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Note to Subscribers:

BRIDGES Trade BioRes will not be published during the upcoming WTO recess. The next issue, Vol. 3, No. 14, will be published on 22 August 2003. We thank you for your continued support and welcome your comments on how we can improve our publication.

Chemicals

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTS BIOTECH REGULATIONS ON TRACEABILITY AND LABELLING

The European Parliament on 2 July adopted in its second reading two Commission proposals on the labelling and traceability of genetically modified (GM) food and feed. The Parliament's vote will now have to be approved by the European Council of Ministers, expected for later this month. US farm groups and governmental sources strongly criticised the draft regulations for being unworkable, while civil society groups welcomed amendments introduced by the Parliament to regulate co-existence between GM and non-modified crops.

Specifically, the European Parliament approved the thresholds adopted by the Environment and Agriculture Ministers in late-2002, i.e. a threshold of 0.9 percent, below which GM products would be exempt from labelling, and 0.5 percent for the adventitious presence of GM organisms (GMOs) that are unauthorised but have nevertheless been assessed as risk-free (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 11 December 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-12-11/inbrief.htm>). They also amended the draft regulations to allow EU member states to impose "appropriate measures" to avoid the unintended presence of GMOs in other products ("co-existence").

New regulations evoke various reactions

While the amendment to allow the implementation of co-existence measures was hailed as an important step forward by civil society groups, which have long been campaigning for strong measures to prevent contamination (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 10 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-10/story1.htm>), they called for such measures to be made mandatory rather than optional. Friends of the Earth also criticised the 0.9 percent threshold as too high and called for strict liability regulations.

US farm groups strongly criticised the Parliament's decision, which they fear will create an even greater barrier to trade than the current de facto moratorium on the approvals of GMOs, currently being challenged by the US and others at the WTO (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 15 May 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-05-15/story1.htm>). "With this new labelling and traceability requirement, the EU has only made a bad situation worse," said the American Farm Bureau, which urged the US administration to continue to "aggressively prosecute" the WTO case. Similarly strong criticism could be heard from US government sources. "We think [the draft regulations] are unworkable, and unenforceable," said US Department of Agriculture trade official David Hegwood.

The Parliament's vote will now have to be approved by the European Council of Ministers, expected for later this month. The regulation would then enter into force in September with a six-months compliance period. While the European Commission has repeatedly said that the de facto moratorium would be lifted once the regulations entered into force, it remains unclear whether the US and others would drop their WTO challenge even if approvals resumed.

What will be different under the new regulations?

- While the European food safety regulations introduced broad traceability requirements for food, feed, food-producing animals and any other substances intended for food use (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 7 March 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-03-07/story2.htm>), there are currently no specific requirements for products that contain or are derived from GMOs. Under the new regulations, operators using or handling GM products would be required to retain the information at each stage of the placing on the market.

- The new regulations would require labelling for GM feed and for products derived from but no longer containing GMOs, these are exempt from labelling under current rules.

- The current rules do not set a threshold for the accidental presence of unapproved GMOs in food or feed that have been assessed as risk-free. Under the new rules, the threshold would be 0.5 percent.

- Under the draft regulations, the current authorisation process would be simplified with a "one door - one key" procedure, i.e. a single risk assessment and a single application would be required to obtain approval for the deliberate release of GMOs into the environment and for use in food or feed. Scientific risk assessments would be conducted by the European Food Authority. The Commission would then draft a proposal for granting or refusing authorisation, which would be submitted for approval by member states within a Regulatory Committee.

"Wallström and Byrne welcome EP acceptance of a trustworthy and safe approach to GMOs and Gm food and feed," EU PRESS RELEASE, 2 July 2003; "US unimpressed and unconvinced by new GMO legislation in the EU," EurActiv, 3 July 2003; "MEPs back tougher GM labels," FOEE, 2 July 2003; "US government, farmers aghast at proposed European biotech rules," AFP, 3 July 2003.

Chemicals

DISCUSSION ON NEW EU CHEMICALS LEGISLATION PICKS UP SPEED

The review and consultation period on the proposed European chemicals legislation, which ended on 10 July 2003 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 5 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-05-15/story5.htm>), attracted a large number of comments from a wide range of stakeholders. European and American civil society groups welcomed the draft. In a rarely seen constellation European and US based industry dismissed the proposal, while British scientists proposed a compromise approach. However all groups agree that the current legislation urgently needs revision.

Termed REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restrictions of Chemicals), the legislation, which is based on a White Paper adopted by the Commission in June 2001, would replace 40 different pieces of current legislation. Among the most fundamental changes are provisions that would shift the burden of proof for the safety of chemicals from public authorities to companies that produce, import and use chemicals. The legislation would be administered by a new European Chemicals Agency. Direct and indirect costs for industry and society could amount to ca EUR 15-33 billion, while the occupational health benefits are estimated to reach EUR 18-54 billion over the next 30 years.

Civil Society Applauds Draft Legislation

As part of the consultation process a major coalition of European civil society groups -- including consumers, trade and women's groups -- handed in a declaration on 8 July to support the draft legislation of the European Commission. In the declaration "For a Toxics Free Future" groups are calling on the Commission to ensure that the REACH legislation includes, *inter alia*, an obligation to phase out and substitute chemicals that accumulate in wildlife, humans or the environment and those that disrupt hormones; the right-to-know of consumers and business, including knowing what chemicals are present in products; and that products imported into the EU have to conform to the same safety standards as those made in the EU.

In addition to the European Declaration, 60 organisations based in the United States together with several thousand US citizens handed in a separate declaration also supporting the EU draft legislation and at the same time criticising the US government, which has rejected the proposed legislation. The US-based groups argue that the new legislation will offer a unique opportunity to control the spread of chemicals worldwide, in particular when taking into account that Europe is globally the largest producer of chemicals.

Industry and US government: Draft Is Unacceptable

While non-governmental groups are very much in favour of the new draft legislation, the international chemicals industry is greatly concerned and argues that the proposed new laws will cost jobs and will be far too expensive. Although the industry acknowledges that new legislation is needed, acknowledging that the previous laws had failed to prevent the release of hazardous chemicals on the market in the 1980s, they strongly resist the shift in the burden of proof. Under the new draft legislation the burden of proof would lie with the industry for testing and risk assessment of some 30,000 chemicals and no longer with authorities. The European Commission has estimated that this assessment could cost up to EUR 7 billion, while industry is estimating that it will cost between EUR 14 and 26 billion to carry out tests and related administration. In addition Eggert Voscherau, Deputy Chairman of BASF -- one of the world's biggest chemicals companies -- warns that approximately 2 million European jobs would be in danger if the new legislation were approved. He added that in particular small and medium sized firms would be heavily affected by the proposed legislation. In a rarely seen coalition US industries supported their European colleagues saying that the plans "would be difficult, if not impossible to implement in an efficient and effective way."

Scientists Propose Alternative System

A recently released report by the British Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution supports the need for a stricter chemicals legislation stating that the current legislation was "a gigantic experiment with all living things". Sir Tom Blundell the Chairman of the Commission said that: "Current approaches to assessing and managing the risks of man-made chemicals in the environment are cumbersome, unsound and rely heavily on animal testing. We want to see a government strategy to achieve a steady, measurable reduction in the use of hazardous chemicals." However, the report also notes that the current proposal by the European Commission would take more than 50 years to implement, and would be financially too expensive and include a too high amount of animal testing. Instead the report recommends a "quick check" system which would test all 30,000 chemicals within the next three years. Under this system chemicals would be tested according to their toxicity, how long they last in the environment before being broken down, and their tendency to accumulate in the bodies of animals. These data should be made publicly available and a charging-system should be developed related to the level of risk associated with using the particular chemical, which would help finance the new system. The Royal Commission expects most chemicals to be of no particular concern.

It is now up to the European Commission to consolidate the inputs by the various groups, finalise the proposal and forward it to a first hearing in the European Parliament and Council within the next five months.

WTO Members highlight trade concerns

The EC chemical legislation was also discussed on the 2 July meeting of the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). The EU had submitted information on its draft chemical legislation to the TBT Committee in late May (G/TBT/W/208, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>) and informed Members on the current consultation process. The US, Australia, Mexico, Japan, China, Malaysia, Korea, Ecuador and Australia outlined a number of concerns relating to the legislation, including its complexity and cost of compliance. Some Members also questioned why the EU was taking a unilateral approach on this issue, as work was ongoing under the OECD to create harmonised principles on chemicals.

Additional Resources:

The report of the Royal Commission on Environment and Pollution is available at: <http://www.rcep.org.uk/chemicals.html>

The White Paper by the European Commission on the "Strategy for a future Chemicals Policy" is available at: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/wpr/2001/com2001_0088en01.pdf

Further information on the EU Directives and Regulation can be found at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/index.htm>
or at: <http://www.euractiv.com/cgi-bin/cgint.exe/558244-859?11&1011=focecne>

"Chemical groups set to reject EU environment laws," FT, 9 July 2003; "Protect us from hazardous chemicals, say European citizens," WWF, 8 July 2003; "Americans Declare Independence From Hazardous Chemicals," WWF-US, 1 July 2003; "Reducing the Risks," Process Engineering, 30 June 2003. ICTSD internal files.

Environment at the WTO

WTO ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEES STUCK ON ROLE OF MEAS, ECO-LABELLING

On 7 and 8 July, WTO Members convened for the final meetings of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) before the Cancun Ministerial Conference in September. Proposals by the EC for trade ministers at Cancun to endorse the participation of observers in CTE Special Sessions and formalise the currently informal MEA [multilateral environmental agreement] information sessions received a mixed welcome, but no consensus. Another EC proposal that the CTE hold three dedicated sessions on eco-labelling was opposed by other Members.

Also at the meeting, China, Chinese Taipei and Australia submitted papers on the MEA-WTO relationship (TN/TE/W/35/Rev.1, TN/TE/W/36, TN/TE/W/37, respectively, available online at <http://docsonline.wto.org>), following up on previous discussions on this point at the last special session on 1-2 May (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 15 May 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-05-15/story4.htm>).

Mandate

In paragraph 31 of the WTO's Doha Ministerial Declaration, adopted in November 2001, Members agreed to negotiations on: (i) the relationship between WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in MEAs; (ii) procedures for regular information exchange between MEA secretariats and relevant WTO committees, and the criteria for granting of observer status; and (iii) liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services. These issues are being addressed in the special CTE sessions. Paragraph 32 instructs the CTE to focus on issues around market access, intellectual property rights and eco-labelling, with a view to making recommendations, where appropriate, with respect to future action, including the desirability of negotiations.

EC proposals meet with resistance

The question of observer status for MEAs continues to be blocked for political reasons at the level of the General Council. Meanwhile, the CTE has opted to invite UNEP and certain MEA secretariats (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 15 May 2003, referenced above) on an ad-hoc, informal basis to participate in certain parts of its special session. The EC proposed that trade ministers in Cancun invite UNEP and MEAs to regularly attend the special sessions rather than to continue inviting them on an ad hoc basis. The EC also proposed that trade ministers formalise the currently informal annual MEA information sessions. While Canada and Norway agreed with the EC that a strong signal should be sent on MEA relations in Cancun, others, including the Philippines, Malaysia, Pakistan and Egypt, said that the EC's suggestion would circumvent the para. 31(ii) mandate to establish criteria on observership. Malaysia, Pakistan and China also told the EC that they had no interest in formalising the current MEA information sessions. Due in part to disagreements over whether the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) qualified as an MEA, delegates at the special session did not agree as to whether they would extend the invites again for its next meeting in October.

At the 7 July regular CTE session, the EC, supported by Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, proposed that the group hold three 'dedicated sessions' on governmental and non-governmental eco-labelling schemes. While Japan and Canada said that this could be a useful basis for discussion after Cancun, a number of other Members -- notably Australia, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and the US -- opposed the EC's suggestion. They also expressed concern that a discussion on labelling would duplicate ongoing work in the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). In particular developing countries are also reluctant to revive the sensitive discussion on process and production methods (PPMs).

US papers on environmental goods

In discussions at the special session under para 31(iii), the US presented two papers on environmental goods. In its first paper (TN/TE/W/34), the US suggested that Members use the list of environmental goods emanating from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum as a starting-point in the negotiations. The US noted that APEC countries did not include goods produced in a manner that is "environmentally friendly" due to "the practical and WTO-legal issues" surrounding discrimination on the basis of PPM criteria. In its second submission (TN/TE/W/38), the US proposed that two lists be established: a core list of goods that everyone agrees are environmental (i.e. sewage treatment equipment); and a second list of other proposed environmental goods. Tariffs would be eliminated on the core list of goods by 2010, and countries would be required to liberalise a certain percentage of products from the proposed list by 2010. Due to time constraints, there was no discussion on these papers.

The CTE special session's final report to the Trade Negotiations Committee (TN/TE/6), which was also discussed on 8 May, will be circulated next week. The regular session adopted its reports to the General Council (WT/CTE/W/230) and to ministers in Cancun (available shortly). The next meeting of the CTE is currently scheduled from 30-31 October.

ICTSD reporting.

In Brief

CODEX COMMISSION ADOPTS BIOTECH RISK ANALYSIS STANDARDS

The Codex Alimentarius Commission -- the UN body charged with setting international standards related to food safety -- at its meeting in Rome, Italy, from 30 June to 7 July, approved three risk analysis standards for biotechnology derived food. The standards had been forwarded by the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology in March 2003 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-21/story2.htm>). The standards include references to the "tracing of products" and food labelling as risk management tools. Many observers believe that the agreement reached at the Codex meeting might mark a breakthrough in international negotiations on the use of traceability systems and at least partially vindicate the EU's insistence on introducing a labelling and traceability system for genetically modified foods, which has repeatedly come under criticism in the WTO from the US, Canada, Argentina and others (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 27 June 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-06-27/story3.htm>). This perception of the Codex standard assumes that 'tracing of products' and 'traceability' are the same. However, the US -- supported by the food industry -- has insisted that the two terms are not equivalent, arguing that 'product tracing' is limited to 'one step forward and one step back' whereas 'traceability' of products refers to the whole production chain of a product. To date, there is no agreed Codex definition for traceability and/or product tracing.

Consumer groups welcomed the adoption of the Codex guidelines. "These standards are a tremendous victory for consumers, for science, for good regulation and for common sense," said Julian Edwards, Director-General of Consumers International.

"UN Food Standards Body Approves GMO Regulations," AP, 1 July 2003.

ECOSOC CALLS FOR END TO AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES

During the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) annual meeting held in Geneva from 30 June to 25 July, ministers issued a declaration urging rich countries to reduce and eliminate agricultural subsidies to ease market access for products from developing countries. Furthermore the declaration highlights the need for the implementation of the Doha Ministerial Declaration and the urgent need for WTO Members to address, at Cancun, issues such as agricultural export subsidies, domestic support and enhanced

market access, as well as special and differential treatment for developing countries. Speaking on 30 June at the opening session of the meeting UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said commitments made at the 2001 WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha must now be implemented. The challenge "is not to decide what to do, but rather, simply, to do it," according to Annan. He called on countries to show greater flexibility to meet the Millennium Development Goals drawn up at the UN Millennium Summit. The Director General of IUCN, Achim Steiner supported the decision of ECOSOC to promote an integrated approach to rural development for poverty eradication and sustainable development. In this respect he said: "A challenge remains in the need to link this work with the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. Without supportive processes in the financing and trade agendas, sustainable development will not be possible. We are at a critical moment in time to prove that the good intentions reflected in the commitments made by countries are put into practice and that ECOSOC can play a leading role in ensuring that this happens."

"ECOSOC Calls For Abolition Of Agricultural Subsidies," UN NEWS CENTER, 2 July 2003; "Annan Urges Action on Rural Poverty," ENS, 1 July 2003; "UN Chiefs Plead With Powers For Fairer Farm Trade," REUTERS, 30 June 2003; "The poverty development nexus," IUCN, 9 July 2003.

WTO MEMBERS STILL FAR APART ON AGRICULTURE

At a 26-27 June and 1 July special (negotiating) session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture (CoA), Members mainly focussed on discussing a draft progress report prepared by CoA negotiations Chair Stuart Harbinson to be submitted to the Trade Negotiations Committee (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-07-03/story2.htm>). Members such as the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Japan and Barbados insisted that the modalities currently on the table could not serve as a basis for the negotiations and thus called for a substantially different text -- leaving open, however, who should produce it. In particular Members cannot agree on the approach to reduce and cut tariffs and did not accept the compromise approach by Harbinson.

Members also discussed the concept of special products (allowing developing countries to make very modest tariff cuts on such products), which is strongly supported by developing countries. While countries such as Indonesia, India, China, and the Philippines demanded that there should be no criteria and that developing countries should decide themselves which products would be special products, Latin American Cairns Group members, as well as many developed countries criticised this approach. They argued that self-declaration would emphasise protectionist tools, instead of tackling domestic support and export subsidies in rich countries, and would hamper trade amongst Southern countries themselves. Instead, these countries proposed that both the special safeguard mechanism and special products should have agreed criteria, and that they should be used as an incentive to liberalise.

A final CoA negotiating session prior to Cancun is scheduled for 16-18 July.

For a more detailed account of the meeting see: BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, 10 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-07-10/story1.htm>.

'Special Products: Thinking Through the Details', report by Oxford Policy Management, downloadable at: http://www.opml.co.uk/economic_policy/trade_policy/et787_spec_produ.html

ICTSD reporting; "Cairns Group members fault misleading reference to 'peace clause,' WTO REPORTER, 30 June 2003.

REPORT URGES PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO SAVE ENVIRONMENT

A new report released on 10 June calls for public participation to stop the deterioration of the world's environment and to address the increasing global poverty issue. The report, entitled "World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth - Balance, Voice and Power," was published jointly by the World Resources Institute, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations

Environment Program (UNEP). The world's poor are often the most affected by the impacts of failed environmental governance. According to the authors, governments should include the local community in decisions affecting ecosystems and integrate environmental impacts into economic decision making. "Democratisation of environmental decision making is one of the most direct routes to better environmental decisions," said Jonathan Lash, president of the World Resources Institute. In addition, fundamental changes, such as greater transparency and accountability, are essential to a better management of natural resources which can help overcome poverty. The report highlights that public access to information from governments, business, and non-governmental organisations can improved the protection of ecosystems.

The report is available at: http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_description.cfm?PubID=3764

"Public Participation Needed To Save Environment," ENS, 10 June 2003; "Landmark Report Urges Governance Reforms To Arrest Decline Of World's Environment," WRI NEWS RELEASE, 10 June 2003.

NEW TREATY FOCUSES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO PROTECT CARPATHIANS

Ministers from Central and Eastern Europe adopted a new environmental agreement in Kiev on 22 May to conserve Europe's greatest reserve of forest and large carnivores while benefiting isolated mountain communities and promoting the region's economic transition. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians will strengthen regional cooperation and support local projects in the mountain areas of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine. The Carpathians still shelter large populations of brown bear, wolf, lynx and other animals that are rare elsewhere in Europe. The new Convention furthermore recognises the link between environmental protection and the need to bring benefits to the local population through sustainable development. Promoting responsible tourism, for example, where landscapes are protected and local communities benefit, would be an example of a win-win approach for the environment and the economy. The Carpathians Convention will also assist the spread of environmental "best practices". These include the application of the 'polluter pays' principle, an emphasis on public participation and stakeholder involvement, transboundary cooperation, integrated planning and management of land and water resources, and the ecosystem approach.

For more information on the new treaty please see: <http://www.carpathians.org>

"New treaty on the Carpathian region will protect Europe's largest remaining wilderness," 22 May 2003, UNEP.

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 four weeks

7-15 July, Geneva, Switzerland: FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GENETIC RESOURCES, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOLKLORE. The meeting is organized by WIPO. For further information contact the WIPO Secretariat; tel: (41 22) 338-9111; Internet: http://www.wipo.org/documents/en/meetings/2003/igc/index_5.htm

12 July, Geneva, Switzerland: CASES AND VIEWS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IPRS, GENETIC RESOURCES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. At this informal, off-the-record

roundtable, organised by ICTSD four speakers will present actual cases and give their views on the possible solutions to the relationship between intellectual property rights, genetic resources and the protection of traditional knowledge. For further information, contact: Marie Chamay, ICTSD; tel: (41 22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093; email: mchamay@ictsd.ch.

13-17 July, Baltimore, US: COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT THROUGH TIME. Organised by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (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; email: Gale.Peek@noaa.gov; Internet: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2003>.

14-18 July, Sydney, Australia: ECO-INNOVATE 03 FORUM. This will be the first event of UNEP's new global strategy for children and youth, approved by environment ministers and high level delegations from 130 countries at the recent UNEP Governing Council. The four-day programme will involve high-profile speakers, discussion forums, hands-on design sessions, and mentoring by business and technology leaders. For further information, contact: Tim Higham, UNEP Regional Information Officer; tel: (66 2) 288-2127; email: higham@un.org; Internet: <http://www.eco-innovate.net>

14-18 July, Geneva, Switzerland: MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION. The seventh meeting of the negotiating committee on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs INC-7) is organised by the Interim Secretariat for the Stockholm Convention, for further information, contact: the Interim Secretariat; tel: (41 22) 917-8191; fax: 797-3460; email: ssc@chemicals.unep.ch; Internet: http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops/newlayout/calendar_of_events.htm

16-18 July, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739-5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org

16-18 July, Maastricht, Netherlands: SEMINAR ON CHALLENGES AND RISKS OF GMOS - WHAT RISK ANALYSIS IS APPROPRIATE? This Seminar will present a multinational framework, determining scope and restrictions for national policies and border protection with regards to the options for future policy making towards integrated agro-food systems. In particular the seminar will focus on the relevant WTO-Agreements on Standard Setting, Labelling Requirements and Intellectual Property Rights. Parallel Multinational Agreements, such as the CBD, are presented and their respective relation to WTO Agreements clarified. For further information, contact Ruggero Lala, tel: (31 20) 620-0225; fax: 624-9368; email: ruggero.lala@amsu.edu; Internet: <http://www.amsu.edu/courses/law/publ12003.htm>

16-18 July, Geneva, Switzerland: CONFERENCE ON THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ON CONTINENTAL AND COASTAL MARINE WATERS. This international conference is 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. The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for the presentation of original research and scientific overviews on major global environmental issues that impact directly or indirectly continental and coastal waters. Quantitative and qualitative aspects of water resources, water related risk and impact on aquatic habitat are the major targets. For further information, contact: email: morawel@tinyworld.co.uk; Internet: <http://www.unige.ch/sciences/near/>.

21-23 July, Geneva, Switzerland: MEETING OF THE WTO NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739-5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org

23 July, Mexico City, Mexico: WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA FOR CARBON-BASED FORESTRY PROJECTS AND THE MEXICAN CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

PROCESS. Organized by the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia (UK) and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research in cooperation with the Instituto Nacional de Ecología, this international workshop aims to inform the Mexican policy process and discuss a set of sustainable development criteria for carbon-based forestry projects. For further information, contact: Yatziri Zepeda; email: yatzem@ine.gob.mx; Internet: http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/events/events_timetable.shtml

28-31 July 2003. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: CONFERENCE ON MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES MANAGEMENT 2003. The theme of this international conference is "Enhancing mineral and energy resources management for sustainable development and human prosperity." For further information, contact: tel: (62 274) 486-403; fax: 486-400; email: hendaryono@recent.or.id; Internet: <http://www.recent.or.id>

28-30 July Montreal, Canada: MINI-MINISTERIAL This meeting, bringing together trade ministers from more than 20 WTO Members, will focus on paving the way for a deal at the WTO fifth Ministerial meeting in Cancun in September.

10-16 August, Stockholm, Sweden: WORLD WATER WEEK. The World Water Week and the 13th Stockholm Water Symposium seminars and events organized in collaboration with different organizations and institutions. It truly serves as an interdisciplinary platform to focus global attention on key water issues, facilitate dialogue, seek constructive solutions to pressing problems, highlight outstanding achievements in the field, and inspire future water leaders. For further information contact: the Stockholm Convention Bureau: tel: (46 8) 5465-1500; fax: 5465-1599; email: Stocon@Stocon.se; Internet: <http://www.siwi.org/waterweek2003/frameset.html>

12-15 August, Geneva, Switzerland: 13TH MEETING OF THE CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE. The meeting is organized by the CITES Secretariat. For further information contact: CITES Secretariat; tel: (41 22) 917-8139; fax: 797-3417; email: cites@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cttee/plants/index.shtml>

13-16 August 2003, Kemer/Antalya, Turkey: INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM SERIES ON LAND USE/COVER CHANGE SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS – STUDYING LAND USE EFFECTS IN COASTAL ZONES WITH REMOTE SENSING AND GIS. This is the first conference of a new colloquium series devoted to the issues of changes in coastal zones as related to land use. For further information contact: Garik Gutman, Land Cover-Land Use Change Program, NASA HQ; tel: (1 202) 358-0276; fax: 358-2770; email: ggutman@hq.nasa.gov; Internet: <http://www.ins.itu.edu.tr/rslucoat1/>

18-21 August, Geneva, Switzerland: 19TH MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE. The meeting is organized by the CITES Secretariat. For further information contact: CITES Secretariat; tel: (41 22) 917-8139; fax: 797-3417; email: cites@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cttee/animals/19/index.shtml>

Other forthcoming events

5-7 September, Cancun, Mexico: 18TH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM: BIODIVERSITY, TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The meeting just prior to the 5th Ministerial Conference of the WTO will focus on: the relationship between the TRIPs Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Risk, precaution and biosecurity; and Trade and sustainable livelihoods. For further information, contact: The GBF Secretariat, Caroline Martinet; tel: (41 22) 999-0216; fax: 999-0025; email: caroline.martinet@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.gbf.ch>

17-19 September, Catania, Italy: CONFERENCE ON THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON HEALTH. Environmental Health Risk 2003 is the second international conference on the impact of environmental factors on health, the aim of a healthy society is to establish effective measures, which can eliminate or considerably reduce hazardous factors from the human environment and minimize the associated health risks. The conference is mainly for health experts from governments and industry. For

further information, contact: tel: (44 0238) 029-3223; fax: 029-2853; email: shobbs@wessex.ac.uk; Internet: <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2003/healthrisk03/index.html>

21-28 September, Quebec City, Canada: WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS. The twelfth World Forestry Congress is aimed at a broad range of actors interested in forests and trees, and their future and sustainable management throughout the world. The conference is organized by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) every six years. For further information, contact: World Forestry Congress 2003 Secretariat; tel: (1 418) 694-2424; fax: 694-9922; email: sec-gen@wfc2003.org; Internet: <http://www.wfc2003.org>

13-17 October, Lisbon, Portugal: CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONGRESS. Organised in partnership with the Portuguese Association for Consumer Defence (DECO), this seventeenth world congress will focus on the theme "The future of consumer protection: representation, regulation and empowerment in a world economy" and speakers will analyse the challenges and impact of the world economy on consumers. The Congress is an important opportunity to take stock and ask what has worked best for consumers in the past, what works now and what will work in the future. For further information, contact: Dolores DeMercado, tel: (44 20) 7226-6663; fax: 7354-0607; email: dmercado@consint.org; Internet: http://www.consumersinternational.org/News_Events/world.asp?cat=24

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.

ECOLABELING: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY. By Consumer's Choice International (2002). This paper assesses the value in ecolabelling. It offers definitions and classifications of ecolabelling, a World Bank perspective and a Green Procurement Action Plan. It discusses the labelling of GM foods, issues surrounding tropical timbers and sustainability and issues of Environmental Assessment and Life Cycle Analysis. The report is available at: http://www.consumerscouncil.org/policy/ecolabeling_0402.pdf

HARMONISATION OF THE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISMS OF THE MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND THE WORLD TRADE AGREEMENTS. By Axel Bree and Sebastian Jungnickel on behalf of in cooperation with CIEL on behalf of the German Federal Environmental Agency (2003). The report addresses a key issue in today's international environmental law debate - that of the interplay between dispute settlement rules in Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

GLOBALISATION, EQUITY, AND POVERTY: THE SOUTH ASIAN EXPERIENCE. By Sisira Jayasuriya (Global Development Network, January 2002). This paper reviews South Asia's recent performance in growth, poverty, and equity, focusing particularly on India, and Sri Lanka. A brief historical background is presented that traces the impact on South Asia of the first phase of globalisation from the late 19th century through to the first world war, and the impact of the economic and political changes leading up to the second world war and independence. This is followed by an analysis of the trends during the changing policy regimes with particular emphasis on the experience of the liberalisation period. The paper is available online at: http://www.gdnet.org/pdf/Fourth_Annual_Conference/Parallels1/SouthAsia/jayasuriya_paper.pdf

STANDARDS AND GLOBAL TRADE: A VOICE FOR AFRICA. By the World Bank (2003). The report says that firms must upgrade their facilities to meet global standards, for example, by investing in better processing, cooling and storage. This in turn will require that African governments continue to improve the climate for investment, for example, by reducing corruption, cutting red tape, and ensuring the provision of critical infrastructure, such as power, telecommunications and farm-to-market roads. For more information see: http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=1688508

WTO: THE DOHA AGENDA - THE NEW NEGOTIATIONS ON WORLD TRADE. By Bhagirath Lal Das (Zed Books, May 2003). This book addresses the issues involved in the current round of world trade

negotiations. The author shows that issues of great importance to developing countries, such as textiles, do not figure in the talks, and makes practical policy proposals for the revision of the existing WTO Agreements to protect and improve the development prospects of the poor and disadvantaged countries. For more information contact Mohammed Umar: tel +44 20 7837 4014; fax: +44 20 7833 3960; email: sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk; Internet: <http://www.drc.org.nz/bookshop/Detailed/765.html>.

THE 21ST CENTURY NGO: IN THE MARKET FOR CHANGE. By Seb Beloe, John Elkington, Katie Fry, Sue Newell (SUSTAINABILITY, June 2003). The report involved a global study of the NGO landscape entitled '21st Century NGO: Playing the Game or Selling Out?', with over 200 NGOs and opinion formers contributing to the identification of the challenges these organisations face in the new millennium. While the report acknowledges that these are early tremors, it predicts they are the start of a seismic shift - one that will see rising numbers of NGOs engaged with business to bring about positive societal change. For further information contact Seb Beloe, tel: +44 207 269 6900 or Katie Fry Hester, tel: +1 202 659 2898; Internet: <http://www.sustainability.com>. To purchase a copy of the report please visit: <http://www.sustainability.com/publications/latest/21C-ngo.asp>.

"The impacts of forest degradation on medicinal plant use and implications for health care in eastern Amazonia" by Patricia Shanley and Leda Luz in BIOSCIENCE 53 (6, 2003). Results of a 9-year market study suggest that forests represent an important habitat for medicinal plants used in eastern Amazonia. Market surveys indicate that all socioeconomic classes in Amazonia use medicinal plants because of cultural preferences, low cost, and efficacy. Degradation of Amazonian forests may signify not only the loss of potential pharmaceutical drugs for the developed world but also the erosion of the sole health care option for many of Brazil's rural and urban poor.

"Sustainable globalisation" by Simone Borghesi and Alessandro Vercelli in ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS 44 (1, 2003). In order to clarify to what extent the recent process of globalisation may be considered as sustainable, this paper draws some hints from a critical assessment of the literature on the Kuznets curve and the environmental Kuznets curve. In particular it is argued that the optimistic implications of this literature on the sustainability of globalisation are ungranted and that the Kuznets approach is in principle unable to give reliable answers to the questions raised in this work. The authors conclude that these conditions can be met by implementing a systematic policy strategy aimed at shifting both Kuznets relations downwards.

"Property rights to multi-attribute fishery resources" by Steven F. Edwards in ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS 44 (2-3, 2003). This paper analyses the United Nations' 'Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries'. Governments are urged to manage multiple yield, bycatch, and habitat attributes of fishery resources. However, due to high costs of multi-attribute management, relatively few attributes (generally stock biomass, age structure, and growth) are specified in yield targets, exposing others (e.g., localized abundance, sex) to excessive use in the public domain. The author proposes solutions like markets for harvest rights to solve this problematic situation.

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