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Trade Issues at WSSD

NGOS CONCERNED ABOUT TRADE-BIAS IN WSSD PREPARATORY PROCESS

The second Preparatory Meeting (PrepCom II) for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) ended on 8 February with the adoption of the Chair's Paper, which raises amongst other issues a number of trade- related points, including market access, subsidies and intellectual property. The Paper will form the basis for discussions at PrepCom III (25 March to 5 April, New York) where delegates will focus on a Governance System for Sustainable Development and on linkages between the various international institutions, including the WTO. The increasing integration of trade issues into the preparatory process is causing concern among NGOs that WSSD will deal more with the multilateral trade regime than with sustainable development.

WTO and international trade feature throughout Chair's Paper

The Chair's Paper -- consisting of nine clusters that were discussed and agreed upon by delegates at PrepCom II -- addresses various trade- related issues, including a call on WTO

members to implement the outcomes of Doha as well as issues related to intellectual property protection of traditional knowledge, improved market access for poor countries, and the reduction of environmentally harmful subsidies in areas such as agriculture and fisheries (see also BRIDGES Weekly, 12 February 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-02-12/story2.htm>; Bridges Trade Bio Res, 7 February 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-02-07/story5.htm>). Many of the points raised in the Paper are also being discussed in the context of the new round of trade negotiations currently underway at the WTO, where delegates will deal with the relationship between WTO rules and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), environmental goods and services, fisheries subsidies and intellectual property rights.

The various references to the Doha Declaration and to the WTO have led to fears among some NGOs that the WSSD will be biased towards free trade and subordinated to the trade regime. These concerns were further fuelled by the release of the European Commission's External Sustainable Development Strategy Communication, which places what it refers to as the "Doha Development Agenda" at the center of its sustainable development strategy and of its strategy for WSSD and the Conference on Financing for Development to take place on 18-22 March in Monterrey, Mexico (see BRIDGES Weekly, 20 February, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-02-20/story3.htm>). In response to the Communication, the Greens - European Free Alliance (EFA) in the European Parliament warned that the commitment of the EU towards sustainable development is now running the risk of becoming a pretext to a trade-oriented agenda at WSSD. "The UN needs to confront the WTO paradigm, not to endorse it," said Alexander de Roo, Vice President of the Parliament's Environment Committee.

Governance issues up for discussion at PrepCom III

At PrepCom III, the issue of strengthening Governance for Sustainable Development at the national, regional and international levels is likely to be the core discussion theme as it remains an outstanding issue in the Chair's Paper. Discussions will focus, inter alia, on the future of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which was created at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21 and the progress towards the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 percent of GDP. The Commission, however, did not fulfil countries' expectations and its work programme is now being revised. Discussions on Economic Governance are likely to deal with the role of the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO -- including its Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) -- in an international governance system for sustainable development.

Also of importance will be the issue of International Environmental Governance (IEG). Here, discussions will focus on the role of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and MEAs, which represent the core of the present IEG system. Many are calling for a stronger mandate and increased finance for this system. Some of these views were also expressed at the Third Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF-3) in Cartagena, 12-15 February. Addressing the Forum, Director General of IUCN - World Conservation Union Achim Steiner pointed to the need for better linkages between the existing institutions, capacity building, good governance and better implementation of Agenda 21 goals. He furthermore presented a "Johannesburg Initiative", stressing the importance of civil society and private sector participation in international policy making, including at the WTO. The outcomes of GMEF-3 will be transmitted to the PrepCom III and can be expected to shape part of the discussions.

PrepCom IV will take place on 27 May - 7 June 2002 in Jakarta, Indonesia. It will include Ministerial and Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segments, and will focus on the elaboration of a political document for WSSD. The World Summit will take place at Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September.

Additional Resources

Documents of PrepCom II, including the Chair's Paper, are available online at <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/prepcom2.html>. For daily coverage of PrepCom II, see IISD Linkages at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/2002/pc2/>.

Documents of GMEF-3 are available at http://www.unep.org/governingbodies/gc/specialsessions/gcss_vii/. For daily coverage of the meeting, see IISD Linkages at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/unepgc/gmef3/>.

The European Commission's strategy paper is available at http://global.finland.fi/julkaisut/pdf/EU_SDS130202.pdf

"What's really happening at Prep.Comm. II," Stakeholder Forum, Volume II – Issue VIII;
"Sustainable Development Agenda Risks Being Hi-Jacked, say Greens/EFA," PRESS RELEASE, 13 February 2002; ENB, Vol. 16, No. 24; ENB, Vol. 2, No. 19; ICTSD Internal Files

Intellectual Property Rights

MISAPPROPRIATION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DISCUSSED AT CBD WORKING GROUP

The Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions -- established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) -- held its second meeting from 4-8 February in Montreal. Some of the liveliest discussions centred on intellectual property, including possible measures to prevent the misappropriation of traditional knowledge (TK) -- a politically charged issue that the WTO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are also grappling with.

Differences remain over traditional knowledge issues

One specific area of difference was that of TK databases. Some governments believe they can prevent patents being improperly awarded for 'inventions' that are essentially identical to TK. Databases could help patent examiners -- who must screen applications so only those describing novel and inventive discoveries may receive legal protection -- to filter out spurious inventions. Indigenous groups in attendance proposed that databases be maintained locally and under the control of indigenous and local communities. They and other groups also opposed the registration of TK without the holders' consent. India is a keen supporter of international TK databases because of concerns about biopiracy, including recent cases of Indian TK being the subject of patents held in the US and Europe, such as the patenting of turmeric powder as a wound-healing agent and of basmati rice. Many developing countries, however, are closer to indigenous organisations, worrying that international databases may encourage biopiracy rather than prevent it.

Another controversial issue is that of harmonising CBD provisions on TK protection with patent law. NGOs, indigenous groups and some developing country governments, including India, have been proposing that patent applicants be required -- where applicable -- to disclose the source of biological material forming the subject matter of their inventions. Some proposals have gone further than this by suggesting (a) that applicants be required to provide evidence that national authorities regulating access to genetic resources had consented to the use of the relevant resources, and (b) that traditional community members whose knowledge was used in the development of an invention had also given their prior informed consent to the application

and been guaranteed a share of any benefits arising from the patent. Such measures are popular with many developing countries, including Brazil, but were strongly opposed by both the US and Switzerland, both of which have economically important life-science industrial sectors that benefit from access to imported biological resources and from being able to patent inventions derived from.

An interesting feature of the Working Group meeting is that while TK holding representatives and most developing countries agreed on several key issues such as their shared suspicion of international TK databases, basic differences remain. For indigenous groups, TK protection is a rights-based issue, while many governmental representatives regard it as a matter of international equity or national development. The same divide exists in other intergovernmental forums in which TK protection is debated. Indigenous peoples' organisations and TK holders sometimes suspect that the subject is being used by their governments to secure trade advantages that will be of no benefit to them. They see particular irony in a situation in which governments of countries where indigenous peoples are victims of human rights abuses are among those calling for protection of TK as a matter of justice in international trade.

In the event, the Working Group made several recommendations for the 6th Conference of the Parties to the CBD, to take place in The Hague from 7-19 April 2002. In particular, they called on the Conference to encourage the disclosure of the origin of relevant TK in intellectual property rights (IPR) applications, and urged Parties to (a) consider taking into account the CBD provisions of prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms in IPR applications, and (b) take TK into account in the examination of novelty and inventive step in patent applications. In addition, the Working Group invited Parties and governments to examine the feasibility of establishing national and community registries of TK, considering issues such as modalities and terms of access.

TK discussions in related forums

Similar discussions are ongoing at both WIPO and the WTO. WIPO has established an Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. Its last meeting in December 2001, *inter alia*, discussed possible means of preventing improper patenting by facilitating the availability of published TK to patent examiners (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 20 December 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/01-12-20/story4.htm>).

Traditional Knowledge has also become an important issue in trade negotiations. Since 1999, several developing countries including the African Group of countries, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru have submitted proposals to the WTO calling for new rules to protect TK, perhaps through a revision of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In response to such demands, the November 2001 WTO Ministerial Declaration instructs the TRIPS Council "to examine, *inter alia*, the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, [and] the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore" (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 22 November 2001; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/01-11-22/story3.htm>). It is difficult to see where such an examination will lead, but there is no doubt that this issue remains of great importance to many developing countries. Discussions will continue at the next session of the TRIPS Council, currently scheduled for 5-7 March.

Background

The Working Group on Article 8(j) was established in 1998 by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD to help further the implementation of the CBD's provisions relating to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.

Article 8(j) requires contracting parties to the CBD to "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices". The article responds to concerns about TK being exploited by commercial interests without fair and equitable benefit-sharing. Since the CBD was opened for signature in June 1992 at the Earth Summit, deliberations have been on-going, but few countries have introduced national laws and policies to implement the article.

Additional resources

Officials documents for the meeting are available at <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?wg=wg8j-02>. For daily coverage, see IISD Linkages at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/biodiv/wg8j-2/>.

Documents of the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore – <http://www.wipo.int/globalissues/igc/documents/index.html>

ENB Vol. 9, No. 228; ICTDS Internal Files.

Biotechnology

GOVERNMENT PANEL TO REVIEW BRAZIL'S GMO POLICY

The government of Brazil has set up an inter-ministerial committee to review the country's rules on labelling products containing genetically modified organisms (GMO). In particular, the committee will reassess a federal decree issued in July 2001 which requires all packaged food with a GMO content of more than 4 percent to be labelled by 2002, and will review the size and wording of such labels. While the decree was scheduled to enter into force on 31 December 2001, its introduction has now been delayed as a result of the revision. The committee is expected to take approximately three months to complete its review. At the same time, Brazil's Congress is debating more stringent labelling regulations as part of a broader biotechnology bill.

As the world's second largest soy producer accounting for 20 percent of global supply, Brazil is the only major agricultural exporting country that does not use GM technology (see BRIDGE Trade BioRes, 24 January 2002; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-01-24/story4.htm>). Government approval of GMOs has been put on hold following a number of injunctions issued by Brazil's Federal Court which amount to what is termed a "judicial moratorium" on the commercial release of GMOs. Despite the moratorium, illegally planted GMO soy is becoming increasingly widespread, in particular in Brazil's South due to smuggling of seeds from Argentina. The share of GM soy is now thought to amount to as much as half of the total crop in some areas, leading many traders to avoid Southern ports. Some have expressed concerns that this trend might endanger exports to key markets, including the EU and China. "75 percent of soy exports from Rio Grande do Sul [in Brazil's South] go to China," said a soybean trader from the area. "If they stopped importing out soy we would be ruined."

Background

At the WTO, labelling requirements for GMOs are covered by the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) which allows governments to introduce TBT regulations if

they are necessary to fulfil legitimate objectives, including "protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment". In addition, the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) covers packaging and labelling requirements directly related to food safety. The Agreement allows WTO Members "in cases where relevant scientific evidence is insufficient" to provisionally adopt SPS measures. In such cases, Members are instructed to seek to obtain additional information necessary for a more objective risk assessment "within a reasonable period of time". Both Agreements stipulate that any measures should not be more trade-restrictive than necessary. Some argue that labelling requirements for GMOs are unnecessarily trade-restrictive (and therefore not admissible under the TBT and SPS Agreements) due to the high cost of segregating GMOs from non-GMOs. Others also believe that there is not enough evidence of threats of GMOs to human health and the environment to justify labelling requirements.

"Brazil may fine farmers for illegal GM soy," REUTERS, 7 February 2002; "Brazil creates GMO Labeling Committee to clear legal questions," DOW JONES, 7 February 2002.

Climate Change

US CLIMATE POLICY MET WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

US President George W. Bush's proposed plan released on 14 February to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other pollutants was met with widespread criticism by the conservation community for the lack of mandatory measures to reduce GHGs. Their calls to urgently address global warming were supported by two new reports that highlight the possible threats of climate change to biodiversity.

US climate policy seen as too weak

Environmental groups sharply criticised Bush's climate policy, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through voluntary action. The plan links a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions -- a GHG linked to global warming -- to growth in US gross domestic product (GDP) by setting a goal of reducing emissions from 183 to 151 metric tons per million dollars in GDP by 2012. According to Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), such a ceiling would actually allow for continued increases in US GHG emissions. "The US is the world's biggest polluter," said Kate Hampton of FoEI. "It is outrageous that President Bush is still refusing to cut emissions in order to avoid upsetting the powerful US fossil fuel lobby." In addition to the voluntary reduction of GHGs, Bush's proposal includes cutting emissions of three of the worst air pollutants -- sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury -- by setting emission limits and assigning tradable permits per tonne of pollution.

Reports stress threat of global warming for biodiversity

The plan comes shortly after the release of two new reports that highlight the significant threats to wildlife and biodiversity posed by global warming. Examining the potential effects of climate change on biodiversity-rich areas, a study by the conservation group World Wildlife Fund (WWF) concludes that a substantial part of the world's species are at risk and warns that many species might not be able to move into new areas on time, possibly resulting in a "catastrophic" loss of species in one-fifth of the world's most vulnerable nature areas. Similar conclusions are also drawn in a report by the US National Wildlife Federation (NWF), which uses eight case studies to look at the threat of global warming on US wildlife. "Global warming has come down to Earth for the wildlife right in our backyards," said Mark Van Putten, President of NWF. "The

effects are already happening and will likely worsen unless we get serious about reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases to help slow global warming."

Bush's rejection of the Kyoto Protocol -- the international treaty designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2 percent by 2012 -- in March last year evoked international outrage among governments and environmental groups (see BRIDGES Weekly, 27 March 2001; <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/27-03-01/story3.htm>). As a result, many conservation groups have stepped up their efforts to convince governments to meet the emissions targets mandated in the Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol will only enter into force once it has been ratified by 55 parties representing 55 percent of GHG emissions (see BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, 28 November 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story2.28-11-00.htm>).

Additional Resources

The WWF report is available at <http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/headline.cfm?newsid=323>. For more information on the NWF report, visit <http://www.nwf.org/climate/climatebooknewsrelease.html>.

"Bush offers alternative plan on "greenhouse gases"," REUTERS, 18 February 2001; "Bush climate plan disappoints as UN meeting ends," REUTERS, 18 February 2002; "Bush's climate con," FoIE PRESS RELEASE, 14 February 2002.

In Brief

SOUTH AFRICA TO REQUEST CITES' PERMISSION FOR RHINO HORN TRADE.

The government of South Africa recently announced that it would seek permission from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to trade in white rhinoceros horns. The trade in rhino horns, which are used as dagger handles in Yemen and as traditional medicines in southeast Asia, has been prohibited under CITES since 1977. The request is expected to be submitted to the CITES Secretariat in June ahead of the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Santiago, Chile, from 3-15 November 2002. South Africa claims that it maintains a healthy, growing and well-protected population of white rhinoceroses and that the money raised would be used for conservation programmes. Animal welfare groups, however, have criticised South Africa's proposal, arguing that lifting the ban would create a legal market, which poachers could use to sell illegally obtained horns. South Africa is also reported to be seeking permission to sell a stockpile of ivory from elephant tusks and to be allowed to set hunting quotas for protected cheetahs.

"South Africa seeks end to ban on rhino horn trade," REUTERS, 11 February 2002.

SPECIES-RICH COUNTRIES BAND TOGETHER TO FIGHT BIOPIRACY. Twelve of the world's most ecologically diverse nations signed an agreement in Cancun, Mexico, on 18 February to protect against biopiracy and advocate rules protecting their people's rights to genetic resources found on their territory. The alliance, formally called the Group of Allied Mega-Biodiverse Nations, brings together the biodiversity-rich countries of Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, South Africa and Venezuela. Citing perceived deficiencies in the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which contains anti-biopiracy language, the group said it would push for a stricter international treaty at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August. Specifically, it will seek new trade rules for patenting and registering products made from their

plant and animal resources in order to curb foreign "prospecting" of local species. "Up to now, our nations have not benefited from this great wealth because there hasn't been an equal sharing between the nations involved nor with the rural and Indian groups that use and protect biodiversity," said Mexican Environment Secretary Victor Lichtinger.

"China, Brazil, India, Others sign Anti-Biopiracy Pact," AP, 18 February 2002; "12 Nations Form Alliance To Battle Genetic Prospecting," UNWIRE, 19 February 2002.

FAO SUB-COMMITTEE DISCUSSES IMPLICATIONS OF DOHA. At the 8th Session of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s Committee on Fisheries (COFI), held in Bremen, Germany, on 12-16 February, delegates highlighted the overlap between FAO's work and the current round of trade negotiations launched at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha. While underlining the importance of free, fair and transparent/sustainable fish trade, they stressed that developing countries should benefit from the new trade round, in particular with regard to improved market access, and called on FAO to provide technical and analytical assistance on fisheries issues to support developing country's participation in the trade negotiations. Lively debate arose during discussions on labelling and traceability requirements in fish trade. While some delegates stated that such requirements should be limited to health aspects, others emphasised that consumers demanded the provision of broader information. Several participants also pointed to the financial implications, warning of the danger of creating hidden trade barriers, in particular for developing country producers. The documents of the meeting are available at http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/cofi/cofift_8/default.asp.

ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO AGREES ON CHAIRS, READY TO BEGIN SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS.

On 15 February, WTO Members agreed on Chairs for the seven negotiating groups and regular bodies of the WTO (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 7 February 2002; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-02-07/story1.htm>), thereby paving the way for Members to begin scheduling the negotiations timetable to execute the mandate from the Doha Ministerial Declaration agreed in Qatar last November. A number of negotiating groups are of particular interest from an environmental point of view: Stuart Harbinson -- who hands over his post as the General Council Chair to Canadian Amb. Sergio Marchi -- will now Chair the Special Sessions of the Committee on Agriculture, which many observers note to be the most politically sensitive issue to be handled in the new round. Special Sessions of the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) -- mandated to finalise negotiations on a multilateral system for the registration of geographical indications (GI) for wines and spirits -- will be chaired by Amb. Eui Yong Chang of Korea, while Ambassador Eduardo Pérez Motta (Mexico) will chair the Regular Sessions of the TRIPs Council, set to address the contentious issues of GI extensions, traditional knowledge and the relationship between the TRIPs Agreement and the CBD. Special Sessions of the Committee for Trade and Environment (CTE) will be presided over by the only Least-developed Country representative in the line-up of Chairs, Amb. Yolande Bike of Gabon, who also chaired the CTE in 2000. The CTE will discuss, inter alia, the relationship between WTO rules and MEAs, and environmental goods and services. Negotiations on fisheries subsidies are likely to take place in the newly-created negotiating group on rules which will be chaired by Amb. Timothy John Groser of New Zealand, traditionally one of the main countries favouring the reduction of distortive subsidies in the area of fisheries.

ICTSD Internal Files.

Events & Resources

EVENTS

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

Coming up in the next two weeks

21-22 February, London, UK: CONFERENCE ON HOW INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS COULD WORK BETTER FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND POOR PEOPLE. Organised by the UK Commission on Intellectual Property Rights. The conference precedes the drafting of the Commission's report and seeks to draw together the different threads of the Commission's work which it has pursued through visits to developing countries, workshops of experts and stakeholders, on-line discussions and other interactions with those interested in how intellectual property rights could work better for poor people. For further information, contact Charles Clift, Secretary, Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, email: ipr@iprcommission.org; Internet: <http://www.iprcommission.org/documents/INVITE.doc>.

21-22 February, Brussels, Belgium: UNEP-UNCTAD CBTF POLICY DIALOGUE ON PROMOTING PRODUCTION AND TRADING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. The workshop will explore opportunities for promoting production and trade in organic agricultural products by developing countries. Focus will be given to examining the role organic agriculture can play to simultaneously meet developmental and environmental objectives, and to identifying ways to enhance market access for developing country exports of organic agriculture products. For further information, contact: Eugenia Nunez, tel: (41 22) 917 6225; email: eugenia.nunez@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/meetings/brussels.htm>.

21-23 February, Lyon, France: EARTH DIALOGUES - GLOBALIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - IS ETHICS THE MISSING LINK? Organised by Green Cross International, Earth Dialogues will provide a forum for debate on the world's most acute problems. Participants will share their views on how to forge the essential links between globalisation, sustainable development and ethics. For further information contact: Earth Dialogues Secretariat; tel: (41 22) 789 1662; email: secretariat@gci.ch; Internet: http://www.greencrossinternational.net/pdf/Earth_Dialogue.pdf. From IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal/>.

24-28 February, Budapest, Hungary: 2ND INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE 'BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE'. The Conference will discuss five priority issues of European importance to the CBD and will bring a concerted message to the COP-6 to the CBD in April 2002, The Netherlands. The subjects are: Forest Biological Diversity, Alien Species, Financing Biodiversity, Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity, Indicators & Monitoring and the Clearing House Mechanism. For further information, contact: Dora Szucs, ECNC, tel/fax: (36 1) 355 3699 e-mail: ecnc.bp@pronet.hu.

25 February - 1 March, Brisbane, Australia: 10TH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS. For further information, contact: Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, tel: (39 06) 5705 1; fax: 5705 4593; email: codex@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccfics10/fc02_01e.htm

25-26 February Gainesville, Florida, United States of America: WORKING FORESTS IN THE TROPICS: CONSERVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT. Organised by the Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences (IFAS) of the University of Florida. The purpose of this conference is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for sharing and synthesis of scientific,

management and policy information about tropical forests, bringing together academic and non-academic scientists (national and international agencies, NGO and private sector) and students interested in tropical forest ecology, conservation, management and policy. For further information, contact Sharon Borneman, IFAS, tel: (1 352) 392 5930; email: borneman@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu; Internet: <http://www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/tropics/>

25-27 February, Costa Rica: GLOBALIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH. Organised by the Center for Tropical Agriculture and Higher Education (CATIE). The aim of the conference is to encourage and enhance mutual interests in the Latin America and Caribbean region through information exchange on issues relating to tropical agriculture research and development activities. Speakers and participants will discuss research priorities, globalisation of agriculture in the American Tropics and develop joint strategies. For further information please contact: CATIE, address: 7170, CATIE, Turrialba, Costa Rica; tel: (506) 556 6431; fax: 556 1533, email: ldelgado@catie.ac.cr; Internet: <http://www.catie.ac.cr/events/conferences/conference>.

4-8 March, Yokohama, Japan: 3RD SESSION OF THE CODEX AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON FOODS DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY. Organised by the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The intergovernmental task force will, amongst others: evaluate the safety and nutrition aspects of foods derived from biotechnology and consider the Draft Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods derived from Modern Biotechnology. For further information, contact Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, tel: (39 06) 5705 1; fax: 5705 4593; email: codex@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccfbt3/bt02_01e.htm.

4-9 March 4 - 9, Nairobi, Kenya: BIOTECHNOLOGY, GENOMICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN AFRICA. Organised by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) and University of Toronto. This is the first of a series of one-week executive courses in biotechnology and genomics health policy. The course will focus on the nature of public policies and institutional arrangements to reduce disparities in global health. Lectures and discussions will be on the potential contributions of genomics and biotechnology in improving public health in Africa. For further information, contact: Marion Motari, Biopolicy Programme, ACTS, tel: (254 2) 524712; email: M.Motari@cgiar.org; Internet: <http://www.acts.or.ke/Genomics%20Course.htm>

4-15 March, San José, Costa Rica: SECOND MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF2). Organised by UN Forum on Forests. For further information, contact Ms. Tiina Vähänen; UN Forum on Forests, Department of Social and Economic Affairs, tel: (1 212) 963 3262; fax: 963 4260; email: vahanen@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>

5-7 March, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

Other forthcoming events

13-15 March, Montreal, Canada: TECHNICAL EXPERT MEETING ON HANDLING, TRANSPORT, PACKAGING AND IDENTIFICATION OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS. For further information, contact the CBD Secretariat, tel: (1 514) 288 2220; fax: 288 6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>

16-20 March, Alexandria, Egypt: BIOTECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - VOICES OF THE SOUTH AND NORTH. Co-sponsored by the Government of Egypt, FAO, UNESCO, World Bank and OECD, among others. The objective of the event is to cover the multi-faceted dimensions of the biotechnology debate: the scientific,

ethical, and safety issues as well as the regulatory, IPR and trade and economic issues. It will bring together leaders from the developing and the industrialised world from various areas such as science, government, NGOs, the media, farmers groups, philanthropy, academia, the private sector and the civil society. For further information, contact: Ismail Serageldin; tel: (203 487) 6024; fax: 6001; email: egyptbiotech@bibalex.org; Internet: <http://www.egyptbiotech.com/>

25 March - 5 April, USA, New York: THIRD SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2002 WSSD. During the meeting delegates will negotiate on the basis of the Chairman's paper, special emphasis will, inter alia, be put on the issue of Sustainable Governance at the international, regional and national level, on the mandate and financing for UNEP and on the CSD work programme. For further information, contact: Andrew Vasilyev; tel: (1-212) 963-5949; fax: (1-212) 963-4260; email: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org>. From IISD linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal>.

22-24 May, Victoria, Canada: 4TH UNEP INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT. 800 children at the age of 10 to 12 from all over the world will learn and discuss the state of the environment, with the aim to produce a statement to the world leaders for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. For further information, contact: Theodore Oben, Children, Youth and Sport Programmes, UNEP, Nairobi; tel: (254 2) 623262; email: theodore.oben@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep.org/children_youth/. From IISD linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/journal>

22-25 July, Dresden, Germany: THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH. The aim of the conference is to encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary communication among scientists, engineers and professionals working in the fields of ecological systems, sustainable management, development of water resources and conservation of natural systems. For further information contact: Cathleen Schimmek, Conference Secretariat; tel: (49 351) 463 33931; e-mail: icwrrer2002@mailbox.tu-dresden.de; Internet: <http://www.tu-dresden.de/fghhihm/hydrologie.html>.

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy or review by the BRIDGES staff to Heike Baumüller, hbaumuller@ictsd.ch. Submissions of publications to ICTSD's documentation centre would also be welcome (contact Matteo Rizzolli, mrizzolli@ictsd.ch).

"Value of biodiversity in pharmaceutical research with differentiated products," by A. B. Craft and R. D. Simpson in ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS, 18 (1, 2001): 1-17. "Biodiversity prospecting" -- the search among naturally occurring organisms for new products of agricultural, industrial, and, particularly, pharmaceutical value -- has been advanced as both a mechanism and a motive for conserving biological diversity. Economists and others have attempted to estimate the value of biodiversity for use in new pharmaceutical project research. Using two models of competition among differentiated products, the authors confirm previous findings that the value to private researchers of the "marginal species" is likely to be small. The models can have very different implications with respect to social values, however. These findings underscore the need for a better understanding of the true meaning of diversity.

"Final Report: European Biotechnology Innovation Systems" by J. Senker et al. in EUROPEAN COMMISSION: TSER Project No. SOE1-CT98-1117, 2001. The report deals with the European Biotechnology Innovation System (EBIS) project, which aims to identify whether the development of biotechnology in Europe is mainly influenced by national or sectoral factors, and to consider the implications for biotechnology policy both at a European and national level. Case studies were prepared of biotechnology developments in Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, The Netherlands, Spain and the UK, focusing on three sectors of

biotechnology: bio-pharmaceuticals, agro-food and research equipment and supplies. The report is available at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/spru/biotechnology/ebis/ebisfinalreport.pdf>

THE POLITICS OF PRECAUTION - GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By Robert L. Paarlberg, 2001. The book looks at the policy choices regarding GM food in four developing countries: Kenya, Brazil, India, and China. It identifies five policy areas in which governments of developing countries can either support or discourage GM crops: intellectual property rights, biosafety, trade, food safety, and public research and investment. For further information, see <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/jhu/politicsprecaution.htm>

"The science of risk assessment for phytosanitary regulation and the impact of changing trade regulations," by F.T. Campbell in BIOSCIENCE, 51 (2, 2001): 148-153. This article examines US policies governing the structure and implementation of prevention programs aimed at alien plants and those insects and disease pathogens considered to be plant pests. It concludes that the approach to phytosanitary safeguards mandated by the WTO may hinder adoption of the most efficient methods to protect ecosystems from introductions of invasive species.

"Property Rights over Biological Resources - India's Proposed Legislative Framework" by Philippe Cullet in JOURNAL OF WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (4/2, 2001): 211. This article looks at India's process of implementing its obligations under the Biodiversity Convention and the WTO TRIPs Agreement. The Biodiversity Bill, the Patents Amendment Bill and the Plant Variety Bill are currently under consideration in Parliament. All three will have significant impacts on the management of biological resources, in particular through the property rights regime they envision. For a hard copy of this article, contact ielc@span.ch or pcullet@span.ch.

ILLEGAL LOGGING IN COSTA RICA, AN ANALYSIS FOR DISCUSSION. By Jose Joaquin Campos and a team from CATIE, nd. Costa Rica has an international reputation for having an environmentally conscious government. Nevertheless, according to a recent report between 28 percent and 41 percent of all the timber sold in Costa Rica was illegally harvested or transported. Most illegal timber comes from trees in pastures, illegal conversion of secondary forest and primary forest without a management plan. To request an electronic copy of the full CATIE document in Spanish or an executive summary of the document in English, contact Lidiette Marin, email: lmarin@catie.ac.cr.

"Options for National Laws Governing Access To and Control Over Genetic Resources", SEEDING SOLUTIONS: VOLUME 2. By The Crucible II Group, 2002. The book discusses legal mechanisms to address three key issues: (1) the need to conserve and exchange germplasm for the benefit of present and future generations; (2) the need to encourage innovation in the conservation and enhancement of germplasm; and (3) new options for securing and strengthening the rights and interests of indigenous and rural peoples in their role as creators and conservers of biological diversity. For further information, see http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product_ID=2649&CATID=15.

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