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Intellectual Property

CBD-TRIPS DISCUSSION PICKING UP SPEED AT THE WTO

Meeting on 4-5 June and again briefly on 6 June, the WTO Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) received a number of proposals related to biodiversity and traditional knowledge. Momentum is again building on discussions at the WTO on these issues, which developing countries are hoping to address as part of the current round of trade negotiations.

The TRIPS Council received three new submissions related to the review of Article 27.3(b) (patentability of life forms), traditional knowledge (TK) and biodiversity from Switzerland (IP/C/W/400, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org/>), the African Group (IP/C/W/404, available at http://www.ictsd.org/iprsonline/ictsd/docs/article273b_AfricanGroup_4June2003.pdf) and India on behalf of Brazil, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Thailand, Peru and Venezuela (IP/C/W/403, available at http://www.ictsd.org/iprsonline/ictsd/docs/wto_IPCW403.pdf).

The Swiss submission proposes an amendment to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO's) Patent Cooperation Treaty that would enable countries to require patent applicants to declare the source of the genetic resources and TK in patent applications. Switzerland also reiterated the "crucial importance" of databases to protect TK. On the CBD-TRIPS relationship, Switzerland noted that both "can and should" be implemented without conflict and that there was no need to modify the provisions of either.

In contrast to the Swiss proposal, both the African Group's and the India-led submissions stress the need for a multilateral solution to these issues in the TRIPs Council, while also noting that any efforts in the WTO would not preclude work on these issues in other forums. They highlight the limited progress that has so far been made in WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, and note the limitations of national laws and contracts to prevent biopiracy at the international level.

The India-led proposal reiterates the countries' proposal for amending the TRIPs Agreement to require patent applicants to disclose the source of origin of the biological resource and associated TK, and evidence of prior informed consent and benefit-sharing (BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 July 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-07-11/story1.htm>). The submission also addresses a number of arguments against the proposal put forward by the US. By reiterating their proposal, the countries aim to ensure that this item remains on the agenda and that the proposal will be discussed and adopted as part of the Doha round of trade negotiations.

Similarly, the African Group notes that "any protection of genetic resources and TK will not be effective until international mechanisms are found and established within the framework of the TRIPs Agreement", and describes other means such as access contracts and databases as merely "supplementary". The African submission, however, goes considerably further in its scope than the India-led proposal by calling for Article 27.3(b) to be revised so as to prohibit patenting of plants, animals and micro-organisms. On traditional knowledge, the Group proposes to classify TK as a category of intellectual property rights and puts forward a draft Decision on TK for adoption by the TRIPs Council.

At the meeting, the EC noted that the Swiss proposal further developed many of the EC's own ideas, though the EC did not specify whether the issue should be addressed in the WTO or in WIPO. The EC again signalled its willingness to discuss mandatory disclosure of origin requirements (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 26 September 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-09-26/story1.htm>). The EC, however, rejected the African Group's call for a ban on patenting of life forms. While acknowledging that the Swiss proposal showed willingness to engage in discussions, one developing country trade source believed that restricting the debate to WIPO was not satisfactory as it would not oblige countries to address biopiracy through intellectual property rights.

For an update on other discussions at the TRIPs Council, including on TRIPs & health and special & differential treatment, see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-06-12/story2.htm>.

ICTSD reporting.

Agriculture

AGRICULTURE UPDATE: SPECIAL SAFEGUARD MECHANISM DISCUSSED, CAP REFORM HITS HURDLES

On 27 May, Members of the WTO Committee on Agriculture (CoA) met for technical consultations on a possible new special safeguard mechanism for developing countries. Reportedly, discussions were comprehensive, but only little progress was made on the form and scope of such a new instrument. Interestingly, the US was said to have -- in contrast to its usual reactions -- shown general sympathy towards the idea of creating a new safeguard mechanism solely open to developing countries. Nevertheless, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick recently stated at the US Congress Agriculture Committee that the US could only accept a new safeguard that would not be accessible to certain developing country Members, such as exporters of a specific commodity or countries with per capita incomes beyond a certain benchmark. "I can't do the same thing for Brazil, which is an exporter," Zoellick reportedly told US Congress, referring to concessions the US might to grant net food importing countries in the Caribbean.

According to trade sources, the CoA continued technical consultations from 4-6 June on subjects such as tariff reduction formulas, trade preferences, treatment of vulnerable groups, and non-trade concerns (NTCs).

EU announces advanced farm offer for Cancun - CAP reform talks postponed

During the 1-3 June G-8 summit held in Evian, France, both French President Jacques Chirac and Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, announced that the EU would be equipped with a new negotiating mandate providing the European Commission with greater leeway at the forthcoming high-level negotiations at the WTO Ministerial Conference from 10-14 September in Cancun, Mexico. Such an extended mandate would greatly depend on EU member states being able to agree on a reform package for the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) along the lines of a proposal by EU Agriculture Commissioner Fischler. However, Fischler's proposal to "decouple" CAP subsidies from production [to make them eligible for the Green Box under which Members can subsidise without any reduction commitments] is still heavily opposed by EU member state such as France, Spain and Ireland. Nevertheless, several observers of the CAP mid-term negotiations indicated that there seemed to be some movement in the French position, and France could be willing to accept at least a partial decoupling of trade distorting EU farm support. "There's a clear consensus emerging, we will get some form of decoupling," an EU official said. He further added that, officially, the French had not yet altered their position on decoupling, but "it looks like the Irish may be moving," he said.

However, on 13 June negotiations on the CAP reform collapsed and EU farm ministers decided to postpone and reconvene on 17 June in the hope to able to agree on a deal at that time instead. The collapse of negotiations was triggered by France and Germany. France rejected the first compromise proposal tabled by the Greek presidency and a bilateral deal between Germany and France triggered the anger of the other negotiators as it became public that Germany had agreed to back-up the position of France and reject the compromise deal. The Commission and the Greek Presidency are now counting on another compromise deal, which will be presented on 17 June. Otherwise the issue would be transferred to EU heads of state.

ICTSD reporting; "EU trashes out farm reform, French take to streets," REUTERS, 26 May 2003; "Global trade discussions may get a kick-start," DOW JONES, 27 May 2003; "G-8 Summit: developing countries demand better deal on trade; new EU farm offer said coming," WTO REPORTER, 3 June 2003. "CAP reform talks postponed" EurActiv, 13 June 2003.

Forestry**UNFF: NUMEROUS DECISIONS BUT UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

Delegates convened in Geneva, Switzerland from the 26 May to 6 June to attend the third meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-3). After two-weeks of discussions participants agreed on Terms of References for three *ad hoc* working groups on approaches on monitoring, assessing and reporting; financing and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. Many delegates pointed to the agreement on the ToRs for the working groups as a success, as these had been under discussion since UNFF-2.

Successful Negotiations for Developing Countries

The UNFF adopted several resolutions, including on the three substantive areas of: forest health and productivity; economic aspects of forests; and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs. Regarding the economic aspects of forests, delegates agreed to a final resolution that highlights, amongst others, the need to develop new markets for environmental services. It also requests countries to enhance market access for forest products and services. The resolution takes into account the special needs of developing countries to simultaneously promote trade and sustainable forest management by calling for the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. In the light of the relatively many resolutions adopted delegates were pleased with the outcome of the UNFF-3, and foresaw it would move into a new, more active phase. Developing countries were particularly satisfied with their negotiation tactics, as most of their proposals were agreed upon resulting -- the result of which was a greater emphasis on the linkages between sustainable forest management policies and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and finance. However, some questioned the quality of UNFF-3 in the light of the half-empty conference room. Countries

complained in particular about the low attendance of developing countries, including those developing countries that hold a great amount of the world's forests. Some participants were displeased with what they considered a low level of commitment to action and implementation. Others, however, pointed out that the UNFF-3 is not an implementing agency.

Looking Ahead To UNFF 4 and 5

In conclusion, participants are looking forward to the next meeting of the forest forum, which they expect to focus more on substance and less on procedural issues. It remains to be seen however how much political support UNFF-4 -- to be held from 3-14 May, 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland -- will receive, considering the amount of criticism from participants. The UNFF-4 is expected to focus on, *inter alia*: progress in implementation regarding forest-related knowledge; social and cultural aspects of forests; monitoring, assessing and reporting, and communication and information for sustainable forest management; and means of implementation. UNFF-4 is also supposed to pave the way for UNFF-5, where participants face difficult discussions on legally binding instruments and treaties, and have to agree on a new five-year mandate for the UNFF.

For daily briefings see IISD's Linkages webpage at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff3/>.

ICTSD Reporting; "Summary of the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests," IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 9 June 2003.

Oceans

UN CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS EXTENDED; REPORTS DOCUMENT PRESSURE ON MARINE RESOURCES

From 2-6 June delegates representing governments, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations gathered in New York for the UN open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea. The meeting was used to exchange views and perspectives on areas of concern, to identify issues which will be forwarded to the UN General Assembly, as well as to discuss the safety of navigation and the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems. Two new reports were released concurrently, highlighting threats to the future of marine living resources.

Consultations consider deep seabed genetic resources, seamounts, IMO convention

During discussions on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, delegates to the open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea highlighted issues related to the implementation of the ecosystem approach, the use of the precautionary principle, the globally declining fish stocks, the vulnerability of seamounts and the equitable use of deep seabed genetic resources. The Mexican delegation called for the establishment of a negotiating mechanism to address the commercial and equitable use of deep seabed genetic resources. However, delegates could not agree on whether this issue should be dealt with under the auspices of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) or by the International Seabed Authority. Following presentations from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and several research institutions on the state of seamounts, coldwater corals and hydrothermal vents, the environmental group Greenpeace called for a moratorium on commercial activities around these. This was opposed by the US that argued that such a measure might prejudice the outcomes of discussions under other fora. When considering the draft declaration and the final text to for the General Assembly, participants urged the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to finalise its draft convention on the control and management of ships' ballast water, which also addresses the issue of invasive alien species and sediments, and called on the IMO to convene a conference on the convention. Another issue under intensive discussion was the legitimacy of the latest EU legislation regarding safety of navigation. Some countries complained that the law would hinder free navigation and thus influence the access possibilities of other countries. In conclusion, delegates agreed on extending the consultative process for another three years and to reconvene for a fifth meeting in May or June 2004.

Reports outline threats to future fish stocks

Two new reports highlighting the dire state the world's fish stocks were released concurrently with the consultations in New York. One report on "America's Living Oceans: Charting a Course for Sea Change" was published by the Pew Oceans Commission. Amongst the many conclusions, the report points to the fact that less than 25 percent of the fish stocks under federal management are fished in a sustainable manner and that mismanagement has caused overfishing, the deterioration of ecosystems which serve as nurseries, as well as the greater intrusion of invasive species. It notes that all these developments affect commercial fishing. The report calls on the US government to commit to *inter alia*: creating a single federal agency which would set and oversee US ocean policy; reversing the decline of ocean wildlife and the collapse of ocean ecosystems; and preserving the ecological, economic and social benefits the oceans provide.

The other recently released report is based on research from US and British scientists and concludes that approximately 308,000 whales, dolphins and porpoises die each year as fishing bycatch. The report has been submitted to the International Whaling Committee (IWC) by WWF, which is urging IWC members -- meeting in Berlin from the 16 to 20 June -- to provide priority funding that would support research and assist in developing strategies to resolve the issue.

A copy of the reports can be found respectively at <http://www.pewoceans.org/> and <http://www.panda.org/>

For daily briefings on the UN consultations see IISD's Linkages webpage at:
<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/oceans/icp4/>

ICTSD reporting; "Summary of the fourth meeting of the open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea," IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 9 June 2003.

"Pew Report Finds U.S. Oceans in Crisis" ENS, 4 June 2003. "Death by drowning: IWC must address 300,000 annual cetacean death toll" WWF, 13 June 2003.

In Brief

MEXICO ACTION SUMMIT CALLS FOR ACTION ON POVERTY, AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY

A "Mexico Action Summit" was held in Mexico City from 2-3 June, to coincide with the G-8 meeting in Evian, France. It was organised by the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council and the Monterrey Bridge Coalition -- a collaborate initiative among organisations challenging states to implement their promises from the Financing for Development conference in 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, and aiming to create mutually supportive linkages between sustainable agricultural production, biodiversity protection and trade policies. The two-day meeting, fostering discussion in number of sessions and roundtables around the themes of poverty, agriculture and biodiversity, concluded by launching a call to action. The call to action stressed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the framework that should unite all public and private action to alleviate hunger and poverty and restore biodiversity, and called for action to reach these goals by 2015. The statement went on to identify critical next steps in this regard, including to: restore agriculture and rural development as the priority sectors in public policies; eliminate subsidies on agricultural products; value and promote healthy ecological systems that provide the basis for agriculture production and a well nourished population; promote public-private partnerships; recognise links between rural development, hunger and HIV/AIDS; create mechanisms for equitable benefit-sharing of biodiversity; and focus especially on tropical and subtropical countries, specifically sub-Saharan Africa.

For a full IISD Reporting Services account of the meeting, visit
<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/sd/sdmex/sdvol86num1.html>.

"The Mexico Action Summit: A Call To Action - A New Approach for a New Future," FUTURE HARVEST PRESS RELEASE, 4 June 2003.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY FOCUSES ON WATER

The main international celebration of the World Environment Day 2003 was held on 5 June in Beirut. This was the first time the annual event took place in the Arab World, and according to a spokesperson for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the celebration held "special significance by being in the Arab world so soon after the recent conflict in Iraq". This year's theme, Water -- Two Billion are Dying for It!, focussed attention on 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater. At the event UNEP launched a report on the state of natural underground reservoirs. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, commented in Beirut that "some two billion people and as much as 40 percent of agriculture is at least partly reliant on these hidden stores. Groundwater also supplements river flows, springs and wetlands vital for rural and urban communities and wildlife". According to UNEP, water shortage has become one of the most worrying problems in the new millennium. Today one person out of six lives without regular access to safe drinking water. Moreover, demand is outstripping supply. Water is vital to survival and is a major input to agriculture, industry and the maintenance of natural systems. The limited quantity, increasing contamination and growing demand for water poses one of the key challenges to sustainable development. Celebrations throughout the world highlighting the issue of water marked the World Environment Day.

"International World Environment Day Celebration to be held in Lebanon on 5 June", UNEP PRESS RELEASE, 30 April 2003; "Freshwater -- An Unresolved International Issue", SEI PRESS RELEASE, May 1995; "Diouf: Safeguard 'The Source of Food Security', Water is the Theme of World Environment Day 2003", FAO PRESS RELEASE, 5 June 2003

NEW BIOTRADE PROJECT LAUNCHED IN BOLIVIA

A National Sustainable Biotrade Programme (PNBS) was launched in Bolivia on 11 June with the aim of helping to reduce poverty and fostering sustainable development. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Biotrade Initiative -- which seeks to enhance the ability of developing countries to produce value-added products and services derived from biodiversity for both domestic and international markets -- is the sponsoring agency. Switzerland and the Netherlands will make financial contributions. Bolivia, a member of the group of "megadiverse" countries that together contain some 70 percent of the world's biodiversity, possesses a great deal of natural wealth, while poverty levels are high. The PNBS seeks to promote income generation and the fair distribution of the benefits through the sustainable use of biodiversity. Its objective is to stimulate production of and trade in biodiversity goods, according to ecological, social and economic sustainability criteria. The programme contains five elements, including the development of standards for promoting the sustainable management of biodiversity and training in biotrade for the various national stakeholders. Other projects will complement the Bolivia Programme. These include the UNCTAD/ICC Biotrade Facilitation Programme and the Andean Biotrade Programme implemented by the Andean Community.

"UNCTAD, Netherlands and Switzerland join together to support the national biotrade project in Bolivia," UNCTAD PRESS RELEASE, 11 June 2003.

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/html/calendar.htm>. 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.

Coming up in the next two weeks

14-19 June, Göteborg, Sweden: INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ENERGY SOCIETY SOLAR WORLD CONGRESS 2003. ISES 2003 will cover environmental, policy and financial issues of general interest and will also have three thematic days covering Solar Buildings, Solar Thermal and Solar Electricity. For information see: Internet: <http://www.congrex.com/ISES2003/>

15-20 June, Dubrovnik, Croatia: 2003 DUBROVNIK CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY, WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SYSTEMS. The conference is devoted to the ultimate goal of modern society: sustainable development of energy, water and environment systems. Its objective is, among others, to discuss sustainability concept of energy, water and environment and its relation to the global development. For information contact: the Secretariat, tel: +385 1 6156940; e-mail: dubrovnik2003@fsb.hr; Internet: <http://www.dubrovnik2003.fsb.hr/>

16-18 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM. Hosted by the World Trade Organization this public symposium will focus on the challenges WTO Members face ahead of the WTO's 5th Ministerial Conference this September in Cancún, Mexico. Participants from governments, parliaments, civil society, the business sector academia and the media are invited to discuss what is at stake in the current negotiations and other key challenges facing the multilateral trading system. For information contact: WTO External Relations Division; tel: +41 22 739 56 76 or 739 52 86; email: symposium2003@wto.org; Internet: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/symp_devagenda_03_e.htm.

16-18 June, Dhaka, Bangladesh: THIRD REGIONAL SESSION FOR ASIA OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM. Organised by the World Conservation Union - IUCN - this forum will address the following four key issues: People and protected areas; sustainable development and livelihoods; access, benefit sharing, and biosafety - relevance to trade and intellectual property rights; and the role of taxonomy in conservation in South Asia. For information: contact Caroline Martinet, tel: +41 22 999 00 01; fax: 999 00 25; e-mail: caroline.martinet@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.gbf.ch>.

16-20 June, Montreal, Canada: 21st CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON LARGE DAMS. This triennial meeting will convene approximately 2000 decision makers, experts, engineers, geologists and other professionals from the dam industry. For more information contact Lise Pinsonneault, tel: +1 514 289 4628; fax: 289 4546; e-mail: pinsonneault.lise@hydro.qc.ca; Internet: <http://www.cigb-icold.org>.

16-20 June, Berlin, Germany: 55TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION. This meeting will be preceded by meetings of the Scientific Committee and various sub-groups. For further information contact: International Whaling Commission; tel: +44 1223 233971; fax: 232 876; email: iwc@iwcoffice.org; Internet: http://www.iwcoffice.org/2003_meeting.htm.

18-19 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES. For information contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: +41 22 739 5007; fax: 739 5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

23-27 June, Trondheim, Norway: FOURTH TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY. The Norway/UN Conference on Technology Transfer and Capacity Building is organised by The Trondheim Conference. For more information contact: The Trondheim Conference, tel: +47 22 24 5700; fax: + 47 73 801401; e-mail: laila.saksgard@nina.no; Internet: <http://chm.dirnat.no>.

23-28 June, Rome, Italy: FAO COUNCIL . The 124th Session of the Council is organised by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation. For further information contact Mohammed Rouighi, Director: e-mail: mohammed.rouighi@fao.org, Internet: <http://www.fao.org>.

24-25 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES. For information contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: 739-5007; fax: 739-5458; e-mail: enquiries@wto.org.

26 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS. For information contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: +41 22 739 5007; fax: 739 5458; e-mail: enquiries@wto.org

26-27 June, Rome, Italy: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION. For further information on the 52nd Session of the Executive Committee contact the Secretariat of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standard Programme, tel: +39 (06) 5705 1; fax: +39 (06) 5705 4593; e-mail: codex@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net>.

Other Forthcoming Events

29 June –3 July, Ravello, Italy: 7TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC GOODS AND PUBLIC POLICY FOR AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY. Organised by the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR), the conference will focus, inter alia, on the impact of agricultural biotechnology and science; biotechnology, trade and development. For further information contact Vittorio Santaniello, tel: +39 (06) 7259 5843; fax: 7259 5705; e-mail: icabr@economia.uniroma2.it; Internet: <http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conference/icabr2003/Default.htm>.

30 June - 5 July, Rome, Italy: 25TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION. For further information contact the Secretariat of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standard Programme, tel: +39 (06) 57051; fax: 5705 4593; e-mail: codex@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net>

1-4 July, Rome, Italy: AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON MOUNTAIN BIODIVERSITY. This meeting is organised by Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. For information contact Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary, tel: +1 514 288 2220; fax: 288 6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>

13-17 July 2003, Baltimore, US: COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT THROUGH TIME. Organised by NOAA Coastal Services Centre, the Coastal Zone conference series is the premier international gathering of ocean and coastal management professionals. For further information contact Ms. Gale Peek, tel: +1 843 740 1231; e-mail: Gale.Peek@noaa.gov; Internet: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2003>.

16-18 July, Geneva, Switzerland: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ON CONTINENTAL AND COASTAL MARINE WATERS. Organised on behalf of the Network for Environmental Assessment and Remediation (NEAR) by the "Centre d'Etudes en Sciences Naturelles de l'Environnement" (CESNE) and the Institute F.-A. Forel, University of Geneva, the conference is co-sponsored by the World Health Organization. For more information email to: morawel@tinyworld.co.uk.

Courses

16-20 June, Tokyo, Japan. COURSE ON WTO AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This course, aimed at university professors, is organised by the United Nations University/Institute of Advanced Studies. For further information please contact Prof. A.H. Zakri, Director, tel: +81 3 5467 2323; fax: 5467 2324; e-mail: zakri@ias.unu.edu; Internet: <http://www.ias.unu.edu>.

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 Marianne Jacobsen, mjacobsen@ictsd.ch.

KEEPING SCIENCE OPEN: THE EFFECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY ON THE CONDUCT OF SCIENCE. (Royal Society UK, April 2003) This report considers whether progress in science has been affected by the interpretation and use of intellectual property policies, and makes recommendations for improvement. A copy of the report is available at: <http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/templates/statements/StatementDetails.cfm?statementid=221>.

STATUS OF THE RIGHTS OF FARMERS AND PLANT BREEDERS IN ASIA. By Ujjwal Kumar and Suman Sahai (Gene Campaign, June 2003). This book compares the salient features of the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) legislation (enacted or proposed) of nine Asian countries -- Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. It also contains three articles that provide a detailed account of the rights of farmers in the Indian PVP law in the context of India's move to join the UPOV Convention. It highlights points to show that joining UPOV is not in the interest of developing countries. For further information, please write to Prabhu Ram at: gc@genecampaign.org or genecamp@vsnl.com.

BIOTECHNOLOGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: NEEDS AND MODES OF COMPETENCE BUILDING. By the Norwegian Centre for International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric, 2003). This report examines opportunities for building scientific capacity in developing countries around the various applications for biotechnology. With particular reference to Africa the report looks at a range of applications from industrial to small scale agriculture such as food technology, animal and plant disease management, tolerance of stress, and more efficient utilization of resources. A copy of the report is available at: <http://www.nlh.no/noragric/publications/reports/NoragricRep14A.pdf>.

GM CROPS: GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN. By ActionAid (2003). This paper asks: Do GM crops help eradicate poverty? Do GM crops meet the needs of poor farmers? Do they threaten basic rights? Do GM crops threaten biodiversity? Do GM crops enhance informed choice and participation for poor people? A copy of the paper is available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/resources/pdfs/gatg.pdf>.

Electronic Resources

PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE WEBSITE. This website, launched by IUCN, TRAFFIC, Fauna & Flora International and ResourceAfrica, seeks to provide a focal point for the variety of ongoing work around the world on the precautionary principle in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. It currently provides background on the precautionary principle, and information on the Precautionary Principle Project. The site can be accessed at: <http://www.pprinciple.net>.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS WEBSITE. Through this website, those interested in learning more about the topics of protection of geographical indications will find information about the use of names that point to a specific geographic place. It provides links to relevant rules in the US, the EU and other countries, and also to regimes of international organisations such as WIPO and WTO. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.geographicindications.com>.

BRIDGES Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org>, in collaboration with IUCN - World Conservation Union, <http://www.iucn.org>, and IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, CEESP, <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/index.html>. This edition of *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* was edited by Malena Sell, msell@ictsd.ch and Marianne Jacobsen, mjacobsen@ictsd.ch. Contributor to this issue were Heike Baumüller, Cecile Giraud, Marianne Jacobsen, Malena Sell and Alex Werth. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 13, ch. des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editors or the Director. *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* is made possible in 2003 through the generous support of the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment (Netherlands) and the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL). It also benefits from ICTSD's core funders: the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK), the Rockefeller Foundation, MISEREOR, NOVIB (NL), Oxfam (UK) and the Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations (Switzerland). ISSN 1682-0843

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