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Biotechnology

GMO UPDATE: EUROPE, CANADA

EU postpones decision on restarting biotech approvals

The European Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health at its 10 November meeting deferred a decision on whether or not to approve a variety of genetically modified maize -- Syngenta's Bt-11 -- for food use in the EU. A positive decision would mark the end of the de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs), in place since 1998 and currently being challenged in the WTO. The vote is now expected for the next Committee meeting on 12 December.

EU member states remain divided over the approval, with the UK, Spain and the Netherlands in favour while Austria and Italy are putting up the strongest resistance. France, where the previously strong opposition to biotech food has softened in recent months, is widely seen as a crucial player in the discussion. For the maize to be approved, the European Commission would require a "qualified majority" in the Committee (i.e. 62 votes out of 87 with the number of votes per country weighted on the basis of population). If this majority cannot be reached, the matter would be taken up by the European Council of Agriculture Ministers who would need to decide within three months. Even if the maize were approved, imports would not start until April 2004 when the new EU labelling and traceability regulations come into effect.

The Committee meeting was accompanied by protests of civil society groups against the approval. The environmental group Greenpeace called on countries to reject the approval. "There is no benefit from GM tinned sweet corn, only environmental and health concerns, so it is not a one month delay that is required but

a rejection of this authorisation," said Eric Gall of Greenpeace. Friends of the Earth Europe hailed the delay as a "victory for common sense". They expressed concern that the GM maize had not been assessed under the new approval process, which they said was "more thorough and transparent".

Approving the GM corn for food use -- which would be sold in cans, not for planting -- would only be the first step in lifting the de facto moratorium and farmers might have to wait for several months until they would get permission to plant new GM varieties. Even then, farmers would be faced with the economic gamble of whether to plant GMOs, given the widespread scepticism of European consumers to biotech foods. The delay is likely to antagonise some of the EU's trading partners, including the US, Canada and Argentina, which have launched dispute settlement proceedings at the WTO over the de facto moratorium (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>).

Ten European regions want to remain GM free

Ten regions in Austria, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Greece and the UK on 4 November joined forces to declare the 'network of GMO free regions'. The group is coordinated by Upper Austria and Tuscany and includes Aquitaine, Basque Country, Limousin, Marche, Salzburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Thrace-Rodopi and Wales. Also on 4 November, the regional parliament of Upper Austria announced that it would appeal a decision by the European Commission at the Court of First Instance to reject the region's request to declare a GM free zone. The regional parliament cited findings of farm scale evaluations in the UK, which had suggested that certain GM varieties could be harmful to biodiversity.

The Commission continues to oppose the possibility of GM free regions, arguing that a blanket ban would violate the core principles of the EU given that no evidence existed to suggest that GMOs were harmful to humans or the environment, according to a spokesperson of the Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler. The spokesperson added that farmers should be given the choice whether to grow GMOs and that "we must not succumb to populism in this case". Regarding concerns over contamination of organic crops with GMOs, the spokesperson noted that "there are more proportionate measures that can be taken to protect the interests of organic farmers", such as buffer zones or limited bans on specific GMOs.

Canada considers change to crop and food approval process

Canada is examining the possibility of introducing an additional step in its crop and food safety approval system that would assess market acceptance of novel foods before they were grown, according to Jamie Oxley of the Canadian Department of Agriculture. To date, new foods are only assessed for food, feed and environmental safety. Suggestions -- informally discussed with farmers, processors, scientists and industry players -- range from new regulations to industry-policed standards. The Department hopes to launch a formal consultation process in spring or summer. The issue of market acceptance has been widely discussed in the controversial case of Monsanto's Bt wheat, which has met widespread opposition in Canada and the US, including among farmers, consumers and environmental groups (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-21/story1.htm>). Monsanto has pledged that even if the wheat were approved, it would not sell it unless at least the EU and Japan had accepted it.

Additional resources

For further information on pending decisions in the EU regarding GM food, feed and seed, see <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/st13/st13733.en03.pdf>.

Results of the UK farm scale evaluations: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/fse/index.htm>

"EU GM decision postponed," IRELAND ONLINE, 10 November 2003; "EU postpones biotech test case vote to December," REUTERS, 11 November 2003; "Upper Austria to appeal against Commission rejection of GMO ban," CORDIS NEWS, 5 November 2003; "Canada ponders new step for crop, food approvals," REUTERS, 6 November 2003.

Intellectual Property Rights

FACILITATING ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING AMONG USERS OF GENETIC RESOURCES

At the initiative of the United Nations University's Institute for Advanced Studies and the Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales (IDDRI), government officials and experts met on 6-7 November in Paris, France, to discuss ways of implementing access and benefit-sharing (ABS) objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) among users of genetic resources, particularly developed countries and the private sector.

International ABS governance

Participants noted that there already exists an extensive body of hard and soft law instruments, which together constitute the existing system of international ABS governance. These include the CBD, the CBD's Bonn Guidelines on ABS for genetic resources, intellectual property, human rights and health and phytosanitary instruments, as well as national and regional ABS and intellectual property regulations. Many participants highlighted the need for developing measures to ensure compliance with existing ABS obligations under the CBD, in particular with relation to technology transfer to providers of genetic resources. Participants also recognised the need for complementarity between 'user' and 'provider' measures to encourage countries where the genetic resources are located -- usually in the developing world -- to facilitate access to their resources while ensuring that users observe their ABS obligations.

Disclosure of origin

Requiring the disclosure of origin of genetic resources in patent applications was one of the possible user measures discussed -- a measure that has attracted increasing support at the WTO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) from a range of developing countries and, more cautiously, from the EC and Switzerland (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 13 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-06-13/story1.htm>). Many participants welcomed the Swiss proposal to the WTO, which suggested an amendment to WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty that would enable countries to implement a disclosure requirement for the source of both genetic resources and traditional knowledge. It was noted that the Swiss proposal would not require compulsory disclosure of origin or of evidence of prior informed consent and the limitations of such a voluntary approach was also debated. Several questions arose during the discussion regarding the practicality of such a disclosure requirement, including its legal status (voluntary or mandatory), the appropriate legal instrument, how to determine the "origin" of a genetic resource, and consequences of non-compliance. Some noted that the answers to these questions would depend on the objective behind disclosure, which could include information provision, legal certainty or compliance with the CBD's ABS objectives.

Participants also considered the relative merits of a system of 'certificates of origin' and discussed whether such a system should focus on the origin, source or legal provenance of genetic material. It was recognised that further investigation of the practicality and feasibility of such a system would require investigation of its utility in different industry sectors.

In the EU, Directive 98/44/EC on the legal protection of biological inventions encourages member states to require patent applicants to include information on the geographical origin of biological material (Recital 27). However, only Denmark has so far implemented this requirement, with Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland and Norway in the process of setting up their regulations. The Norwegian proposal goes one step further by also requiring the provider country to be specified (if it is different from the country of origin) and evidence of prior informed consent. The country is also in the process of developing rules to govern the access to genetic resources in Norway.

Other user measures: Technology transfer, access to justice

Participants stressed the need to broaden the debate around user measures beyond disclosure requirements, in particular for genetic resources that would not be covered by intellectual property rights. Other possible measures comprise the transfer of technology, including through non-market mechanisms, such as the

movement of persons, imitations and spill-overs of activities of foreign companies. Participants stressed the importance of broader policies and the appropriate enabling environment to support technology transfer, including incentives for users of genetic resources to transfer the technology, measures to support the commercialisation of research in developing countries, and market access opportunities for the recipients of the technology. Participants noted the absence of guidelines on technology transfer in the Bonn Guidelines and some suggested that such guidelines might prove a useful tool in particular for enhancing compliance with the technology transfer obligations of the CBD set out in Articles 16(3) and 19(1).

Participants also raised the as yet little discussed issue of access to justice (i.e. the ability to seek redress in the event of infringement of ABS obligations). One speaker noted the need for a comprehensive approach, which covered access to information, opportunity for participation, capacity building and access to legal redress. Possible measures discussed included arbitration -- possibly within the CBD context -- or the designation of an ombudsman to investigate potential infringements.

Additional resources

User Measures: Options for Developing Measures in User Countries to implement the access and Benefit-Sharing Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNU-IAS.

http://www.ias.unu.edu/binaries/UNUIAS_UserMeasuresReport.pdf

For further information on the UNU-IAS project on ABS, see

http://www.ias.unu.edu/binaries2/UNU_ABSbrochure.pdf.

Directive 98/44/EC:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1998/l_213/l_21319980730en00130021.pdf

ICTSD reporting.

Convention on Biological Diversity

ALIEN INVASIVES AND SUBSIDIES DISCUSSED AT CBD SCIENTIFIC BODY

The Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice Body (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is meeting in Montreal, Canada from the 10 - 14 November to discuss a work programme on protected areas, and technology transfer and cooperation. The meeting is also looking into, *inter alia*, the "draft" international regulatory framework regarding invasive alien species, and measures to remove or mitigate perverse incentives.

Alien Invasive Species

Working Group I of the SBSTTA committee considered on Wednesday gaps and inconsistencies related to the international regulatory framework relevant to invasive alien species. In particular, delegates discussed the contentious Decision V/23 from COP-6 -- the Guiding Principles on Alien Invasive Species (AIS) (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 2 May 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-05-02/story1.htm>). During the discussion, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand and the US voiced their opposition to the previous COP decision and requested that their reservation be included in the document. These countries are concerned that the Guiding Principles' Principle 7 dealing with measures to prevent the introduction of AIS might be used to implement measures that constitute disguised trade barriers, thereby contravening the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS). Similarly, ambiguous language on the precautionary approach (Principles 1 and 10) was seen as potentially conflicting with provisions under the SPS Agreement. New Zealand also called for language on the potential increasing risk through, amongst others, global trade to be removed from the Guiding Principles' chapeau -- a suggestion that was opposed by the EC and Norway. Finally, delegates also recommended that the CBD look further into linking its guidelines to other institutions and agreements already in place, such as for example the International Plant Protection Convention, and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE).

Perverse Incentives

Working Group I also considered proposals on removing or mitigating perverse incentives. The proposals were forwarded from the second Workshop on Incentive Measures for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity, held in Montreal 3-5 June 2003. The proposals (UNEP/CBD/SBSTAA/9/9/Add.3) address activities in relation to both perverse and positive incentives and how to assess the value of biodiversity. During the discussions, however, Argentina preferred to only focus on perverse subsidies, whereas an environmental NGO highlighted the need to clearly identify perverse subsidies as undermining biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Within the context of the CBD, a perverse incentive has been identified as a policy or practice that encourages resource uses leading to the degradation of biological diversity, as an unintended side effect in the design of the subsidy. The Secretariat has identified environmentally harmful government subsidies; persistence of environmental externalities; and laws or customary practices governing resource use as common types of perverse incentives. With regard to economic sectors, the discussion at the CBD has mainly focused on the effects of perverse subsidies in the fisheries, agriculture and forestry sectors.

The Committee is expected to finalise its discussions on Friday and forward relevant recommendations to the CBD COP-7, to be held on 9-20 February 2003 in Malaysia.

Additional Resources

For daily coverage and a final summary of the meeting, see ENB Daily Updates:
<http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/sbstta9/>

SBSTTA meeting documents can be found at <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?mtg=SBSTTA-09>.

"SBSTTA-9 Highlights: Wednesday, 12 November 2003" IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 13 November 2003.

In Brief

METHYL BROMIDE POLLUTES CHEMICALS MEETING

The fifteenth meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer is taking place from 10-14 November in Nairobi, Kenya. Items discussed include: a study on the management of the financial mechanism of the Montreal Protocol, implications of entry into force of the Beijing Amendment, various issues relating to exemptions of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) from the control measures and specific interim reductions of methyl bromide. Particularly controversial at this meeting was the developed nations' proposed phase-out of the pesticide methyl bromide, a significant ozone depleting substance, by 1 January 2005. The US, EU and Japan have cut the use of the chemical by 30 percent relative to their previous production. However, the US now argues that it needs more time to find effective substitutes due to a drop in production in farming sectors traditionally using methyl bromide. The US has therefore requested a two-year exemption from the proposed 2005 ban on production and importation, increasing its use to 39 percent in 2005 and 37 percent in 2006. The EU, however, opposes such exemptions and is unwilling to reverse on the progress made. The 134 Parties to the Protocol failed to reach a consensus on methyl bromide and are considering an extraordinary meeting of the Parties in the Montreal Protocol either in March or April next year in Montreal, Canada.

The Montreal Protocol is one of the six Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), which has attended negotiating sessions of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment in the past as ad hoc observer. For daily reports of the meeting and a final analysis, see IISD Linkages at: <http://www.iisd.ca/ozone/mop15/>.

"EU and US to clash over phase-out of methyl bromide," EURACTIV, 10 November 2003; "US, ozone experts argue over methyl bromide ban," REUTERS, 13 November 2003, "Talks fail to agree on ozone damaging fumigant-US," REUTERS, 14 November 2003; "MOP-15 Highlights: 10-14 November," ENB, 10-14 November 2003.

FOREST SERVICES- THE WAY AHEAD?

Member countries of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) met from 10-12 November in Yokohama, Japan for the second preparatory committee meeting of the IITA, which has been in place since 1984 and is now up for renewal. Discussions focused mainly on emerging markets for tropical forest services as well as property rights of indigenous peoples. Participants noted that international trade in primary products from tropical forests was continuously decreasing both in volume and in value, concluding that trade in forest services might be the best future economic option. In this context delegates raised concerns as to how to ensure that indigenous peoples and other local communities owning the forests also take part in the economic benefits of forest services. Chairman Jürgen Blaser from Switzerland suggested establishing property rights and legal frameworks in this area. Government delegates from Norway, supported by Malaysia, Venezuela, Indonesia, the Republic of Congo and the EC, warned that the ITTA and its implementing agency the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) should not duplicate the work of other international bodies such as the WTO and the CBD. Whereas Norway supported the inclusion of property rights of indigenous peoples, the EC stressed that it would prefer the ITTA only to be an agreement on commodities.

For daily coverage of the meeting, see ENB Daily Updates: <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/prepcom2/>

"Ecosystem Services of Tropical Forests Growing in Importance," ENS, 12 November 2003; "Prepcom II Highlights," IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 12 November 2003.

SUSTAINABLE TRADE OF MAHOGANY BECOMES LEGALLY BINDING

On 15 November, big-leaf mahogany will be added to Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), which will provide legally binding controls for international trade in the species (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-11-21/story1.htm>). In practice, this means that all shipments of mahogany will have to be accompanied with a CITES export permit, thereby assuring importers that they are buying legally and sustainably harvested timber. Furthermore, the regulation will benefit local and indigenous communities by promoting the sharing of benefits from the harvest of this highly valuable commodity. One cubic meter of big-leaf mahogany is worth around USD 1,300. According to Greenpeace, big-leaf mahogany is threatened by extinction mainly due to illegal logging practices and illegal export of the timber. In 2001, Greenpeace released a report documenting widespread illegal logging of the tree in the Brazilian Amazon. In response, the Brazilian government issued an export ban while at the same time promoting a scheme for the sustainable and legal logging of mahogany. The CITES listing provides both importing and exporting countries with measures to control the legality of the shipment and provides exporting countries with tools to manage the sustainable use and the sustainable trade of mahogany resources.

"International Mahogany Trade Comes Under CITES Control," ENS, 12 November 2003; "Experts meet in Montreal, Canada, on UN biodiversity convention," UN NEWS CENTRE, 11 November 2003.

CASPIAN RANGE STATES FINALLY ADOPT CASPIAN SEA CONVENTION

Ministers from the five Caspian littoral states -- Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan -- met on 4 November for a ceremony at the Iranian capital, Tehran, to sign the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea. While four of the countries signed the treaty designed to protect the fragile environment of the Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan refused to sign the Convention, arguing that it needed more time to consider its terms. However, on 8 November Turkmeni Environment Minister Matkarim Radzhapov returned to the Iranian capital and added his name to the treaty. The Framework Convention aims to reverse ecological and environmental damage in the Caspian Sea area caused by industrial pollution, sewage and leaks from oil refineries. The sea also suffers from uncontrolled fishing of the caviar-producing sturgeon, the over-exploitation of marine resources, and the destruction of the region's biological diversity. The adoption of the Framework Convention has been the objective of a five-year process under the Caspian Environment Programme (CEP) implemented by UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. The initiative has also been linked to a process under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) on the protection of Caspian

sturgeon, the stocks of which have declined by 90 percent since the late 1970s (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 June 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/19-06-01/story6.htm>). Until recently, the five littoral states were at odds over the legal status of the Caspian Sea, as this question has significant implications for each country's share of the enormous oil reserves of the Caspian. So far, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation have struck a deal dividing the territory amongst themselves, leaving out Iran and Turkmenistan. The Convention is the first treaty adopted by the five new, young countries. The accord now goes to member governments for ratification, a process that could take several more years.

"Turkmenistan signs Caspian Sea Environmental treaty," UN WIRE, 11 November 2003; "Turkmenistan backs away from landmark Caspian agreement," IRIN, 5 November 2003; "Turkmenistan walks away from Caspian Sea treaty," UN WIRE, 5 November 2003; "Caspian states sign deal to protect caviar sea," REUTERS, 4 November 2003.

IS THE FLOWER INDUSTRY DRYING OUT KENYA'S LAKE NAIVASHA?

Fishermen and local residents living on the shores of Lake Naivasha in Kenya have recently made alarming announcements that the water levels of the Lake have been dropping for the past several years, fish stocks are declining and the lake is being polluted by chemicals. The blame for this situation has been put on the flower industry around the lake. Approximately 30 large flower farms, mainly producing cut flowers for the European markets, are situated around the lake. The flower industry is using water from the lake for irrigation purposes and has been accused of polluting the lake water through extensive use of chemicals, which has had a heavy effect on the lake's biodiversity. The flower export is the third largest foreign cash income for Kenya, following tea exports and tourism. One of the biggest flower farms is the Dutch owned "Oserian Flowers", which states that it is constantly reviewing its production methods and developing environmentally friendly production techniques. Oserian Flowers denies dispensing chemicals into the lake and furthermore, stressed that is only using trickle irrigation for the entire farm. In order to raise the awareness of the conservation efforts, local residents have formed the Naivasha management committee. Andrew Esculen from this committee points out that "the problem that I struggle with is that the more environmentally friendly we are in our behaviour around the lake, the less competitive advantage we have". Lake Naivasha is the only fresh water ecosystem in the eastern Rift Valley with area between 114 and 991 square kilometres, depending on the rainfall.

For information on a newly established flower labelling programme, see:
<http://www.flower-label-program.org>

"Flower farming threatens Kenya's fresh water lake," AFP, 3 November 2003; "Anxiety as Kenyan lake dries up," BBC, 10 November 2003.

BINDING TREATY ON GIANT BIRDS AND FISHING PRACTICES ENTERS INTO FORCE

On 7 November, South Africa was the fifth nation to sign the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) under the Convention on Migratory Species. Albatrosses and petrels are threatened by extinction as they get hooked on bait used in longline fishing and drown, their prey is being overfished, and they face various risks from marine pollution. The treaty will enter into force on 1 February 2004 and is seen by many environmentalists as the last chance to save the giant birds. The treaty has been welcomed by conservationists as it is a legally binding agreement obliging Parties to take specific measures to mitigate the effect of, for example, unsustainable fishing practices on the conservation status of the birds. In particular, attention is being paid to the effects of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, and using longline fishing practices. The first meeting of the parties to the Convention will be held next year, to establish future steps. Other countries that have ratified the Convention include Australia, New Zealand, Spain and Ecuador; the UK is said to be following soon.

More information on the Convention can be found at: <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms>

"South Africa, Joins Treaty to Protect Albatrosses, Petrels," ENS, 7 November 2003; "South Africa Joins Treaty to protect Rare Sea Birds," REUTERS, 7 November 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:

16-21 November, Miami, USA: EIGHTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT OF THE AMERICAS (FTAA). For further information, contact: Miami FTAA, tel: (+305) 375-3734; fax: 375-5310; email: FTAA@miamidade.gov; Internet: <http://www.miamiftaa2003.com/>. ICTSD in collaboration with its partner organisations will provide daily updates of the meetings in Miami, USA. The updates will be provided in Spanish, English and Portuguese and will focus on delivering news from the negotiations and other activities around the Ministerial as they relate to trade and sustainable development. To receive PUENTES Diario de Miami via email, please send a blank email to puentes@ictsd.ch indicating "Miami" and your preferred language in the subject line.

17-21 November, Geneva, Switzerland: PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR UNCTAD XI. Organised by UNCTAD, this meeting will be held at the Palais des Nations. In the morning of 17th November, civil society will be invited to report on a civil society meeting convened by the UNCTAD Secretariat in October 2003. UNCTAD XI will be held from 13-18 June 2003 in Sao Paulo, Brazil and is seen as an opportunity for tackling the most pressing developmental challenges confronting developing countries. For further information, contact: Amel Haffouz, email: amel.haffouz@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org>.

17-18 November, Johannesburg, South Africa: GLOBAL FORUM ON INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT: Encouraging Modern Governance and Transparency for Investment- Why and How. Organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This conference will be the third annual meeting of the OECD Global Forum on International Investment, a forum for policy dialogue among OECD members, non-members and other stakeholders. The meeting will consider how modern, transparent governance can help countries to attract and benefit from foreign investment. For further information, contact: Kaveri Bopiah Liverani, tel: (+33 1) 4525-9369; fax: 4430-6135; email: kaveri.bopiah-liverani@oecd.org; Internet: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/6/4409911.pdf>.

17-20 November, Wilton Park, West Sussex, UK: CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN NORTH AND SOUTH? Organised by the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and LEAD International. This conference will discuss the next step in the Kyoto process, mitigation targets needed for the coming commitment period, whether the US and major greenhouse gas emitters among transition and developing nations can be drawn in, what role there is for alternative energy and nuclear power, and what external actors and national governments can do to help entire societies soften the impacts through adaptation strategies. For further information, contact: David Grace, email: davidgrace@insideeurope.fsnet.co.uk; tel: (+44 1) 4606-7368; Internet: <http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/web/conferences/wrapper.asp?confref=WP730>.

17-19 November, Miami, US: AMERICAS TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM (ATSDF). Organised by the North South Centre, University of Miami. Preceding the FTAA Ministerial, the ATSDF will convene workshops, panels and roundtables to discuss social, economic, political and practical concerns relating to trade liberalisation in the Americas. For further information, contact: nscenter@miami.edu; Internet: <http://www.miami.edu/nsc/pages/FTAA.html>.

17-21 November, Paris, France: JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME: CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES. Organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Items on the agenda include: matters referred by the Codex

Alimentarius Commission, including the Joint FAO/WHO evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO work on food standards, the review of the principles concerning the participation of international non-governmental organizations in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and other proposals to facilitate standard development will be presented. For further information, contact: the FAO, fax: (+39 06) 5705-3152; email: FAO-HQ@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccgp19/gp19_01e.htm

17-21 November, Rome, Italy: FAO/WHO EXPERT CONSULTATION ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED ANIMALS, INCLUDING FISH. This event is organised by FAO and WHO. Its purpose is to review and analyse data on the current situation of GM animals, in particular fish, and the foods derived from them. For further information, contact: Ezzeddine Boutrif, FAO; tel: (+39 6) 5705-6156; fax: 5705-4593; email: ezzeddine.boutrif@fao.org; Internet: http://www.who.int/foodsafety/biotech/meetings/ec_nov2003/en/.

17-21 November, Geneva, Switzerland: PIC INC-10: Organised by the United Nations Environment Programme. This will be the 10th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade. For further information, contact: Interim Secretariat for the Rotterdam Convention, tel: (+41 22) 917-8183, fax: 797-3460; email: pic@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int>

18 November, Miami, Florida: FINDING SYNERGIES IN THE FTAA BETWEEN THE CONVENTION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND IPRS. Organised by World Conservation Union (IUCN), Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA) and Tulane Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. This session will focus on the interface between intellectual property rights and the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources, which is addressed by a variety of international instruments, most importantly the WTO Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the ongoing discussions in WIPO on traditional knowledge and on a new Substantive Patent Treaty. For further information, contact: IUCN, tel: (+41 22) 999-0000; fax: 999-0002; email: mail@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.miami.edu/nsc/pages/ATSDFtentIPR.pdf>

19 November, Johannesburg, South Africa: WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE OECD GUIDELINES FOR MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES. Organised by the Organisation on Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This workshop will be held to take stock of progress in promoting corporate responsibility through private sector initiatives and inter-governmental approaches such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The focus will be on companies' environmental performance. For further information, contact: Kaveri Bopiah Liverani, tel: (+33 1) 4525-9369; fax: 4430-6135; email: kaveri.bopiah-liverani@oecd.org; Internet: <http://www.oecd.org/media/upcoming.htm>

24-25th November, Brussels, Belgium: WHY DOES CHEMICALS POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT CONCERN ME? Organised by EU Conferences Limited. The REACH Chemical Policy will become a reality in some form very soon and its legislation will influence, transportation, labelling, management, software applications design, testing procedures and production of chemicals. It will affect upstream and downstream users, as well as distributors and ethical retail purchasers. For further information, contact: tel: (+44 18) 7383-0724; tel/fax: 7383-0692; email: info@euconferences.com; Internet: <http://www.euconferences.com/frachemical.htm>

27-29 November, Brussels, Belgium: GLOBAL PROGRESSIVE FORUM. Organised by the Party of European Socialists, the Parliamentary Group of the PES and the Socialist International. The Global Progressive Forum will bring together more than 500 policy makers, leaders and representatives of non-governmental organisations, trades unions, businesses and academia from around the world for a three-day gathering in the European Parliament in Brussels, to launch a global reform process. The Forum is open upon registration and will consist of two plenary sessions and eighteen round tables on global issues, such as trade

and poverty and reform of the UN. For further information, contact: globalprogressiveforum@pes.org; Internet: <http://www.pes.org/globalprogressiveforum>

Other Forthcoming Events

1- 4 December, Berlin, Germany: MEETING ON THE SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: A CHALLENGE FOR SOCIETY. Organised by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. At national and international levels, no strategies exist that help resolve the conflict between conserving biological diversity and, simultaneously, using diversity in a sustainable manner. The symposium is intended to intensify the dialog between decision makers, users and scientists, and to foster national and international research cooperation on these issues. For further information, contact: the Ministry, tel: (+49 22) 8819-9611; fax: 8819-9640; email: meltem.cosar@dir.de; Internet: <http://www.biodiversity-symposium.de>.

4-5 December, Brussels, Belgium: RISK PERCEPTION: SCIENCE, PUBLIC DEBATE AND POLICY MAKING. Organised by the European Commission. Building on previous European Commission conferences on risk management and European governance the event incorporates a stakeholder forum on risk perception looking at genetically modified (GM) crops and GM food. The conference will focus both on understanding the process of risk perception and on practical ways in which governance can be improved and the public's trust in science based regulation can be increased. For further information, contact: tel: (+32 2) 344-6232; fax: (+32 2) 344-7564; email: Risk-perception@jk-events.com; Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/risk_perception/index.htm

8-12 December, Chile: SECOND MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION EXPERT GROUP ON BAT-BEP. Organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In this meeting, guidelines will be developed on the best available techniques and provisional guidance will be provided on best environmental practices relevant to the provisions of Article 5 and Annex C of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. For further information, contact: Stockholm Convention interim Secretariat; tel: (+41 22) 917-8191; fax: 797-3460; e-mail: ssc@chemicals.unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pops.int>.

10-13 December, Colombo, Sri Lanka: ASIA REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM. Organised by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The Forum aims at facilitating the identification of critical environmental and conservation issues facing the region and also a broad based agreement across the environment and development constituency on how best these issues and concerns can be addressed. This would help the countries fine tune their programmes, NGO and research organization focus their activities on relevant issues and donors include funding provisions for these issues in their portfolio. These outputs will be incorporated in the IUCN's programme for 2005-2008, which would be adopted by the global environmental conservation community at the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, Thailand in November, 2004. For further information, contact: IUCN, tel: (+41 22) 999-0000; fax: (+41 22) 999-0002; email: mail@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.rcfasia.org/>.

28-30 January 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: SEMINARS ON INVESTMENT AND COMPETITION. CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation (C-CIER), Jaipur, India will organise a luncheon Panel Discussion on Civil Society Perceptions of FDI as part of the Final Meeting of the 'Investment for Development' (IFD) project on 28 January; a conference of the INCSOC entitled 'Engaging Civil Society in Promoting a Healthy Competition Culture' on 29 January; and an international seminar as part of the final meeting of the IFD project entitled 'FDI Policies and Regulation - How to Foster Economic Development?' on 30 January. For further information, contact: IFD, email: ifd@cuts.org or incsoc@incsoc.net.

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy or review by the BRIDGES staff to Heike Baumüller, [mjacobson@ictsd.ch](mailto:mjacobsen@ictsd.ch).

"Domestic Import Regulations for Genetically Modified Organisms and their Compatibility with WTO Rules," by Heike Baumüller. Published by IISD and ICTSD Trade Knowledge Network, August 2003. This paper surveys the regulatory regimes in selected countries for imports of genetically modified agricultural products. It also addresses some questions related to the regimes' compatibility with WTO rules, including the trade-restrictiveness of mandatory traceability and labelling requirements, whether GMO regulations covering substantially equivalent GM products might be trade-discriminatory, the role of precaution as a justification for an import ban on GMOs, and how the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety might impact on a possible dispute at the WTO. The full report is available at:
<http://www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net/publication.aspx?id=587>

A LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN: WHO REALLY RUNS EU TRADE DECISION MAKING? By Elizabeth Drury and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), October 2003. The report raises concerns about the dangers in allowing a "small group of influential trade specialists to dominate policy making". It points out that this could result in a narrowly focussed debate, which ignores broader issues such as the call to put sustainable development at the heart of trade policy. The full report is available at:
http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/other_news/news.cfm?uNewsID=9621

BRIDGING INFORMATION GAPS BETWEEN FARMERS, POLICYMAKERS, RESEARCHERS AND DEVELOPMENT AGENTS, by G. Wesseler and W. Brinkman. Published by Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), 2003. Information is a prerequisite for development, both in agriculture and more broadly. Information gaps are direct impediments to development and need to be overcome. On the other hand, it is not just any kind of information that is required. Information overload is quickly becoming a problem not only for policy-makers and researchers in the North, but to anyone with access to the Internet. To be useful, information has to be relevant, reliable, timely, and delivered via an appropriate medium. The full report is available at: <http://www.cta.int/pubs/wd8030/informationgaps-final.pdf>

ENERGY LAW AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Edited by Adrian J Bradbrook and Richard L Ottinger. Published by the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, 2003. There are 11 chapters on different aspects of the subject written by leading experts in their fields. Professor Jose Goldemberg of Brazil describes the relationship of development and energy, while Jeff McNeely, IUCN considers the relationship between energy and biodiversity. Professor Jacqueline Lang Weaver of Houston Law School covers sustainable development in the petroleum sector. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are described by Dean Emeritus Richard Ottinger and Fred Zalcman of the Pace University School of Law, with wind promotion highlighted with a Denmark case study by Dr. Rikke Munk Hansen, from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

THE WTO PROMOTES TRADE, STRONGLY BUT UNEVENLY, by Arvind Subramanian and Shang-Jin Wei. Published by the International Monetary Fund, September 2003. This working paper tries to prove that the GATT/WTO has had a powerful and positive, but uneven impact on trade. GATT/WTO membership for industrial countries has been associated with a large increase in imports estimated at about 40 percent of world trade. The same has not been true for developing country members, although those that joined after the Uruguay Round have benefited from increased imports. These results are consistent with the history and design of the institution, which presided over significant trade liberalisation and largely exempted developing countries from the obligations to liberalise under the principle of special and differential treatment; but attempted to redress the latter by imposing greater obligations on developing country members that joined after the Uruguay Round. The working paper is available at:
<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=16822.0>

"Lost in Transit – Global CFC Smuggling Trends and the Need for Faster Phase Out," by Ezra Clark. Edited by Julian Newman. Published by the Environmental Investigation Agency, 2003. This report reveals the global nature of the illegal trade in CFCs and the role that transit countries play by facilitating the diversion of CFCs onto the black market. Singapore and other significant transit points in the illegal CFC trade such as

Dubai have strong economies founded on their role as major trade hubs, however they do not have sufficient control to monitor the movement of CFCs through their ports. The full report is available at: http://www.eia-international.org/campaigns3_reports.shtml

PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION AND FARMERS' RIGHTS IN INDIA - TOWARDS A BROADER UNDERSTANDING. By P. Cullet and R. Kolluru. Published by the International Environmental Law Research Centre, 2003. This article looks at some of the reasons for the introduction of PVP, in particular the links between PVP and food security. The authors survey the measures, which have been proposed internationally and examine the regime in India. The article argues that the new regime in India has been driven by it's desire to satisfy international obligations under TRIPS and has neglected measures, particularly farmers rights, of increasing importance to food security. For further information, see: <http://www.ielrc.org/Content/A03041P.pdf>

IN SEARCH OF BIOSECURITY: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES, BENEFIT-SHARING, AND BIOSAFETY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND MONGOLIA. By United Nations University and the Institute of Advanced Studies, 2003. This report is based on the proceedings and findings of a workshop". In Search of Biosecurity: Capacity Development on Access to Genetic Resources, Benefit-Sharing, and Biosafety in Central Asia and Mongolia", held by UNU/IAS, June 2002. It contains a regional and national overview of the state of biodiversity in Central Asia and Mongolia and its importance to sustainable development and the principal pressures on genetic and biological resources in the region, namely fragile arid and semi-arid ecosystems, limited resources and economic development, and the international context and multilateral instruments relevant to these issues. For further information, see: http://www.ias.unu.edu/binaries/UNUIAS_CentralAsiaReport.pdf

WWF'S PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EU FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF THE FIFTH WTO MINISTERIAL. By WWF and the Centre for International Environmental Law, October 2003. This discussion paper flags impacts of potential WTO GATS negotiations and subsequent negotiated rules on water resources and the environment, and offers recommendations on how problematic areas can possibly be avoided and mitigated. The paper can be accessed at: <http://www.panda.org/downloads/policy/wwfrecommendationstoeuontrade.pdf>, or obtained in hard copy by sending an e-mail to: sgranger@wwfint.org.

REGIONALISM AND THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM. By the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003. This study examines how regional trade agreements are undermining and/or contributing to global trade agreements governed by the World Trade Organisation. The chapter on intellectual property argues that the TRIPS-plus deals supported by Washington, Brussels and other economic powers are not only multiplying, but they are seen to be setting new international IPR standards. For further information see: <http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/2203031E.PDF>.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARDS IN EXPORT CREDIT. By Ecologic. This study focuses on the incorporation of environmental and social standards into export credit agencies' lending practices. Commissioned by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), it surveys the environmental guidelines of eight OECD member states' export credit agencies. Special emphasis was given to the support of large dams; in this context, the study evaluates to what extent the recommendations made by the World Commission on Dams were reflected in the environmental and social guidelines. The study concludes with a series of suggestions as to how the WCD recommendations can be better integrated into the lending practices of ECAs. The study is available at: <http://www.ecologic.de/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=829>.

"Institutional interaction to address greenhouse gas emissions from international transport: ICAO, IMO and the Kyoto Protocol, " in CLIMATE POLICY 3 (3, 2003): 191-205. By Sebastian Obethur. This paper discusses how in response to Article 2.2 of the Kyoto Protocol, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) have begun to consider greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from international aviation and shipping. However, neither ICAO nor IMO have taken any effective action on the issue yet and progress can be characterised as slow. This paper lays out three options for furthering progress within ICAO and IMO.

"Climate negotiations beyond Kyoto: developing countries concerns and interests," in CLIMATE POLICY 3 (3, 2003): 221-231. By Adil Najam, Saleemul Huq and Youba Sokona. The principal argument of this paper is the need for a to return to the basic principles outlined in the Framework Convention on Climate Change in the search for a north-south bargain on climate change. Such a bargain might be achievable if can the policy architecture of the climate regime is realigned to its original stated goals of sustainable development.

"Molecular marker assisted selection as a potential tool for genetic improvement of crops, forest trees, livestock and fish in developing countries," by the Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2003. This publication deals with the potential benefits of using markers linked to genes of interest in breeding programmes, it describes the availability of markers throughout genetic material and the breakthrough in identifying markers. For further information, see: <http://www.fao.org/biotech/C10doc.htm> or email: biotech-admin@fao.org

Internet Resources

THE CAMBODIAN RESEARCH CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT. This Centre for Development is an independent, non-political, non partisan and not for profit research organization. The activities of CRCD focus on research in the areas of development, with the goal of improving the activities of national and international organisations involved in the development of the Kingdom of Cambodia. CRCD aims to provide to a broad public, knowledge for sustainable development, through academically rigorous research. For further information, see: <http://www.dev-zone.org/cgi-bin/links/jump.cgi?ID=6519>

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