



International Centre for Trade  
and Sustainable Development

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## Chemicals

### EUROPEAN EFFORT TO BAN ASBESTOS FAILS

At the tenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-10) for an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (Rotterdam Convention) -- held from 17-21 November in Geneva -- Canada and Russia blocked the listing of asbestos-chrysotile. Had the listing gone through, trading of the chemical substance would only be allowed with the prior informed consent of the importing country. Countries also discussed future cooperation with the WTO as well as other issues pending prior to the expected entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention in 2004.

#### No ban on economically valuable asbestos

Four forms of asbestos were added to the Convention's PIC list. However, the decision on whether to add the fifth form -- chrysotile asbestos -- was postponed, despite the fact that chrysotile asbestos accounts for 94 percent of the commercial asbestos production and is known to cause cancer. The EU was the main demandeur for listing chrysotile asbestos, supported by Switzerland, Chile, Argentina, Norway, the Gambia and the Congo. However, the proposal was blocked by Canada and Russia, supported by the Ukraine, China, Zimbabwe, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Egypt and Morocco. For most of the opposing countries, chrysotile asbestos is an economically valuable substance. Canada, for example, is the leading exporter of chrysotile asbestos, with an industry estimated to bring in CAD 2,500 million annually and employs 2,000 workers. Russia, on the other hand, is the world's largest producer of asbestos. Zimbabwe and China are also large asbestos producers and exporters.

As decisions under the Rotterdam Convention need to be taken by consensus, countries decided to give Canada more time to conduct national consultations on the issue and postponed a final decision. Environmental groups such as WWF criticised Canada and Russia for being overly focused on their self-interest. Clifton Curtis, Director of WWF's Toxic Programme said "chrysotile unequivocally met the Convention's requirements, and those governments opposing its listing blatantly disregarded the treaty obligations".

In light of the chrysotile asbestos discussion, Parties have expressed concern that the conflict between environmental and health concerns on the one hand and economic and trade concerns on the other hand would arise frequently once the Convention has entered into force. The Chair of INC-10 thus also reminded delegates that the Convention does not take into account economic and trade considerations when listing a chemical.

Consensus was reached on adding DNOC and its salt to the Convention's PIC list as well as dustable powder formulations of benomyl, carbofuran and thiram.

### **Work ahead before entry into force**

In the context of a note presented by the Secretariat on the cooperation with the WTO, Canada submitted a proposal for a draft decision on seeking observer status for the Special Sessions of the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE). Delegates agreed to forward the draft decision to the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1), noting, amongst others, the need to strengthen the cooperation between the Convention and the WTO as well as to encourage governments to inform their delegates at the WTO on decisions taken at the INC-10.

The Rotterdam Convention -- which requires just one more ratification to enter into force -- is expected to become legally binding soon with Greece or Ecuador as the possible 50th Parties to ratify. However, Parties still have to decide on some crucial issues, including the rules for compliance and the specific rights and obligations of Parties and non-Parties. Under the current rules, non-Parties will not have the right to oppose the listing of a chemical to the PIC Procedure.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (INC-11) will be tentatively held on 18 September 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland. The first meeting of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (COP-1) has tentatively been set to take place on 17-21 November also in Geneva.

### **Background**

The Rotterdam Convention was adopted in 1998 under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). To date, it has been signed by 73 states and ratified by 49; it will enter into force once 50 nations have ratified it. The Convention aims to assist governments, particularly in developing countries to avoid accidents and pollution related to chemicals and to protect people and the environment from the harmful results of chemicals trade. The PIC procedure, which is part of the Rotterdam Convention, is aimed at making information about hazardous chemicals readily available in order to facilitate informed decisions on the import of chemicals and the associated risks. When a chemical is added to the PIC procedure list, a country cannot export the chemical unless the importing country, in writing, has accepted to receive the shipment. Should a country agree to import the chemical, the Convention would promote its safe use through labelling measures and through technical assistance.

The Rotterdam Convention is one of six multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) that WTO Members are focusing on in their Committee on Trade and Environment debate on the relationship between WTO rules and specific trade obligations in MEAs (see BRIDGES Trade Biores, 11 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-07-11/story3.htm>).

For more information on the Rotterdam Convention see: <http://www.pic.int/index.html>

"Summary of the Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an international legally binding instrument for the application of the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade," IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 24 November, 2003; "Asbestos Nations Block Placement of Chrysotile on Danger List," ENS, 18 November 2003; "WWF Slams Canada and Russia for blocking listing of asbestos as a dangerous substance," WWF, 18 November 2003.

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

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### **UNEVENTFUL TRIPS COUNCIL REVISITS BIODIVERSITY ISSUES**

Little new emerged from discussions on biodiversity at the 17-18 November meeting of the WTO Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), with countries largely reiterating previous proposals. One trade source noted a general lack of enthusiasm in the Council's discussions compared to the excitement of last year's negotiations on TRIPs and public health.

#### **No progress on biodiversity**

During the debate on issues related to Article 27.3(b) (patentability of life forms), traditional knowledge and biodiversity, various Members recalled their previous proposals, including Switzerland, the African Group and a group of developing countries led by India (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-06-12/story2.htm>). Norway, the EC and Thailand supported the Swiss proposal to amend the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)'s Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) that would enable countries to require patent applicants to declare the source of the genetic resources and traditional knowledge in patent applications. The EC added that it was also willing to discuss other proposals for disclosure of origin, including inserting text in the TRIPs Agreement. The US, Japan, Canada and Australia opposed any discussion on this issue in the TRIPs Council, saying that it should be dealt with in WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee (ICG) on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. The US said it would prefer to not change the patent system, but rather address disclosure and benefit-sharing through permits, contractual obligations and civil and/or criminal penalties.

Disclosure requirements were also discussed at the WIPO Working Group on the reform of the PCT at its 17-21 November meeting. Similar to the TRIPs Council, the US-led group of countries said that these issues should be discussed at the ICG instead. One trade source pointed out that the discussions in the two meetings highlighted the strategy of the US and others to use the ICG to undermine developing countries' demand for amending the TRIPs Agreement (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 3 October 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-10-03/story1.htm>). The source added that it was a "telling detail" that only developed countries had referred to the ICG in the TRIPs Council meeting, while no developing countries had mentioned it.

#### **GI discussions on hold**

Members did not discuss geographical indications (GI, i.e. identifications of the country or region where the quality, reputation or other characteristic of a product is essentially attributable to the geographical region). This issue had been moved to the level of the Trade Negotiations Committee in December 2002 as part of the other 'implementation' issues (see BRIDGES Weekly, 21 May 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-05-21/wtoinbrief.htm>). Negotiations on the multilateral register for GIs have been temporarily suspended along with all other negotiating sessions.

In related developments, the European Commission in a paper on the post-Cancun process adopted on 26 November proposed that the EC take a more flexible approach to the multilateral register for GIs (see related In Brief, this issue). Such flexibility could include a carefully defined start-up phase of appropriate length, particularly for developing countries. The Commission also noted that the EU needed to rapidly finalise the list of 41 foods and beverages transmitted prior to Cancun, taking into account any additions due to

enlargement. The Commission added that progress in the discussions on the list in the context of agriculture negotiations should not be linked to progress on the multilateral register and GI extensions (i.e. extending the additional protection already provided for wines and spirits to other products).

The TRIPs Council sessions for next year have been tentatively scheduled for 8-10 March, 21-23 September and 30 November - 2 December.

For an account of the health-related discussions at the TRIPs Council meeting, see BRIDGES Weekly, 27 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-11-26/story4.htm>

ICTSD reporting; "EC Directorate offers more flexible approach to extend GI protection in Doha round talks," WTO REPORTER, 19 November 2003.

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## Regional Developments

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### THE AMERICAS: "LITE" ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

The eighth meeting of American Trade Ministers to continue negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami (17-18 November) ended one-day early when Ministers agreed on the final ministerial declaration after just a few hours of negotiation. Environment hardly features in the Declaration despite concerns raised, in particular by environmental groups regarding the potential environmental effects of the agreement. Civil society groups were active and visible at the Miami meeting and forwarded recommendations to Ministers on several issues, including intellectual property rights and biodiversity.

The negotiations on the FTAA, which includes all countries of the Americas except for Cuba, have been set to end in January 2005. Ministers in Miami were expected to settle some of the major outstanding issues in particular on agriculture, intellectual property rights and investment. However, the final declaration only notes that the FTAA will include measures in each negotiating area, but does not set out the specific commitment levels. Several sources described the Declaration as an excuse for not confronting the real problems in the negotiations, instead leaving the job to the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC), which will meet in February 2004. The main message of the Ministerial Declaration is that the FTAA provides each country with flexibility on its level of commitment according to its needs, goals and capacities.

Currently the FTAA draft text contains limited language on environment in the investment chapter. Amongst others, Ministers discussed, but did not agree on, whether the agreement should discourage the relaxation of domestic environmental laws in order to attract investment. Also in the context of investment, the draft agreement includes text that small economies should be compensated through the transfer of new environmentally friendly technology if they agree not to relax their national environment laws. However, all those provisions are still in brackets, i.e. they have not yet been agreed upon.

### The environment, the people and sustainability assessments

Prior to the Ministerial Meeting civil society representatives met for the Americas Forum on Trade and Sustainable Development (AFTSD) to discuss implications of the nine FTAA negotiating areas on social, developmental and environmental issues. With regards to the environmental aspects of the free trade area, participants focused in particular on the interface between intellectual property rights (IPRs) and the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources. Participants concluded, *inter alia*, that the FTAA negotiations on IPRs should be supportive of negotiations undertaken in multilateral fora, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the WTO, WIPO, FAO and others. On a positive note, participants highlighted that a range of countries in the Americas have advanced national IPR legislation supporting biodiversity conservation and protecting traditional knowledge. IUCN in this regard noted that the FTAA negotiations "can help trigger innovative thinking that can assist in breaking the stalemates that currently plague the negotiations at the global level".

During the AFTSD, civil society representatives also took a shot at assessing the potential impacts of the free trade agreement on sustainable development issues in developing countries. In particular, civil society groups are concerned that the "flexibility" provisions in the FTAA should not be confused with a solid commitment to development and might lure smaller countries into believing that there are no risks associated with trade liberalisation.

In order to assess the potential social and environmental implications of the FTAA, governments and non-governmental organisations have been advocating for the more widespread use of sustainability assessments of the agreement. Analyses are underway in several countries, including Chile and the US. Canada already published their initial environmental impact assessment. However, the current methodology to conduct the assessments has come under fire, as experts point to that the many reports exclusively use an *ex-post* approach -- i.e. examining past experiences to draw lessons for future policy -- instead of also using an *ex-ante* approach -- i.e. using the proposed policy as the starting point. Furthermore, experts criticise that experiences from other free trade agreements are not taken into consideration in the assessments, and that the assessments focus too narrowly on the environmental effects of trade in goods and services, leaving out for example the potential effects of liberalisation in the agricultural sector on the environment.

In Miami, Ministers agreed to increase the participation of civil society. This could give some momentum to put forward the concerns of civil society related to the current Sustainability Assessments of free trade agreements.

### **Meanwhile on the other side of the world...**

According to a recent report commissioned by OzProspect, a Melbourne-based think tank, the current negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement between the US and Australia might have environmental implications, partly due to increased agricultural production for export. During negotiations at the end of October, Australia urged the US to open its agricultural markets, in particular for dairy, beef and sugar. According the OzProspect report, the opening of markets and a subsequent greater Australian agricultural production could raise Australia's total water use in the agricultural sector by 7.5 percent and increase energy related greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent. Furthermore the report points out that the increased use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides can cause water pollution and soil acidification. It also mentions potential conflicts with regards to the Australian legislation on labelling food products containing genetically modified material.

### **Additional Resources**

For a more detailed account of the FTAA negotiations see the BRIDGES Miami Daily Updates at: [http://www.ictsd.org/issarea/Americas/FTAA\\_ministerial/miami/index.htm](http://www.ictsd.org/issarea/Americas/FTAA_ministerial/miami/index.htm)

The Ministerial Declaration and the 3rd FTAA draft agreement is available at: <http://www.ftaa-alca.org>

The Canadian Initial Environmental Impact Assessment is available at: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/tna-nac/consult2-en.asp#ea2>

The OzProspect report "The Australia-US Free Trade Agreement: An Environmental Impact Assessment," can be accessed at: <http://www.ozprospect.org/pubs/FTA.pdf>

### **In Brief**

#### **RED LIST OF ENDANGERED SPECIES TOPS 12000**

The World Conservation Union's (IUCN) annual Red List of the world's endangered species has topped 12,000, with the addition of another 2,000 species. The conservation organisation underscored the threat of alien invasive species on native islands plants and animals in places such as the Seychelles, Galapagos

Islands and Hawaii. IUCN's Director General Achim Steiner commented, "The Red List tells us that human activities are leading to a swath of extinctions that could make these islands ecologically and aesthetically barren". Alien invasive species are mainly introduced into natural environments through human activities, including international trade and tourism. Invasive species are not only threatening biodiversity, but are also causing major economic costs. The trade-related economic costs of alien invasive species have been estimated to amount to USD 123 billion just in the United States. The degradation of natural habitats, ecosystems and agricultural land are other factors, which according to IUCN lead to the loss of biodiversity. Continental species that are increasingly threatened include the Mexican black howler monkey, the variegated spider monkey (found only in Columbia and Venezuela), South Africa's river rabbit and the giant catfish of the Mekong basin. Indonesia, India, Brazil, China and Peru are among the countries with the highest known number of threatened birds and mammals while plants are rapidly declining in Malaysia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Brazil and Sri Lanka. These countries have all seen a sharp rise in industrialisation, forest clearance and tourism in recent decades. The IUCN Red List is a compilation of the work of thousands of scientists and conservationists from around the globe. The Red List categorises species as "critically endangered", "endangered", "vulnerable", "near-threatened" or "least concern".

For more information on the Red List and recent updates visit: <http://www.iucn.org>

For more information on Alien Invasive Species visit: <http://www.issg.org/>

"Release of 2003 IUCN Red List," IUCN RELEASE, 18 November 2003; "Red List Finds 12,000 Species Endangered Worldwide," REUTERS, 18 November 2003.

## **REPORT: WORLD BANK SHOULD ABANDON OIL AND COAL FINANCING**

The Extractive Industry Review, released on 25 November 2003, has advised the World Bank Group (WBG) to phase out investments in oil production by 2008, and to continue its current practice of not investing in coal mining developments. Instead, the WBG should concentrate its lending on promoting sustainable energy policies, energy efficiency, recycling and cleaner fuels. Moreover, the Review, which was launched by the WBG to discuss its future role in the extractive industries with concerned stakeholders, stresses that the Bank's interventions should allow extractive industries to contribute to poverty alleviation through sustainable development as a prerequisite for the Bank's involvement in the oil, gas and mining sectors. The Review also recommends, inter alia, that the WBG should systematically evaluate whether an extractive project provides the best option for poverty alleviation "in line with the precautionary principle"; ensure that affected local communities are asked for their consent and receive the benefits from the projects; perform integrated environmental and social assessments; and ensure that human rights are respected. According to one Bank official, the report is unlikely to gain much support in the Bank's governing board, which takes the final decisions on proposals.

While Friends of the Earth International welcomed the Review as pointing to "an important shift away from traditional support to the extractive industries", they noted that the environmental impacts of the mining industry would not be fully mitigated even if all the recommendations were put into practice, calling for the WBG to withdraw from large-scale mining altogether.

The EIR is available at <http://www.eireview.org/>.

"World Bank advised to pull out of oil and coal financing," FT, 20 November 2003; "'World Bank pull out of oil and coal' now official advice," FOEI, 25 November 2003.

## **EC ADOPTS COMMUNICATION ON POST-CANCUN STRATEGY**

The European Commission adopted a strategy paper on the post-Cancun process on 26 November. According to EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, the EC will now re-engage at the WTO and work to get the current round of trade talks back on track. The strategy paper is being circulated among EU member states and the European Parliament, and trade ministers as well as the European Parliament will discuss the

paper at their respective meetings on 2 December. EU foreign affairs ministers are expected to adopt it at an 8 December General Affairs Council, just prior to a 15 December high-level officials meeting at the WTO. At the Commission's adoption of the report, Lamy commented that "we have listened carefully to all points of view inside and outside Europe, and we believe there is now enough support to get the train back on track". According to the paper, the EC remains committed to the multilateral trading system and is willing to engage in re-launching talks, with the expectation that other parties show flexibility and a willingness to negotiate and go beyond initial positions. The paper covers areas in which the EC could show flexibility, such as the Singapore issues, environment and geographical indications (GIs), as well as areas in which the EC would like to see flexibility from its trading partners. The latter areas could include agriculture and the cotton initiative. The EC also proposes, among other things, that the profile of commodities issues be raised.

The communication "Reviving the DDA Negotiations - the EU Perspective" is available at: <http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/doclib/html/114259.htm>

"EU says it ready to resume global trade talks," REUTERS, 26 November 2003; "EU-WTO: European Commission proposes to put Doha Round of trade talks back on track," EC RELEASE, 26 November 2003.

### **UK COMMISSION DIVIDED OVER GMO COEXISTENCE AND LIABILITY**

The UK's Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission (AEBC) in its report "GM Crops? Coexistence and Liability" released on 25 November called for the establishment of legally binding rules. These rules could help managing coexistence of genetically modified (GM) and other crops, which should aim to facilitate consumer choice "while allowing UK farmers to respond to present and future national and international market demands". Commission members, however, differed widely over the appropriate contamination threshold (0.1 or 0.9 percent); who should be responsible for ensuring compliance and bear the costs (GM or non-GM growers); whether to initially limit the rate of adoption of GM crops; and how farmers, suffering financial loss as a result of contamination should be compensated. The disagreements mirrored similar divisions at the EU level where countries continue to argue over how to manage coexistence (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 3 October 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-10-03/story2.htm>). Critics noted that with so little agreement on key issues the report would provide little help for the government ahead of its decision of the future of GM crops in the UK early next year. The report is the last output of the UK government's study of the scientific and economic aspects of GM crops and public perceptions in the country.

The report is available at <http://www.aebc.gov.uk/>.

"UK's Top policy advisor divided over GM crops," REUTERS, 26 November 2003.

### **CAP REFORM, STEP-BY-STEP**

On 18 November, the European Commission adopted the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform proposals for the tobacco, olive oil, cotton and hops sectors, a follow-up to the discussions on 29 September by the EU's Council of Ministers (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 16 October 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-10-16/story1.htm>).

The tobacco sector will undergo the most rigorous reform. The transition to a decoupled single payment scheme will be completed gradually in three steps, receiving income from a mixture of decoupled and coupled payments for three years. 'Decoupled' payments will no longer be linked to what farmers produce, as was the case before the CAP reform, but will be conditional upon compliance with binding standards in environmental protection, food safety, animal health and welfare and occupational health. Aid from a restructuring fund will also be provided to help farmers to diversify from the tobacco sector. The subsidies for hops will also be fully decoupled, although "the Commission proposal foresees the possibility for member states to maintain coupled aid, up to a maximum of 25 percent" to aid in securing regional characteristics of some beers. For olive oil and cotton, 60 percent of payments will be decoupled. If approved

by the EU governments during debates at the end of December, the reform package could come into effect in 2005.

"Commission adopts reform proposals for Europe's tobacco, olive oil, cotton and hops sectors," EU PRESS RELEASES, 18 November 2003; "Brussels CAPS off reform," EUPOLITIX.COM, 18 November 2003.

### AUSTRALIA, FRANCE PREPARE TO COMBAT ILLEGAL FISHING

On 24 November, Australia and France signed a maritime cooperation agreement that establishes a framework for cooperation in surveillance and research against the illegal fishing of mainly Toothfish in the Southern Ocean. The two countries have agreed to exchange information on licensing, location and movements of fishing vessels because they "share a common desire to protect the valuable fish resources found in neighbouring exclusive economic zones in the Southern Ocean". The number of cases of illegal fishing for Patagonian toothfish, a native of France's Crozet Islands and Kerguelen Islands, and Australia's Heard Island and the McDonald Islands, has increased dramatically in the last decade. Scientists are concerned that the toothfish industry will collapse in a few years given the current rate of fishing. The two countries are both members of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which manages the toothfish industry. Measures already in place include fitting vessels with a mandatory satellite system to track fishing locations, a centralised vessel monitoring system, an electronic catch documentation scheme and an illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing vessel blacklist. Greenpeace called for the application of more stringent measures, including the enforcement of a moratorium on toothfish fishing. Conservationists have earlier argued that the economically valuable toothfish is endangered and that the international trade of the fish should be controlled and regulated by the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) (see BRIDGES Trade Biores, 21 November 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-11-21/story1.htm>).

"France, Australia join forces against tooth-fish pirates," ENS, 24 November 2003.

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### Events & Resources

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#### 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:

Coming up in the next two weeks

1 December, Geneva, Switzerland: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION. This is an ad hoc informal meeting organised by and for the UN Economic Commission for Europe in order to review the preparations for the first Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. For further information, contact: UNECE, fax: (+41 22) 917-0107; email: [subashini.narasimhan@unece.org](mailto:subashini.narasimhan@unece.org); Internet: [http://www.unece.org/env/wgso/Sustainable%20Development/sd\\_consult.meet.dec.2003.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/wgso/Sustainable%20Development/sd_consult.meet.dec.2003.htm)

1-3 December, Singapore: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Organised by the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL) of the Faculty of Law (National University of Singapore), together with the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL), the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) and the Intellectual Property Academy. The conference intends to bring together judges, leading academics, practitioners and policy-makers from around the world to share their views on the legal and ethical controversies that have arisen from the global biotechnology revolution, with particular emphasis on the compatibility of intellectual property rights with the biological wealth that resides in the flora and



fauna of developing countries. For further information, contact: Conference Secretariat, tel: (+65) 6332-4149; fax: 6334-4940; email: IPBioresources2003@sal.org.sg; Internet: <http://law.nus.edu.sg/apcel/conference/ipc03/>.

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. In the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Germany is developing strategies and action plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The symposium is intended to intensify the dialog between decision makers, users and scientists, and to foster national and international research cooperation. Representatives of more than ten partner countries will be attending. For further information, contact: the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research; tel: (+49 22) 8819-9611; fax: 8819-9640; email: [meltem.cosar@dir.de](mailto:meltem.cosar@dir.de); Internet: <http://www.biodiversity-symposium.de>.

1-5 December 2003, Brisbane, Australia: 12TH SESSION, CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS. Organised by the Codex Commission under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO). Items on the agenda include: a proposed draft revision to the codex guidelines for the exchange of information in food control emergency situations and discussion paper on traceability/product tracing in the context of food import and export inspection and certification systems. For further information, contact: the FAO, fax: (+39 06) 5705-3152; email: [FAO-HQ@fao.org](mailto:FAO-HQ@fao.org); Internet: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp>.

1-5 December, Montreal, Canada: SECOND MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING. Organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The working group will discuss issues related to the implementation of the access and benefit-sharing provisions of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) as well as it will forward recommendations to COP 7 on various aspects of an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. For further information, contact: the CBD Secretariat, tel: (+1 514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: [secretariat@biodiv.org](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org); Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/abs/abswg-02/official/abswg-02-01-en.doc>

1-12 December, Milan, Italy: COP 9 OF THE PARTIES TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGES (UNFCCC). At the COP participants will discuss, *inter alia*, the current implementation process of the commitments under the Climate Change Convention, the financial mechanism of the Convention, the development and transfer of technologies and matters relating to least developed countries. For further information, contact: Ms. Isabelle Colineau, UNFCCC, Science & Technology Programme, tel: (+49 228) 815-1425; fax: 815-1999; email: [icolineau@unfccc.de](mailto:icolineau@unfccc.de); Internet: <http://unfccc.int/cop9/index.html>.

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: 344-7564; email: [Risk-perception@jk-events.com](mailto:Risk-perception@jk-events.com); Internet: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/risk\\_perception/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/risk_perception/index.htm)

6-7 December, Montreal, Canada: INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY (IIFB). This is an Indigenous Preparatory Session for the 3rd meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is taking place from December 8-12, 2003 in Montreal, Canada. For further information, contact:

Tamara Dionne Stout, email: [akiis@hotmail.com](mailto:akiis@hotmail.com) and please copy your message to [tamara.dionnestout@ec.gc.ca](mailto:tamara.dionnestout@ec.gc.ca)

8-9 December, Geneva, Switzerland: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE COFFEE SECTOR: EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PART II: ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION. This international workshop is organised by UNCTAD and IISD. The meeting will focus on assessing concrete opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration towards the implementation of sustainability in the coffee sector at the multilateral level. Participants will discuss, among other things, the potential and interest in implementing a select range of global mechanisms for promoting sustainability on pilot basis including: i) enhanced coordination among standards systems and among stakeholders in both defining and implementing sustainability across the sector at the global level; ii) the establishment of a Sustainable coffee (credit/grant) fund; and iii) the establishment of systems for ensuring "sustainable" contractual relations in the coffee sector promote sustainability. For more information, contact: Jason Potts, IISD, tel: (1 514) 814-1967; fax: 527-0612; Internet: <http://www.iisd.org/trade/commodities/>

8-10 December, Geneva, Switzerland: WORLD FORUM ON INFORMATION SOCIETY. Organised by the United Nations. The focus of this conference, entitled Digital Divide, Global Development & Information Society, is on critical issues and considerations in the context of information technological revolution, global transformation, and marginalisation. Inter and intra regional disparities will be examined in terms of information infrastructure and dissemination, knowledge generation and management. For more information contact: World Forum Secretariat, email: [wfis@irfd.org](mailto:wfis@irfd.org); Internet: <http://www.irfd.org/events/wf2003/intro2.html>.

8-12 December, Chile: SECOND MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION EXPERT GROUP ON BAT-BEP. Organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This Expert Group meeting will focus on Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practices (BEP). Participants will aim at developing guidelines on the best available techniques and provisional guidance will be provided on best environmental practices as they relate to relevant provisions of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. For further information, contact: Stockholm Convention interim Secretariat; tel: (+41 22) 917-8191; fax: 797-3460; email: [ssc@chemicals.unep.ch](mailto:ssc@chemicals.unep.ch); Internet: <http://www.pops.int>.

8-12 December, Montreal, Canada: AD HOC OPEN ENDED INTER SESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8 (J) AND RELATED PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. Organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Items on the agenda include a presentation of a composite report on the status and trends regarding the knowledge, and the innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. For further information, contact the secretariat, tel: (+1-514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: [secretariat@biodiv.org](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org); Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/tk/wg8j-03/official/wg8j-03-01-en.doc>

9-12 December, Havana, Cuba: INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY. Organised by the Cuban Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment with the support of UNESCO, this meeting will consider policies and strategies that allow a better interface between science and technology and sustainable development. Other issues related to S&T and their interface with society to be discussed include: ethics and bioethics, interactive museums, science communication, science education, technology transfer, and innovation. For further information, contact: email: [lilliam@ceniai.inf.cu](mailto:lilliam@ceniai.inf.cu); Internet: <http://sustsci.harvard.edu/events.htm#sts-cuba03>

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 Asian region. The meeting and its outcomes are aimed at assisting countries to fine tune their conservation programmes, and support NGOs and research organisations focus their activities on relevant issues. These outputs will be incorporated in the IUCN's programme for

2005-2008, which would be adopted by the global conservation community at the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, Thailand in November, 2004. For further information, contact: IUCN, tel: (+41 22) 999-0000; fax: 999-0002; email: [mail@iucn.org](mailto:mail@iucn.org); Internet: <http://www.rcfasia.org/>.

Other Forthcoming events:

16-21 January 2004, Mumbai, India: WORLD SOCIAL FORUM. Organised by the India General Council (IGC), India Working Committee (IWC), India Organising Committee (IOC) and Mumbai Organising Committee (MOC). People's movements across the world are working to demonstrate that the path to sustainable development and social and economic justice does not lie in neo-liberal globalisation but in alternative models for people-centred and self-reliant progress. WSF India offers a platform to discuss issues of concern to civil society aimed at building a society centred on the human person. For further information, contact the WSF Secretariat: tel: (+91 22) 2421-6249; fax: 2421-6382; email: [wsfindia@vsnl.net](mailto:wsfindia@vsnl.net); Internet: <http://www.wsfindia.org/anotherworld.php>

21-25 January 2004, Davos, Switzerland: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING. Organised by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Annual Meeting aims to provide a platform for discussion and to lay the groundwork for economic growth and development across the globe by identifying emerging economic risks, and their possible impact on the state of the world. For further information, contact: The secretariat, tel: (+41 22) 869-1212; fax: 786-2744; email: [contact@weforum.org](mailto:contact@weforum.org); Internet: <http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Events+subhome>

23-24 February 2004, London, England: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE WTO: TRADE, INVESTMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AFTER CANCUN. This international conference is the fifth in the Royal Institute of International Affairs' series on trade, investment, and sustainable development. Challenges to the multilateral trading system in the wake of Cancun will be discussed, including the US and EU response to developing country concerns over agricultural subsidies, the negotiating dynamic of the new G21 grouping of developing countries, and potential conflicts between trade and sustainable development. For further information and to register for the conference, contact: the Conference Unit, tel: (+44 20) 7957-5729; Internet: <http://www.riia.org/index.php?id=5&cid=38>.

1-3 March 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON SYNERGIES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING UNDER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ADDRESSING CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT. Organised by UNITAR in collaboration with several other international organizations. UNITAR has initiated a series of thematic workshops aimed at building the capacity of countries in chemicals and waste management. For further information, contact: UNITAR; tel: (+41-22) 917-1234; fax: 917-8047; email: [cwm@unitar.org](mailto:cwm@unitar.org); Internet: <http://www.unitar.org>

2-5 March 2004, Concepción, Chile: GLOBAL BIOTECHNOLOGY FORUM. Organised by UNIDO and the Chilean Government. This event will bring together representatives from the scientific, public, private and social sectors as well as high-level decision makers to review opportunities and challenges in biotechnology for the developing world. For further information, contact: tel: (+56 41) 204-649; fax: 214-288; email: [gbf2004@udec.cl](mailto:gbf2004@udec.cl); Internet: <http://www.gbf2004.cl>.

## 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](mailto:mjacobsen@ictsd.ch).

THE STATE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN THE WORLD 2003. By the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The new report shows that hunger is on the rise again after falling steadily during the first half of the 1990s the report furthermore shows that the World Food Summit goal of reducing the number of undernourished people by half by 2015 cannot be reached. The report also looks at the impact international trade can have on reducing hunger and poverty in developing countries in particular in relation to economies

of scale and production potential. To access the report, see:  
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/j0083e/j0083e00.pdf>

IMPACTS OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS ON PESTICIDE USE IN THE UNITED STATES: THE FIRST EIGHT YEARS by Charles Benbrook (November 2003) published by the Northwest Science and Environmental Policy Center. The report is the first comprehensive study of the impacts of all major commercial GE crops on pesticide use in the United States over the first eight years of commercial use, 1996-2003. It draws on official U.S. Department of Agriculture data on pesticide use by crop and state and is the sixth in a series of "Technical Papers" prepared for Ag BioTech InfoNet. The report concludes, *inter alia*, that the major category of GE crops, corn and cotton engineered to produce the natural insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) in plant cells, continues to reduce insecticide use by 2 million to 2.5 million pounds annually. The increase in herbicide use on HT crop acres, however, far exceeds the modest reductions in insecticide use on acres planted to Bt crops, especially since 2001. The report is available at Internet: [http://www.biotech-info.net/Technical\\_Paper\\_6.pdf](http://www.biotech-info.net/Technical_Paper_6.pdf)

ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING (ABS): AN INSTRUMENT FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION. PROPOSALS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ABS REGIME. By Gudrun Henne, Klaus Liebig, Andreas Drews, Thomas Plän. (German Development Institute). This study has been prepared as a scientific contribution to the "Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing", which will be held in Montreal, Canada, from December 1 to 5, 2003. The authors take as their common starting point the view that the Contracting Parties of the CBD should use the on-going process to develop and implement an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources with a view to increasing the effectiveness of ABS as an instrument of poverty alleviation. As elaborated in this study, ABS can contribute to achieving these goals if the international community takes its political statements seriously and develops an ABS regime that simultaneously supports the goals of the CBD. For further information, see: [http://www.die-gdi.de/die\\_homepage.nsf/654d7718232dc2a7c1256bda0022626d/7068b149353699a0c1256de90030c95c?OpenDocument](http://www.die-gdi.de/die_homepage.nsf/654d7718232dc2a7c1256bda0022626d/7068b149353699a0c1256de90030c95c?OpenDocument)

UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES: PARTICIPATION OF RESOURCE POOR FARMERS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY- THE CASE OF WEDZA DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE, by Saruchera, M.; Matsungu, O. (Environment Team, IDS Sussex, 2003). This background paper from the IDS "Biotechnology and the policy process in developing countries" project examines the perspectives and participation in agricultural biotechnologies projects of resource-poor farmers in the Wedza district of Zimbabwe. Farmers in this region are faced with tremendous farming challenges that are adversely impacting on their livelihoods. Beyond climatic, soil and other direct farming constraints, the farmers' options are severely curtailed by lack of material resources and other socio-economic realities that have resulted in, among other development interventions, agricultural biotechnologies pilot studies and projects. Available online at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/env/PDFs/MunyaradziWedza.pdf>

DOMESTICATING GLOBAL POLICY ON GMOS: COMPARING CHINA AND INDIA, by P. Newell (Environment Team, IDS Sussex, 2003). This IDS working paper compares the way in which two leading developing countries in the global debate on biotechnology have sought to translate policy commitments contained in international agreements on trade and biosafety into workable national policy. It is a complex story of selective interpretation, conflict over priorities and politicking at the highest levels of government. It connects the micro-politics of inter-bureaucratic turf-wars with the diplomacy of inter-state negotiations and coalition building. At the same time, the role of business and civil society actors, media and scientific communities, also shows to be key. Available online at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/wp/wp206.pdf>

PULVERISING POW(D)ER: THE IMPACT INCOHERENT EUROPEAN POLICIES ON DAIRY FARMERS IN TANZANIA AND JAMAICA, by: S. Verwer (Centre for International Development Issues (CIDIN), University of Nijmegen, 2001). The paper examines how Europe's common agriculture policy (CAP) is operated and influences the livelihoods of dairy farmers in Tanzania and Jamaica in order to demonstrate how European policy can hamper the development of farmers in developing countries. It argues

the problems faced by farmers result from an inconsistency between the objectives of the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Europe's development objectives, as defined in the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties (1992, 1996). Available online at:  
<http://www.socsci.kun.nl/maw/cidin/publications/papers/op101.pdf>

**BIODIVERSITY FOR (BIO)TECHNOLOGY UNDER THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: BIOPROSPECTING PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE**, by Jorge Cabrera Medaglia. The importance of biotechnology for food, agriculture, human health, environmental protection, etc, has been outlined by diverse studies and emphasized by entities such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme. At the same time, the access and acquisition of these technologies is especially complex due to their proprietary character, basically because of the existence of intellectual property rights such as patents and plant breeder's rights. In the great majority of cases, transnational firms are the owners of these rights due to their financial capacity to destine important resources to the research and development of new products and biotechnological processes. To access the report, see: [http://www.geneconserve.pro.br/gene\\_conserve\\_home.htm](http://www.geneconserve.pro.br/gene_conserve_home.htm)

**MINING AND CRITICAL ECOSYSTEMS: MAPPING THE RISKS**. By Marta Miranda, Philip Burris, Jessie Froy Bincang, Phil Shearman, Jose Oliver Briones, Antonio La Viña, Stephen Menard. This report is the culmination of a 2-year research effort aimed at identifying environmentally and socially vulnerable areas at risk from mining. The report aims to provide a methodology that companies, governments, and civil society groups can use to develop a set of standards for environmentally responsible mining, or the identification of areas that should be placed off limits from mineral development--so-called "no go" zones. For further information, see:  
<http://postsnet.com/r.html?c=255473&r=254970&t=76417371&l=1&d=84930739&u=http://www.wristore.com/miandrec.html&g=0&f=84930744>

"The dynamics of European Union biodiversity policy: interactive, functional and institutional logics" by Susan Baker in *ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS* 12 (3, 2003): 23-41. Adopting a multi-level governance approach, this article explores the interactions between the international CBD regime, the European Union and the member states in relation to biodiversity conservation policy. The European Community signed the UN Convention on Biodiversity in 1992. Between 1993 and 1998 EU the biodiversity policy was rather ad hoc. The 1998 Biodiversity Strategy provides a more strategic response. Early biodiversity conservation efforts were hampered by member state persistent non-compliance with key legislation. Increasingly, however, collective action is the norm, being driven by the functional logic of nature conservation and by the institutional logic of the CBD. However, collective action is nonetheless constrained by the EU system of environmental governance. The result is a structural stress, which has the cumulative effect of enhancing the complex interdependencies that exist between these multi-level actors.

**2003 IUCN RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES**. By IUCN (November 2003). The IUCN Red List is an annual accord of the worlds threatened species. The Red List includes extinctions since 1500 AD and is compiled based on data and research compiled by IUCN's Species Survival Commission, which is a network of more than 7.000 experts. This year the experts added another 2.000 new entries to the list summing up to 12.000 threatened species. Invasive Alien Species have been identified as one of the main threats to species survival. For further information, see: <http://www.iucnredlist.org>

**WHOSE REALITY COUNTS?: PUTTING THE FIRST LAST (2003 Edition)** by Robert Chambers (ITDG Publishing, 2003 May). In this sequel to *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Robert Chambers argues that central issues in development have been overlooked, and that many past errors have flowed from domination by those with power. Development professionals now need new approaches and methods for interacting, learning and knowing. Through analysing experience - of past mistakes and myths, and of the continuing methodological revolution of PRA (participatory rural appraisal) - the author points towards solutions. For further information, see: <http://www.drc.org.nz/bookshop/Detailed/794.html>

THE UNITED STATES AND THE FTAA: TIME TO LISTEN. By Kevin P. Gallagher (November 2003). The eyes of the world will be watching Miami next week when Western Hemisphere trade ministers revisit negotiations for what could be the largest regional trading bloc in the world: the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The big question is whether Miami will be a repeat of recent world trade talks in Cancun. For US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, this is no small concern, as twelve of the 21 developing countries that opposed US trade policy in Cancun are part of the FTAA negotiations. If the US wants to see progress on trade, they will have to listen to the concerns of its southern neighbours. For further information, see: <http://www.americaspolicy.org/commentary/2003/03111ftaa-commentary.html> and [www.irc-online.org](http://www.irc-online.org).

SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT NAFTA - AND THREE LESSONS FOR LATIN AMERICA. Produced by Alejandro Nadal, Francisco Aguayo and Marcos Chávez. (Science, Technology and Development Program (PROCIENTEC), El Colegio de México) (November 2003). As Latin America and the rest of the Western Hemisphere gathers in Miami for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Ministerial this week, its time to look at the reality behind the myths about the impact of NAFTA on Mexico: 1. The GDP growth rate in Mexico has remained stagnant since 1983. NAFTA did not change that. Since NAFTA was approved average per capita GDP growth has been 1%, which is similar to the slump of the 1930's, and much less than the 3.4% increases during the period of 1945-1980. 2. Mexico has a permanent trade deficit. The myth of Mexico as an export giant evaporates when we consider that, next to the surplus with the US, there is a booming trade deficit with Asia and Europe which increased by 600% and 400% respectively since 1994, when NAFTA was enacted. For further information, see: [www.colmex.mx/centros/cee/procientec](http://www.colmex.mx/centros/cee/procientec). Or contact: [a\\_nadalpcyt@yahoo.com.mx](mailto:a_nadalpcyt@yahoo.com.mx)

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS: TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TRADE POLICY IN THE HEMISPHERE. By Kevin P. Gallagher & Hernán Blanco (April 2003). "Sustainability Assessments (SAs) of trade agreements are under-utilised tools that could add substantial value to discussions about the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Defined as analyses of the potential social and environmental benefits and costs of proposed trade agreements, SAs are gaining widespread use by governmental and nongovernmental organizations alike." For further information, see: <http://www.fpipf.org/papers/tools-for-trade2003.html>

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