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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
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WTO MARKET ACCESS PREP SNAGS ON MODALITIES

At an 8 April informal meeting of the WTO's Negotiating Committee on Market Access, a number of developing countries opposed a negotiating schedule calling for agreement on 'modalities' by 31 March 2003 proposed by Chair Pierre-Louis Girard (Switzerland). The issue stands in the way of Members agreeing on a timetable for non-agricultural market access negotiations as mandated by the Doha Ministerial Declaration agreed last November.

Negotiation modalities lay out the framework for how talks will proceed, including numerical targets and formulas. Two approaches predominate: a 'formula', or across-the-board approach, and a 'request/offer' method, whereby principal or substantial suppliers of goods engage in bilateral tariff reduction talks that are then extended multilaterally. In the 1986-94 Uruguay Round of negotiations, countries primarily employed request/offer modalities which led to targeted tariff cuts on a product-by-product basis. According to informed sources, sector-by-sector approaches have largely been abandoned since the Uruguay Round. As a result, it remains unclear how the Market Access Negotiating Group will deal with environmental goods, for example, as Market Access has been designated as the forum to negotiate reduction or elimination of tariff or non-tariff barriers in this sector.

Kenya, India, Egypt, Malaysia and China, supported by other developing countries, pointed out that the Doha Declaration did not indicate a specific date to agree on the modalities, and said that assigning a 31 March deadline imposed too much of a burden on developing country Members for a variety of reasons. For its part, China said that as a newly-acceded Member it needed more time to formulate a position, while others pointed to the already-packed WTO negotiating agenda and to capacity constraints at missions and capitals as major restrictions.

Australia, New Zealand, the US, the EU, Japan and Canada expressed support for Girard's proposed deadline. Australia said it was perplexed by the developing countries' resistance to the idea of a modalities deadline given that they are expected to be the main beneficiaries from the market access talks on non-agricultural goods. Australia further emphasised that it was important to know what other countries will put on the table before negotiations begin.

Latin American countries such as Brazil, Chile and Mexico said they were flexible on the issue, although Chile said it was important to have some agreement before the WTO's next Ministerial Conference, due to take place in Mexico in the second half of 2003.

Girard said he would hold further consultations with Members and would revisit the issue at the formal meeting of the Negotiating Group scheduled for 10-11 April.

The Chair's proposed timetable sets out a work programme establishing seven negotiating sessions over the next year, including the establishment of modalities by 31 March 2003. Two sessions, on 11-12 July and on 12-13 September, would focus on specific tariff

issues in the Doha Declaration such as tariff peaks and tariff escalation as well as non-tariff barriers to trade, with a specific focus on products of export interest to developing countries. 15 October is set as a target date for the submission of proposals on modalities, with consideration of possible modalities discussed at negotiating sessions during November and December. A comprehensive review of possible modalities, based on an overview paper presented by the Chair, would take place in January 2003, with the Chair presenting a first draft agreement on modalities at a session in February. A subsequent session in March would set agreement on modalities by the end of the month.

ICTSD will report on the outcome of the formal Market Access session in the next issue.

"Countries Reject Proposal for Modalities Deadline in WTO Market Access Talks," WTO REPORTER, 9 April 2002; ICTSD Internal Files.

DEP. USTR HIGHLIGHTS DIVERGENCE BETWEEN US, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Speaking at a 3 April forum sponsored by the Global Business Dialogue and the National Foreign Trade Council in the US, Deputy US Trade Representative Peter Allgeier called upon WTO Members to "agree on what technical assistance for developing countries is mandated by the Doha Ministerial Declaration." In Allgeier's view, such clarity is needed to "prevent [developing countries] from insisting at the next Ministerial that they did not get sufficiently broad development aid to actively participate in the new round" of WTO negotiations.

According to the Deputy USTR, the US believes that the mandate on technical assistance and capacity building relates "strictly to assisting these countries in negotiations and does not require broader development aid." As for developing countries, said Allgeier, "there's a great danger here. Developing countries...define it very broadly." According to sources, developing countries' broad definition of technical assistance includes development aid that will help them implement new obligations and take advantage of new opportunities. But Allgeier said that the US wants to focus narrowly on the assistance related to negotiations, though he highlighted the need for other international agencies to coordinate development efforts with the WTO.

The Doha Declaration states in paragraph 38 that, "...The delivery of WTO technical assistance shall be designed to assist developing and least-developed countries and low-income countries in transition to adjust to WTO rules and disciplines, implement obligations and exercise the rights of membership, including drawing on the benefits of an open, rules-based multilateral trading system..." Further, the commitment to well-targeted and sustainably-financed technical assistance is repeated in greater specificity in paragraphs 16, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, 38-40, 42 and 43 of the Doha Declaration.

In recent weeks, the WTO has sought to step up its efforts in the area of technical assistance. A WTO Secretariat document circulated to delegations during a Pledging Conference held on 11 March 2002 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 March 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-03-12/story1.htm>) states that, "technical cooperation and capacity building are core elements of the development dimension of the multilateral trading system." (WT/ COMTD/W/95/Rev.1) In the Technical Assistance Plan, delegates established an extensive mandate and undertook a firm set of commitments with regard to capacity building and technical cooperation "to enable beneficiary countries to implement WTO rules and obligations, prepare them for effective participation in the work of the WTO, including for future negotiations and an extensive Work Program, as well as to enable them to draw on the benefits of the open, rules-based multi-lateral trading system."

Both the WTO Technical Assistance Plan and the Doha Declaration (para. 39) refer to cooperation with other organisations on delivery of technical assistance. According to Allgeier, however, "there needs to be clarity in terms of the division of labour between what the WTO can do and what the larger development organisations such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank can do. " A point developing countries and non-governmental observers have also tried to stress many times in the past. Some developing countries, in particular those in the Like-Minded Group such as Pakistan and Egypt, feel the WTO is not an adequate, neutral or desirable provider of technical assistance in many areas, including preparing governments for negotiations. They also do not regard it as capable of assisting developing countries in developing or strengthening their much needed analytical capacity in the formulation of trade policy and positions. "The real test will be at the Fifth Ministerial [scheduled for mid-2003 in Mexico] and the attitude of developing countries", Allgeier stated.

"Allgeier: Division Over Technical Assistance Dangerous For WTO Talks," INSIDE US TRADE, 5 April 2002; ICTSD Internal Files.

PREPCOMM III FALTERS IN LEAD-UP TO WSSD

The third Preparatory Committee (PrepComm III) in New York for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) concluded on 5 April with little movement on key agenda items (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 April, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-04-03/story2.htm>). This setback has forced participants to start PrepComm IV -- a ministerial-level event originally scheduled for 27 May to 7 June in Bali, Indonesia -- 3 days earlier, in hopes of making up some of the lost ground.

The preparatory meeting was organised by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) with the intention of negotiating a draft text on an action plan for the 24 August - 4 September 'Rio + 10' Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. This 'chairman's paper' was then to be transmitted to PrepComm IV. However, after two weeks of negotiations, a

succinct 21-page document emanating from PrepComm II is now a 100+ page "compilation text" with little in the way of agreement.

According to Emil Salim, Chairperson of the preparatory committee, the goal was to have this chair's paper serve as the basis for two consensus documents on commitments that countries were willing to make and on how to implement those commitments. However, as of the morning of 5 April, two of the three working groups (dealing with oceans, energy, the needs of small island states and Africa) had failed to complete their work.

Charges of blame abound

With such a setback so close to the main event, a great deal of blame has been laid on the numerous parties involved. Many of the criticisms put forth focus on the US, Canada, Japan, Australia and the OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, including Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Iran, Iraq, and Indonesia, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait) countries of the G-77. These countries, according to critics, aim to derail the summit by blocking the achievement of any kind of meaningful targets and/or timetables. On the whole, many critics pointed to a general lack of preparedness on behalf of government delegations, especially in light of the aims of the meeting. One key charge laid against the UN itself was that of poor management of the negotiating process over the course of the meeting.

For further information on the proceedings and outcomes of PrepComm III, visit <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/2002/pc3/>.

"Johannesburg Summit Preparations Bog Down," ENS, 8 April 2002; "Consensus Eludes Preparatory Meeting," UN WIRE, 5 April 2002; "Prep Meeting Nears End Without Agreement," UN WIRE, 4 April 2002.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: ASEAN-US

On 5 April, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the US announced they would develop economic co-operation, but were not able to make progress on a free trade area. In a joint statement, ASEAN ministers "agreed to adopt an ambitious work programme designed to expand further the close trade and investment relationship between ASEAN and the US." The 10 member ASEAN group said that it hoped to develop a clearer trade mandate to boost economic relations with Washington.

Currently, the ASEAN region is Washington's fourth largest trading partner and is seen as "extremely important to the US, in both strategic and economic terms," US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick said. Two-way trade between the US and ASEAN has tripled over the past decade to about \$US120bn, with the US running a \$US32bn trade deficit with the region, he said.

At a meeting with Southeast Asian trade ministers in Bangkok on 4 April, Zoellick discussed an overall ASEAN-US free trade agreement, but said that the countries of the region are in such varied economic stages that such a pact was a long way off. However, a free trade agreement between the US and Singapore is in the final stages of preparation and is expected to be signed by the end of this year. As part of the agreement, the US and Singapore announced on 6 April that more than 100 information technology items manufactured in industrial parks on the nearby islands of Batam and Bintan, Indonesia, would be granted the same free trade agreement status as if they came from Singapore.

Singapore Trade and Industry Minister George Yeo said the provision for Batam and Bintan would improve ASEAN's competitiveness vis-à-vis China as an investment destination for US companies. "US companies will find ASEAN, as a whole, more attractive because the initiative will make it easier for them to locate production facilities in different Southeast Asian countries to exploit their competitive advantages," he said. He added that as Indonesia improves investment conditions, the country could become very competitive in many sectors.

ASEAN accelerates financial services

A deal to liberalise trade and investment in financial services was signed on 6 April by Southeast Asia's finance ministers. Many observers, including Mr. Zoellick, say the ten members of ASEAN need to break down trade barriers and increase cooperation if they are to maintain strong economic growth and attract outside investment. The financial services deal formalises results of negotiations that ended in December 2001, when ASEAN members agreed to extend to each other slightly more favourable treatment in financial services than they do to other countries in the WTO, but thus far the concessions are fairly minor. Instead, ASEAN officials have said that such concessions will have to be built upon in another round of negotiations to take place in the future. Aside from financial services, ASEAN's economic integration is proceeding on a number of different fronts, including trade in goods, which is on the agenda for an upcoming meeting of ASEAN economic ministers on 11-12 June in Laos.

In addition to strengthening ties with the US, the ASEAN group has also tried to bolster ties between its members and the strongest economies in the region: Japan, South Korea and China. Japan has signed a bilateral free-trade agreement with ASEAN member Singapore and senior officials from ASEAN and China will meet in Beijing next month to draw up a blueprint for a regional free trade agreement.

ASEAN comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

"US-Asian free trade zone no nearer," BBC, 5 April 2002. "ASEAN, China officials to hold 1st meeting on FTA in May," JAPAN ECONOMIC NEWSWIRE via DOW JONES, 8 April 2002. "First ASEAN-US trade talks held in 10 years," AFP. "US Envoy Campaigns for Trade Pacts on Asian Trip," 7 April 2002. "Asean Takes Another Small Step Towards Integration," DOW JONES INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE via DOW JONES.

In Brief

AFRICAN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP PLAN PROMOTED IN CANADA-S. AFRICA SUMMIT

Following a three day working visit of Canada's Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to South Africa, South African President Thabo Mbeki and Chrétien announced on 7 April that preparations to get an African revival plan off the ground are under way and that tangible decisions on the matter could be expected at the June Summit of the group of eight (G-8) world powers in Canada. Chrétien, chair of the G-8 group, said that he was impressed with the progress in the programme to start pushing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into effect. NEPAD outlines Africa's objectives on democracy, good governance and economic development, with a view to achieving a growth rate of seven percent on the African continent by 2015. Key to NEPAD's success, according to Mbeki, is participation by the private sector in addition to what funding might come from governments. Preparations on particular issues for the G-8 summit are focusing on the sectors of agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, and information and communication technology, although Mbeki said that not all will be ready for implementation by the June meeting. Chrétien said the June summit would primarily focus on three issues: economic matters, African development, and terrorism.

"G8 leader backs Nepad after Mbeki meeting," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7 April 2002.

EU TO OVERHAUL POLICY IN ATTEMPT TO SAVE FISHING STOCKS

On 17 April, the European Commission is expected to announce plans to cut the size of European fishing fleets and scrap annual quotas in an attempt to save species that are close to extinction in some of Europe's waters. "We have never been so efficient at catching fish, but now we are overexploiting our oceans. Species like cod have been subjected to so much fishing that stocks are near to collapse," said Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler in a recent letter to the fishing industry. The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) says that the EU's fleet is at least 40 percent overcapacity and that 40 of 60 commercial fish stocks in the North East Atlantic are heavily over-fished. Fischler wants money currently spent on modernising trawlers to be switched to encouraging fishers to seek alternative employment. Fischler's plans for radical change are likely to be met with staunch opposition from Mediterranean countries such as France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece, who all have large, vocal and politically powerful fishing industries. They have joined forces to form an unofficial lobbying group -- les Amis de la Pêche (Friends of Fishing) --- to limit changes, arguing that it sustains employment in poorer regions.

"EU to cut fleets in overhaul of fishing policy," REUTERS, 9 April 2002.

JAPAN'S TRADE MINISTRY CALLS ON FARMERS TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE

At a press conference on 5 April, Japan's trade minister Takeo Hiranuma called on the national farming sector to become fitter for international competition so that Japan could better liberalise its agriculture markets and enter into stronger economic relationships with other countries. "I think the farm sector could become competitive enough, depending on its efforts, as the agricultural technology is advancing and Japan is blessed with mild weather and sophisticated improvement technology," the chief of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (MITI) stated. Acknowledging that this was "a sensitive issue," he added that "there should be no sacred cows in proceeding with free trade agreements (FTAs) and economic partnerships." The Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy of the Japanese government considers FTAs a key strategy to boost Japan's sluggish economy. WTO rules allow Members to enter into bilateral and regional FTAs under which they can agree on individual tariff schemes for substantially all trade areas. Although Japan has just recently concluded its first-ever FTA with Singapore (see BRIDGES Weekly, 23 October 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/01-10-23/inbrief.htm>), the agricultural sector had been quasi-exempted from the pact, as it only covers a few farm products imported from Singapore. Japan's position at the WTO is that food security requires self-sufficiency and that agriculture plays a multifunctional in its society.

"Japan MITI Urges Farm Sector To Up Competitiveness," KYODO NEWS, 5 April 2002.

PHILLIP MORRIS LOOKS TO CHILL CANADIAN PLANS TO BAN DESCRIPTORS ON CIGARETTE PACKAGES

In response to proposed Canadian regulations that seek to prohibit the use of the terms "light" and "mild" on cigarette packages (G/TBT/N/CAN/22), Phillip Morris International (PMI) has indicated that any such measure would violate a number of Canada's international trade obligations and thus potentially result in legal action. In its March 2002 submission, PMI cites two articles in the NAFTA's (North American Free Trade Agreement) investment chapter (Chapter 11: 1105 -- unfair and inequitable treatment; and 1110 -- measures tantamount to expropriation of reasonably expected profits). PMI also cites Article 20 of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) (unjustifiably encumbering the use of a trademark by special requirements), as well as Article 2.2 of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement (regulations creating unnecessary obstacles and not being the least trade restrictive method) as demonstrative of the illegal nature of the proposed regulations. PMI says that it would however, support labelling requirements that state that "light" products have not been shown to be safer than other cigarettes. Recent surveys show that more than a third of smokers who smoke "light" and "mild" cigarettes, do so for health reasons. Another international tobacco firm, JTI-Macdonald Corp., has already introduced a new packaging design for testing in Ontario in response to the proposed regulation that presents two "tar" measurements in large type on the front of the pack.

The full PMI submission can be viewed at:

<http://www.essentialaction.org/tobacco/pmresponsetonoi.pdf>.

"Phillip Morris to Canada: Drop Dead" FOCUS ON THE CORPORATION, 04 April 2002; "G/TBT/N/CAN/22" WTO, 21 December 2001.

EC ADOPTS MANDATE ON FUTURE ACP-EU NEGOTIATIONS

Following their 9 April meeting, the European Commission (EC) adopted a negotiating mandate that sets out a framework for the upcoming negotiations between the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union (EU) (see BRIDGES Weekly 3 April 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-04-03/story3.htm>). These negotiations, set out in the Cotonou Agreement to begin in September 2002, will follow a strategy of negotiating reciprocal and WTO-compliant 'Economic Partnership Agreements' (EPAs) with various regional groupings within the ACP -- so as to "combine trade and development issues in ways tailored to national and regional conditions [...]." Specifically, the framework addresses trade liberalisation as well as supply-side constraints and competitiveness, trade-related areas, and trade development measures in order to develop regional and domestic frameworks conducive to economic growth and social development. This strategy now goes to the 15 EU member states for approval. A number of European non-governmental organisations have raised concerns that this EPA strategy will create a scenario whereby ACP countries that are not in a position to negotiate reciprocal agreements may end up worse off vis-à-vis EU market access relative to those ACP countries that are able to enter into reciprocal arrangements.

"New strategy for partnerships with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries" EC, 9 April 9, 2002.

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

8-9 April, Manchester, UK: INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE. Organised by ERP Environment, the meeting will address issues such as corporate social responsibility, natural resource management, public participation, and globalisation. For further information contact: Elaine White, ERP, UK;

tel: (44-1274) 530- 408; fax: 530-409; email: elaine@erpenv.demon.co.uk. Internet: <http://www.erpenvironment.org/>.

9 April, Bern, Switzerland: MIND THE GATS: DEFINING UPU DEVELOPING COUNTRY INTERESTS IN GATS NEGOTIATIONS. The event is organised by the UPU's Council of Administration Project Team on WTO Relations. The Project Team's mission is to enhance awareness and understanding of WTO disciplines among the UPU's members, principally communications regulators and postal operators from throughout the world. Information will be targeted primarily to postal regulators and operators from developing countries. For further information visit: <http://www.upu.int/>.

11 April, Geneva, Switzerland: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN PRACTICE: THE RIGHT TO HEALTH. Organised by the International Commission of Jurists, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Chile, the meeting will gather representatives from governments and civil society that have expressed a particular interest in exchanging views and building a constructive dialogue on the right to health. The meeting will proceed by way of expert submissions, to be followed by a panel discussion dedicated to answering questions from the floor. For further information contact: Edwin Berry, International Commission of Jurists; tel: (41-22) 979-3811; fax: (41-22) 979-3801; email: berry@icj.org; Internet: <http://www.icj.org/>.

11-12 April, Laredo, Texas: FREE TRADE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE: THE CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE. The conference will identify, analyse and discuss the critical issues facing the Western Hemisphere as the global economy continues to emerge. For further information contact: Jessica Palacios; tel: (1-956) 326-2828.

12-14 April, Banff, Alberta, Canada: G-8 ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS MEETING. Inter alia, the summit will address the leadup to the World Summit on Sustainable Development scheduled for August-September 2002. For further information contact: Environment Canada; tel: (1-819) 956- 5212; fax: (1-819) 956-5964; email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca; Internet: <http://www.canada2002earthsummit.gc.ca/>. From IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

15-19 April, Paris France: The 17th SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES. Organised as a joint session by the FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The session will, inter alia, address working principles for Risk Analysis. For further information contact the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat; tel: (39 06) 5705 1; fax: 5705 4593; email: codex@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccgp17/gp02_01e.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.

9 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT- Special Session on Special and Differential Treatment for Developing Countries.

9-11 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TEXTILES MONITORING BODY.

10-11 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO NEGOTIATING GROUP ON MARKET ACCESS.

10-11 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF VIETNAM.

11-12 April, Geneva, Switzerland: JOINT WTO-WORLD BANK SYMPOSIUM ON MOVEMENT OF NATURAL PERSON (MODE 4) UNDER THE GATS.

12 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE IN INVESTMENT MEASURES.

15 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.

15-16 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY-MEXICO.

15 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING GROUP ON TRADE, DEBT AND FINANCE.

16 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY-Special Session on reform of the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

16-17 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING GROUP AND TRADE AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY.

29 April - 1 May 2002, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO SYMPOSIUM "THE DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND BEYOND." WTO symposium for governmental and non- governmental actors on major issues of concern around the WTO's new negotiating agenda. For further information contact: Bernard Kuiten, WTO External Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5676 or 739-5254, email: bernard.kuiten@wto.org. Internet: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/symp_devagenda_02_e.htm.

Other Forthcoming Events

17 April, Brussels, Belgium: FROM RIO TO DOHA TO JOHANNESBURG: COUNTERBALANCING THE WTO WITH STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RULES. This public hearing, convened by Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE), will address two specific cross-cutting issues: Environmental Governance and Alternatives to Trade and Investment Liberalisation. The event aims to foster a dialogue among EU officials and civil society representatives from the North and South on controversial WTO matters and discussions on positive alternatives in light of future WTO negotiations and the WSSD in Johannesburg. For further information contact: FoEE; email: alexandra.wandel@foeeurope.org; Internet: <http://www.foeeurope.org/>.

20 April, Brussels, Belgium: PUSHING TNCs TO COMMIT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT: IS ETHICAL INVESTMENT, GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP, AND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM TNCs THE ANSWER?. Organised by the International Coalition for Development Action (ICDA) with presentations by the New Economics Foundation, United Nations Environment Programme division on the Global Compact, Christian Aid UK and Public Services International. The aim of this seminar is to raise public awareness of the role of transnational companies, to provide information on the issue area to membership and partners and to promote mutual knowledge and coordination among civil society organisations. For further information contact ICDA at: tel: (32-3) 230-0430; fax: (32- 2) 230-5237; email: ekbensah@icda.be; Internet: <http://www.icda.be/ffdevelopment/tncseminar/>.

25 April, The Hague, Netherlands: FTAA: CHALLENGE OR PITFALL?. At the event, the strategic issues and the structure and procedure of the FTAA will be discussed as well as its implication for South America and the European Union. For further information contact: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2597 VH The Hague, Netherlands; tel: (31-70) 3245384; fax: 3282002; email: info@clingendael.nl; Internet: <http://www.clingendael.nl/>.

4-5 May, Montreal, Canada: CANADA AND AFRICA: A NEW PARTNERSHIP. The event will bring together the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) partners, both African and Canadian, to discuss and raise awareness about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a plan developed by African leaders to lift the continent out of poverty. The meeting will feature African speakers and presenters on topics related to key issues, including: governance; health and education; gender equality, peace and security; and, economic growth. For further information contact: Hilary Humphrey, Office of the Minister for International Cooperation; tel: (1-819) 953-6238; Internet: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/vLUAllDocByIDEn/AE3DDDA5D7D6B3D985256B9500542FAC?OpenDocument.

19-22 May, Quebec, Canada: WORLD ECOTOURISM SUMMIT. The World Ecotourism summit is expected to be the largest ever gathering of stakeholders involved in or affected by ecotourism. The objectives of the summit, inter alia, are to open a wide review on the potential contribution of ecotourism to sustainable development, to exchange information on good practice techniques and lessons learned in the sustainable

planning, development, management and marketing of ecotourism and to advance the knowledge of the social, economic and environmental impacts of ecotourism. For further information contact: Ecotourisme 2002 Secretariat; tel: (1-418) 692-1699; fax: (1-418) 692- 5587; email: ecotourism2002@jpd.com; Internet: <http://www.ecotourism2002.org/>.

26 May-6 June, Geneva, Switzerland: THIRD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS. Delegates to the forum will discuss a variety of issues, including: means of implementation, progress in implementation, specifically related to economic aspects of forests, forest health and productivity and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs. For further information contact: Mia Soderlund, UNFF Secretariat; tel: (1-212) 963-3262; fax: (1-212) 963-4260; email: unff@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>. From IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

21-28 August, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: 2002 WORLD ORGANIC CONGRESS-CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES. Organised by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, the event will be attended by farmers, researchers, advisors, food processors, traders, certifiers, policy makers, consumers and others interested in organic agriculture and sustainable development. The Congress will explore issues, the current research and practical applications of organic agriculture in plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions and posters. For further information contact: tel: (1-250) 655-5652; email: ifoam2002@cog.ca; Internet: <http://www.cog.ca/ifoam2002/>.

21-25 October, Cairns, Australia: INTERNATIONAL ECOTOURISM CONFERENCE. The conference is expected to be the final formal event of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 and will bring together the work carried out throughout the year. For further information contact: Tony Charters, Convenor; tel: (61-73) 535-5493; fax: 535-5445; email: tony.charters@tq.com.au; Internet: <http://www.ecotourism-australia.info/conf2002/index.htm>. From IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

25-29 November, Rome, Italy: 14TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. For further information contact: Ozone Secretariat; tel: (254-2) 62-1234 or 62-3850; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/meet2002.shtml>.

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 Matteo Rizzolli, mrizzolli@ictsd.ch).

WORLD TRADE REVIEW. The WTO and Cambridge University Press (CUP) have launched this new scholarly journal that is designed to "publish peer-reviewed articles which contribute to public discussion and debate about the multilateral trading system". Although it is an initiative of the WTO Secretariat, in close collaboration with CUP, the journal has an independent editorial policy and board. According to the WTO, the journal aims to "deepen understanding of issues facing the international trading system through critical analysis and constructive debate". For further information visit:

<http://uk.cambridge.org/journals/wtr/>, or

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres02_e/pr284_e.htm.

FACING THE FACTS: A GUIDE TO THE GATS DEBATE. By Scott Sinclair and Jim Grieshaber-Otto, published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 28 March 2002. New services negotiations, which began more than a year ago, are in full swing at the WTO. Senior government officials have just returned from a negotiating session in Geneva to expand the reach of GATS in areas usually considered the exclusive prerogative of domestic policy-making, namely, public services such as education and health care, and public interest regulations such as tobacco control and environmental protection laws. Scott Sinclair's earlier work, "GATS: How the WTO's Services Agreement Threatens Democracy," was the target of official rebuttals by both the WTO and the OECD. The new report is, in part, a response to the OECD and WTO rebuttals.

PROTECTING AND COMMERCIALISING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. The international seminar on systems for protecting and commercialising traditional knowledge (TK), organised by the Government of India and UNCTAD in New Delhi from 3 to 5 April, has just issued its final communiqué. Government-nominated representatives from 14 countries were joined by some 100 Indian participants and representatives of international organisations to discuss commercialisation of traditional medicine, systems Seminar on Systems for Protecting and Commercialising Traditional Knowledge for protecting TK at the national level, and the international dimension of TK protection, including possible components of an international sui generis system. For the final communiqué and other documentation on the seminar, visit: http://www.unctad.org/trade_env/. For further information contact: Mr. Rene Vossenaar, Chief, Trade, Environment and Development Section, UNCTAD/DITC, tel (41-22)907 5679, fax (41 22) 917 0247, email rene.vossenaar@unctad.org; or UNCTAD Press Office, tel. +41 22 907 5828/1646, fax: +(41-22) 907-0043, email: press@unctad.org.

THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM: A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE. Edited by Martin Khor, published by Third World Network, December 2001. This paper analyses the global governance of trade from a development and developing country perspective with a particular emphasis on its institutional framework. The paper begins by looking at the role of trade and the world trading system in the context of development. It provides an analysis of the historical evolution of the world trading system in the post World War II period. It then looks at the impact and implications of some of these agreements on development and developing countries, offering proposals for both improving the multilateral trading regime as well as for institutional and structural reform of the world trading system. The full paper is available at: <http://www.undp.org/mainundp/propoor/>.

AFRICA AT THE CROSSROADS: TIME TO DELIVER. Published by Oxfam, March 2002. This paper addresses the crisis facing Africa today, placing the responsibility for the crisis within the continent and outside it.. It suggests that Africa needs fair and accountable governance that works in the best interests of poor people, at national, regional, and international levels. Although Oxfam believes that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to the African crisis, the paper does include some changes that Oxfam believes are needed in order to make progress and further the debate. For the full paper, visit <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/africacrossroads/africacrossroads.html>.

AMERICA'S HIDDEN TAX ON THE POOR: THE CASE FOR REFORMING US TARIFF POLICY. By Edward Gresser, 25 March 2002. This policy report suggests that tariffs may now be the most regressive part of US tax policy, indicating that they fall hardest on two groups who can least afford them: poor Americans and impoverished textile-exporting countries such as Cambodia and Bangladesh. Reformers' three suggestions for amelioration of this problem are 1) a decision to treat tariffs as taxes, 2) new market access programs for the least developed nations, ending the exclusion of shoes and clothes from existing US duty-free programs, or 3) a renewed focus on raising US living standards as a principal trade policy goal, and thus use of the new WTO negotiating round to eliminate tariffs on shoes, clothes and other household goods worldwide. For the full text, visit: http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=108&subsecID=900010&contentID=250329.

"A general equilibrium analysis of the insurance bonding approach to pollution threats", by John Merrifield, in ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS, 2002. This paper addresses the issue of toxic accidental releases, or spills. Because spills of stored and transported chemicals are not continuous, or even inevitable, analogs of economic incentive approaches like emissions fees and transferable pollution allowances are inappropriate. Allowances are inappropriate because potential spills are often too harmful to allow, and a fee large enough to pay for clean-up and damages is beyond the means of many potential sources. The accidental release threat suggests an approach analogous to automobile liability insurance. To develop testable hypotheses and determine where traditional partial equilibrium analyses would probably be misleading, the paper compares a very basic insurance bonding approach to the traditional command-and-control approach in a general equilibrium setting. That allows a comparison of effectiveness, and impacts on output levels, prices, and factor returns.

Position Vacancy

The Foundation For International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD) is seeking a new lawyer with at least five years experience with international trade law as well as experience in international environmental law. The lawyer will undertake a variety of work, including research, teaching and the provision of advice, and should be able to work independently and as part of a team. FIELD is non-profit organisation which aims to contribute to the progressive development of international law for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development. A job description and an application form may be downloaded from:

<http://www.field.org.uk/fieldmain/jobs.htm>. The closing date for the position is Monday, 6 May 2002.

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

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