M.A. (UD), Italy; tel: (39-0) 432 889-014 or 889-698; fax: 889-798; email: larea@cifra.uniud.it; Internet: <http://www.larea.uniud.it>.

27 September, Prague, Czech Republic: WTO: SHRINK OR SINK - A CITIZENS' TURNAROUND AGENDA. For information contact: Alexandra Wandel, Trade and Sustainability coordinator (FoEE); 29, rue blanche - B-1060 Brussels, Belgium; tel: (32-2) 542-0185; fax: 537-5596; email: alexandra.wandel@foeeurope.org; Internet: <http://www.foeeurope.org/trade/about.htm>.

27 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5412.

27 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING PARTY ON GATS RULES. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

28 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

28 September, Geneva Switzerland: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AT THE CROSSROADS: CAN POVERTY BE ERADICATED? Organised by the World Bank office in Geneva. For information contact: Ms. Vania Keller, World Bank-Geneva; tel: (41-22) 799-8872; email: vkeller@worldbank.org.

28-29 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE --SPECIAL SESSION (negotiations). For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5412. See related story, this issue.

28-30 September, Joensuu, Finland: MEETING ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF FORESTS AND FORESTRY TO THE MITIGATION OF GREENHOUSE EFFECTS. For information contact: Brita Pajari, Seminar Coordinator; European Forest Institute, Torikatu 34, FIN-80100 Joensuu, Finland; tel: (358-13) 252- 0223; fax: 124-397; Internet: <http://www.efi.fi/events/2000/coste21/>. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal>.

29-30 September, Grenada, West Indies: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT: IDENTIFYING AND DELIVERING PRACTICAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL

SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC TRANSITION. Sponsored by Caribbean Council for Europe, St. Georges University, and OXFAM. The economic development conference will bring together government, private sector, and NGO stakeholders to discuss and develop specific policy and economic development initiatives to support the effective economic transition process in the Caribbean. For information contact: Sue Monteath, Caribbean council for Europe, London, UK; tel: (44-207) 799-0152; email: sue.monteath@cb-bc.com.

1-8 October, Santiago, Chile: SEMINAR ON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. Sponsored by the Latin American Energy Organization and the German Government, among others. For information contact: Francisco Figueruera, Latin American Energy Organisation (OLADE); Av. Mariscal Antonio Jose de Sucre, P.O. Box 17-11-6413, Sector San Carlos, Quito, Ecuador; tel: (593-2) 59-8280 or 59-8122; fax: 53-1691; email: figueroa@olade.org.ec.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming World Trade Organisation 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 the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

6 October, Geneva, Switzerland: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

9 October, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

9-11 October, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TEXTILES MONITORING BODY. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

10 October, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING. For information contact: Keith Rockwell, Director of Information and Media Relations; tel: (41-22) 739-5015.

Other Forthcoming Events

4-11 October, Amman, Jordan: WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS (IUCN). The theme of the World Conservation Union (IUCN)'s Congress is 'ecospace', a term indicating that environmental protection at various geographical scales is a prerequisite for the social, economic, and even political security of people. For information contact: IUCN Congress Office, Gland, Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 999-0020; email: jth@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.iucn.org/amman/index.html>.

5-8 October, Montpellier and Me'ze, France: MEDITERRANEAN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (MCSD) WORKSHOP: FREE TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE EURO MEDITERRANEAN CONTEXT. For information contact: MCSD; tel: (33-49) 238-7130; fax: (33-49) 238-7131; email: planbleu@planbleu.org.

9-10 October, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: SECOND GLOBAL FORUM ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. Sponsored by the UN Development Programme. The Forum will continue to expand the frontiers of research and debate on concepts, measurement and policies for human development. It will provide an opportunity for dialogue between economists, social scientists and development and human rights professionals. For information contact: Sarah Burd-Sharps, UNDP; tel: (212) 906-3664; email: sarah.burd-sharps@undp.org; Internet: <http://www.undp.org/hdro/Rioforum.html>.

9-13 October, Arusha, Tanzania: UNEP WORKSHOP ON MANAGEMENT OF DIOXINS. Organised by the UN Environment Programme. The workshop will focus on the management of dioxins, furans, and PCBS. 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.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

9-13 October, Edinburg, Scotland: EUROPA BIO 2000 - BIOTECHNOLOGY TODAY FOR A BETTER LIFE TOMORROW, THE CHALLENGE OF AN OPEN DIALOGUE. Part of the European Biotechnology Congress, organised by EuropaBio, BIA and Scottish Enterprise. For information contact: EuropaBio 2000; Avenue de l'Armée 6, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium; tel: (32-2) 735-0313 ; fax: 735-4960; email: mail@europa-bio.be; Internet: <http://www.europa-bio.be>.

9-13 October, Geneva, Switzerland: BASEL CONVENTION WORKING GROUPS. The 17th Session of the Technical Working Group and the Second Session of the Legal Working Group will meet. For information contact: Pierre Portas, Technical Unit; tel: (41-22) 917-8217; email: pierre.portas@unep.ch; or Pavel Suian, Legal Unit; tel: (41-22) 917-8219; email: pavel.suian@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.unep.ch/basel/meetings/calendar.html>. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

9-17 October, Montreal Canada: CAPITALIST GLOBALISATION AND ITS IMPACTS. Hosted by the International Research Collective (IRC). The conference seeks to share knowledge and analysis about the FTAA leading up to next spring's Summit of the Americas. For information contact: the IRC; tel: (1-514) 937-3200; email: lombrenoire@tao.ca.

9-20 October, Geneva, Switzerland: UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD, 47th SESSION. For information contact: UNCTAD Office of the Secretary of the Board; tel: (41-22) 907-5007; fax: 907-0056.

10-12 October, Warsaw, Poland: THIRD ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE ELECTRICITY AND GAS TRADE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE. Sponsored by EconTrade. The main topics of the conference include: the influences of the Polish energy exchange on energy trade in Central and Eastern Europe, structural changes in the energy sector, and technical restrictions in international energy trade. For information contact: Walter Leal Filho; tel: (49-351) 871-8344; fax: 871-8448; email: mr@econtrade.com.

18-20 October, Bonn, Germany: DEBATE 21. Organised by GERMANWATCH and WEED. The focus of the conference will be primarily climate policy, financial architecture and trade. The conference will also look at ways of creating sound sustainable development in poor countries. For information contact: Stephen Rostock, Project coordinator; Kaiserster. 201, D-53113 Bonn,

Germany; tel: (49-228) 965-2426; fax: 965-2428; email: debate21@debate21.org; Internet: <http://www.debate21.org>.

25-27 October, Marrakech, Morocco: WORLD CONFERENCE OF TRADE PROMOTION ORGANIZATIONS. Sponsored by the International Trade Centre. This event is the continuation of the process that began with the first Conference held in Cartagena, Colombia, September 1996, and the second organized in Santiago, Chile, October 1998. The meeting will be an opportunity to renew strategic contacts between international experts in trade promotion, to assess and share mutual experiences in using and exploring both new and traditional tools and identify ways to develop trade. For information contact: Larbi Bourabaa; tel: (212-2) 30-22-10; fax: 30-17-92; email: bourabaaL@cmpe.org.ma; Internet: http://www.cmpe.org.ma/OPC/TPO_conf2.htm.

30-31 October, Bonn, Germany: THE TWO-THIRDS MINORITY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE WTO. Views and proposals about representation in the WTO and the overall treatment in the current trading system will be made by developing countries and then opened to discussion. Representatives from the WTO, European governments and NGOs will be present. For information contact: GERMANWATCH; Kaiserstr 201, 53113 Bonn, Germany; tel: (49 0 228) 604-9213; fax: 604-9219; email: germanwatch@germanwatch.org.

Call For Nominations

31 December: DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING NOMINATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Board is seeking nominations of natural and social scientists with expertise on: (i) the condition of ecosystems, (ii) the impact of ecosystem change on health, economics and human welfare, and (iii) policies for managing ecosystems, to be involved in an international scientific assessment of ecosystems. For information contact: Valerie Thompson, Interim Secretariat of the Millennium Assessment; c/o World Resources Institute, 10 G St. NE, Suite 800, Washington D.C. 20002; tel: (1-202) 729-7600; fax: 729-7610; email: Valeriet@wri.org; Internet: <http://www.ma-secretariat.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).

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FARMERS GONE? By Brian Halweil, in WORLD WATCH, 2000, vol. 13, no. 5, pp. 12-28. This paper argues that all over the world, independent farmers are being driven out of business or forced into servitude on their own land. The author suggests that losing independent farmers may be a link in the agrifood chain that one cannot live without.

BIOTECHNOLOGY IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. Papers from the International Conference on Biotechnology in the Global Economy Held at Harvard University, September 2-3, 1999. Published in the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BIOTECHNOLOGY Vol. 2, Nos. 1/2/3, pp. 1-273. To obtain a copy contact: Dr. Calestous Juma Science, email: ijbt@inderscience.com; Internet: <http://www.inderscience.com>.

WTO MATRIX ON TRADE MEASURES PURSUANT TO SELECTED MEAs (doc. # WT/CTE/W/16018). By the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Secretariat, September 2000. This Note has been prepared in response to requests from delegations for information on developments in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and contains a Matrix on trade measures pursuant to selected MEAs in order to provide information on the provisions of 11 environmental conventions and protocols and one draft agreement. To obtain a copy visit: <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>.

LIBERALISATION AND REGULATORY REFORMS IN SOUTH ASIA. SAWTEE Briefing Paper No. 3, March 2000. This paper attempts to analyse the processes of liberalisation in the South Asia and deal with some of the key issues relating to regulatory reform in the region. The paper also provides recommendations to ensure that regulatory reform benefits the masses. To obtain a copy contact: Ratnakar Adhikari, PRO PUBLIC, P.O. Box 14307, Gautam Buddha Marg, Anam Nagar, Kathmandu, Nepal; tel: (977-1) 268-681; fax: 268-022; email: rmadi@propublic.wlink.com.np or propublic@wlink.com.np.

IS THE WTO'S ARTICLE XXIV A FREE TRADE BARRIER? By Ben Zissimos and David Vines, February 2000. The paper suggests that trade block formation under Article XXIV exerts negative externalities. The authors suggest that internal tariff reductions yield much the same effect as a rise in external tariffs. The authors conclude that free trade is not an equilibrium. To obtain a copy contact: Ben Zissimos, CSGR, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK; email: benjamin.zissimos@economics.ox.ac.uk; or to obtain a copy go to: www.wtowatch.org/wtowatch/library/admin/uploadedfiles/Is_the_Wtos_Article_XXIV_a_Free_Trade_Barrier.pdf.

Electronic Resources

"AGRICULTURE: WORK IN THE WTO, THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS." The site, maintained by the WTO, gives the latest information on the WTO's activities in the area of agriculture. Internet address: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/negoti_e.htm.

POSITION VACANCY AT GRAIN:REGIONAL PROGRAMME OFFICER (ASIA) ON TRADE & IPR

GRAIN (Genetic Resources Action International) is a small non-governmental organisation working to help strengthen farmers' and local communities' control over agricultural biodiversity, especially in developing countries. With offices in Asia, Europe and Latin America, GRAIN's programme addresses trade liberalisation and genetic diversity in agriculture; the corporate push for intellectual property rights on life forms and local knowledge; alternative community rights; and the need to make agricultural research and innovation systems more relevant to small farmers. Our new Regional Programme Officer will be responsible for GRAIN's work in Asia on intellectual property, community rights and trade. The work entails: monitoring, networking and information activities at the regional level; developing and implementing joint research projects with local groups; and providing programme support to peoples' initiatives in the region. Details are available at: <http://www.grain.org/jobs.htm>.

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