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CONTENT

Environment at the WTO	1
WTO Negotiations Speed Up In Lead-Up To Cancun	
Biotechnology	3
GMO Update: US-EU, China, Africa	
In Brief	5
Events & Resources	7

Environment at the WTO

WTO NEGOTIATIONS SPEED UP IN LEAD-UP TO CANCUN

From 10-14 September WTO Members will meet in Cancun, Mexico, for the fifth WTO Ministerial Conference to take stock of the current round of trade negotiations launched in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001. Environment- and biodiversity-related issues explicitly feature within the negotiating mandate of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), but are also folded into other negotiating areas, including agriculture, fisheries, intellectual property rights and possible negotiations on the 'Singapore Issues' (investment, competition, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation).

Heads of Delegation are currently meeting every morning with the Chair of the General Council, Ambassador Perez del Castillo of Uruguay, to discuss items included in the draft Ministerial text. Smaller groups are meeting during afternoons and nights and some WTO Members have tabled key proposals. On discussions related to environment and biodiversity, negotiations have mainly focused on issues related to the observer status of multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) Secretariats, agriculture and fisheries. There have been no recent developments in the other negotiating areas related to environment and biodiversity, including the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, eco-labelling and the effects of environmental measures on market access.

Informal environment discussions focus on observership

On 23 August, WTO Members met informally to further discuss the status of observership of MEA Secretariats and a few international organisations to attend special (negotiating) sessions of the CTE (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 11 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-07-11/story3.htm>). The EC proposed to invite UNEP, UNCTAD, the Basel Convention, the UNFCCC, the Montreal Protocol, CBD, CITES and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) to special sessions of the CTE. Several countries, including the US, Japan, Switzerland and Norway, supported the EC proposal. However, in particular developing countries, including Egypt, China, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia, continue to oppose a

permanent invitation and would instead prefer to extend invitations to the organisations on a flexible basis just prior to the CTE meetings. Members did not reach an agreement on the EC proposal. Similarly, the systemic decision on observership remains stuck at the level of the Trade Negotiations Committee.

Agriculture negotiations move forward

A second draft Cancun Ministerial text was circulated on 24 August, including a new Annex setting out a framework for establishing agriculture modalities. The draft Annex aims to strike a balance between the generally conservative EC-US 'joint text' and a counter proposal by twelve developing countries from the Cairns Group plus China, India, Mexico, Venezuela and Peru, which are more supportive of agricultural liberalisation albeit with significantly easier conditions for developing countries.

The draft Annex notes that developing countries "shall benefit from special and differential treatment, including lower tariff reductions and longer implementation periods". The text also includes references to 'special products', which would be subject to a linear cut (to be determined). The text would also set up a special agricultural safeguard for use by developing countries. Non-trade concerns (NTCs), which include, for instance, biodiversity conservation, landscape preservation and other aspects of rural environmental management, are mentioned in the text, but without specific details.

The concept of 'special products' is being strongly advocated by a group of six like-minded countries, including the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Kenya, Nicaragua, Panama and Sri Lanka, which would like such products to be exempted from tariff reduction commitments. The group of six has proposed that developing countries should be able to self-designate an [unspecified] percentage of tariff lines as special products, which would be exempt from tariff cuts. The EC-US text also proposes a special agricultural safeguard mechanism for use by developing countries "as regards import-sensitive tariff lines".

The EC-US text acknowledged the trading blocks' failure to agree on the issue of NTCs. Like Japan, Korea, Norway and Switzerland, the EC is part of the 'Friends of Multifunctionality', which maintains that support for legitimate NTCs, such as the environmental and social roles of agriculture, should be exempt from reduction commitments. Submissions from Japan, Norway and Switzerland (on behalf Bulgaria, Chinese Taipei, Iceland, Korea, Liechtenstein) regretted that NTCs were not addressed in the EC-US paper, and indicated that they would be able to show more flexibility in subsidy reduction if such concerns were taken into account. These countries would prefer negotiations to be less ambitious than proposed by the EC-US and by Cairns et al, especially in the areas of market access and in reducing domestic support.

Group of developing countries submit joint fisheries proposal

The WTO Negotiating Group on Rules met, from 21-22 July to consider, inter alia, a submission on fisheries subsidies by a group of small island and coastal states, including Antigua, Barbuda, Belize, Fiji Islands, Guyana, the Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis (TN/RL/W/136, searchable at <http://docsonline.wto.org/>).

The proposal -- the first of its kind in the fisheries negotiations from a cohesive group of developing countries -- advocates for exceptions from fisheries disciplines relevant to small fishery-dependent states, following a background paper by the of 'Friends of Fish' group (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 30 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-06-30/story4.htm>). Specifically, the proposal aims to address the sustainable development concerns of small vulnerable states -- noting the relatively high dependence of their populations on fisheries -- and to operationalise proposals on special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing countries in this area. It outlines three categories of fisheries activities relevant to the small coastal states: revenue generation from access fees for distant water fleets; domestic and foreign fishers operating for export in the waters of the small coastal states; and artisan fishery operations for both domestic and export markets.

At the meeting, New Zealand, Australia, the EC, Barbados and Japan supported the inclusion of a development dimension in the talks. The US and Mauritius expressed their interest in working along the lines of the proposal. Australia, on the other hand, felt more appropriate ways of dealing with S&D existed than through the focus on subsidy definitions. This meeting was the final scheduled session of the Negotiating Group prior to the Cancun Ministerial meeting.

Additional Resources

For the latest news, resources, events and logistical information around the Cancun meeting, see <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/index.htm>.

For a more in-depth account of the agriculture negotiations, see BRIDGES Weekly, 21 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-08-21/story2.htm>; and the forthcoming issue of BRIDGES Monthly, <http://www.ictsd.org/monthly/index.htm>.

For a more in-depth account of the fisheries negotiations, see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-07-28/story6.htm>.

ICTSD reporting.

Biotechnology

GMO UPDATE: US-EU, CHINA, AFRICA

US requests WTO panel in US-EU biotech dispute

The US at the 18 August meeting of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) requested the establishment of a panel to rule on its complaint against the EU's de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs, see BRIDGES Weekly, 15 May 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-05-15/story1.htm>). The US is also challenging a number of marketing and import bans in certain EU member states, including Austria, France, Greece and Italy where the importation and marketing of GM products is prohibited although they have been approved for sale in the EU. Panel requests were also submitted by Argentina, a third party to the US case, and Canada, which is initiating a separate dispute. The US asked that the complaints be assessed by a single panel.

The requests mark the end of the consultations initiated in May. According to US Ambassador Linnet Deily, the consultations had proven inconclusive and the EU had not offered "any scientific justification for its measure". The EU, in contrast, contended that it had been prepared to continue the consultation process, but that "to the EU's dismay" the US had declared the failure of the consultations and had immediately submitted its panel request. The EU continues to insist that its measures are justified under international law, citing inter alia the recently adopted Codex risk analysis principles (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-07-11/inbrief.htm>) and the precautionary approach provided for in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (to enter into force on 11 September) in support of its measures.

The EU has blocked the first request and the US has asked the issue to be placed on the agenda of the 29 August DSB meeting -- just prior to the fifth WTO Ministerial meeting in Cancun -- where a second panel request is expected to be made. Under WTO rules, a panel will automatically be established once the second request has been received.

In related developments, the European regulations on traceability and labelling of genetically modified food and feed received the final nod from the European Council of Ministers on 22 July after having been adopted by the European Parliament on 2 July (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-07-11/story1.htm>). The regulations were approved with all the amendments proposed by the Parliament, including language to allow EU member states to impose "appropriate measures" to avoid the unintended presence of GMOs in other products ("co-existence"). Luxembourg, the UK and Denmark voted against the regulations. The legislation will enter into force 20 days after publication

in the Official Journal of the EU. Operators have to comply with the new provisions on labelling within six months of the date of publication. While the European Commission has repeatedly said that the de facto moratorium on the approval of new GMOs 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.

The European Commission on 23 July released Guidelines for the development of national strategies and best practices to ensure the co-existence of GM crops with conventional and organic farming. Civil society groups have criticised the EU in the past for leaving co-existence to be dealt with at the national level, calling instead for the establishment of "clear and coherent" legislation at the EU-level (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 10 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-10/story1.htm>).

GMO debate heating up in China

The debate around GMOs and biotech food in China appears to be heating up in recent weeks. Inspections of Chinese supermarkets got underway in early August to ensure that GM foods are properly labelled in compliance with the interim biotech rules that came into effect in March 2002 and have recently been extended until April 2004 (BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 2 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-06-02/story2.htm>). The inspections have focused on edible oils, most of which are produced with GM ingredients. To assess GM content, inspectors are tracing the raw materials or testing the sample. Traders from the US, Argentina and Brazil remain concerned about China's import regime for soybeans following verbal notifications by embassy officials that China was planning new restrictions.

In related developments, food producers in China have for the first time publicly committed themselves to not selling GM foods. In a formal statement to Greenpeace China, 32 companies, including Lipton, Wrigley, Wyeth and Mead Johnson announced that they would not use GM ingredients in products sold in China.

The company Shanghia Nestle Co and a local supermarket have recently come under attack for not labelling GM foods. Zhu Yanling sued Nestle for not labelling its Nesquik instant chocolate drink as a GM food and is seeking 13.6 yuan (USD 1.64) in compensation -- twice as much as he spent on the drink. "We are fighting for the right to be informed whether the food is genetically modified or not," said Wu Dong, Zhu's attorney. "The customers should have the right to select what kind of food they like."

NEPAD to establish biotech advisory panel

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) is planning to set up an advisory panel on biotechnology and biosafety in an effort to develop an African strategy on biotechnology. The panel, which would bring together scientists, representatives from civil society, industry, senior policy makers and opinion leaders, would also aim to harmonise biosafety regulations across the continent to facilitate trade. "If Africa doesn't make a decision, it is going to remain caught between the US and European positions," said John Mugabe, NEPAD's Science and Technology Advisor and one of the panel's architects. The establishment of the panel still requires approval by NEPAD's steering committee. This initiative would complement other regional efforts already underway in Africa, including a decision by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to set up an Advisory Committee on GMOs in October 2002, and efforts to develop a regional GMO policy for member states of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) launched in November 2002.

Additional Resources

For further information on the US-EU dispute, see http://www.ictsd.org/issarea/environment/biotech_case.htm.

The EU co-existence guidelines are available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/publi/reports/coexistence2/index_en.htm.

ICTSD reporting; "European legislative framework for GMOs is now in place," EU PRESS RELEASE, 22 July 2003; GMOs: Commission publishes recommendations to ensure co-existence of GM and non-GM crop," EU PRESS RELEASE, 23 July 2003; "U.S. to Secure WTO Panel To Rule on EU GMO

Restrictions," WTO REPORTER, 20 August 2003; "European Commission regrets the request for a WTO panel on GMOs," EC PRESS RELEASE, 18 August 2003; "Food firms pledge to keep Chinese products GE free," ENS, 22 July 2003; "GM food fight to heat up in China," SHANGHAI DAILY, 29 July 2003; "Chinese inspectors check GM foods," CHECKBIOTECH, 12 August 2003; "Nepad to set up advisory panel on biosafety," AGBIOS, 24 July 2003.

In Brief

ICELAND COMMENCES WHALING - PACIFIC ISLANDS ESTABLISH SANCTUARY

Iceland has decided to resume its whaling activities and has announced that it would hunt 38 minke whales this summer under the scientific research provision of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). According to Iceland's Ministry of Fisheries, the objective of the scientific whaling is to "gain knowledge on the role that minke whales have in the marine ecosystem, especially their interaction with fish stocks". Several civil society groups, including WWF and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), expressed their outrage over Iceland's plans. WWF's Richard Mott noted that the scientific information, which Iceland was looking for, could be gathered through biopsies, and hinted that the only reason for Iceland to presume whaling was to provide consumers with whale meat. Conservation groups also pointed out that Iceland's whale watching and ecotourism markets would be severely hurt by this move. Despite the arguments and concerns raised by various groups, the Ministry upheld its position saying that "the need for comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem of the sea makes it imperative [...] to study [...] all the different elements of the ecosystem".

Meanwhile, WWF praised 11 Pacific nations for their "commitment [...] to the conservation of whales". The countries have either declared their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) as whale sanctuaries or are protecting whales through domestic legislation in an effort to boost the region's tourism, provide important livelihood opportunities for local communities and at the same time protect biodiversity.

ICTSD reporting; "Iceland Sets Harpoon Sights on 38 Minke Whales," ENS, 6 August, 2003; "Pacific Nations join forces to save the whales," WWF, 13 August 2003; "Iceland resumes whaling," High North Alliance, 6 August 2003; "Iceland's whalers back on track," High North Alliance, 19 August 2003.

VIETNAM TO APPEAL US DECISION ON CATFISH TARIFFS

Vietnam on 7 August announced that it would appeal a US Department of Commerce's decision to impose US duties ranging from 37 to 64 percent on catfish products shipped from Vietnam. The increase put into effect a 23 July decision by the US International Trade Commission (ITC) to allow new duties on Vietnamese Tra and Basa catfish, following claims by US catfish producers that Vietnamese catfish farmers were selling frozen fish fillets at unfairly low prices, thereby threatening American producers. The US move, which caused an outcry in Vietnam, is threatening to block one of the few products in which the impoverished nation enjoys a comparative advantage. Vietnam will not be able to challenge the duties through WTO dispute settlement procedures, as it is not a WTO Member. Instead it will bring its appeal to the US International Commercial Court. Vietnam's catfish fillet exports to America have dropped considerably since early this year as a result of the anti-dumping tariffs. The dispute has raised concerns in Vietnam that the ruling could set a negative precedent for future trade, including products of even greater economic importance to the country, such as shrimp. In the US, shrimp farmers are already demanding that a similar tariff should be imposed on shrimp from Vietnam.

ICTSD reporting; "The great catfish war," NYT, 21 July 2003; "Vietnam loses tariff, fears America will target shrimp market next," AP, 25 July 2003; "Vietnam to protest catfish tariffs," MERCURY NEWS, 7 August 2003; "Global market for Vietnamese catfish," ASIA TIMES, 12 August 2003.

SOFT DRINK CONTAMINATION SCANDAL KEEPS BUBBLING IN INDIA

On 21 August the Indian Minister of Health Sushma Swaraj confirmed that 9 out of 12 soft drinks tested by two certified laboratories were found to contain pesticide levels of 1.6 to 5.2 times above EU standards. "The assertion of the soft drink manufacturers that their product is within the EU limits has [...] not proved to be correct for 100% of the samples," the Minister noted. Although the levels cited by the government were significantly below those published by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on 5 August, Suanita Narain, the CSE Director, stated that the fact remained that the CSE report and the government-initiated testing showed levels of pesticides. She called on the government to develop guidelines and regulations for the soft drinks industry, which currently do not exist in India. Shortly after the Minister's statement, the government set up a joint parliamentary committee to probe the test results. Moreover, the Indian government suggested tightening the standards for soft drinks to EU standards by January 2004 as they had done for bottled water. Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court has ordered separate tests to be carried out, following a petition by the soft drink company Pepsi asking for a restraint of any action until these results were released.

The controversy over pesticide-contamination of soft drinks began when the CSE reported that 12 brands of soft drinks, including drinks by Pepsi and Coca-Cola, contained pesticides up to 70 times higher than EU standards. The results of the report were based on tests the CSE had conducted in their pollution monitoring laboratory. The CSE report is available at <http://www.cseindia.org/>.

ICTSD reporting; "Coke, Pepsi in Hot Water Over India Health Scare," REUTERS, 18 August 2003; "Colas safe but, JPC probe on," ECONOMIC TIMES, 21 August 2003; "Toxic Pesticides Found in India's Soft Drinks," ENS, 5 August 2003; "Coke Pepsi meet safety norms, India," REUTERS, 22 August 2003.

'NO-GO' FOR MINING IN WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) signed a statement on 20 August, agreeing "not to explore or mine in World Heritage properties". ICMM, which is comprised of 15 of the largest mining and metal producing companies, also committed to taking "all possible steps to ensure that operations are not incompatible with the outstanding universal values of World Heritage properties". Moreover, the companies recognised the role of properly designated and managed protected areas in conservation strategies and the importance of national and global protected areas systems. This important move by the mining industry is the result of a dialogue between ICMM and IUCN - The World Conservation Union, which aims to improve the performance of the mining industry in relation to biodiversity conservation and protected areas. IUCN Director General Achim Steiner welcomed the decision, describing it as the first step for the industry to endorse the IUCN protected areas category system. Francesco Banderin, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, expressed hope "that such a clear statement by the major mining companies in the world will significantly reduce direct or indirect impacts by mining on World Heritage sites all over the world". Currently there are 754 World Heritage sites including the Taj Mahal, the Great Barrier Reef and Yellowstone National Park.

The announcement comes just prior to the 5th World Parks Congress to be held from 8 to 17 September in Durban, South Africa, which takes place every 10 years as the main global forum for setting the agenda for protected areas.

ICTSD reporting; "Landmark 'No-Go' Pledge From Leading Mining Companies," IUCN, 20 August 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.

ICTSD events

5-7 September, Cancun, Mexico: 18TH GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM - BIODIVERSITY, TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This session of the GBF is jointly organised by ICTSD, IUCN, SEMARNAT, CEESP and others. The GBF is a mechanism to bring together governmental and non-governmental representatives to foster dialogue and information sharing on key biodiversity issue. Key issues to be addressed will include: The relationship between the TRIPs Agreement and CBD; risk, precaution and biosecurity; and trade and sustainable livelihoods. For further information, see: http://www.gbif.ch/present_session.asp?no=31&lg=EN

11-12 September, Cancun, Mexico: CANCUN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM. The Conference seeks to provide a platform for intellectual enquiry and dialogue on issues related to trade and development and to address key concerns afflicting development in the trade policy arena. The main objective of the CTDS is to encourage innovative thinking on issues related to trade and development to be translated into inputs for negotiations. For further information, contact: ICTSD, Bernice Lee; tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093; email: tds@ictsd.ch; Internet: <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/cancun/tds/index.htm>

Coming up in the next two weeks

24 August - 11 September, Denver, Colorado, United States: INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOREST AND NATURAL RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT. This seminar's themes are global perspective, policy, programmes and administration, sustainable management, and research and technology transfer. For further information, contact: Ann Keith, Seminar Coordinator; tel: (1-970) 482-8098; fax: 490-2449; email: IFS@cnr.colostate.edu; Internet: <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/isbam/welcome.htm>

25-27 August, Dubna, Russia: TUNZA INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE. The Tunza International Youth Conference targets young people (15-24 years) to learn from one another and share experiences and ideas on community-based environmental actions. The main objective is to strengthen links between UNEP and youth organizations and to facilitate youth participation in the implementation of the UNEP long-term strategy for young people. For further information, contact: Mr. Theodore Oben, email: theodore.oben@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep.org/children_youth/tunza/.

27-31 August, Stryn, Norway: EUROPARC 2003. Sponsored by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment, the Europarc General Assembly will meet to discuss ways to balance nature conservation and local economic development in protected areas in Europe. Recommendations will be forwarded to the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, in September 2003. For further information, contact: Europarc 2003 Conference Office; tel: (47-57) 877-200; fax: 877-201; email: office@europarc2003.no; Internet: <http://www.europarc2003.no>

28-29 August 2003, Joensuu, Finland: SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR ON FOREST RESEARCH CROSSING BORDERS. Topics for this seminar include the role of forests in creating welfare, effect of global change on sustainable forest management, and better information for good governance of forests. For further

information, contact: Anu Ruusila, European Forest Institute; tel: (35-8) 13-252-0215; fax: 13-124-393; email: anu.ruusila@efi.fi; Internet: <http://www.efi.fi/events/2003/10AC/seminar.html>

28-29 August, Venice, Italy: FOURTH BIOECON WORKSHOP ON THE ECONOMICS OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION. This meeting is organized by the University College London's Department of Economics in the framework of an EU-funded project designed to advance economic theory and policy for biodiversity conservation. For further information, contact: Tim Swanson; tel: (44-207) 679-5831; fax: 601-6-2772; email: tim.swanson@ucl.ac.uk; Internet: <http://www.BioEcon.ucl.ac.uk>

29 August - 1 September, Dushanbe, Tajikistan: DUSHANBE FRESH WATER FORUM. This Forum will allow countries to exchange views on how to create the conditions to improve the management of water resources. Topics to be discussed include: water and interstate cooperation; water, health and sanitation; water conservation and productivity in agriculture; and information exchange for water partnership strengthening. For further information, contact: Secretariat on the Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum; tel: (992-372) 23-41-98; fax: 21-71-98; email: waterforum@tojikiston.com; Internet: <http://www.freshwaterforum.org>

4-5 September, Bogota, Colombia: THE USE OF CLEAN ENERGY IN ENERGY PROJECTS IN THE UNCONNECTED ZONES OF COLOMBIA. This international congress, organised by the Institute for the promotion of Energy Solutions for the non-integrated Zones (IPSE), seeks to identify possible energy and integrated development solutions to improve quality of life for the non-integrated communities of Colombia. For further information, contact: IPSE; tel: (571-622) 4010; fax: 3898; email: congreso@ipse.gov.co; Internet: <http://www.ipse.gov.co>

4-6 September, Honolulu, Hawaii, United States: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE POLICY AFTER MARRAKECH: TOWARDS GLOBAL PARTICIPATION. Hosted by the East-West Center, the Conference aims to convene senior technical bureaucrats, policy analysts and experienced practitioners to: discuss and share views on recent developments in climate policies and initiatives around the globe; advance understanding of the actions and policy frameworks that can contribute to compliance with Kyoto emissions targets; and facilitate discussion on how, when, and under what conditions a climate regime can move from where we are now to a global regime of wider participation and deeper emissions cuts. For further information contact: Penny Higa; tel: (1-808) 944-7131; fax: 944-7380; email: higap@eastwestcenter.org; Internet: <http://ewcraql.eastwestcenter.org/~marrakech/>

5-9 September, Sydney, Australia: 19TH WORLD ENERGY CONGRESS. This congress will focus on key energy issues covering a wide range of topics within the energy industry. The Congress will include oral and poster sessions, workshops, tutorials, symposia and panel sessions. For further information, contact: 19th World Energy Congress Managers; tel: (6-12) 9248-0800; fax: 9248-0894; email: energy2004@tourhosts.com.au; Internet: <http://www.tourhosts.com.au/energy2004/>

Other forthcoming events

8-17 September. Durban, South Africa: FIFTH WORLD PARKS CONGRESS - BENEFITS BEYOND BOUNDARIES. The congress occurs once each decade and is sponsored by the IUCN. The Congress provides the major global forum for setting the agenda for protected areas. Previous Congresses have had a tremendous impact in assisting national governments to create new protected areas, and direct more resources towards biodiversity conservation. For further information, contact: Peter Shadie, IUCN Programme on Protected Areas, tel: (41-22) 999-0159; fax: 999-0025; email: pds@iucn.org; Internet: <http://wcpa.iucn.org/wpc/wpc.html>

9-12 Sept 2003. Delft, Netherlands: SIXTH WATER INFORMATION SUMMIT 2033. This year, the Water Information Summit (WIS-6) will focus on strategies to overcome the "digital divide" between North and South and within the South and to share knowledge and information in support of the management of the water and sanitation sectors. WIS-6 will provide a forum to discuss the state of the art and trends in knowledge management, the application of web-based technologies and the formation of partnerships. For

further information, contact: Ms. Ingeborg Krukkert (IRC), P.O. Box 2869, 2601 CW Delft, The Netherlands; tel: (31-15) 219-2985; fax: 219-0955; email: wis6delft@irc.nl; Internet: <http://www.irc.nl/news/wis6.html>

10-14 September, Cancun, Mexico: THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION. Over 10,000 people are expected to attend the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference: among them 3,000 journalists, 2,000 NGOs and 5,000 government delegates (including trade ministers and other ministers of agriculture, environment, finance and development). The meeting is the mid-term exercise for trade ministers to take stock of progress in the negotiations launched at Doha, Qatar in November 2001. For further information, see Internet: <http://www.wto.org> or <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/index.htm>

29 September - 3 October, Moscow, Russia: WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE. The main goal of the Conference is a comprehensive discussion of the scientific aspects of natural and anthropogenic climate change; impacts; measures for adapting human society, economies and ecosystems to on-going and future climate change; and integrated approaches to reducing anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The Conference is convened by the Russian Federation. For further information, contact: B. Predtechensky per., 7, Moscow, 123242, Russia; tel: (7-095) 255-2143; fax: 255-1507; email: [HYPERLINK "mailto:wccc2003@hydromet.ru"](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:wccc2003@hydromet.ru) <mailto:wccc2003@hydromet.ru> ; Internet: <http://www.wccc2003.org>

5-9 October, Madrid, Spain: XI WORLD WATER CONGRESS - WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT THE 21ST CENTURY. The Congress deliberations are to be structured around seven main themes: Water planning under uncertainty, climatic variability and climate change; Valuing water; Impact of new technologies in water management; Relevance and sustainability of intensive groundwater developments; Water infrastructure development; The influence of socio-economic, cultural and religious factors in water resources policies; Subsidiarity and participation in water management. The Congress will also include an exhibition of technology and innovations in the practice of water resources development. For further information, see: http://www.cedex.es/iwracongress2003/en/hoja2_en.htm

International Course

29 September – 10 October, Turrialba, Costa Rica: LINKING SMALL RURAL PRODUCERS WITH SUPPLY CHAINS. This course will be organised by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre (CATIE) with the support of CIAT. The course, will cover concepts and methodologies of the micro-regional approach to rural development, inter alia the selection of promising production chains within a micro-region; the identification of market opportunities; the identification and prioritisation of factors limiting the competitiveness of the chain; production chain competitiveness; and trade agreements. For further information, see: <http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/agroempresas/ingles/index.htm#course>

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.

26 DAYS LEFT BEFORE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY ENTERS INTO FORCE: NECESSARY ACTION, PREPARATIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE 11TH SEPTEMBER 2003. By the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA, 2003). The document contains information about actions that will be required by the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol (CBP) once it goes into force on September 11, 2003. It also provides background information on the CBP and relevant links. The document is available online at <http://www.isaaa.org/kc/Bin/Issues/Cartagena/index.htm>

WHAT PRICE FARMED FISH: A REVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL COSTS OF FARMING CARNIVOROUS FISH. By Michael Weber (SeaWeb, July 2003). This report provides a general overview of aquaculture and summarises available literature on trends in aquaculture production, farming salmon and other carnivorous species, salient environmental and human health issues, and alternative methods and species for farming fish. The document examines the impacts of farming salmon and warns that the trend toward farming additional carnivorous fish species, including tuna, cod, and halibut, will likely generate many of the same problems. The full report is available in PDF at: <http://www.AquacultureClearinghouse.org>

CRACKING THE WTO CODE: UNDERSTANDING TRADE TERMS. By Friends of the Earth International a guide to help would-be trade campaigners crack the WTO code. Understanding trade jargon is an essential first step for anyone wanting to understand or change the international trade system. For the sake of simplicity this guide does not attempt to analyse any of the terms that are included – it is more like a quick-reference dictionary. Also, this tool does not in any way cover the entire range of terms used on a day-to-day basis by those that are on WTO-related issues. The guide is available online at: http://www.foei.org/publications/trade/wtoglossarysnenglish_lowresol.pdf

PUBLIC FORUM ON GENE-SPLICED CROPS. Launched by Unilever, Co-operative Group, Greenpeace, and the Consumers' Association (July 2003). Two of Britain's largest retailers, Unilever and Co-operative Group, have joined forces with the Consumers' Association and Greenpeace to set up an "independent GM citizens' jury" in a bid to aid government thinking as it decides whether to allow GM crops to be grown commercially in Britain. The jurors will produce a report at the end of September outlining its conclusions and overall verdict, which will be then presented to food, farming and environment ministers to review. For further information see:

http://www.checkbiotech.org/root/index.cfm?fuseaction=newsletter&topic_id=2&subtopic_id=9&doc_id=57
38

THE ECONOMICS OF GENERATING AND MAINTAINING PLANT VARIETY RIGHTS IN CHINA. By Koo, B.; Pardey, P.G.; Qian, K.; Zhang, Y. (International Food Policy Research Institute, July 2003). This paper empirically examines the pattern of plant variety protection (PVP) applications in China since its PVP laws were first introduced in 1997. It places those PVP rights in the context of China's present and likely future seed markets to identify the economic incentives and institutional aspects that influence decisions to develop and apply for varietal rights. The paper concludes that if China adopted the U.S. pattern of PVP costs, the economic extent of protection would expand considerably. However, this result is sensitive to a number of assumptions, not least those regarding the present value of the costs to develop new varieties versus the costs of protecting the intellectual property embodied in them. The paper is available online at: <http://www.ifpri.org/divs/eptd/dp/papers/eptd100.pdf>

COMMUNITY FARMERS AND BREEDERS RIGHTS IN AFRICA: TOWARDS A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUI GENERIS LEGISLATION. By Kameri-Mbote, P. (International Environmental Law Research Centre, July 2003). This article analyses international and Kenyan legal frameworks for the protection of biodiversity and plant varieties. It looks at TRIPS and the CBD in terms of their coverage, synergies and recent developments. It seeks to identify cross-cutting issues and trends pertinent to the protection and enforcement of community, farmers' and breeders' rights through sui generis systems. It argues that laws protecting biodiversity in general and plant varieties in particular are steeped in favour of individual property rights not suited to protecting those of the community. Developing countries, particularly in Africa, should seize the opportunity given to them by TRIPS to devise a sui generis system to protect their plant varieties. The article is available online at: <http://www.ielrc.org/Content/A03021P.pdf>

BETWEEN MYTH AND REALITY: GENETICALLY MODIFIED MAIZE, AN EXAMPLE OF A SIZEABLE SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSY. By Wisniewski, J. P.; Frangne, N.; Massonneau, A.; Dumas, C. (Biochimie vol. 84 (11), Editions Scientifiques et Medicales Elsevier SAS, 2003). This debate, which addresses both safety and ethical aspects, has raised questions about the impact of genetically modified (GM) crops on the biodiversity of traditional landraces and on the environment. The authors review some of the key points of maize genetic history as well as the methods used to stably transform this cereal. They describe

the genetically engineered Bt-maizes available for field cultivation and they investigate the controversial reports on their impacts on non-target insects such as the monarch butterfly and on the flow of transgenes into Mexican maize landraces. For further information contact: Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon, tel: +33 4 72 72 80 00.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS. By Nigel G Halford (Imperial College Press, London, July 2003). This book describes the history and development of the science and techniques that underpin plant biotechnology, GM crops that are grown commercially around the world and the new varieties that are being developed. It covers failures as well as successes. The safety record of GM crops is reviewed together with the legislation that has been adopted to cover their use. The book also deals with the concerns of consumers, the GM crop debate and the prospects for the technology. More information can be viewed online at the link below: <http://www.wspc.com.sg/books/lifesci/p284.html>

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS. By Dale Colyer (in the Estey Centre Journal of International Law and Trade Policy, July 2003). The paper explores the implications for agriculture and the environment of international trade agreements, such as the World Trade Organisation, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and other regional and bilateral trade agreements. Agriculture is and will continue to be a major contributor to environmental degradation, inducing the conversion of natural ecosystems to agricultural production as the sector responds to increased demand for food and fibres due to increases in population and wealth. The paper can be viewed at: <http://128.233.156.252/estey/>

STOLEN FRUIT – THE TROPICAL COMMODITIES DISASTER. By Peter Robbins (Zed Books, July 2003). Fifty or more developing countries still depend mainly on the tropical commodities or minerals that they produce. But encouraging so many countries to grow coffee, sugar, cotton and other crops has been a disaster. Peter Robbins examines how this situation came about, the current trading arrangements and the possible ways forward. He argues that, if developing countries are to measure up to the scale of the disaster facing them, they must take a leaf out of supply side economics, and take the measures to bring supply and demand into a balance that will secure them far higher and more stable prices. For further information or to order a copy of this title by post, contact Mohammed Umar, tel: +44 (0)20 7837 4014; fax: +44 (0)20 7833 3960; email: sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk; Internet: <http://www.zedbooks.demon.co.uk/>

ENDING HUNGER IN OUR LIFETIME: FOOD SECURITY AND GLOBALISATION. By C. Ford Runge, Benjamin Senauer, Philip G. Pardey, Mark W. Rosegrant (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2003). The authors of this book bring good news: hunger can be banished in our lifetime. They first distil what is already known about fighting hunger and then report on important new research findings and projections that show it can be done, through new and renewed institutions, scientific innovation, global economics and investment, and sustainable environmental practices. Anyone wanting a better understanding of poverty and hunger and how to end it will benefit from reading it. For further information visit: <http://www.drc.org.nz/bookshop/Detailed/771.html>

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