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WTO WORKING PARTY FINALLY APPROVES CHINESE MEMBERSHIP

On 17 September, the WTO successfully concluded negotiations on China's terms of membership after 15 years of talks. During the previous week, the much-awaited session of the Working Party settled the last major blocks and cleared the way for Beijing to join the trade body by the end of the year. "Is only the end of the beginning," Chinese chief negotiator Long Yongtu told the press after the 14 September Working Party informal meeting.

"With China's membership, the WTO will take a major step towards becoming a truly world organisation. The near-universal acceptance of its rules-based system will serve a pivotal role in underpinning global economic cooperation," said WTO Director-General Mike Moore.

The Working Party will now forward some 900 pages of legal text to the WTO's 142 Members. Formal acceptance is expected to take place at the forthcoming Ministerial in Doha from 9 to 13 November. Thirty days after China notifies its acceptance of the agreement, it will legally become a Member of the WTO.

The "long and painful" talks, as the EC's chief negotiator Karl Falkenberg called them, eased when, on 13 September, Mexico announced the achievement of a bilateral deal with China. The deal allows Mexico to keep its antidumping measures covering some 1300 Chinese products for six years after China's accession (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 June 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/12-06-01/story1.htm>). According to a Mexican statement, the possibility of implementing antidumping measures after the six-year period is subjected to the demonstration that China is still dumping goods in Mexican markets.

Insurance impasse breached

Talks had also been stuck over the enduring issue of foreign ownership in Chinese-based insurance ventures. The US demanded that life insurers already settled in China should be allowed to maintain their existing ownership structures in future branches. Although the US remarked that their stand did not endorse any single company's interest, such a provision would have guaranteed New York-based American International Group (AIG) the right to retain 100 percent ownership of its Chinese ventures. The EU had resisted such concessions unless they were extended also to its insurers (namely France's Axa and Germany's Allianz) according to the most-favoured nation principle (see BRIDGES Weekly, 24 July, 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/24-07-01/story5.htm>).

The phrasing used in the revised deal, trade sources said, specified that any concession granted on branching should be automatically extended to all Members, thereby granting to EU life insurers future market access benefits on a par with AIG in the life insurance sector. China in turn reassured the US that its accession would not lead to any reduced market access for US firms already in China (notably the AIG). At the same time Long Yongtu denied that China was forced to make a significant concession on insurance, saying that "the final agreement did not alter China's negotiating stance". One South-east Asian trade official complained that this outcome grants AIG-Axa-Allianz a market access advantage over newcomers.

China's entry shuffles cards on the WTO table

Once in the WTO, China will represent the world's fifth largest trading power after the Quad group (composed of the US, the EC, Japan and Canada). Several analysts conjecture that China's entry will change the balance of forces in the body, adding weight on the side of developing countries. Conversely, easier access to a market of one billion people is widely believed to offset Quad concerns over the stance China might take in the trade organisation.

However, many developing countries with labour-intensive export- oriented economies fear that northern markets will reallocate their demand toward cheaper Chinese goods, especially in the clothing, textiles and footwear industries, as well as other industrial goods. In an attempt to mitigate the Asian country's potential impact on the trading system, during the accession process many developing countries negotiated bilateral agreements with China.

However, some developing country diplomats have said these deals are palliatives, as they will not make much difference to Chinese dominance of global trade in consumer goods. Developing countries are also concerned about the expected diversion of current flows of foreign direct investment from other developing countries following China's WTO accession.

Accession shuffles cards on Chinese table too

Chinese chief negotiator Long Yongtu told the press that formal accession "is a long process for China to implement and enforce the Agreement and to [be] a good WTO Member." The weekly news publication *The Economist* indirectly supported Long's view this week stating that, "although some of the economic change necessary to prepare China for membership has already taken place, much painful restructuring still remains to be carried out, and with it the risk of growing public resentment."

The commitments undertaken will oblige China to cut import tariffs and give foreign businesses much greater access to potentially lucrative markets in services industries. Such major concessions are expected to affect many of those directly or indirectly exposed to new foreign competition.

Recently, China's leadership has tried to convince its public that membership will bring no great benefits or disadvantages. Long Yongtu said earlier this year that, "anything that is against our country's interests, we simply won't do."

According to analysts, widespread underemployment in the Chinese countryside, already a major social problem, will worsen due to cheaper agricultural imports. On 17 September, Long Yongtu admitted that more competition would also deepen the income gap, especially between wealthier coastal regions and the mainland. However, he said, the problem will be tackled with the creation of a social security system and a development strategy for western China.

Taiwan likely to follow in China's footsteps

With China's major accession constraints out of the way, Taiwan's long- delayed entry was also finally cleared. Analysts expect that Taiwan's accession will closely follow that of China's, though the details of the process have yet to be specified.

"WTO successfully concludes negotiations on China's entry ," WTO Press Releases, 17 September 2001, "WTO Group Agrees on Chinese Membership," REUTERS, 14

September 2001; "EU-US deal paves the way for China to join WTO," The Business Times, 17 September 2001; "The marathon negotiations on Chinese membership of the WTO are ending. For the government, the hard part may only now be beginning' The Economist, 15 September 2001; WTO Members Agree on China's Accession; Compromise Reached on Insurance Clause" WTO Reporter, 17 September 2001; "China, Mexico Bilateral Agreement Signed Clearing Final Hurdle to Beijing WTO Entry," WTO Reporter, 14 September 2001; "Mexico Inks Accord With China, Gets Shield For AD Measures," Inside US Trade. 14 September 2001. "Analysis- China, set for WTO this years raises fears," Reuters, 16 September 2001; ICTSD Internal Files.

EC SHOWS IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF ASIAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' CONCERNS

At an 11 September meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam, trade ministers from 10 Asian countries and their EU counterparts agreed to promote the launching of a new round of free trade talks at the forthcoming WTO Ministerial to be held in Qatar. But most developing country delegations expressed concerns -- and Malaysia even doubts -- over whether a new round should take place this year.

In the meeting between the two trade blocs following the mini-summit in Mexico earlier this month (see BRIDGES Weekly, 11 September 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/11-09-01/story1.htm>), all participants of the third Asia Europe Meeting of Economic Ministers (ASEM EMM3) "expressed their political will and flexibility in building support for launching a round at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha" and said that new trade negotiations should be held "at the earliest possible opportunity to promote growth."

But ambiguities still persist over the timing and scope of a new round. Some Members, such as the EC and Japan, are pushing for a wider undertaking that would include a range of issue-areas such as investment, competition and environment, while others, such as India, Malaysia and Pakistan, are more reticent about a broader agenda.

EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, who is spearheading the Union's campaign for launching a comprehensive trade round in Doha, admitted during a news conference following the ASEM talks that the two sides did not manage to clear all their differences.

"There are still dissenting voices but that is to be expected at this stage in the process," Lamy stated. There remain only eight weeks to "bridge the difference between what is necessary -- the launch of a new round -- and what is sufficient to launch it," he added.

Developing countries still sceptical

Some countries, however, doubted that all concerns could be settled before Doha. Referring to the so-called 'new issues' such as investment and competition policy, the

environment, and labour standards, Malaysian International Trade Minister Rafidah Aziz commented that the Europeans had been trying to incorporate too many "political" issues in the WTO rules that "many people still don't understand". Concluding that they needed time to understand, she said, "when we are ready, maybe in two to three years down the line, then that can be [brought] on board".

Philippine Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II Monday expressed his and other Asian delegates' concern that some of the proposed amendments of WTO rules could be counterproductive for developing countries' interests. "We don't want to be in a position where the rules keep us poor," Monday said.

Thai Commerce Minister Adisai Bodharamik stated that Bangkok favoured a limited round, as having a comprehensive agenda would be "too difficult." Bodharamik also indicated that Asian countries had particular difficulties with the EC's position regarding anti-dumping rules and the integration of labour regulations.

EC showing more flexibility

However, the Thai Minister pointed out that Asian countries had been impressed by the greater degree of flexibility shown by the Europeans regarding the problems developing countries have in complying with WTO rules in the short run. But "we have to go into details," he added. This view was confirmed by Lamy, who stated that the EC's position had "evolved considerably" since the 1999 Ministerial held in Seattle. For example, an EC source says that it is now likely that WTO Members will request the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to assess labour standards and to keep the issue off the Doha agenda.

ASEM participants were also concerned about the recent slowing down of the world economy, which many regard as an indicator of a global recession. They noted that the "Asian ASEM partners would be affected by the global slowdown, especially in the export of manufactured and agricultural products."

The countries represented at the ASEM EMM3 were the 15 EC Member States and ten Asian countries: Japan, China, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.

"Asia, Europe Ministers Affirm Need For New Trade Round," KYODO NEWS, 11 September 2001; "EU, Asia Strike Compromise Over New World Trade Talks," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 11 September 2001; "EU, Asians Look To Trade Round, Malaysia Doubts," REUTERS, 11 September 2001; DJ Wrap: EU, Asia Agree New WTO Talks Needed; Divisions Remain," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 11 September 2001; "EU, Asian Ministers Meet For Crunch Talks To Salvage World Trade Deal," AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 11 September 2001. ICTSD Internal Files.

SPECULATION EMERGES ON POSSIBLE TRADE REPERCUSSIONS OF US ATTACKS

In response to speculations that the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, currently scheduled for 9-13 November, might be postponed following the terrorist attacks on the US, the WTO announced that preparations for the meeting would continue as planned. Speculation also abounds regarding possible impacts of the attacks on the global economy; the meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) later this month; and the approval of 'trade promotion authority' for the US President.

Doha Ministerial set to take place

Speaking at a news conference last Friday, WTO Director-General (DG) Mike Moore said that the WTO would go ahead with the Ministerial meeting in Doha as planned despite last week's terrorist attacks on the US. So far, no one in the WTO has formally requested the DG to move the November meeting, trade sources said. US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick echoed Moore's reassurances, saying that there was no likelihood at this time that the meeting would be cancelled, and that "every possible step" would be taken to ensure security in Qatar. "It is important that the WTO meeting in Doha proceeds so that the world trading system can continue to promote international growth, development and openness," he added. Similarly, the EU has expressed its commitment to holding the meeting as planned. "There is no indication at all that the European Union would be in favour of postponing Doha," said Willy Helin, spokesman for the European Commission in Washington DC.

Some trade diplomats, however, have expressed concern about holding a major meeting involving trade ministers from around the world in a Middle Eastern state in light of current speculations regarding involvement of terrorists from the region and the possibility of US retaliatory action. A final decision is likely to depend on who is responsible for the US attacks and whether tensions in the Middle East will heighten as a result. "What happened in the United States will make us more careful," said Sheikh Fahed Awaid Al-Thanki, Qatar's Ambassador to the WTO. "But we think our security planning is sufficient."

Related developments

Exporters such as Japan, South Korea and Singapore, which rely heavily on the US market for their exports, are particularly worried about an economic backlash from the terrorist acts. Malaysia's recovery is also expected to be affected by the recent events. In response, both Japan and South Korea have promised additional funds to stabilise their economies. Some trade analysts, however, predict that impacts are likely to be short-term.

Furthermore, the IMF and WB are expected to postpone their annual meeting, originally scheduled to take place in Washington, DC on 29-30 September, as the city will probably not be able to deal with the thousands of anti-globalisation protesters expected to hold

demonstrations alongside the meeting, Washington police chief Charles Ramsey said. The city had originally planned to request reinforcements from New York.

Last week's events are also likely to temporarily set back the schedule for negotiations to grant the US President 'trade promotion authority' (TPA) which would enable him to negotiate trade deals which Congress cannot amend, but only approve or reject (see BRIDGES Weekly, 15 May 2001; <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/15-05-01/story3.htm>). Approval for TPA is nevertheless expected to be granted in the coming weeks after Republicans and Democrats reached "virtual agreement", a key House Republican said last week.

"U.S. Bombings raises questions about Doha Venue for WTO Ministerial," WTO REPORTER, 13 Sept 2001; "U.S., EU firm on WTO Meeting in Qatar; Moore says gathering preparations continue," WTO Reporter, 17 September 2001; "Asian leaders worry about terror impact on economy," AFT, 12 September 2001; "IMF/World Bank meeting in doubt," FT, 13 September 2001; "Thomas upbeat on trade bill for Bush", REUTERS, 14 September 2001.

UNCTAD REPORT CALLS FOR DRAMATIC INCREASE IN AFRICAN AID AND TRADE

A UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) study entitled "Economic Development in Africa: Performance, Prospects and Policy Issues" released on 11 September 2001 reviews the recent economic performance of Africa in terms of output growth and sectoral developments, examines factors affecting growth prospects, and produces policy recommendations for bolstering the continent's projected growth rate of only three percent over the next decade.

According to the report, in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), only Mozambique and Uganda achieved an economic growth rate of six percent or more in the past decade. The report argues that while African countries experienced surges of investment and growth in the past, they have not in general been able to establish a 'virtuous circle' of investment, savings and exports. It is estimated that for each dollar of net capital inflow to SSA from the rest of the world, a dollar and six cents has flowed out (51 cents through terms of trade losses, 25 cents through debt servicing and profit remittances, and 30 cents through leakages into reserves build-up and capital outflows).

The small number of countries that showed a virtuous process of accumulation -- combining faster growth with rising savings rates -- includes Mozambique, Uganda, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria. Acceleration of growth in these countries exceeded two percentage points per annum. A further group that falls into this category but that displayed only moderate improvements in growth consists of Madagascar, Central African Republic and Benin. Other countries demonstrated either stagnant accumulation and growth rates, or a one-off surge in growth unrelated to rising investment and/or

savings. Examples of such countries are Algeria, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Burundi, Rwanda, Zambia, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, and Swaziland, most of whom also experienced declines in savings rates.

The downward trend in African private capital inflows as a proportion of gross national product, which in the 1990s remained under two percent for SSA, partly reflects an overall decline in official flows, the report says. For developing countries as a whole, excluding technical cooperation grants, such assistance declined from more than \$US 55bn in 1990 to less than \$US 39bn in 2000. Owing to debt write-offs in the context of the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries and Paris Club initiatives, SSA's external debt stood at \$US 206bn in 2000, \$US 10bn below the level reached in 1999. The report argues that what amounts to a decade-long period of stagnation in investment in Africa has undermined both industrial productivity and chances of sustained improvement in the competitiveness of non-traditional exports.

Warning that international and domestic actions are complementary, rather than substitutes, the report concludes that considerable external financing -- \$US 10bn per annum maintained over a decade -- will be needed to close the resource gap if Africa is to attain a higher growth rate. The report underlines the need to review current WTO Agreements and practices to assess their impact on African development, and to extend and translate Special and Differential Treatment provisions into explicit obligations. The report calls for a debt sustainability assessment to be made by an independent body, with an agreement by creditors to write off debt deemed unpayable.

At the domestic level, a new poverty alleviation focus is invited through a frank assessment of the effects of macroeconomic and structural adjustment policies on growth and income distribution in the past two decades. According to the report, in addition to redirecting public spending on health and education, key areas that need to be assessed for their growth and distribution impacts include agriculture, trade, finance, exchange rates, enterprise deregulation and privatisation.

OAU trade ministers to meet in Abuja, Nigeria

The Fourth Ordinary Session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Conference of Ministers of Trade will be held from 19-23 September 2001 in Abuja, Nigeria. Issues on the table include intra-African trade concerns, preparation for the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, African preparation for trade negotiations in the context of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and implementation of the US Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Discussion is also expected to cover related issues such as Egypt's hosting of the 8th All-Africa Trade Fair.

Sources: UNCTAD Report; UNCTAD Press Release, 11 September 2001.

IN BRIEF

EFFECT OF FRENCH HESITATION ON NEW ROUND DEPENDS ON GERMAN SUPPORT. According to several observers, the impact of the French demand that the Doha Ministerial Conference should not launch a new round of trade negotiations (see BRIDGES Weekly, 11 September 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/11-09-01/wtoinbrief.htm>) will depend to a large extent on the support France receives from Germany. Some observe that it will be difficult for EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy to push ahead with preparations for a new round in the face of opposition from two of the EU's most powerful member states. So far, Germany has not given a clear signal as to whether it supports France on this issue. The French position, presented to the European Commission at a 7 September meeting, takes the stance that the upcoming Ministerial could serve as a transitional conference that would focus on other decisions pertinent to the WTO, including the developing country-driven issue on implementation. Other EU countries, as well as Pascal Lamy, are strongly opposed to the French demand. Lamy recently downplayed the French reservations on the launching of a new round, saying it was more a tactical move than an actual opposition. "Impact of French Wavering on WTO Round Depends on Germans," Inside US Trade, 14 September 2001; "EU plays down French reservations over new trade round," AFP, 11 September 2001.

MSF TO EXPORT BRAZILIAN AIDS PROGRAMME. The organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders) announced last Thursday that it planned to use Brazil's anti-aids programme and AIDS drugs -- including locally made copies of patented medicines -- in other developing countries. During a visit to Brazil's capital Brasilia, Dr. Bernard Pecoul, director of a medical access campaign run by MSF, signed an agreement with Brazilian Health Minister Jose Serra. "We want to exploit Brazil's experience," said the group's spokesperson Juliano Borges in Rio. "The agreement includes human resources, technology and the drugs themselves." (for more details regarding Brazil's AIDS policy, see BRIDGES Weekly, 6 January 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story3.06.01.01.htm>). "Intl Group To Export Brazil's Anti-Aids Program," AP, 14 September 2001.

EU MEETS ON INTEGRATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN AGRICULTURE. The agriculture ministers of the EU on 16-18 September held an informal summit in Alden-Biesen, Belgium, on the theme 'Integration of New Technologies in Agriculture.' The ministers explored, with a panel of five experts, the challenges facing the European agriculture sector in integrating, inter alia, technologies regarding genetically modified plants and the development of energy production from biomass. Several Belgian non-governmental organisations reacted to the summit declaration, saying that despite widespread opposition from Belgian and European consumers, the Belgian minister of agriculture was succumbing to fallacious arguments in support of the benefits of GMOs (genetically modified organisms). ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO IN BRIEF

QUAD ADDRESSES IMPLEMENTATION & ENVIRONMENT IN VIEW OF QATAR. The 'Quad' group of WTO Members (Canada, EU, Japan, US) is currently striving to find solutions regarding two deadlocks in preparations for the upcoming Ministerial Conference in November. These are developing countries' demands for more benefits in the implementation of existing trade agreements, and the EU's trade-related environmental issues. The new Quad paper, which builds on an informal ministerial meeting held in Mexico City in the beginning of this month (see BRIDGES Weekly, 11 September 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/11-09-01/story1.htm>), will outline options available before, during, and after the Ministerial Conference to address developing countries' implementation demands, trade officials said. Regarding environmental issues, the Quad group itself is divided as to the merits of including this subject in the agenda. "Quad Works to Break Two Deadlocks in Ministerial Preparations," *INSIDE US TRADE*, 14 September 2001.

THIRD WTO GENEVA WEEK FOCUSES ON DOHA PREP. A 10-14 September meeting for 34 WTO Members without representation in Geneva, observer governments, and more than 30 intergovernmental organisations, addressed a number of substantive issues. These included implementation-related concerns, built-in agenda negotiations in Agriculture and Services, the Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), and the overall context of the approaching November Ministerial in Doha, Qatar. Geneva week is intended to bring non-resident Member and observer delegations up to date on recent WTO activities such as the establishment of a Trade Resource website (see http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/res_e.htm) and the creation of an internal Secretariat task force on small economies. In an introductory statement, WTO Director-General Mike Moore announced the opening of a non-residents' centre by the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC) with the help of the Swiss government that would assist non-resident Members in engaging in WTO-related activities. "Geneva Week 2001 Successful Meeting Focuses on Preparations For Doha," *WTO NEWS*, 14 September 2001. ICTSD Internal Files.

SUBSIDIES COMMITTEE DISCUSSES IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS. At an 11 September informal meeting of the Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, India, Brazil, El Salvador and Jamaica separately submitted four proposals in an effort to advance their implementation concerns ahead of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Qatar in November. While many developed countries continue to believe that implementation concerns should be addressed as part of a new round of trade negotiations, they did not dismiss the proposals off-hand, but rather said they would study them for further discussions at the next Committee meeting. However, trade officials from the EU, Japan, Canada and the US indicated that the proposals were unlikely to be approved before Qatar. The Committee is scheduled to meet again on 18 and 28 September before reporting back to the General Council on these issues by 30 September. "Developing countries' subsidy proposals get cold shoulder from Quad," *INSIDE US TRADE*, 14 September 2001; ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO CONDUCTS US TRADE POLICY REVIEW. Initially scheduled to take place on 12 and 14 September, the WTO biennial review of US trade policy instead took place on 14 and 17 September, following the recent terrorist attacks in the US. The meeting was designed to review the latest WTO report on developments in US trade policy. Noting that US trade policy practices remain largely unchanged since the last review, the report criticised the US for increasing government support payments in agriculture as well as for increased protectionism in the US steel industry through the use of antidumping and safeguard measures (see BRIDGES Weekly, 1 May 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/01-05-01/story4.htm>). The report noted that US government support for the agricultural sector had almost tripled between 1997 and 2000. Furthermore, the WTO review stressed that significant barriers to foreign competition remain in sectors such as textiles and clothing, transportation and some other services sectors. Protectionism persists in areas such as maritime transport, restrictions on foreign ownership in US air carriers, and state restrictions on the provision of insurance. "The new [Bush] Administration's response to these policy challenges will be important to global trade and welfare," the WTO declared. "WTO Delays U.S. Trade Policy Review Following N.Y., Washington Terrorist Attacks," WTO REPORTER, 13 September 2001; "WTO calls on US to reduce trade barriers," AFP, 17 September 2001.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

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/cal/index.htm>.

Coming Up This Week

20 September, Amsterdam, Netherlands: HOW FREE IS TRADE - WHO SETS THE STANDARDS? An international conference organised by the South-North Federation (SNF). The SNF will explore issues related to the next Ministerial Conference of the WTO (scheduled for November in Qatar). Participants will make recommendations to representatives of the Dutch government, politicians and NGOs who will attend the Qatar meeting. The following issues will be discussed in workshops and expert meetings: market access for Least-Developed Countries, investment treaties, environmental standards and WTO, social standards and WTO, access to medicines, baby food marketing, and trade in health services. For further information contact: Inez Staarink; tel: (31-70) 376-5523; email: snf@artifexsupport.com; Internet: <http://www.hivos.nl/>.

21 September, European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium: SOCIAL LABELS AND ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EUROPEAN ENTERPRISES. Convened by the vice prime minister at the Budget Ministry in collaboration with the Research Group for an alternative economic strategy with support from the European Commission. The conference will address, among others, the performance of labels, their

impact on the economy, the reaction of concerned stakeholders, and how to encourage the exchange of best practices between private and public actors. For further information contact: GRESEA; email: gresea@village.uunet.be; tel: (32- 2) 219-7076; fax: 219-6486.

21-23 September, Lucerne, Switzerland: INCD CONFERENCE "TOWARDS A GLOBAL CULTURAL PACT". The second conference of the International Network for Cultural Diversity will be co-hosted by the NGO Suisseculture. In dialogues, discussion rounds and workshops the participants will work on the creation of an international instrument which would remove culture from the usual trade disciplines by establishing specific rules to promote cultural exchange rather than homogenisation. For more information contact: Janet Creery, INCD Secretariat, Ontario; tel: (1-613) 238-3561; email: janet.creery@ccarts.ca; Internet: <http://www.incd.net> and <http://www.ccarts.ca>.

24-25 September, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts: CONFERENCE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY AND GLOBALISATION: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS. The conference is organised by Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and Center for International Development and is also supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. The conference presents the existing ethical theories (e.g. utilitarian and transcendental ethics, biocentric and anthropocentric approaches) and how they are used in the context of biotechnology and development. Furthermore, the conference focuses on the key ethical issues that influence policy discussions on biotechnology. For further information contact: Brian Torpy, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, tel: (1-617) 496-5574; email: brian_torpy@ksg.harvard.edu; Internet: <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidbiotech/ethicsconf/description.htm>.

24-25 September, Geneva, Switzerland: PREPARATORY REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The conference is organised by the UN Economic Commission for Europe and is open for states and NGOs based in Europe. At the same time, states are invited by the UN to constitute national committees that integrate NGO's for the preparation of the conference. These committees will have to choose among measures taken in Switzerland to promote sustainable development. Selected examples will be presented during the World Conference. For further information contact: UN Economic Commission for Europe, email: mary.pat.silveira@unece.org. For Switzerland, contact: M Werner Thut, Direction of Development and Cooperation, Freiburgstrasse 130, 3003 Berne, Switzerland.

24-26 September, Hamburg, Germany: INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY AFTER COP-6. Hosted in co-operation of the Hamburg Institute, Hamburg University and the Hamburgische Electricitäts-Werke AG (HEW). Topics to be covered include: international flexibility in current climate, foundations of an efficient global climate regime, long-term integration of developing countries, the role of pro-active stakeholders, and the way ahead for climate policy after COP 6. For further information contact: tel: (49-40) 4283-4479; email: climate@hwwa.de; Internet: <http://www.hwwa.de/climate.htm>.

24-28 September, Cusco, Peru: CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN THE ANDES AND AMAZON BASIN, LINKING SCIENCE, NGOs AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE. This international interdisciplinary congress will focus on the countries of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia and their ecosystems ranging from deserts to tropical forests, to mangroves, lowland forests in the Amazon basin, tropical dry forests, relicts of Andean forests and scrub formations in the Paramo region. For information further contact: Sigrun Lange, INKA e.V, International Network for the Conservation of Cultural and Biological Diversity, Munich, Germany; fax: (49-89) 4591-1920; email: Sigrun.Lange@inka-ev.de; Internet: <http://www.inka-ev.de/>.

24-28 September, Geneva, Switzerland: Third Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Foods Derived from Biotechnology - Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Genetically Modified Microorganisms. For further information visit: <http://www.who.int/fsf/GMfood/index.htm>.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.doc. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland. For further information on WTO events contact: WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

18-19 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY STANDARDS - SPECIAL MEETING.

19 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COUNCIL ON TRADE-RELATED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (TRIPs) - ON ACCESS TO MEDICINES.

20-21 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRIPs COUNCIL - REST OF AGENDA.

24-26 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO INFORMAL AGRICULTURE NEGOTIATIONS. Topics to be covered that will give special consideration to developing countries include: rural development, geographical indications, domestic subsidies and support (green and blue box), and agricultural safeguards. For further information visit: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/negs_bkgrnd00_contents_e.htm.

25 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY.

26 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS.

27 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE – REGULAR SESSION.

28 September, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE – SPECIAL SESSION. On the agenda is inter alia the work programme for the second phase of the negotiations for continuing the reform process under AoA Article 20.

Other Forthcoming Events

25 September, Geneva, Switzerland: A SKILLSHARE SEMINAR ON ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS AS APPLIED TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE. Organised by the Asia-Pacific Environmental Exchange (APEX), in coordination with IATP, FOEI, and CIEL through their joint Trade Information Project (TIP). The seminar aims to introduce the multidisciplinary field of Ecological Economics to staff of NGOs, development organisations, and international institutions working on issues relating to international trade; and to provide NGO staff with the tools, concepts, and policies of ecological economics for their trade-related work and campaigns. The meeting will be held in Room 4 of the International Environment House, Chemin des Anémones 11, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 pm. RSVP to: Matthew Stilwell (CIEL); email: mstilwell@ciel.org.

25-28 September, Rome, Italy: Joint FAO/WHO EXPERT CONSULTATION ON EVALUATING FOOD SAFETY: SCIENCE AND ETHICS. For further information visit the FAO calendar at: <http://www.fao.org/events/index.asp>.

16-19 October, Colombo, Sri Lanka: 13TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. A preparatory segment on 16-17 October will, among other things, cover topics related to ozone depletion and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. A high-level segment on 18-19 October will include presentations by the representatives of United Nations agencies, World Bank, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, President of the Implementation Committee, and statements by heads of delegations. For further information contact: Ozone Secretariat, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: (254-2) 62-1234; fax: 62-3601; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/13mop.shtml>.

3 November, Cambridge, Massachusetts: GENE WATCH 2001: WORKSHOPS WITH THE EXPERTS. Presented at Harvard University and Co-sponsored by the Council for Responsible Genetics and the Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism, this event will explore current challenges of biotechnology. Expert workshops will be on topics such as the government and biotechnology, disability issues, new reproductive technologies, workplace genetic discrimination, genetically engineered food, biotechnology and the informed public, religion and biotechnology, and race and biotechnology. For tickets (limited to 150 participants) and further information contact: tel: (1-617) 868 0870; email: crg@gene-watch.org; Internet: <http://http://www.gene-watch.org/events/gw2001.html>.

6-7 December, Washington, DC: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY COUNCIL MEETING. For further information contact: GEF Secretariat; tel: (1-202) 473-0508; fax:

522-3240; email: secretariatofgef@worldbank.org. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

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 Hugo Cameron, hcameron@ictsd.ch. Submissions of publications to ICTSD's documentation centre would also be welcome (contact Marc Galvin, mgalvin@ictsd.ch).

AFRICA NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE NO.1. Published by ICTSD, September 2001. The report discusses the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Right (TRIPs) with regard to African countries' concern for access to medicines and Article 27.3. It also discusses developing countries' demands for a better-balanced global trade regime in the form of implementation of WTO commitments. The Negotiation Report Series will report on the current negotiations, among others, on services, agriculture and implementation issues to identify: outcomes of special negotiation sessions; the thrust of ideas, requests and proposals presented by key delegations; areas of agreement and differences; and synergies in terms of objectives/approaches or constraining points. The report is available online at: <http://www.ictsd.org/html/africaupdate.htm>; or it can be requested from ICTSD; address: 13 chemin des Anemones, 1219 Geneva Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093.

WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2002: BUILDING INSTITUTIONS FOR MARKETS. Published by the World Bank, September 2001. The paper discusses how it is that only countries with efficient and inclusive markets have seen significant income growth and poverty reduction. A key factor in developing such markets is market-enhancing institutions, which perform three essential functions: reduce information asymmetries; reduce the costs of dispute resolution/contract enforcement and to enhance competition in markets. As in previous editions, the World Development Report 2002 includes Selected World Development Indicators, an essential reference on recent trends in development. The report is available at: <http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr/subpage.php?pr=2391>.

WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT 2001. Published by UNCTAD, September 2001. The report analyses world foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and provides details at the subnational, country, regional, and international levels. The main theme of this year's report is how FDI's contribution to development can be enhanced through more and deeper linkages between foreign affiliates and local enterprises. For further information contact: Anh-Nga Tran-Nguyen; tel: (41-22) 907-5943; fax: 907-0194; email: anh-nga.tran-nguyen@unctad.org; or Erica Meltzer; tel: (41-22) 907-5828/5365; fax: 907-0043; email: press@unctad.org.

BIOTECHNOLOGY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS. By Stephen Dadzie Jr. Published by the African Centre for Technology Studies, March 2001. The discussion paper maps the changing biotechnology research

and development landscape. It identifies institutional factors that account for the rapid growth of technology in the industrialised world. The paper also analyses the barriers to biotechnology research and development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper can be obtained from: http://www.acts.or.ke/outreach_pubs.htm.

IISD VIEWPOINT ON GOALS FOR WTO - QATAR. Published by The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), August 2001. The "Viewpoint" contends that, "the WTO has increasing difficulty in convincing the public that its approach to economic liberalisation responds to a broadly-supported set of economic, social and environmental goals. Part of the problem is that there is no clear statement of the WTO mission, making it nearly impossible for the WTO to respond to its critics." The Viewpoint is available at: http://www.iisd.org/pdf/trade_qatar_viewpoint.pdf.

"A Blueprint for Making the Prospective Mediterranean Free Trade Zone an Environmental Role Model." By Eric Neumayer. Published by EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT, April 2001, no.11, p.173-184. The article argues that the existing bilateral association agreements between the European Union and Southern Mediterranean countries are insufficient from an environmental perspective. It says that if the MFTZ were to be based upon those agreements, it would represent a free trade agreement environmentally inferior to the North American Free Trade Agreement and even the WTO. Neumayer advises that the EU needs to step up financial, technical and other assistance as part of a wider regional environmental strategy and partnership. For further information contact: Lorna Cameron IISD; email: lcameron@iisd.ca.

"Climate Change Impacts: Can Africa Cope with the Challenges?" By Youba Sokona and Fatma Denton. Published by CLIMATE POLICY, January 2001, no.1, p.117-123. The aim of this article is to revisit the challenges posed by climate change, especially in the African context, by showing the inability of the continent and its people to grapple with environmental degradation due to a lack of institutional economic and financial capacity to support such actions. Secondly, reviewing the complex dynamics of climate change, the article seeks to show the human and social dimension of climate change by focusing on the vulnerability of people in the African continent. For further information contact: Lorna Cameron, IISD; email: lcameron@iisd.ca

Electronic Resources

LISTSERV FOR WORLD SOCIAL FORUM/PORTO ALEGRE. A new list serve has been created to enhance communications among individuals and groups from the United States planning to participate in the 2002 World Social Forum either by attending the meetings in Porto Alegre, Brazil or by working in support of the Forum. For additional information, contact Kevin Murray at kmurray@grassrootsonline.org or Mark Ritchie at mritchie@iatp.org. To subscribe, type WSF-US in the body of an email to listserv@iatp.org.

GLOBAL ISSUES WEBSITE. The website, maintained by Anup Shah, provides annotated links to external articles, website reports, and analysis on issues ranging from

trade, poverty and globalisation to human rights, geopolitics and the environment. The section on trade issues is available at: <http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/FreeTrade.asp>.

A searchable archive of BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest© can be accessed at: [http://www.newsbulletin.org/bulletins/WhichBulletin.cfm? Bulletin_ID=14&SID=](http://www.newsbulletin.org/bulletins/WhichBulletin.cfm?Bulletin_ID=14&SID=)

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