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WTO: MEMBERS DISCUSS INTERNAL REFORMS, TRANSPARENCY

Informal consultations on institutional reform continued on 29 February in an informal session of the WTO General Council (GC). The talks, chaired by Ambassador Kare Bryn of Norway, revealed continuing differences between developed and developing countries over how best to improve the functioning of the WTO and how to improve public perception of the trade body.

At the meeting, developing country Members called for immediate examination of the WTO Secretariat structure and the need for senior management and staff to better reflect the Membership. They emphasised that discussions on this topic should be de-linked from those around the ongoing review of the selection process for the office of WTO Director-General (D-G). Developing countries noted that of the 26 directors of various WTO divisions only three are from developing economies. Developing countries make up a significant majority of the 136-strong WTO Membership.

Members also discussed the issue of extending observer status to intergovernmental organisations. Some Members stated that the issue has been on the table for a long time without decision and that

parties outside the WTO could not understand why the decision-making process has dragged on for so long.

Members also discussed the issue of "Coherence in Global Policy-Making," which prominently highlighted North-South divisions. As part of the Uruguay Round, Members agreed to work towards "greater global coherence of policies in the fields of trade, money and finance, including cooperation between the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank". At the meeting, the EC referred to recent statements on the need for coherence with institutions other than the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. For its part, the United States requested the Director-General to continue consultations on this issue. Developing countries -- notably Bangladesh, Brazil, Hong Kong China, India, Mexico, and Morocco -- stressed that the scope of such coherence should not be expanded to other areas beyond the existing Uruguay Round commitments, particularly to so-called non-trade issues such as labour and environment.

Talks on transparency also formed part of the discussion, with a large number of developing countries rejecting an earlier US and EC attempt to link internal transparency (i.e. greater access for all WTO Members to important negotiating sessions) with external transparency (i.e. document derestriction and better access for non-governmental groups to WTO meetings and information). Developing nations refused to sign an agreement launching a new round of negotiations at Seattle last Nov-Dec, citing a lack of internal transparency in the decision-making process as a central reason.

Further informal consultations are scheduled for this week and are due to conclude by the end of March.

In related news, WTO D-G Mike Moore on 28 February called for closer involvement of Member parliamentary bodies with the WTO. "What we do must be checkable and measurable. In our society this happens through government and parliament," Mr. Moore told a Swiss newspaper. "We must increasingly seek contacts with parliamentarians to guarantee that parliament, and with it the voters and the people, own the institutions," he said.

Speaking at the UK House of Commons, UK Trade and Industry Secretary Stephen Byers indicated on 2 March that reforms to bring about greater external transparency at the WTO should be in place in about a year and a half. "I'm hopeful that within a year or 18 months" changes making the WTO more accountable will be in place, Byers said. The UK has forwarded a proposal to the WTO to consider establishing an 'eminent person's group' to examine how best to proceed with reforms.

Meanwhile, the WTO is proposing to establish a Community Forum on its website where individuals and groups can make their views known to the WTO and other users of the site. This would likely be done through participation in on-line forums or by posting position papers and other documents. The WTO has invited individuals to comment (via an on-line questionnaire) on this idea and to provide feedback on other activities which could encourage a free exchange of views on WTO matters. The questionnaire is available at <http://www.wto.org/feedback.htm>

"Trade: continuing conceptual divides at the WTO," SUNS, 2 March 2000; "WTO boss talks of need for transparency: newspaper," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 28 February 2000; "WTO public participation forum questionnaire," WTO ACTIVIST, 6 March 2000; "WTO reform to take place within 18 months, Byers says," BLOOMBERG, 2 March 2000.

CTE MEETING FOCUSES ON MARKET ACCESS, FISHERIES

At a meeting of the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) from 29 February to 1 March, WTO Members focused their discussion around the theme of market access, with talks on fisheries taking centre stage for a significant portion of the meeting. The meeting was the first for the new chair of the CTE, Yolande Biké from Gabon.

Falling under item six of the CTE's ten-point work agenda, a 2-3-hour long dialogue on removing subsidies in the fisheries sector moved the ongoing sectoral debate from a theoretical to a practical level. New Zealand, Iceland, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) all submitted discussion papers, and the OECD and FAO representatives in attendance briefed the CTE on their respective work on fisheries subsidies. Though no formal conclusions were drawn on the subject, Members will resume the fisheries discussion formally at a later meeting in October, and may revisit it informally at their next meeting on 5-6 July.

The OECD also presented a paper on its Workshop on environmental assessment of trade liberalisation agreements held on 26-27 October 1999. A number of (chiefly developed country) Members commented by emphasising the importance of conducting environmental reviews of trade agreements at the domestic level and exchanging experiences in the CTE. The EC just recently (23 February) held a public meeting to present the findings of its own Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) Report on the EC agenda for a new round of WTO trade negotiations (see related story, this issue). Developing countries for the most part are concerned that should the WTO require environmental reviews of trade liberalisation agreements, the reviews could become technical barriers to their full participation in the trade system due to the high costs in implementing such assessments.

In the discussion under item three -- on requirements for environmental purposes relating to products (i.e. eco-labelling) -- Members asked the Secretariat to update a previously-existing Secretariat paper on eco-labelling (WT/CTE/W/110). There was also a reference of the questions under this item to be taken up at the second triannual review of the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), which is due by the end of 2000.

In what one WTO official termed a "controversial" presentation, Argentina submitted a paper on the multifunctionality of agriculture that contained a report by the Chairman of the 12-17 September 1999 FAO/Netherlands Conference on the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land. Argentina, who is a member of the Cairns group of agriculture-exporting countries, drew attention to the fact that the Chairman's report, while acknowledging the usefulness of a multifunctional approach, nevertheless stressed the need for "continuing the elimination of discriminatory and protectionist practices in international trade relations". The presentation was understood to be a salvo directed at those Members -- such as the EU, which supports "multifunctionality" in agricultural discussions -- whose agricultural policies are deemed by many to be protectionist.

The issue of WTO coherence with the recently-signed Biosafety Protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity was also raised. According to the WTO Secretariat, several Members expressed the view that commitments under both agreements should be implemented in a mutually supportive manner. A number of Members pointed to the ongoing review of Article 27.3(b) of the Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs)-- relating to the patenting of life forms -- and the need for TRIPs also to be mutually supportive of the Convention on Biodiversity.

Under item seven of the CTE work programme, both Egypt and Nigeria reiterated their concern over the export of domestically-prohibited goods, in particular the export of cosmetics from the EU that contain mercury.

The CTE will hold two Information Sessions with Secretariats of ten multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in tandem with its next two scheduled meetings of 5-6 July and 24-25 October. The Secretariat announced its plans to improve the WTO website section on trade and environment (ostensibly to make documents and information on trade and environment more accessible), setting a tentative upgrade date for April 2000. While a suggestion for holding another High-Level Symposium on Trade and Environment similar to that held in 1999 met with little enthusiasm, the CTE did express its support for holding a second round of regional seminars on trade and environment with developing country government officials in 2000.

A WTO report on the meeting is available at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/new/webenv.htm>, along with a number of the submitted documents.

"CTE focuses on market access," WTO website, <http://www.wto.org/wto/new/webenv.htm>, 7 March 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

OECD CONFERENCE EXPOSES LACK OF CONSENSUS ON GMOS

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) -- a grouping of 29 industrialised member states -- held a Conference on the Scientific and Health Aspects of Genetically Modified (GMO) Foods from 28 February - 1 March. 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. The purpose of the conference was to forward the dialogue on the safety of GMOs with an emphasis on the underlying science, and to seek common ground on whether and how applications of GMO technologies in the food and crops sector serve the needs of society.

At the meeting, two major camps emerged that took opposing sides to the debate on genetically-modified organisms, illustrating the broad range of international opinion on the topic. The conference ended with an acknowledgement that, thus far, GMOs had produced no known ill-effects on human health, but scientists recommended that "enhanced, modified and improved" tests be carried out to assess potential risks.

Much of the conference focused on the issue of "substantial equivalence" which requires GMO food to be as safe as the conventional versions of the same food. The premise of substantial equivalence has been adopted in regulatory frameworks in OECD countries, including most notably the US. Those opposed to GMOs argue that the notion of substantial equivalence is not valid since the genetic manipulation undergone in creating GMOs invalidates a comparison of the plant's molecular structure with naturally-occurring species.

Sir John Krebs, chair of the conference, suggested the establishment of an international consultative panel on GMOs modelled after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (convened under the auspices of the UN). The forum would serve to inform, "rather than make policy," Sir John said. "If such an international discussion did go forward, it would have to be based on science," Sir John

declared. "But it has to be science plus the broader issues of economic development, trade and other concerns that we have heard here."

Amongst the civil society organisations participating in the conference were Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth and GeneWatch. Greenpeace International expressed disappointment in both the premise and findings of the conference.

"The organisers failed to recognise the fact that the majority of citizens have refused genetically modified organisms in their food and in agriculture," said Benedikt Haerlin of Greenpeace. "Instead the organisers pretend that the question of how to 'introduce GE food' was the only problem to be solved, ignoring the fundamental ethical and value based questions."

"The OECD is engaged in a futile attempt in trying to generate a consensus that does not exist. The draft report duplicates the faults of the conference itself in narrowly focusing on genetic engineering technology and not on the environmental, social, ethical and political issues from which it cannot be separated," Mr. Haerlin said.

The findings of the conference will be submitted to the Group of Eight industrialised countries at the G-8 summit in November. For further information on the meeting visit: <http://www.oecd.org/subject/biotech/edinburgh.htm>

"GM foods 'need more testing'," FINANCIAL TIMES, 2 March 2000; "Greenpeace disappointed at OECD GE food conference," GREENPEACE PRESS RELEASE, 1 March 2000; "Chairman of OECD conference calls for international consultative panel on GM Foods," TRADE COMPASS, 1 March 2000; "OECD official sees US-EU biotech trade dispute looming," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 28 February 2000.

GMOS 2: CODEX TO TAKE UP FOOD SAFETY NEXT WEEK

Japan this month will hold an international meeting from 14-18 March to discuss safety standards for GMOs. The meeting is to be held under the auspices of a Codex Alimentarius Commission task force charged with devising GMO food standards by 2003. Codex Alimentarius is the only international food standards body recognised under WTO rules. Thus, its findings could resonate in WTO trade disputes and ongoing negotiations.

"There are no global standards on how to evaluate the safety of genetically modified foods. The task force will meet to work out such rules," a Japanese health official stated.

The Japanese consumer group Japanese Offspring Fund (JOF) will participate at the meeting as an observer. It intends to question the premise of "substantial equivalence" of GMO foods to conventional counterparts (see related story in this issue). "The approval system based on the concept of substantial equivalence should be replaced with one that would rigorously investigate the possible risks of eating GMO foods," said one JOF official.

Meanwhile, at a meeting sponsored by the Africa Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum in Nairobi last week, African scientists say biotechnology is a key to solving the continent's food problems.

"The biotechnology issue is a development issue," said John Wafula of the Nairobi-based Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). "Poor food production over the years has meant that hunger continues to stalk the continent, affecting the health of our children, threatening their education and development."

Kenya's assistant minister for education, science and technology, Joseph Wamukoya, noted that, "The debate on what is good or bad for Africa has been driven by people and groups outside the continent, some without adequate knowledge of the situation and the needs of the continent."

"Japan to hold meeting on GMO safety standards," REUTERS, 2 March 2000; "Development: Africa and the biotechnology debate," IPS, 1 March 2000.

DSB UPDATE

EU officials last week indicated that the EU may be willing to extend a WTO deadline for US compliance with a WTO ruling against US foreign sales corporations (FSC). The WTO Appellate Body on 24 February upheld an October 1999 dispute settlement decision which ruled that the US FSC tax scheme constitutes an unfair export subsidy under global trade rules (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 8, 29 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.29-02-00.htm>).

A senior EU official indicated that if the US showed good faith toward implementing the decision but needed more time to finalise a plan to comply, the EU would be willing to forgive the US if it takes longer than the October 2000 WTO deadline to abide by the ruling.

The likelihood of any good faith in the case is not clear. Any attempt within the US to change its tax rules to comply with the WTO ruling would probably not take place before US elections in November. The decision could also prove to be a major source of contention when Congress undertakes its mandatory consideration of US membership within the WTO (a date for this has not yet been set). Meanwhile, US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers warned that the US would "support whatever actions necessary to preserve what are very important incentives that level the playing field for US producers."

The US has argued that the FSCs are necessary to counter favourable EU tax rules allowing EU firms to claim rebates on indirect sales taxes applied to EU goods sold abroad.

Australian officials are likely to keep a keen eye on the FSC case, as they attempt to support Australia's lone automotive leather manufacturer in the wake of a controversial WTO review panel ruling that requires, for the first time, a company to repay in full an illegal export subsidy from a Member government. The case involves a June 1999 dispute brought against Australia by the US over A\$30 million in subsidies to Howe and Company Proprietary Ltd., a producer of automotive leather (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest* Vol. 4, No. 6, 15 February 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story3.15-02-00.htm>).

"We've got to find some way of supporting Howe that abides by the WTO ruling and satisfies the Americans," an Australian official said. This could entail providing an offsetting loan to Howe for the A\$22 million it has been told to repay.

Australia remains outraged by the WTO decision. "The approach of this panel puts Australia in an almost impossible decision with regard to implementation," the Australian WTO delegation said in a statement. "There is no basis in the WTO for punishing private companies. They have broken no WTO law."

Upon adoption of the WTO Howe ruling major WTO Members insisted that the decision not be taken as a precedent for adjudication of future disputes, e.g. the FSC case. If the FSC case were to meet the same fate as the Australian case, US firms would be compelled to repay the US billions in tax breaks.

"EU could extend deadline in US tax case- official," REUTERS, 25 February 2000; "Trouble ahead," ECONOMIC TIMES (India), 29 February 2000; "US readies attack on corporate tax shelters," international herald tribune, 1 March 2000; "US firms say WTO ruling on FSC may trigger conflict," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 25 February 2000 "Australian, US trade officials meet over Howe leather," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 14 February 2000.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA

More than 1,000 delegates attended a regional economic conference under the auspices of the 21-member Common Market for Eastern and Southern African countries (COMESA). The meeting, held in Cairo from 27-29 February, was intended to promote the economic integration efforts underway in COMESA countries. The grouping plans to launch a free trade area on 31 October 2000. The COMESA market will comprise 380 million people with a combined gross national product of US\$165 billion.

Opening the conference, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called for greater co-operation among COMESA members to address the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation. "Our nations have no choice but to face [globalisation] with a fixed plan to work together and catch up, to limit the dangers and take advantage of opportunities to open up to the global market," Mr. Mubarak said. Mr. Mubarak also noted that increased export capacities as a result of the COMESA free trade accord would offset revenue declines from tariff elimination.

Delegates were to include executives from western multinationals such as Coca-Cola and Merrill-Lynch looking for investment opportunities in the region. "This part of COMESA is designed to show the world we have reform programs and our economies are in shape in terms of deficits and GDP ratios," according to one COMESA official.

Zambia has yet to ratify the free trade accord agreed by the 14-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreed last month. The country continues to negotiate rules of origin with its partners. The trade agreement, expected to launch in April, would phase out tariffs on all "non-sensitive" products by 2008; by 2012 the grouping expects fully liberalised trade. Zambia is still working on rules of origin with regard to its key exports of textiles, clothing and motor vehicles and has yet to finalise a market access regime for sugar. Zambian officials said they were likely to have an agreement by 31 March.

In other news, EU and Latin American officials met in Portugal from 21-28 February to discuss political and trade matters. The EU and the so-called Rio Group of 18 Latin American countries on

24 February called for a new round of multilateral trade talks. According to a joint statement, "The ministers stressed the importance of keeping up momentum in favour of launching a new comprehensive round". Meanwhile, the EU and Andean Pact countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) agreed to study ways to increase trade ties, but failed to agree to launch free trade talks. EU officials said Andean countries were not yet integrated enough to launch talks. The EU and the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur, comprised of Brazil Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay) are expected to meet for trade talks next month toward an EU-Mercosur free trade deal.

In separate comments, Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama noted that trade links with Latin American countries would be the best way to improve democracy and human rights in the region. "The [EU] role is to favour, by increasing trade, investment and also political dialogue, progress in Latin American societies," Mr. Gama said. Portugal currently holds the rotating EU presidency.

Panama is to host a meeting this month with Central American trade leaders toward reinvigorating stalled trade talks. At the 21-22 March talks, Panama hopes to push forward free trade talks with the Central American common market bloc. Ministers from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Nicaragua are expected to attend the meeting. The Central American market comprises about 32 million people. Annual trade between Panama and Central American countries is around US\$1 billion.

"Zambia still studying SADC trade protocol," POST OF ZAMBIA, 16 February 2000; "African trade bloc to showcase private sector," REUTERS, 27 February 2000; "African conflicts just end to give free trade a chance," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 28 February 2000; "Egypt's Mubarak puts case for African tariff cuts," REUTERS, 28 February 2000; "EU says trade boosts Latin democracy, rights," REUTERS, 21 February 2000; "EU, LatAm call for new multilateral trade talks," REUTERS, 24 February 2000; "Panama pushes Central American trade talks," REUTERS, 1 March 2000.

EU HOLDS PUBLIC REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE WTO AGREEMENTS

The European Commission (EC) on 23 February held a public meeting to present the findings of its Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) Report on the EC agenda for a new round of WTO trade negotiations.

The assessment was carried out by researchers at the University of Manchester (UK) and can be viewed at http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/2000_round/sia.htm. Representatives from a cross-section of government agencies, private companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attended the meeting, which reviewed Phases I and II of the SIA.

Phase I undertook a literature review and selection of methodology for the assessment, and Phase II comprised a preliminary qualitative assessment of the impact upon sustainability of the EU's WTO trade round agenda. The SIA investigators noted that the methodology devised for the SIA "constitutes a major development in the field of impact assessments of international trade policy."

A grouping of 40 NGOs co-ordinated by the WWF European Policy Office submitted a joint statement on the SIA work to date, in which the grouping noted that "the potential of the SIA

process to make EU trade policy sustainable has not even begun to be used." The statement criticised the SIA process for thus far failing to engage the European Parliament (comprised of elected representatives from EU member-states) nor the parliaments of EU member states, whose involvement -- the joint statement said -- is key to informing national debates on policy making.

The NGO grouping also called on the EC to carry out an impact assessment of the Uruguay Round (UR) agreement to understand the effects on, *inter alia*, the environment, poverty, development, and human rights. The SIA investigators noted, however, that such an assessment would be difficult due to problems associated with separating the effects of the UR trade measures from the effects of other influences on the European environment that have occurred since UR implementation.

The grouping called for more resources to be devoted to SIAs, including providing support for developing countries to carry out their own SIAs. EC officials said that the Commission would encourage developing countries to undertake SIAs but cautioned that developing countries would likely not have the resources to do so and that EC resources for these ventures are also limited.

In their joint statement, the NGO grouping called on the EC to make SIAs mandatory for any bilateral, regional or multilateral trade agreement in which the EU is involved, and called for a more formal mechanism for regular consultation between the EC and civil society.

In related news, a 6-8 March international experts meeting in Quito, Ecuador on "Sustainability Assessment of Trade Liberalisation" is taking place this week. The meeting is organised by WWF International in collaboration with Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano. For further information contact: Mireille Perrin, WWF International, email: mperrin@wwfnet.org

"Record of Commission public meeting, 23 February 2000, on Sustainability Impact Assessment," EC PRESS RELEASE, 28 February 2000; "Sustainability assessment draws cautious response," IPS, 25 February 2000; "Joint NGO statement on the EC Sustainability Impact Assessment of WTO trade liberalisation," 23 February 2000.

IN BRIEF

The US Trade Representative (USTR) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) have issued a request for public comment regarding implementation of the Clinton Administration's Executive Order 13141 calling for ongoing assessments of the environmental impacts of trade agreements. The USTR and CEQ are now seeking comment concerning the issues the agencies should consider with respect to implementing the executive order, including -- *inter alia* -- general views on how the environmental review process should work; mechanisms for involving the public, including the role of USTR advisory committees in the process; timing and process for conducting a written environmental review for those agreements requiring it; and appropriate methodologies for assessing environmental impacts in the context of trade negotiations. Comments are due no later than 7 April 2000. For more information on how and where to submit comments, contact the Office of the US Trade Representative, Environment and Natural Resources Section, tel: (1-202) 395-7320 or Council on Environmental Quality, tel: (1-202) 456-6224. "Barshefsky outlines four steps to broaden trade advisory process," INSIDE US TRADE, 2 March 2000.

In a recent Japan-EU meeting on regulatory reform, Japan warned the EU that its draft proposals for EU directives on Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment and End of Life Vehicles if too

stringent and could be in violation of WTO rules, namely the agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). The aim of the EU proposal is to promote the reuse or recycling of electrical and electronic equipment and cars. Japan contends that the directive covers too broad a range of electronic appliances. Japan made 89 proposals to the EU for regulatory reform in 21 areas. Also discussed were reforms in legal services, commercial laws and business practices, standards and certifications, and business stays and work permits. According to the European Commission, the meetings "demonstrated the value of the current dialogue in identifying areas in which both partners can improve market access and investment conditions." "Japan warns EU on proposed waste and recycling directives," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 3 March 2000.

On 3 March, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) announced its first two certification labels that indicate sustainable fishing practices. The recipients were herring caught from the Thames estuary by independent gill netters, and rock lobster fished off the coast of western Australia. The latter accounts for one fifth of Australia's commercial fish catch. "We deliberately set out to show that our certification methods were suitable for both small and large-scale approaches," said Scott Burns of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which was one of the main driving forces behind formation of the MSC. The consumer goods firm Unilever -- a major retailer of frozen fish -- is also a strong backer for the initiative, as the company believes that there is significant consumer demand for seafood which can be shown to have been harvested in a sustainable fashion. The MSC label is designed for use on packaging and on restaurant menus, and is awarded following a positive verification process by an independent, third-party auditor -- a similar procedure to that used by the Forest Stewardship Council. "Sustainable Fisheries Scheme Sets Sail," ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 6 March 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

On 7 March the WTO hosted a seminar on Special and Differential Treatment for Developing Countries, organised under the auspices of the WTO Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) by request of its Members. The seminar explored various aspects of special and differential treatment, focusing on, *inter alia*: technical assistance, implementation of WTO agreements, developing country economic reforms, and the future of Special and Differential Treatment. In an effort to allow a candid exchange of views, the meeting took place outside of the WTO's formal negotiating context and outside the formal processes of the CTD. Delegates from a number of Geneva-based missions participated as discussants in sessions following presentations of papers from the WTO Secretariat and a variety of other contributors. The proceedings of the conference and the accompanying background papers will feed into the 10 March meeting of the CTD. Background papers and the agenda for the seminar are available on the WTO website at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/develop/sdt.htm>. WTO PRESS RELEASE, 3 March 2000.

The UK International Development Committee --- a Parliamentary Select Committee of the House of Commons -- is currently conducting an inquiry into the WTO after Seattle. The central interest of the Committee is to establish the necessary conditions for developing countries to maximise the benefits of WTO membership. The focus of the inquiry is on four main areas: the need for institutional reform of the WTO, including proposals to improve the transparency of the WTO and the ability and capacity of developing countries actively to participate in discussions and to implement any agreed measures; implementation of existing agreements; the impact of TRIMs and TRIPs Agreements on developing countries; and potential opportunities and threats for developing countries arising from negotiations in agriculture and services. The Committee is seeking

submissions from NGOs, academics, government ministers and especially welcomes submissions from representatives from developing countries. Submissions should be sent as soon as possible to William Benson, Committee Specialist, International Development Committee, House of Commons, London, SW1P 3JA; fax: (0171) 219-2891; email: indcom@parliament.uk . 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 Events

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

7 March, Geneva: WTO SEMINAR ON SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. For information contact: web: <http://www.wto.org/wto/develop/sdt.htm>

13-17 March, Geneva: TEXTILES MONITORING BODY. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO; tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

15-16 March, Geneva: COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES. Inter alia, Members will discuss: communications from the European community on the precautionary principle, communication from the European community on the white paper on food safety, the SPS agreement and developing countries, technical assistance and cooperation, and monitoring the use of international standards. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO; tel: (41-22) 739-5412

• Other Events

16-17 March, Rome: 23rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON CURRENT FISHERIES ISSUES. This conference is co-hosted by The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Centre for Oceans Law & Policy (COLP). The conference will provide a forum for fisheries experts around the world to meet and exchange ideas on important concerns in the oceans community. For information contact: COLP; tel: (804) 974-7441; fax: 924-7362; web: <http://www.virginia.edu/colp/> or at <http://www.fao.org/legal/news-e.htm#fishconf>

20-25 March, Bonn, Germany: POPs INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE. This is the fourth session of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) committee and is hosted by UNEP Chemicals. For information contact: Michael Williams, UNEP Chemicals; tel: (41-22) 917-8242; email: michael.williams@unep.ch; web: <http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/>

27-31 March, Montreal, Canada: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MULTILATERAL FUND UNDER THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. This is the 30th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund under the Montreal Protocol. For information contact: the Ozone Secretariat; tel: (254) 262-1234; fax: 262-3601; email: ozoneinfo@unep.org; web: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/meet2000.htm>. Source: IISD Linkages Calendar of Upcoming Meetings, <http://www.iisd.ca/updates/upcoming.html>

11-12 October, Washington DC: NORTH AMERICAN TRADE & ENVIRONMENT SYMPOSIUM. Hosted by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the symposium will bring together the leading institutions and organisations in North America to discuss the linkages between environment and trade in the NAFTA context and, in particular, to encourage further analysis in light of the methodology developed by the CEC in its "Analytical Framework for Assessing the Environmental Effects of NAFTA." For information contact: Scott Vaughan, email: ssvaughan@ccemtl.org; web: <http://www.cec.org/>

- **Resources**

DECISION MAKING IN THE WTO. March 2000. By Jeffrey Schott and Jayashree Watal. Published by the Institute for International Economics, this analysis suggests responses to the problems that led to the failure of the WTO's Ministerial Conference at Seattle. The authors of this brief

would like to receive comments from readers. To view see web:

<http://www.iie.com/NEWSLETR/news00-2.htm>

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECTED LITERATURE CONCERNING THE USE OF TRADE MEASURES IN MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS (MEAs). February 2000. This is a WTO document from the Committee on Trade and Environment. To view visit the WTO's Document Dissemination Facility at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>. The document symbol is WT/CTE/W/129.

WTO RULES AND THE TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT INTERFACE: AN ICME ASSESSMENT. September 1999. Published by the International Council on Metals and the Environment, this paper presents an assessment of key proposals that have been put forward to modify WTO rules in order to extend the use of trade measures to meet environmental objectives. The paper also considers issues arising from the DSB's Shrimp-Turtle decision and identifies areas offering win-win solutions for trade liberalisation and sustainable development within the WTO. To order contact: ICME, tel: (613) 235-4263; fax: 235-2865; or see web: <http://206.191.21.210/icme/WTOltd.htm>

UNITED STATES-TAX TREATMENT FOR "FOREIGN SALES CORPORATIONS". February 2000. This is the WTO's Report of the Appellate Body on US tax breaks for FSCs. To view visit the WTO's Document Dissemination Facility at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>. The document symbol is WT/DS108/AB/R.

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