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WTO ISSUES BLOW TO US FSC SCHEME

In what many observers see as the most important case yet to reach the WTO, the WTO Appellate Body on 24 February upheld an earlier dispute settlement ruling against US tax exemptions for foreign sales corporations (FSCs). The WTO ruled in October 1999 that the US FSC tax scheme constitutes an unfair export subsidy under global trade rules. The EU brought the complaint to the WTO, arguing that the US subsidises about \$US10 billion annually through tax exemptions for US companies.

The exemptions are granted to US companies exporting goods and services through FSCs registered off-shore in Caribbean countries such as Barbados and the Cayman Islands. The US estimates the benefit to US corporations to be around US\$4.1 billion. The EU and US had been operating under a so-called gentleman's agreement regarding tax schemes such as FSCs, as both sides maintain beneficial tax schemes for corporations. However, the EU argued that its tax structure does not have the effect of subsidising exports.

The Appellate Body upheld the original panel ruling that the US FSC scheme amounts to a prohibited export subsidy under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures because it is tied to export performance. According to the ruling, "A Member of the WTO may choose any kind of tax system it wishes -- so long as, in choosing, that Member applies that system in a way that is consistent with its WTO obligations. Whatever kind of tax system a Member chooses, that

Member will not be in compliance with its WTO obligations if it provides, through its tax system, subsidies contingent upon export performance that are not permitted under the covered agreements."

The WTO Appellate Body offered no advice as to how the US should alter its FSC policy to comply with WTO rules. The US has until 1 October 2000 to comply with the ruling. The decision was viewed by many as a major blow to the US and a major victory for the EU. Some observers speculated that the EU brought the case to the WTO in retaliation for US complaints against the EU banana import regime and an EU ban on hormone-treated beef - two high profile trade disputes in which the WTO found in favour of the US. It is not clear how or if the FSC dispute will affect negotiations to resolve the politically-charged beef or banana disputes.

Regarding the EC-bananas dispute, Ecuador (a co-complainant in the case), noted that the EU would have to keep Ecuador's interests in mind in any banana deal it may reach with the US as a result of the FSC case. Ecuador has its own banana interests to consider as it pursues US\$450 million in retaliatory sanctions against the EU for the EU's failure to comply with the WTO ruling against its discriminatory banana import regime.

In other news, a WTO dispute panel on 18 February ruled that Australia had failed to comply with a previous WTO Appellate Body ruling against an Australian ban on the importation of untreated fresh, chilled or frozen salmon from Canada. Canada has requested authorisation to impose US\$28 million in trade sanctions in retaliation. Australia replaced its ban on Canadian salmon imports with certain sanitary protection measures that still served to violate its commitments under the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), according to the WTO dispute panel. Specifically, the panel ruled that Australia had violated Article 5.6 of the SPS Agreement by imposing measures on salmon imports that are more trade restrictive than required to achieve an appropriate level of sanitary protection. The panel also found that certain measures adopted by the Australian state of Tasmania -- and which have effectively prohibited imports of Canadian salmon - - were not based on adequate scientific risk assessments.

However, a draft risk assessment analysis released on 23 February by Tasmanian authorities (available at <http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/new.html>) concluded that protection measures similar to those already introduced for an interim period are appropriate as a permanent level of sanitary protection. David Llewellyn, Minister for Primary Industries, Water and Environment, stated that: "The analysis clearly identifies that the impact of the arrival of any one of several serious diseases of salmon would have a devastating effect on our natural environment and on our economy." Says trade spokeswoman for Australia's Democrats Natasha Stott Despoja: "The reality is, under WTO rules now, we cannot prevent fish coming into Australia that we know to be diseased."

A WTO arbitrator is expected to rule on Canada's request for retaliation within two months.

"WTO upholds major U.S. loss on FSC tax case brought by EU," INSIDE US TRADE, 25 February 2000; "EU won't drop U.S. tax shelter case for banana pact," BLOOMBERG NEWS, 21 February 2000; "Bananas, beef and now export subsidies," FINANCIAL TIMES, 18 February 2000; "Canada to impose surtax on Australian imports after WTO ruling," BLOOMBERG NEWS, 18 February 2000; "WTO faults Australia for failure to comply with Salmon ruling," DAILY REPORT FOR EXECUTIVES, 22 February 2000; US to 'seek solution' in trade dispute with Europe; FINANCIAL TIMES, 25 February 2000; "WTO accused of endangering Australia's environment," FISHLINK

SUBLEGALS, 25 February 2000; "Scientific basis for Salmon controls," TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE, 23 February 2000.

WTO SERVICES TALKS START

WTO Members on 25 February formally launched mandated negotiations on services at a meeting of the WTO Council on Trade in Services. Members addressed a timetable for carrying out the negotiating process, but took no decision on a deadline for concluding talks. WTO Services Council Chair Sergio Marchi of Canada said the talks would serve as a "touchstone of the WTO's resilience and ability to deliver" in the aftermath of the failed WTO ministerial in Seattle late last year.

The first phase of negotiations will focus on rule-making issues, to be followed by market access commitments at a later phase, said one source.

The Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur, comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) called for services talks to proceed in parallel to mandated talks in agriculture, meaning progress in services talks would be contingent on progress in talks on agriculture - a sector of great importance to Mercosur. Some developing countries noted that progress on the issue of implementation would also be necessary for services talks to move forward. Developing countries also raised concerns regarding the availability of data regarding services flows between WTO Members, noting that it would be difficult to negotiate an agreement without adequate benchmarking.

Members agreed to hold negotiating meetings at regular 5-6 week intervals, likely to coincide with separate meetings on negotiations in agriculture. The next meeting on services negotiations will be held in late March or early April. Mandated talks on agriculture are scheduled to begin with a Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture on 23-24 March.

"EU willing to discuss lowering trade barriers," JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, 29 February 2000; "WTO Services talks begin; EU outlines priorities for air transport," DAILY REPORT FOR EXECUTIVES, 28 February 2000; "Trade: services talks linked to agriculture, implementation," SUNS, 29 February 2000.

CHINA WTO ACCESSION: EU TALKS END WITHOUT AGREEMENT

EU and Chinese trade negotiators ended four days of talks on China's accession to the WTO without reaching agreement. EU officials noted that the two sides made limited progress in the Beijing talks, which addressed agricultural and industrial tariffs, and services. The EU is reportedly seeking an improved package on telecommunications, insurance and financial services. Among its demands, the EU wants China to allow 51 percent foreign ownership of Chinese telecomm firms. China has thus far put forward 49 percent ownership - the terms agreed to with the US-China WTO accession deal reached last year. Neither China nor EU officials commented as to when talks might resume.

As reported in *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol.4, No. 7 (<http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.22-02-00.htm>), India and China on 22 February signed a bilateral trade agreement on China's WTO accession. Bilateral trade between the two countries is

worth about US\$2 billion annual. Indian trade officials said that India-China trade is expected to double to US\$4 billion within three years. India is expected to gain better market access for its pharmaceuticals, chemicals and financial services. China also agreed to review sanitary and phytosanitary restrictions on imports of Indian fruits and vegetables.

In other news, three prominent US labour leaders -- John Sweeny of the AFL-CIO, Jay Mazur of UNITE! and Lenore Miller of RWDSU -- on 24 February resigned from the President's Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and Negotiations (ACTPN). Together, the three represented labour interests on ACTPN, which also includes 27 corporate representatives, one environmental representative and one consumer representative.

The labour leaders resigned in protest over the decision by corporate ACTPN representatives along with US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky to focus the ACTPN agenda on a single goal: securing US congressional approval for so-called permanent normal trade relations (NTR) status for China as part of China's membership in the WTO. Labour groups are opposed to NTR because of China's record on human rights, including workers' rights. In their resignation letter, the three labour leaders criticised the structure of ACTPN as being imbalanced in favour of corporate interests.

As a result of labour's opposition to NTR, environmental support now plays a critical role in the NTR process. Most environmental groups oppose China's entry to the WTO due to that country's unwillingness to link trade to the environment. Many are pushing for an amendment to the NTR bill that requires US companies to abide by American environmental laws in China and that allows Chinese citizens to sue for environmental damages in US courts. However, some are worried that taking the government to task on this issue could weaken the presidential prospects of Al Gore, a committed environmentalist. Since China is expected to accede to the WTO regardless of the outcome of an NTR vote, many environmental groups are considering neutrality on the topic.

"EU, China break off WTO talks without deal- official," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 24 February 2000; "EU, China fail to conclude WTO deal; Lamy cancels trip to China," INSIDE US TRADE, 25 January 2000; "EU angles for telecoms prize in China WTO talks," REUTERS, 24 February 2000; "India, China sign pact on WTO," THE HINDU (India), 23 February 2000; "India, China clinch WTO deal - diplomats," REUTERS, 22 February 2000; "Labour representatives resign from President's trade advisory committee over China agenda," INSIDE US TRADE, 24 February 2000; "Greens undecided on China's trade status," FINANCIAL TIMES, 25 February 2000.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: EU-S. AFRICA DEAL; ASIA

The EU and South Africa on 13 February resolved a trade dispute over the wine and spirits component of an EU-S.Africa free trade deal set to enter into force from 1 January 2000. 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. Implementation was delayed after Italy and Greece refused to implement the accord, insisting that S. African wine and spirit producers cease the use of certain "geographical denominations" (e.g. "grappa" and "ouzo") protected under EU law.

The dispute was resolved after S. Africa agreed to phase out the use of the names "grappa" and "ouzo" in addition to others (e.g. "port" and "sherry"), within five years. The EU and S. Africa had previously agreed to a 12-year phaseout timetable. However, S. Africa demanded in return that the

EU-S.Africa agreement clearly state that final say on the geographical denominators rests with the WTO under the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPs Agreement).

"Our hope is that we can now get down to the real business of the trade agreement and that we have now ended this bizarre dispute," S. African trade minister Alec Erwin said. As an example of the bizarre nature of the dispute, S. Africa pointed out that it does not even produce ouzo and only produces 30,000 bottles of grappa annually. Mr. Erwin further commented that the five-year phaseout is "entirely conditional" on its compatibility with WTO rules, noting that S. Africa remains confident the WTO will find the EU-mandated phaseout of the geographical indicators "unacceptable" under global trade rules, and South Africa will ultimately win the battle over spirits.

The EU-S.Africa spirits dispute served to damage EU-S. African relations and hurt EU credibility with developing countries. "Every single time in the last 18 months that we have reached an agreement with [the EU], they have broken it," Mr Erwin noted. South African trade officials were resentful and furious over the eleventh hour manoeuvres by EU countries, and said that tactics set a dangerous precedent for developing countries dealing with the EU. The European Commission just recently recommended for approval an EU-Mexico free trade agreement (see <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.25-01-00.htm>), which is expected to be signed next month.

In regional news from Asia, officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Agreement (CER) met in early February to discuss the feasibility of an ASEAN-CER free trade area from 2010. A combined ASEAN-CER market would be worth an estimated US\$1.2 trillion annually. ASEAN in 1998 agreed to move forward with an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) by 2003-2008. ASEAN and CER officials will meet again in April in New Zealand.

Officials from the 21-member Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (APEC) met on 14 February for a preparatory meeting in advance of an APEC trade minister's meeting scheduled for June. Convening for the first time since the WTO failed to launch a new round of trade talks at the WTO ministerial in Seattle, APEC ministers discussed how APEC could re-build momentum toward launching a new round of trade talks. APEC accounts for nearly half of all world trade: the grouping had pinned its hopes on a new round of WTO talks to advance the cause of freer trade amongst its own economic grouping. In 1999, unable to reach internal agreement on a free trade package, APEC ministers referred its so-called Accelerated Tariff Liberalisation (ATL, sometimes referred to as EVSL) agenda to the WTO.

The ATL essentially called for an early harvest in proposed negotiations for a number of sectors, including, *inter alia*: forest products, environmental goods and services, fishery products, automotives, civil aircraft, fertilisers, food, oilseeds, and rubber. The US, New Zealand and a number of other APEC members were keen for ATL to become a centrepiece of new WTO negotiations. The ATL found few supporters -- even among APEC members -- at the Seattle ministerial meeting, and its fate remains uncertain as the WTO attempts to regroup. The question for APEC remains one of credibility and relevance - despite its world trade weight, APEC has been unable to achieve much significance either internally or (witness ATL) at the WTO, leaving observers to question the necessity of the grouping. APEC comprises Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the US, and Vietnam.

"EU-South Africa trade deal impasse resolved after Pretoria gives way in grappa grapple," FINANCIAL TIMES, 17 February 2000; "EU, South Africa resolve dispute over spirit names; pact to proceed," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 24 February 2000; "AFTA-CER free trade to be established," TRADE COMPASS, 11 February 2000; "Afta could take in Australia and NZ," BANGKOK POST, 11 February 2000; "APEC officials call for political push to revive WTO talks," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 13 February 2000; "APEC pledges to push ahead with free trade," REUTERS, 14 February 2000.

THAILAND WEIGHS OPTIONS FOR ESSENTIAL HIV MEDICINE

Thailand could test the extent of US commitment to a more benign trade policy on access to essential medicines as it considers its options with regard to ensuring affordable access to the HIV/AIDS therapy didanosine (DDL). Thai officials are continuing to debate whether to implement a compulsory licensing regime for DDL, an effective HIV treatment unaffordable for the vast majority of Thailand's 1 million HIV-positive patients.

DDL was developed and patented by the National Institute of Health (NIH), a US government agency. NIH then gave Bristol Meyers-Squibb -- a US-based pharmaceutical company -- the exclusive right to produce and sell DDL. Despite US President Clinton's assurances that the US would "implement its health care and trade policies in a manner that ensures that people in the poorest countries won't have to go without the medicine they so desperately need," the Thai government has been loathe to implement compulsory licensing of DDL lest it lead to a trade dispute with the US.

Compulsory licensing is a mechanism under which governments limit patent or intellectual property rights if it is necessary to protect public health and nutrition. This is usually done by allowing domestic firms to produce a generic version of an otherwise patented drug with or without the consent of the patent holder, in return for compensation of a percentage of sales of the drug. Compulsory licensing is addressed under Article 31 of the TRIPs Agreement.

"We must be very, very careful," said Somsong Rukphao, head of the Thai Ministry of Health's Communicable Disease Centre. "We must consider the livelihood of our 62 million people, not just the over 1 million HIV patients."

The issue of compulsory licensing has been the focus of demonstrations in January and again at the UNCTAD X conference in Bangkok in mid-February.

Thai Deputy Director of Intellectual Property Weerawit Weeraworawit said last week that implementing a compulsory licensing regime for DDL or other drugs was not easy because of different interpretations of the TRIPs Agreement with regard to whether there is actually a drug shortage or other emergency necessitating compulsory licensing. "If trade partners disagree with our interpretation, that poses a big problem for Thailand," Mr. Weeraworawit said.

Thai NGOs argue that the US has signalled it would not object if Thailand implemented compulsory licensing of DDL. "If the Thai government determines that issuing a compulsory license is required to address its health care crisis, the United States will raise no objection, provided the compulsory license is issued in a manner fully consistent with the [WTO TRIPs

Agreement]," said Joseph Papovich, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Services, Investment and Intellectual Property to the Thai NGO PHA Network of Thailand in a 27 January letter.

However, Thai officials note that the letter is merely a diplomatic gesture and is not legally binding. The wariness over a potential dispute with the US is symptomatic of the mistrust that exists between many developing countries and the US. The US announced its kinder, gentler policy at the Third WTO Ministerial in Seattle in December. But less than a year ago, the US Trade Representative was threatening both Thailand and South Africa with retaliation lest either implement compulsory licensing measures. The first real test of how this policy manifests itself in trade could come next month if Thailand moves forward with production of a powder form of DDL. In the meantime, however, Thai officials said they will continue negotiating with Bristol Meyers-Squibb on its DDL pricing in an effort to avoid compulsory licensing.

For their part, pharmaceutical companies argue that rather than benefitting developing countries, price control mechanisms such as compulsory licensing could have overall negative welfare effects for consumers and producers. First, while these mechanisms may lead to lower prices, they have a disproportionate downward effect on pharmaceutical firms' profits. A reduction in profits could result in a reduced incentive to invest in new drugs and brands, ultimately reducing consumer choice.

"New world disorder," DOW JONES NEWSWIREs, 14 February 2000; "Drug patents versus human rights," FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW, 17 February 2000; "Compulsory ddl licensing seen as unlikely," BANGKOK POST, 2 February 2000; "Thailand battles AIDS medicine monopoly," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 21 February 2000; "The conflicts between parallel trade and product access and innovation: the case for pharmaceuticals," JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW, Vol. 1, No. 4, December 1998.

IN BRIEF

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s 3-day Conference on the Scientific and Health Aspects of Genetically Modified (GM) Foods got underway in Edinburgh, Scotland on 28 February. 400 delegates from academia, consumer and other interest groups, industry, international organisations, developing countries and OECD government representatives were on hand to participate in the conference. While environmental activists outside the meeting protested against the use of GM foods, talk on the inside revolved around finding ways to make GM technology acceptable to a wary public and to developing countries, with many delegates weighing in in support of GM foods. *BRIDGES* Weekly Trade News Digest will report on the conference and on other biosafety-related issues in the next issue. "GM food safety: facts, uncertainties, and assessment," OECD PRESS RELEASE, 24 February 2000; "Differences widen on use of modified foods," FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 February 2000.

Canada's House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade earlier this month recommended that projects undertaken by the Canadian Export Development Corporation (EDC) should be subject to its passing social, environmental and human rights assessments based on World Bank standards. The Committee also recommended that the scope of the federal Auditor General's office ought to be expanded to allow its Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development to monitor the performance of the EDC. Meanwhile, at an OECD meeting last week in Paris, member states reiterated their intention to "strengthen a

framework of common approaches" on environmental standards for national export agencies by the end of 2001, agreeing to share information and schedule further meetings on the subject. Environmental and human rights groups have expressed frustration over the continuing lack of action on the issue. "Time to reform Canada's EDC, says federal committee," GALLON ENVIRONMENT LETTER, 21 February 2000; "OECD 'drags feet' on green standards for export agencies," UN Wire, 28 February 2000.

The US and Japan on 18 February agreed to hold high-level trade talks as soon as possible to address pressing trade differences. Antidumping is expected to lead the US-Japan agenda: Japan has called for antidumping rules to be re-opened at the WTO while the US has refused this call. US-Japanese bilateral trade issues to be addressed include further deregulation of the Japanese telecommunications, insurance and flat-glass sectors. "Barshefsky and Kono agree to talks on dumping and other trade issues," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 24 February 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

US Ambassador to the WTO Rita Hayes earlier this month said the US would push for the UN International Labour Organisation (ILO) to have permanent observer status at the WTO. The US said it would like to extend the ILO's current observer status -- currently reserved for WTO ministerial meetings -- to allow the ILO to participate as an observer at all regular meetings of the WTO. "US to push observer status for labour group at WTO meetings," BLOOMBERG NEWS, 18 February 2000.

At a 25 February meeting of the WTO committee on technical barriers to trade, Brazil expressed concern over a US proposal to implement a "dolphin safe" labelling regime for tuna caught without harming dolphins. Brazil said it was not clear from the US proposal whether the label would be made obligatory and reiterated its position that any eco-label marks should be voluntary in order to avoid them becoming a barrier to trade. The US Commerce Department announced on 4 January new interim labelling standards for the 'dolphin-safe' mark used on tuna. The new regulations allow for the use of purse seine nets -- wherein fishing vessels encircle dolphins with a large net in order to capture the tuna that might be below -- during fishing. Under the interim rules, tuna may be labelled as "dolphin-safe" if no dolphins were observed to be killed or injured while encircled with purse seine nets. In a related development, a coalition of conservation groups sued the US Commerce Department 8 February, claiming that the new regulations violate a US Congressional mandate under the International Dolphin Conservation Program. "Brazil Concerned Over U.S. Proposal To Label Tuna Products as 'Dolphin-Safe'," REGULATION, LAW & ECONOMICS, 28 February 2000; U.S. Commerce Department announces new dolphin-safe tuna standards and logo," LABELS: LINKING CONSUMERS & PRODUCERS, 18 February 2000; "Second lawsuit targets commerce rules on tuna imports and dolphin-safe label," INTERNATIONAL TRADE REPORTER, 17 February 2000.

Participants and observers at the meeting of the Committee on Trade and Environment in Geneva this week (29 Feb - 1 March) have speculated that a possible response of the trade system to the increasing criticism of the WTO's handling of environmental issues might be a decision to convene yet again a symposium with civil society later on this year. *BRIDGES* will report on this first CTE meeting after Seattle in next week's issue. ICTSD Internal Files.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

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

- **WTO Meetings**

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

29 February 2000: INFORMAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL. For information contact: Keith Rockwell, Director, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5007.

10 March: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division, tel: (41-22) 739-5075, email: lucie.giraud@wto.org

21-22 March: WTO COUNCIL FOR Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5412; email: peter.ungphakorn@wto.org

- **Other Events**

3-4 March, Geneva, Switzerland: PROGRAMME OF TRAINING FOR THE APPLICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW. This is a meeting of experts held by UNITAR, UNEP, and IUCN. For information contact: Daniel Navid, UNITAR, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 917-8547; fax: 917-8047; email: daniel.navid@unitary.org

6-26 March: ELECTRONIC CONFERENCE FOR NGOS ON RURAL POLICY AND FOOD SECURITY. Hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), this electronic conference intends to promote the discussion and capture the visions of NGOs on certain issues which will be established during the 26th Regional Conference of the FAO for Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, the agenda of the electronic conference is the following: during the first week, to discuss the impact of the technical obstacles and non-trade barriers on agricultural trade in Latin America and the Caribbean; during the second week, to debate on topics related to rural development and institutionality; and during the third week, to examine specific problems, and possible solutions, to food insecurity. For information contact: Linda Elswick, CSD NGO Sustainable Agriculture/Food Systems (SAFS) Caucus, c/o International Partners for Sustainable Agriculture (IPSA), 2100 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20037; tel: (1-202) 778-6119; fax: 778-6134; email: ONG-OSC-L-Moderador@fao.org; web: <http://www.rlc.fao.org/foro/pages/con4ingl.htm>

9 March, Brussels: WTO FORUM HOSTED BY THE EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE. The forum will update its participants with any current developments in the WTO, prepare for a new

round of multilateral trade talks, and discuss China's accession to the WTO and implications for European business. For information contact: The European Policy Centre, 42 Bld Charlemagne, 1000 Brussels; tel: (32-2) 231-0340; fax: 231-0704; web: <http://www.theepc.be/>

21-22 March, Miami, Florida, USA: MEETING OF THE FTAA COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SOCIETY. For information contact: FTAA Secretariat, 100 Chopin Plaza, Plaza Level, Miami, Florida 33131-2140 USA; tel: (1-305) 381-9043; fax: 381-8390; email: ftaa-alca@ftaa-alca.4tz.com

22-24 March, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: SIXTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE AND TRADE FAIR ON DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT. For information contact: The GLOBE Foundation of Canada, 504 - 999 Canada Place, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6C 3E1; tel: (1-604) 775-7300; fax: 666-8123; email: info@globe.apfnet.org; web: <http://www.globe.ca>

23-31 March, Seville, Spain: THE 4th INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY and the indigenous participation at the AD HOC INTERSESSIONAL OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8J AND RELATED PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. Hosted by the Spanish NGO, WATU Acción Indígena. For information contact: Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (Canada) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Place Vincent Massey, 9th Floor, 351 St. Joseph Blvd. Hull, PQ, K1A 0H3 Canada; tel: (1-819) 953-5819; fax: 953-1765; email: tamara.dionnestout@ec.gc.ca; web: http://www.servicom.es/watu/textos/forosevilla_eng.htm

10-14 April, Merida, Mexico: 26th FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. For information visit: <http://www.rlc.fao.org/larc/>

- **Resources**

"FOR WHOSE BENEFIT? LIMITS TO SHARING IN THE BIOPROSPECTING 'REGIME'" in ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS (Journal). Winter 1999, v. 8, no. 4, p. 35-65. By Shane Mulligan. This article concludes that independent analysis of the social impacts of bioprospecting would be valuable in evaluating the sustainability of the ABS programmes. It recommends further consideration of multilateral regulatory action, despite the difficulties inherent in establishing such a regime.

"RACING TO THE TOP OR THE BOTTOM? INDUSTRY RESISTANCE TO ECO-LABELLING OF PAPER PRODUCTS IN THREE JURISDICTIONS" in ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS (Journal). Winter 1999, v. 8, no. 4, p. 110-137. By Kathryn Harrison. This article examines eco-labelling, which attempts to harness market forces by helping environmentally motivated consumers identify products that are less harmful to the environment. The article concludes that eco-labels are best seen as a complement to, rather than substitute for, traditional regulatory instruments.

- **Web Resource**

NEW AFRICA MAILING LIST LAUNCHED. The new mailing list, entitled 'africadiv', is hosted by the Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Working Group at the Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI) in collaboration with Nuffic-CIRAN, Centre for International Research and Advisory Networks. The Africa Diversity mailing list is devoted specifically to the sustainable use

and conservation of indigenous knowledge and biological diversity in Africa. For information contact: Ingeborg Krukkert (listmanager) Nuffic-CIRAN, Centre for International Research and Advisory Networksthe Hague, The Netherlands, email: krukkert@nuffic.nl

NEW UNDP WEBSITE ON AFRICAN PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT. To view visit: <http://www.undp.org/rba/psector/>

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