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DEVELOPMENT

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### LEAD STORIES

#### WTO: TRADE, ENVIRONMENT OFFICIALS PROGRESS ON MEA-WTO LINKS

On 11 and 12 November, officials from WTO Member trade and environment ministries convened with multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) secretariats for two back-to-back meetings, where they considered the relationship between the WTO and MEAs, in particular how to improve information exchange between the two regimes. The 11 November session, organised by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), was geared to promote synergies between MEAs and the WTO and lay groundwork in an informal context before the WTO's special (negotiating) session of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) on 12 November. At the CTE meeting, Members again heard presentations from MEAs, and agreed upon how to structure the Committee's work under paragraph 31(i) of the Doha Declaration (relationship between WTO rules and specific trade obligations in MEAs).

With the question of observership for MEAs in the special (negotiating) sessions of the CTE still blocked due to political reasons (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 June 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-06-12/story3.htm>), the CTE had agreed earlier this year to convene an informal special session on MEA information exchange (para. 31(ii)), where MEA secretariats could interact with WTO Members on relevant aspects of the Doha mandate.

According to paragraph 31(ii) of the Doha Declaration adopted by the WTO in Qatar last November, Members agreed to negotiations on "procedures for regular information exchange between MEA Secretariats and the relevant WTO committees, and the criteria for the granting of observer status."

#### Information exchange

While no concrete decisions on information exchange were taken by Members at the UNEP and WTO meetings, a number of suggestions were raised that sources say have laid the groundwork for further interaction between MEAs and the WTO. These included potential regularised and institutionalised MEA

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information sessions focused around specific topics; a website clearing-house for all relevant MEA and WTO documents; and enhanced cooperation at the national level between trade and environment officials and at the international level between MEA and WTO secretariats.

Regarding future MEA information sessions, Members remained undecided over whether they should be institutionalised, though there was more support for sessions to be held on a regular basis. Some countries, including the US, made suggestions about what topics could be covered by these sessions, including policy coherence and document exchange, technology transfer, capacity building, specific trade obligations in MEAs, and environmental goods and services. A Cambodian environmental official said that accurate and updated information would help to promote coherence at the national level.

A US proposal at the 12 November meeting to hold two MEA information sessions per year was generally well received, sources said, though there is unlikely to be any agreement on this before the next meeting of the CTE special session in the second week in February. One trade source indicated that it was unlikely that another MEA information session would be held before the next WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003.

Brazil and others stated the usefulness of holding the MEA info sessions back-to-back with UNEP to help focus the discussion and air views in an informal setting. The UNEP 'pre-meeting' was also open to civil society, enabling a wider participation of views. UNEP further contributed to the process by arranging, with funding from Canada, for the participation of 15 officials from environment ministries in developing countries.

### Observership

The issue of observership for MEAs was raised by a number of participants and by many of the MEA secretariats. Many expressed frustration over the difference between the relatively transparent observership criteria for most MEAs vis-à-vis the current blockage for observership at the WTO (the WTO Secretariat participates at many of the MEAs' Conferences and Meetings of the Parties, requiring only an expression of interest to attend). The EC continues to press for ad-hoc observership for MEAs, but resistance from Egypt, Malaysia and others means that the issue is likely to remain on hold until a resolution is found at the level of the Trade Negotiations Committee and the General Council.

One non-governmental representative commented that holding informal MEA information special sessions of the CTE was not a sufficient replacement to granting

MEAs observer status in the special sessions, as they were "special sessions" in name alone, and not real negotiations. Given that the Doha negotiating mandate addresses MEAs specifically, he said, it was vital that they participate at the negotiating level. This view was echoed by a trade diplomat from a developed country, who stated that in his view, a major consequence of the 11-12 November meetings was that "it's critical to have the MEAs in the room".

Some participants at the UNEP meeting felt that, in the absence of a decision on observership for MEAs, advancing on the information exchange mandate in para. 31(ii) was one way around the observership deadlock. Canada said it believed there was room for some sort of an "early harvest" on the 31(ii) mandate, though some other delegations were sceptical of this.

### Members agree on work structure for 31(i)

At an informal meeting following the MEA information session on 12 November, Members agreed on a compromise method on how to structure negotiations on the relationship between MEAs and the WTO mandated under para. 31(i) of the Doha Declaration (see BRIDGES Weekly, 17 October 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-10-17/story1.htm>). The compromise, which articulates a primarily 'bottom-up' approach based on specific trade obligations in MEAs, breaks an impasse between the EC and most other Members. Most countries had supported addressing 31(i) from a specific trade obligations approach, such as that advocated by Australia last spring or, more recently, New Zealand (see TN/TE/W/12, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>). The EC favoured discussing conceptual issues first, then moving on to addressing specifics. The compromise reached by Chair Yolande Bike (Gabon) adopts the specific trade obligations approach while mollifying it somewhat by saying that she would raise conceptual issues as these arose in the course of the negotiations. Members will focus on the 31(i) mandate with this approach at their first CTE special session of 2003 in February. Sources indicate that many -- though not all -- Members would like discussions to be based on a revised June 2001 WTO Secretariat matrix on MEA trade obligations (see WT/CTE/W/160/Rev.1).

Beyond the February meeting, Members have not yet agreed on how many CTE meetings would take place in 2003.

MEA secretariats present at the UNEP session included: the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes, and the Ramsar Convention.

Present at the WTO CTE special session were: the CBD, the UNFCCC, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Basel Convention, and UNEP.

ICTSD reporting.

## **WTO: S&D REVIEW STRUGGLES FOR AGREEMENT**

The last three weeks has seen special sessions of the WTO's Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) meet three times to discuss agreement-specific submissions as part of its review of special and differential treatment (S&D) provisions for developing countries.

Starting with a 23 October meeting on safeguards and services, they met again on 6 November for submissions relating to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and again on 12 November on dispute settlement. The general debates on these submissions reportedly saw little movement in countries' positions (see BRIDGES Weekly, 24 October, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-10-24/story2.htm>), with developed countries repeatedly saying that agreements could not be re-negotiated in this forum and should be relegated to the relevant bodies. Industrialised Member countries also said that proposals put forward by developing countries were impractical and would not achieve desired aims, and/or that sufficient flexibility was already available in the current rules. Many developing countries reportedly expressed disappointment and exasperation that the talks were essentially going in circles. In addition to these three meetings, an informal EC paper on the issue of differentiation (i.e. providing different levels of S&D to countries at different levels of development) was met with intense opposition from developing countries when it was circulated at a 4-5 November meeting for senior officials hosted by the EC.

WTO Members are working towards reaching agreement around strengthening S&D provisions ahead of a 31 December 2002 deadline, already extended from a missed 31 July 2002 deadline.

### **Safeguards**

Discussions on the Safeguards Agreement were relatively short and focused on Article 9 (dealing with developing country concerns). The proposal on this item contained in the Africa Group submission

(TN/CTD/W/3/Rev.2, not yet de-restricted) asserts that the nature of the prohibition against applying safeguard measures on products from developing country Members and the right for developing country Members to extend/augment safeguard measures is binding. Developed countries generally said there were no reasons to question the binding nature of Article 9, and requested clarification on what was meant by a "binding right" (which they interpret as an obligation). At the end of the discussions, Members simply agreed that the Article was binding.

With respect to the elements of the Africa Group proposal that looked to increase the level of a developing country's exports upon which a safeguard could not be applied, the EC, Japan, and Norway indicated that these matters had already been considered in another forum but that no conclusion had been reached.

### **Services**

The services discussion saw little headway, with developed country responses to the proposals (primarily from the Africa Group, see above) pointing to the inherent flexibilities already embedded in the positive-list approach to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), in particular the allowance for lower levels of commitments from developing countries. Developed countries reportedly said that developing countries should take advantage of this approach by making requests in the context of the services negotiations for items of export interest to them. Countries such as the US and New Zealand said they were willing to discuss the question of technical assistance for the services negotiations currently underway. The perception that there was neither sufficient time nor an appropriate mandate to re-negotiate GATS (in the CTD or otherwise) was cited by a number of developed countries.

An Africa Group proposal that developed country Members reserve quotas for the supply of services by developing country suppliers in sectors that developing country suppliers have interests was widely rejected by developed countries on account that quotas went counter to GATS' liberalisation efforts.

### **Sanitary and phytosanitary measures**

On the contentious issue of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) -- measures that can often negate crucial market access opportunities for developing countries' exports -- developed countries expressed a lack of understanding of many concerns underlying the developing countries' proposals. Industrialised country Members reportedly said that the proposals (TN/CTD/W/2 & W/6, searchable at

<http://docsonline.wto.org/>; and W/3/Rev.1, not yet de-restricted) placed too many restrictions and delays on implementing new SPS measures and/or required unlimited technical assistance funding, which was not available.

Australia said that withdrawing and/or providing exemptions to SPS measures defeated the purpose of protecting against risks. The EC mentioned that it could offer further work on equivalency systems and transparency. Canada and the US followed on earlier arguments that despite the unique nature of S&D with regards to SPS measures, the current S&D provisions had not been used effectively, and that making better use of existing provisions should be the priority (as opposed to changing/adding to them). Developed countries on the whole indicated that further consultations in the SPS Committee would be useful when new SPS measures were likely to cause problems for developing countries (as suggested in the Canadian submission to both the CTD special session and the SPS Committee, G/SPS/W/127).

Developing countries responded that their proposals did not in fact ask that sanitary and phytosanitary standards be lowered, but rather that meaningful and mandatory technical and financial assistance be provided in order to meet the new standards. Commenting on the Canadian proposal, Egypt noted its value, but said it did not address the related proposals that sought to secure and enhance current levels of exports from developing countries. They agreed that S&D provisions were in fact under-utilised, but attributed the cause to the vagueness of the language used in them -- a vagueness that one trade source noted was explicitly what was meant to be addressed under the CTD's mandate. Furthermore, Egypt added that often when S&D provisions had been used it was in a bilateral setting, and as such were not recorded by the WTO Secretariat. A delegate from the Africa group reportedly queried at one point, "if these proposals were not workable, then what was?"

### Dispute Settlement

While Members did engage in an in-depth discussion of the various proposals on the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU), many (developed and developing) countries preferred to focus on these items in the special session of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) -- where a number of the same proposals had been tabled. Some developing country delegates, however, noted that while the DSB meetings were looking primarily at new provisions and rules, the CTD's mandate was to operationalise the current ones. The EC reportedly noted that while it would entertain discussions in the CTD on the DSU, any modification should come in the relevant negotiating body (the

special sessions of the DSB). Of note, the issue of providing blanket provisions for special treatment and/or technical assistance to all developing country Members, as opposed to only those on the lower end of the income bracket, came up repeatedly in the discussion.

### EC paper on differentiation and graduation

This same issue was the focus of a paper circulated at a 4-5 November meeting outside Geneva, hosted by the EC for senior officials. The informal EC paper was reportedly aimed at steering the S&D review away from how to strengthen these provisions and make them "more precise, effective and operational", and push it towards a discussion on differentiation (i.e. providing different levels of S&D to countries at different levels of development).

Differentiation between developing countries has been a long-standing and hotly contested debate (both between developed & developing countries and amongst developing countries themselves). The EC paper, widely supported by the major trading powers, allegedly outlines that if any substantial concessions were to be made on the mandate to strengthen S&D provisions, it would have to be done in the context of differentiation and graduation, in the sense that as a country develops, it qualifies for less S&D provisions. One developed country source reportedly said that even if this were the case, little agreement was likely to be reached by 31 December (the new deadline for completing with the first part of the CTD's mandate on S&D, which was already postponed from its initial 31 July date).

In light of the mandate provided at Doha to review the agreement-specific provisions, combined with the sensitivity over the issue of differentiation, developing countries, according to sources, vehemently opposed the EC paper and re-affirmed their commitment that if the S&D review is sidetracked, it will have very negative impacts on the entire Doha round.

The next CTD special session is scheduled for 20-21 November.

ICTSD reporting.

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### CITES MOVES ON WHALES AND IVORY

Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), meeting for their 12th Conference in Santiago, Chile, on 4-15 November, rejected a proposal by Japan to allow limited trade in certain populations of whales. While they approved a one-off sale of ivory stockpiles in



Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, they turned down two ivory-related proposals from Zimbabwe and Zambia. Parties also rejected a draft resolution put forward by the CITES Secretariat on economic incentives and trade policy.

### **Of whales and elephants...**

Delegates voted against a proposal by Japan to transfer most northern hemisphere populations of Minke whale and the western North Pacific population of Bryde's whale from Appendix I (no trade allowed except in exceptional circumstances) to Appendix II (limited trade under strict controls). These and other whale species are currently protected under the International Whaling Commission, which established a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. At the IWC, whaling nations such as Iceland, Norway and Japan have been pushing hard for a lifting of the moratorium to allow for limited whaling activities. Both Norway and Iceland hold a reservation on the moratorium, which allows them to legally resume whaling.

Countries adopted proposals by Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to allow one-off sale of ivory stockpiles, collected from elephants that died of natural causes or as a result of government regulated problem animal control. Botswana and Namibia had previously withdrawn their request to institute annual sales of ivory in addition to the one-off sales. Any future one-off sales will be supervised through a rigorous control system and will not occur before May 2004 to allow for the gathering of baseline data on population and poaching levels. The CITES Standing Committees can suspend trade if they find the importing or exporting countries to be in non-compliance with their regulations.

However, parties rejected Zimbabwe's request for a one-off sale. Kenya and the US, in particular, had raised concerns regarding Zimbabwe's current ability to adequately enforce laws, manage wildlife, and control the domestic ivory trade. Parties also rejected Zambia's proposal to down-list its elephant population from Appendix I to II. The US and Kenya again opposed the proposal, with the US arguing that Zambia's elephant population did not meet the criteria for down-listing. India and Kenya had been the strongest opponents to re-opening ivory trade due to concerns that it would revive the ivory industry and lead to widespread poaching.

Many conservation groups greeted the decision to allow limited sales for the three African countries with anger, describing it as a "death warrant" for elephants. "Poachers, smugglers, and profiteers are not interested in the fine print that outlines the conditions attached to future ivory sales, nor in the 18-months delay before any sale can take place", said Will Travers, president of

the Born Free Foundation and chairman of the Species Survival network. The groups strongly criticised the US for supporting the ivory trade for the first time in CITES history. "We condemn the United States for today's disappointing departure from its past position on this issue," said Teresa Telecky of the Wildlife Trade Programme for the Humane Society of the US.

### **Countries reject resolution on economic incentives and trade policy**

Parties rejected a draft resolution on economic incentives and trade policy put forward by the CITES Secretariat (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 24 October 2002; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-10-24/story1.htm>), which, inter alia, encouraged the use of social and economic incentives at the domestic level to achieve the objectives of the Convention and the removal of perverse incentives. The draft resolution furthermore called on Parties to avoid the use of stricter domestic measures (SDMs, i.e. domestic legislation with trade controls stricter than those required by CITES) and to favour instead the adoption of incentive measures at the international level. The reference to avoiding SDMs was rejected by India, the EU and Brazil, arguing that the Convention did allow for the use of such measures. Many regard SDMs as the most likely potential point of conflict between CITES and WTO rules, believing that they open the door for unilateral, arbitrary and restrictive trade measures that are allowed under CITES (see BRIDGES Vol.2 No.2, <http://www.ictsd.org/English/BRIDGES2-2.pdf>).

Nevertheless, the CITES Secretariat will conduct further work on the use of economic incentives, following the adoption of a draft decision which sets out future activities for the Secretariat to further explore this issue.

All decisions by the CITES Parties will be submitted for adoption by the final plenary on 15 November.

Documents of the meeting are available at <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/index.shtml>. For daily coverage, see <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/cites/COP12/>

"Elephant ivory sales approved for three nations," ENS, 12 November 2002; "Nations vote to protect minke, bryde's whales," ENS, 8 November 2002; ENB Vol. 12 No. 20-28, 3-14 November.

## OTHER NEWS

### SPS COMMITTEE DISCUSSES EU GMO REGULATIONS AS POSSIBLE WTO CHALLENGE LOOMS

At the 7-8 November meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), the US, Canada, Australia, Argentina and the Philippines again raised concerns regarding the EU's continued de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 July 2002; <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-07-03/story4.htm>). Australia also added concerns regarding the EU's proposed labelling and traceability regulations. For its part, Argentina submitted a set of questions, which the EU said they would respond to in writing (G/SPS/GEN/354, searchable at <http://docsonline.wto.org/>). The European Commission - speaking on behalf of the EU -- expressed its frustration that nothing had happened on these issues in the EU since the July SPS Committee meeting, but also stressed that it was a delicate and extremely political process.

The US has yet to decide whether to formally challenge the EU regulations at the WTO. The most recent call for a challenge has come from US agriculture groups that have urged the US government in a letter on 8 November to "engage the EU in a WTO dispute settlement proceeding against its illegal moratorium". European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection David Byrne in a recent interview acknowledged that the legal defences for the EU in case of a dispute "would be very narrow", but also warned that even if the US won the challenge, they might risk a consumer backlash in the EU which would undermine the Commission's efforts to build public confidence in GM foods.

The EU's responses to questions posed by WTO Members regarding the proposed labelling and traceability regulations are contained in the WTO documents G/SPS/GEN/337 and 338.

ICTSD reporting; "Warning on GMO rules delay," FT, 12 November 2002.

### USTR PROPOSES NEW FTA WITH SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONS

On 4 November, US Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Zoellick informed Congressional leaders of the Bush Administration's intent to begin negotiations in the

hopes of forming a free trade agreement (FTA) with the countries included in the South African Customs Union (SACU): Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Swaziland. The negotiations are expected to commence in approximately three months. In regards to the potential agreement, Zoellick has said that "[the Administration is] responding to Congress' direction, as expressed in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), to initiate negotiations with interested beneficiary countries to serve as the catalyst for increasing free trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa and for increasing private sector investment in the region." Some civil society groups, however, are questioning the US' intentions behind the initiative.

According to the USTR, an FTA with SACU, already the US' largest sub-Saharan African export market, would likely enhance both US political and economic links to the African region and lead to spurred development. SACU accounts for up to USD 3 billion in exports a year, and in 2001, combined two-way trade between the US and the region was estimated at almost USD 8 billion. One media source indicates that the South African business community in the US is pleased with the initiative.

Zoellick informed the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate of the Administration's intentions to maintain continuous consultations with Congress around the the SACU FTA, and sent a similar letter to Senator Robert Byrd (D). In the letter to Byrd, Zoellick outlined a number of major issues relating to the Administration's intentions, including an interest to develop American trade interests, compete with the advantageous trade relationship the EU has with Africa, and connect enhanced trade with development of the SACU region. The letter goes on to express an interest in increasing regional integration, developing intellectual property rights regimes, and in decreasing impediments to American service firms.

### American intentions scrutinised

Larry J. Goodwin of the Africa Faith & Justice Network believes that language in the letter to Senator Byrd indicates that the Administration plans to push access to the region for US genetically modified organisms (GMOs) through the agreement. The letter states that the US will "seek to eliminate non-tariff barriers in SACU countries to US exports, including...unjustified trade restrictions that affect new US technologies" and "eliminate SACU country practices that adversely affect US exports of perishable or cyclical agricultural products."

Goodwin also interprets the letter as saying that American subsidies would be protected under an intended agreement, while African subsidies would not. The US, according to Zoellick's text, will "pursue a mechanism with SACU countries that will support achieving the US objective in the WTO negotiations of eliminating all export subsidies on agricultural products, while maintaining the right to provide bona fide food aid and preserving U.S. agricultural market development and export credit programs." Mr. Goodwin believes that the reference to "bona fide food aid" could also relate to the GMO issue.

### In related news

Last week, at a ministerial conference between the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the EU, the EU announced plans to grant SADC EUR 101 million in an attempt to improve the economic integration of various sectors in the region, including trade, communications and transport. SADC is made up of nine members, including Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe and works to improve development, economic growth, and alleviate poverty amongst other goals in the region.

For further information, see:

<http://www.ustr.gov/releases/2002/11/2002-11-04-SACU-byrd.PDF> and  
[http://www.sadc.int/english/news/mr21\\_07112002.html](http://www.sadc.int/english/news/mr21_07112002.html).

"Zoellick Launched Negotiations With Southern African Customs Union," AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK, 7 November 2002. " USTR Notifies Congress Administration Intends to Initiate Free Trade Negotiations with Sub-Saharan Nations," USTR, 5 November 2002," Letter to Senator Byrd," USTR, 5 November 2002. "EU grants €101m to strengthen economic integration in SADC," DOW JONES, 12 November 2002," US formally launches SACU free trade proposal," BUSINESS DAY, 7 November 2002.

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## FTAS MULTIPLY IN ASIAN REGION

On 5 November, one day after Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members and China signed a framework agreement to begin negotiations next year to create what would be the world's largest free trade agreement (FTA) (see BRIDGES Weekly, 7 November 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-11-07/inbrief.htm>), the group of 10 countries announced that it would also begin talks with India and Japan to achieve similar agreements. India and ASEAN issued a joint statement after the 3-5 November ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, saying that, "The leaders agreed on

the importance of enhancing their close economic cooperation and to work towards India-FTA linkages." Japanese and ASEAN leaders signed a joint declaration incorporating their agreement to draw up a framework for a trade and investment agreement by the end of next year, and to create a Japan-ASEAN economic partnership as soon as possible within ten years.

Free trade agreements involving Asian countries have proliferated recently, as many in the region have indicated that these bilateral agreements can be seen as an addition to the Doha round that allows for faster results in trade liberalisation. Japan, on top of its partnership with ASEAN, has begun FTA negotiations with Mexico and to a lesser extent the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand. It has also been proposed by China that Japan and South Korea consider an FTA between the three countries in the coming years. Thailand and India announced on 8 November that they are very close to negotiating an agreement, while South Korea in October signed an FTQ with Chile.

At the same time, Thailand has signed an agreement with the United States (see BRIDGES Weekly, 31 October 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-10-31/inbrief.htm> - 4), which is the country's largest foreign investor. The US already has agreements with Indonesia and the Philippines and is very close to signing an FTA with Singapore. Two weeks ago, Singapore signed an FTA with Australia, adding to its existing agreements with Japan and New Zealand. Even Malaysia, which has traditionally opposed FTAs, appears now to be opening to the idea of bilateral trade deals after the US proposed a trade and investment framework agreement at the end of October to increase US trade and investment in Malaysia.

"Analysis: Asian trade pacts proliferate," UPI Business Correspondent, 5 November 2002; "China and ASEAN to sign trade pact as AFTA falters," REUTERS, 4 November 2002; "India, ASEAN agree to create Free Trade Area," PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, 5 November 2002; "India, Thailand agree to create FTA," REDIFF, 8 November 2002.

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## US REQUESTS CONSULTATIONS ON VENEZUELAN AGRICULTURAL BARRIERS

On 7 November, the United States requested consultations with Venezuela at the WTO over aspects of the Latin American country's agricultural import regime. The dispute focuses on Venezuela's import licensing processes, which according to the US Trade Representative (USTR) restrict US agricultural exports

to Venezuela. American agricultural exports to Venezuela are estimated at about USD 200 million per year. According to one trade source, the US is looking to secure market access for its agricultural surpluses in the wake of last May's 80 percent increase in US support for its domestic agricultural producers.

The USTR alleges that Venezuela has imposed "a variety of discretionary import licensing practices to impede or prevent imports of agricultural products" from the US. As an example, the USTR said that Venezuela requires that importers of corn often purchase domestically produced feed grains in order to obtain import licenses. Consequently, the USTR asserts, this has led Venezuelan corn imports to drop by almost 60 percent over the past year.

The US is also challenging other Venezuelan practices, including a lack of published rules on licensing procedures and delays in processing applications, which have allegedly reduced US exports of sorghum, dairy products, grapes, poultry, beef, and soybean meal. "We hope that Venezuela will take our concerns seriously and use the consultations as an opportunity to bring its import regime for agricultural products into full compliance with WTO rules," USTR Robert Zoellick said.

Venezuela has 30 days to consider whether to agree to consultations with the US. If the discussions begin and do not produce a resolution after sixty days, the United States can formally initiate a dispute settlement panel process.

"U.S. Seeks WTO Consultations with Venezuela in Dispute over Rules Restricting U.S. Agricultural Imports", USTR PRESS RELEASE, 7 November 2002.

## IN BRIEF

### EUROPEAN LABOUR MEP TAKES STANCE AGAINST EU SUGAR REGIME

In an open letter published on 9 November, Labour Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for Wales, Glenys Kinnock, called on the EU and other WTO Members to reform agricultural policies based on export subsidies, internal price supports and direct aid to producers, blaming them for having a "devastating effect on developing countries' efforts to participate in international trade." Referring to the emerging WTO dispute initiated by Australia and Brazil over the EU's sugar regime with the African, Caribbean and Pacific

(ACP) group, the MEP said it was clear that the 77 ACP countries as well as the Union would strongly defend the sugar regime under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (see BRIDGES Weekly, 17 October 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-10-17/wtoinbrief.htm>). "Europe is the most costly producer of sugar and the world's biggest exporter of white sugar," Kinnock stated in her letter. She further criticised that the EU would sell considerable amounts of sugar to several African countries such as Algeria and Nigeria, although "these would be natural markets for sugar from countries on their own continent, such as Mozambique." Kinnock also hinted at a somewhat two-faced negotiating approach pursued by the EU which would on the one hand negotiate with the ACP under the Cotonou Agreement to enable its partner countries to become more competitive in global markets, while on the other hand defending policies that ran counter to developing country interests that were "crying out for reform." Nevertheless, Kinnock also addressed the challengers of the EU-ACP sugar regime, saying their dispute was "about subsidies", but it was "promoted by two countries that subsidise their own industries."

"Letters To The Editor: Small Farmers Are Threatened By Policies That Need Urgent Reform," FINANCIAL TIMES, 9 November 2002.

### METHANEX REFILES CASE WITH NAFTA OVER CALIFORNIA MTBE BAN

The largest global producer of methanol, Methanex Corp., based in Vancouver, Canada is looking for approximately USD 1 billion in damages in a new pleading it has filed with a NAFTA tribunal claiming harm caused by California's 1999 decision to ban a gasoline additive methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), which the company produces. There is suspicion that the additive has carcinogenic properties. Believing that the planned ban would cost the company US \$970 million in business, Methanex already sued the US government in 1999 through a NAFTA provision. A NAFTA international tribunal subsequently passed a judgment that the corporation was unsuccessful in proving all aspects of the case, and gave Methanex 90 days to provide new evidence. Last week the corporation brought a 'comprehensive new filing' to the NAFTA tribunal. Michael Macdonald, senior vice-president of technology at Methanex, said on 7 November that "our fresh pleading will clearly demonstrate our case." The defendant in this case, the US Department of State, has one month to respond to the new filing.

"Methanex Refiles NAFTA Claim Over California Ban," NATIONAL POST, 7 November 2002.



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION RELEASES DRAFT ECODESIGN LEGISLATION

The European Commission has circulated a draft legislative proposal combining two previously released proposals on ecodesign requirements and minimum energy efficiency standards for consumer appliances. The proposal forms part of the EU's strategy to curb energy consumption and cut greenhouse gas emissions. It would constitute a framework directive and would require implementing measures to be developed, thereby allowing industry more time to adjust to the new legislation. Also, the draft legislation for the first suggests that ecodesign requirements might include quantitative limits on the consumption of resources in the production and use of appliances, as well as minimum recycled material content. The proposal will be discussed at a stakeholder meeting in Brussels on 18 November.

"Europe experiments with product ecodesign," ENS, 7 November 2002.

## ON THE MOVE

### PURI NEW UNCTAD TRADE DIVISION DIRECTOR

On 21 October, Lakshmi Puri (India) was appointed as the next Director of the UN Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) Division for Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities (DITC). Ms. Puri joins UNCTAD after 28 years with the Indian Foreign Service, working on administration and policy-making and in bilateral and multilateral economic diplomacy, with a focus on trade, economic cooperation and development. During her time with the Indian government, Ms. Puri helped formulate and negotiate both regional and interregional economic and trade initiatives. She has offered both theoretical and policy-related research to academic institutions and think tanks that work on trade and development issues. Between 1999 and 2002 Ms. Puri acted as the Indian Ambassador to Hungary and concurrently accredited to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ten years ago she was placed as the Deputy Permanent Representative of India at the UN in Geneva, where she actively participated in UNCTAD events.

"Lakshmi Puri Appointed to Head UNCTAD's Trade Division," UNCTAD, 7 November 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>. If you would like to submit an event, please email [events@ictsd.ch](mailto:events@ictsd.ch).

### Coming Up This Week: 14-21 November

14-15 November, Sydney, Australia: 'MINI-MINISTERIAL' MEETING OF CERTAIN WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION MEMBERS. A so-called 'mini-ministerial' meeting to discuss ongoing negotiations aimed at lowering global trade barriers. The Sydney meeting will occur a year after the WTO launched the current round of trade liberalisation talks in the Qatari capital of Doha (see BRIDGES Weekly, 7 November 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-11-07/story3.htm>).

15-16 November, Brussels, Belgium: FILLING THE DEVELOPMENT DEFICITS AND INFLUENCING THE WTOMC5: TRANSFORMING BLIND ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY. The objectives of this annual conference, inter alia, are to: identify the core deficits of the latest int'l conferences; examine and analyse the role of the private sector, FDI, partnerships, and corporate social responsibility after Johannesburg, as follow-up to ICDA Trade and TNC Seminar in April 2002; and explore ways in which ICDA's members, partners, and contacts in the South and North can work towards pressing both the WTO and the UN, especially development and trade bodies, such as UNCTAD, to play a more proactive role in advancing a gender-sensitive, people-oriented, sustainable development. For further information, visit <http://www.icda.be/annual-conference/>.

19 November, Geneva, Switzerland: SEMINAR ON THE "PEACE CLAUSE" IN THE WTO AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE. Given by Professors Timothy Josling of Stanford University and Richard Steinberg of the University of California at Los Angeles. The "Peace Clause" (Article 13 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture) precludes most WTO dispute settlement challenges against a country that is complying with the Agreement's liberalisation commitments -- until January 1, 2004, when the Peace Clause will expire. Professors Josling and Steinberg will evaluate the strength of the main legal theories likely to be used in challenges to EC and US agricultural subsidies after expiry of the Peace Clause, consider economic techniques (regression analysis and equilibrium modelling) for meaningfully applying those legal standards, and report on the use of

those techniques to apply the soundest of the legal theories to economic data about and models of agriculture trade. The seminar will take place in the Auditorium Jacques Freymond ("AJF") of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, 132 rue de Lausanne, from 13:30 to 15:00. For further information, contact John Cuddy at [jdacuddy@yahoo.com](mailto:jdacuddy@yahoo.com).

20 November, Brussels, Belgium: CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE: MEETING ON SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF EU-CHILE AGREEMENT/TRADE PILLAR. The DG Trade is holding a meeting on a sustainability impact assessment of the EU-Chile Agreement (trade pillar). For further information on this meeting, visit [http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/civil\\_soc/meet.php?action=consult&critere=90](http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/civil_soc/meet.php?action=consult&critere=90).

21 November, 18.00-20.00 CET: ONLINE CHAT "NEW WTO TRADE ROUND: TALKING TRADE - WHAT'S GOING ON?" Does trade make a difference? What's up in the World Trade Organisation (WTO)? Are trade negotiations also good for development and environment? One year after the launch of the new trade negotiations round, European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, the Egyptian Trade Minister Youssef Boutros-Ghali and a representative of WWF, Dr Keith Tyrell, will debate whether this round is on track and voice their hopes and concerns. For further information concerning this discussion, visit [http://europa.eu.int/comm/chat/lamy9/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/chat/lamy9/index_en.htm).

21 November, Brussels, Belgium: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TRADE -- A NEW APPROACH. EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy is keynote speaker at a meeting concerning the Sustainable Trade and Innovation Centre (STIC) project. This new global partnership will enable developing country producers to benefit from growing market pressures to integrate environmental and social factors into their export strategies. The project is designed by the Commonwealth Science Council (CSC), European Partners for the Environment (EPE) and the Dutch Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), with the support of DG Trade. For further information on this meeting, visit [http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/civil\\_soc/meet.php?action=consult&critere=82](http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/civil_soc/meet.php?action=consult&critere=82).

21-22 November, London, England, Royal Institute for International Affairs: CLIMATE POLICY FOR THE LONGER TERM: FROM HERE TO WHERE? The past 18 Months have revolutionised the landscape of climate policy. The Kyoto Protocol is now widely expected to enter in to force, but in very different circumstances than originally envisaged. The rescue of the Protocol in the face of the US rejection has raised the issue to new heights and strengthened the resolve of many countries to move towards effective implementation of their

commitments. At the same time, the international framework is weakened and the economics of the international trading system undermined. For further information on this conference, contact Georgina Wright at [conferences@riia.org](mailto:conferences@riia.org).

## WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/meets.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf). 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.

13-15 November, 10:00, Geneva, Switzerland: SPECIAL SESSION OF THE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY. Proposals submitted by the delegations will be discussed in these meetings.

14 November, 10:00, Geneva, Switzerland: WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF CAMBODIA. The meeting will be held to review the state of play of the bilateral market access negotiations in goods and services as well as to continue the examination of the foreign trade regime of Cambodia.

15 November, 12:00, Geneva, Switzerland: COMMITTEE ON RULES OF ORIGIN. Issues to be discussed include, issues to be resolved pertaining to product-specific rules of origin and the transitional review under paragraph 18 of the protocol of the accession of China. Also, the annual review of the implementation and operation of the agreement on the rules of origin will be discussed.

18 November, 15:00, Geneva, Switzerland: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT. Issues to be discussed include, implementation rate of the WTO 2002 Technical assistance Plan, evaluation of the regional trade- policy courses in Casablanca and Nairobi, and the WTO 2003 Technical Assistance plan.

20-21 November, 13:00, Geneva, Switzerland: SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT. Discussion is to focus around the Agreement on Agriculture (TN/CTD/W/3/Rev.2, TN/CTD/W/4).

20-21 November, 10:00, Geneva, Switzerland: WORKING GROUP ON THE INTERACTION BETWEEN TRADE AND COMPETITION POLICY. Meeting will focus on review and approval of the draft report (2002) of the working group to the General Council.

## Other Forthcoming Events

24-26 NOVEMBER, NEW DELHI, INDIA: ASIA PACIFIC SEMINARS ON INVESTMENT AND COMPETITION. Organised by CUTS Center for Trade Economics & Environment (CUTS-CITEE). The objectives of the seminar are to share research findings of the project with the civil society and disseminate information on the various issues relating to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). On 25 Nov, a half-day Project Interim Meeting of the project "Investment for Development". The meeting will provide an opportunity for project partners to take stock of achievements in the project so far and to plan ahead. On 26 Nov, two parallel one-day events: a Regional Seminar on Competition Issues, and Research Seminar on Foreign Direct Investment and Development – The Policy Dimension. For further information, visit <http://www.cuts.org/>.

25-26 November, London, England: THE WORLD FOOD AND FARMING CONGRESS (WFFC). In the next few years, national policy decisions and international agreements will determine where and how much food will be grown around the world. Policy decisions will determine who produces food and how much food is traded across national borders. This Congress offers the opportunity to hear divergent views on the future of world agriculture; to debate critical issues and to offer key recommendations to the world's food and farming leaders. For further information on this conference, visit <http://www.wffc.co.uk/>.

25-29 November, Rome, Italy: SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE VIENNA CONVENTION AND THE 14TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. For further information, visit <http://www.unep.org/ozone/meet2002.shtml>.

26 November, Leuven, Belgium: SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBALISATION. The aim of this conference is to launch a call for a larger development consensus within the context of the WTO's Doha negotiating mandate. A panel of prominent international keynote speakers will initiate the debate. For further information on this event, visit <http://www.globalisationdebate.be/>.

27-29 November, Cusco, Peru: MEETING OF THE GROUP OF LIKE-MINDED MEGADIVERSE COUNTRIES. Initial two days of the meeting will be an expert meeting on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing (ABS) and traditional knowledge. Experts and government representatives will look at progress in national and international ABS policies and legislation; they will also address genetic resources markets, demand and how the biotechnology industry perceives the CBD ABS rules; discussions will also

focus on the new FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and finally, how to address the issue of legally protecting indigenous traditional knowledge. The final segment of the meeting will bring together Ministers and high-level representatives of the Group to analyse and approve a political statement. Participants include Ministers, CBD representatives, FAO representatives, industry representatives, indigenous peoples representatives, among a wide range of stakeholders. To view the declaration forming this group, visit <http://www.embamexcan.com/english/Environment/CancunDeclaration.html>.

4-5 December, Sao Paulo, Brazil: LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL SEMINAR ON INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT, organised by CUTS-CITEE. The seminar will be held under the "Investment for Development", which is being conducted by CUTS-CITEE in collaboration with UNCTAD with support from Department for International Development (DFID), UK. The objectives of the seminar are to share research findings of the project with the civil society and disseminate information on the various issues relating to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The project researcher from Brazil will present his research findings. For further information, visit <http://www.cuts.org/>.

9-17 December, Geneva, Switzerland: FOURTH SESSION OF THE WIPO INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GENETIC RESOURCES, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOLKLORE. For further information on this conference, contact WIPO; tel: +41-22-338-9111 or email: [WIPO.mail@wipo.int](mailto:WIPO.mail@wipo.int).

9-13 December, Geneva, Switzerland: SIXTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE TO THE PARTIES TO THE BASEL CONVENTION. Meeting will provide an opportunity for sharing ideas and building partnerships between governments and organizations focused on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. Exhibition stands will also be available to groups that wish to present material pertaining to the subject matter. During meetings provisions and annexes will be made to the Basel Convention concerning the monitoring and movement of hazardous wastes. For further information, visit <http://www.basel.int/>.

## 2003 Events

2-7 January, Hyderabad, India: ASIAN SOCIAL FORUM. The main themes of the forum are the following: Peace and Security; Debt, Development and Trade; Nation State, Democracy and Exclusions; Ecology, Culture and Knowledge; Social Infrastructure,

Planning and Cooperation; and Alternatives and Peoples Movements. The events that are envisaged over a period of 6 days are: 2 public/ plenary sessions; 2 conferences daily (total 6-8); 25 parallel seminars daily (total 50-100); Up to 50 workshops daily (total 100-200); Testimonials, and open "spaces" for mass movements; A Youth Camp; Cultural Events; and a Film Festival. For further information on this conference, visit <http://www.wsfindia.org/>.

3-7 February, Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL. For further information on this event, visit <http://www.unep.org/>, or contact [beverly.miller@unep.org](mailto:beverly.miller@unep.org).

10-14 September, Cancun, Mexico: WTO FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. For further information on this conference, visit <http://www.wto.org/>, or email: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org).

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## 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 [resources@ictsd.ch](mailto:resources@ictsd.ch). Submissions of publications to ICTSD's documentation centre would also be welcomed (see mailing address below).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Edited by Kevin P. Gallagher and Jacob Werksman. Published by Earthscan, 2002. This reader presents the latest research on trade and sustainability issues. Topics include the Environmental Kuznets Curve and Pollution Haven hypotheses, foreign direct investment and the environment, MEA-WTO conflicts, trade laws and fisheries subsidies, intellectual property rights and traditional knowledge, and related policy mechanisms. For more information on this reader, visit [http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae/highlights/earthscan\\_reader.html](http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae/highlights/earthscan_reader.html).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE ECONOMICS: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH. By Jonathan M. Harris. Published by Houghton Mifflin, 2002. This introductory text balances standard and ecological economics approaches, offering a global perspective on current issues of population growth, climate change, and natural resource use, as well as extensive treatment of environmental valuation, industrial ecology, and the relationship between trade and the environment. This text contains numerous examples, graphs, key terms, and end-of-chapter questions to help students review and assimilate core concepts. It is intended both to economics instructors who wish to include a broader analysis and to

instructors in fields such as environmental studies who seek an integrated treatment of economic and ecological issues. For further information on this publication, visit [http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae/summaries/EconText/econtext\\_color.htm](http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae/summaries/EconText/econtext_color.htm).

PROPOSAL FOR MODALITIES FOR WTO AGRICULTURE NEGOTIATIONS. By Bhagirath Lal Das. September 2002. The paper is aimed at correcting current imbalances and deficiencies in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), which the author says enable developed countries to maintain or even increase their very high subsidies whilst penalising the developing countries, many of which are now experiencing a surge of cheap food imports—including imports that are "dumped" or artificially cheap because of subsidies. Among the key proposals are that developing countries be allowed to make use of quantitative restrictions in order to re-balance the agreement, since rich countries still maintain high subsidies whilst developing countries are unable to do so, either due to WTO restrictions or due to lack of financial resources to subsidise. To obtain a copy of this publication, visit <http://www.twinside.org.sg/>.

WEF GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME. November 2002. The World Economic Forum publishes yearly competitiveness reports covering the major economies of the world. First published in 1979, the Global Competitiveness Report has become a comprehensive assessment of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of national economies around the world. In recent years, the report has been produced in close collaboration with Harvard University to ensure that the latest thinking and research of scholars working in the area of global competitiveness are incorporated. To obtain a copy of this publication, visit <http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Global+Competitiveness+Programme>.

"How regional blocs affect excluded countries: the price effects of MERCOSUR," in AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW 92 (4, 2002): 889-904. By Won Chang and L. Alan Winters. The welfare effects of PTAs are most directly linked to changes in trade prices, i.e., the terms of trade. This paper employs a simple strategic pricing game in segmented markets to measure the effects of MERCOSUR on the pricing of "nonmember" exports to Brazil: as Brazil exempts its MERCOSUR partners from tariffs, the resulting competitive pressure leads other exporters to reduce their prices. Working with detailed data on unit values and tariffs we find that the creation of MERCOSUR was associated with significant declines in the prices of nonmembers' exports to the region.



"Simulating the effect of regulatory systems in a fishery: an application to the French driftnet albacore fleet," in ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS 23 (1, 2002): 1-28. By Olivier Guyader. With a thin economic component, most bio-economic models of fisheries fail to assess the effects of the regulation systems on firms. In order to analyse the short-term consequences of different management schemes, a simulation model is applied to the French driftnet albacore fleet: license allocation with driftnet regulation, individual quotas, and individual transferable quotas without any input control. Vessel technology is estimated by using the data collected, and groups of vessels are distinguished according to criteria of performance.

"Toughest on the poor: America's flawed tariff system," in FOREIGN AFFAIRS 81 (6, 2002): 9-14. By Edward Gresser. US tariff policy has evolved into something astonishingly tough on the poor, both at home and abroad, the author argues. This paper posits that this scandalous situation would not be hard to fix.

"A renaissance for U. S. trade policy?," in FOREIGN AFFAIRS 81 (6, 2002): 86-98. By C. Fred Bergsten. The Bush administration's recent protectionist measures have attracted intense international criticism. US backtracking on free trade could give other countries an excuse to do likewise. But, according to the author, critics should note that those measures also made it easier for Bush to win "fast-track" negotiating authority from Congress, providing the political base necessary for further liberalisation.

"World Bank research: influential but narrow," in THIRD WORLD ECONOMICS 290 (Oct. 1-15, 2002): 13-16. By Alex Wilks and Fabien Lefrancois. One of the dominant purveyors of development ideas, the World Bank is able to steer national policymakers not only through its financial clout but also by way of its influential research output. However, as the authors discover, knowledge generated by the Bank often tends towards the narrowly economic and technocratic, ignoring or downplaying the multidimensional aspects of complex development problems.

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## WTO RESOURCES

The following recently released WTO documents of note from a sustainable development perspective are available on the WTO website at: <http://docsonline.wto.org/>.

### Negotiating Group on Market Access

FORMULA APPROACHES TO TARIFF  
NEGOTIATIONS (TN/MA/S/3/Rev.1). Negotiating

Group on Market Access. Note by the Secretariat; revision, 4 November 2002. The study was compiled as a response to Brazil's request for a study to show the different modalities utilised in tariff negotiations. The study examines the tariff negotiation mandate, various proposed and adopted formulae, and the kinds of exceptions that have been used in the past.

WTO MEMBERS' TARIFF PROFILES  
(TN/MA/S/4/Rev.1). Negotiating Group on Market Access. Note by the Secretariat; revision, 1 November 2002. These profiles have been compiled in response to a Malaysian request. The WTO Consolidated Tariff Schedules database (CTS) and the Integrated Data Base (IDB) have been used as sources for data.

### Technical Assistance

2003 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES  
(WT/COMTD/W/104/ADD.1/REV.1). Committee on Trade and Development. Note by the Secretariat, 7 November 2002. Report covers WTO technical assistance activities in many areas, including: Agriculture; Dispute Settlement; Implementation Issues; Integrated Framework and LDCs; Marketing Access; Services; Singapore Issues; Textiles and Clothing; Trade and Environment; and Trade negotiations.

COORDINATED WTO SECRETARIAT ANNUAL  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN 2003  
(WT/COMTD/W/104/REV.1). Committee on Trade and Development. Note by the Secretariat, 7 November 2002. The use of Technical Assistance (TA) for the process of integrating trade into development is in three inter-linked stages, namely: TA to develop negotiating capacity for the Doha negotiating mandate; TA to build institutional capacity to understand the rules and implement agreements; and TA to develop commercial infrastructure for the development goals of revenue generation, increased employment and poverty reduction.

### SPS - GMOs

RESPONSE FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
TO COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY WTO MEMBERS  
UNDER G/SPS/N/EEC/149 AND 150  
(G/SPS/GEN/354). Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. Submission by Argentina, 4 November 2002. In this submission Argentina raises a number of questions regarding a European Communities' presentation on GMOs. During the presentation the EC recognise, based on their own risk assessment, that GMOs "obtained there from authorized for marketing in the European Communities" represent no higher risk than their conventional counterparts, meaning the former has the same "level of safety." Argentina questions the need for creating a

separate regime for the approval, labelling and traceability of GMOs than that for their conventional counterparts among other related issues.

### TRIPs - Geographical Indications

IMPLICATIONS OF ARTICLE 23 EXTENTION (IP/C/W/386). Council for Trade- Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. Communication from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, New Zealand, Paraguay, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei and the United States, 8 November 2002. The countries behind this communication believe that a possible extension of Article 23 of the TRIPs Agreement to cover geographical indications for all goods would "not provide meaningful benefits but will instead create new difficulties."

### Subsidies and Countervailing Measures

REPORT (2002) OF THE COMMITTEE ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING MEASURES (G/L/585). 6 November 2002. This report covers the timeframe between 2 November 2001 and 1 November 2002, the period following the Committee's last annual report. During this time the Committee has convened two regular meetings and seven special meetings.

### On The WTO Website

WTO CANCUN MINISTERIAL SITE. The official WTO website for the Cancun Ministerial, to take place in September 2003, is now available. The page currently contains preparation information and the current mandate that the ministerial will attempt to fulfil. This page will be updated with more material about the forthcoming conference as it becomes available. [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/minist\\_e/min03\\_e/min03\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min03_e/min03_e.htm).

WTO INDEX OF DISPUTE ISSUES. You can now see and search for disputes by subject on the WTO website. This page is an aid to finding WTO disputes, and in particular all official documents related to those disputes. It is an index of issues that are the subjects of the disputes. Because there are often a number of ways to describe an issue, each dispute can appear under more than one heading. To utilise this site, visit [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dispu\\_e/dispu\\_subj\\_ects\\_index\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_subj_ects_index_e.htm).

WTO MULTILINGUAL TERMINOLOGY DATABASE. New database where you can find the terminology used by the trade specialists in the organisation in English, French and Spanish. Get the details at: [http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/res\\_e.htm#terminology](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/res_e.htm#terminology).

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