



International Centre for Trade
and Sustainable Development

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NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

This is the last issue of *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* for the year 2003. The first issue of 2004 -- Vol. 4, No. 1 -- will be published on 22 January. The *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* team would like to thank our reporting contributors all over the world and our funders for their critical assistance. We are grateful to our readers for their interest and feedback and send to you all our best wishes for the holiday season and 2004.

Biotechnology

GMO UPDATE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

European Food Committee fails to end de facto biotech moratorium

The European Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health at its 8 December meeting failed to reach the qualified majority required for approving Syngenta's Bt-11 biotech maize (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 14 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-14/story1.htm>), with 33 votes in favour, 29 against and 25 abstentions. Austria, Denmark, France, Greece and Luxembourg voted against the proposal, while Germany, Belgium and Italy abstained. A positive vote would have put an end to the ongoing de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMO) -- at least for biotech foods -- which is currently being challenged in the WTO by the US, Canada and Argentina (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>). The proposal will now be put to the European Council of Agriculture Ministers (probably in January), which will be required to take a decision within three months. If it fails to decide, the Commission can adopt the proposal unilaterally. Friends of the Earth hailed the vote as a "victory for public safety and common sense". The group insists that the maize should be assessed under the new, more thorough approval process recently adopted in the EC.

The Commission has stressed that the product would not be sold before April 2004 when the new traceability and labelling rules enter into force, which would also apply to the biotech maize.

EU Parliamentarians call for Community-wide rules on co-existence

On 2 December, the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee adopted an own-initiative report on the coexistence of GM crops and conventional and organic crops. The report calls for basic provisions on the management of co-existence at the Community-level, rather than simply providing guidelines for national measures as proposed by the Commission (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>), in an effort to avoid distortions of competition. The report also suggests that liability for possible damage should rest with the original manufacturer of a GMO. Liability would be passed on to the users of GMOs if they do not comply with the conditions of sale and use. Moreover, the report stresses that members states should be allowed to impose regional restrictions on GMO cultivation, which the report notes might sometimes be the most effective and least costly measure to ensure co-existence. It thereby opens the door for regions such as Upper Austria to retain their self-proclaimed GM-free status (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-14/story1.htm>). The Committee, however, could not agree on a threshold for the accidental presence of GMOs in seeds, simply noting that it should be set at a "technically and statistically reliable detection threshold". The Commission has proposed a threshold of 0.3 and 0.7 percent depending on the seed.

The European Parliament is due to vote on the report during the plenary session in January.

The Committee's report is available at

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/agri/20031202/492181en.pdf>.

The European Commission's guidelines for co-existence can be viewed at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/publi/reports/coexistence2/index_en.htm.

"EU fails to end moratorium on genetically modified food," ENS, 9 December 2003; "Member states divided over GM food ban," EURACTIV, 8 December 2003.

Intellectual Property Rights

CBD WORKING GROUPS PONDER RELATIONSHIP WITH WIPO

The respective roles of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in the conservation, sustainable use and sharing of benefits related to biological resources and traditional knowledge (TK), led to extensive discussions at both the CBD Working Groups on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) and on Article 8(j), which deals with protecting the knowledge of indigenous and local communities. In particular during debates in the ABS Working Group, many developing countries remained adamant that the CBD rather than WIPO should take the leading role in discussing ABS-related disclosure requirements.

ABS Working Group explores options for international regime

A large part of the discussions at the meeting of the ABS Working Group from 1 to 5 December in Montreal, Canada, focused on possible elements for an international ABS regime, as mandated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation adopted in September 2003 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 5 September 2003, http://www.ictsd.org/biores/wssd_updates/english/update5.htm). Following lengthy discussions, countries forwarded a heavily bracketed text to the CBD's seventh Conference of the Parties, to take place in February 2004 in Malaysia. One of the few recommendations that countries could agree on was that COP-7 should mandate the ABS Working Group to negotiate and elaborate the international regime.

Mirroring dynamics at WSSD, Mexico on behalf of the Like-minded Group of Megadiverse Countries (LMMC) would have liked to see negotiations on a legally binding instrument start as soon as possible. The EC, in contrast, took a more cautious approach, preferring to focus on implementing the Bonn Guidelines on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing at the domestic level. Countries were also divided over whether the regime should cover the products and derivatives of genetic resources, as advocated by the LMMC.

The relationship to WIPO proved the most contentious point in discussions on measures to ensure compliance with prior informed consent (PIC) provisions on mutually agreed terms (MAT), such as requiring the declaration of origin of a genetic resource in patent application. The LMMC, along with many other developing countries, pushed for discussions on these issues to take place in the CBD context. They objected to strengthening the collaboration with WIPO due to concerns that their interests would not be adequately addressed in a forum dealing with intellectual property rights.

Switzerland -- supported Norway, the EC and Thailand -- is one of the advocates for discussing disclosure requirements in WIPO in the context of WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-28/story2.htm>). The US, Japan, Canada and Australia, however, would prefer these discussions to take place in WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee (ICG) on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore.

Article 8(j) Working Group focuses on TK

The question of how to avoid overlap with WIPO's work, and in particular with the ICG, also arose during discussions on possible elements of a sui generis system for the protection of TK during the meeting of the Article 8(j) Working Group from 8 to 12 December, also in Montreal. Overall, the meeting was described as constructive and solution-oriented, in particular compared to the ABS Working Group that took place just before. In the final recommendations regarding a possible sui generis system, the Working Group asks COP-7 to request the Working Group to, inter alia, make recommendations regarding the international ABS regime with a view to including sui generis systems and TK protection systems; assess the role of databases and registers in protecting TK; and explore the potential of existing forms of intellectual property rights to contribute to achieving Article 8(j) objectives. Only the references to international law in the preamble remained bracketed in this section.

Additional Resources

For daily coverage of the meetings, see IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca>.

Documents of the ABS Working Group, including the WIPO Technical study on disclosure requirements related to genetic resources and TK: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=ABSWG-02>

Documents of the Article 8(j) Working Group: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/tk/wg8j-03/official/wg8j-03-01-en.doc>.

ENB, Vol 9, No 268, 8 December 2003; ENB, Vol. 9, No 273, 15 December 2003.

Marine Resources

ILLEGAL FISHING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

There has been heightened concern that many species of fish are highly threatened by illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) deep-sea fishing. Two reports on IUU fishing have been released, one by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and another by the environmental group WWF and the wildlife trade-monitoring network TRAFFIC, analysing the threat of illegal fishing to the survival of deep sea fish species. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has formed a task force with the goal of combating illegal fishing.

Reports criticise state of deep-sea fisheries

Also related to IUU fishing, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on 3 December released a report on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing. In the report the FAO calls for immediate action in order to eliminate illegal fishing practices in particular taking into account "that some 75 percent of world fisheries are already being fully exploited, overexploited, or depleted". In June 2004 the FAO is planning a conference addressing the commitments of countries to develop and implement their national plans on IUU fishing. Many countries depending on fishing for economic income as well as for subsistence needs, such as small vulnerable island states, may find it difficult to implement stringent measures to combat illegal fishing, as they lack sufficient technical, institutional and financial resources. The particular situation of these countries has also been debated at the WTO where the clarification and improvement of fisheries subsidies is being negotiated under the Doha mandate. Within the context of the fisheries subsidies negotiations, the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules met in July 2003 to consider a proposal addressing the sustainable development concerns of these states with considerations on special and differential treatment -- noting the relatively high dependence of their populations on fisheries (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story1.htm>).

The WWF-Traffic report "Managing Risk and Uncertainty in Deep-Sea Fisheries" pointed out that deep sea fish species have long reproductive cycles and are affected by the fact that 40 percent of the world's trawling grounds are now in waters deeper than 200 meters. The report addresses four action areas including: moving towards an eco-system based approach to management of deep-sea species and their habitats, maximising the potential to protect deep-sea ecosystems on the high seas, addressing the underlying problem of over-capacity in world fisheries, and adopting a more precautionary approach to the management of deep-sea fish species and their habitats. With regards to addressing the underlying causes of over-capacity in world fisheries, the report highlights in particular fisheries subsidies as one of the main causes of overexploitation, and urges international organisations such as the WTO to eliminate fisheries subsidies.

Task force formed against IUU fishing

The establishment of a new ministerial task force to combat IUU fishing was announced on 30 November in conjunction with the Deep Sea 2003 conference in New Zealand. Ministers from Australia, Britain, Chile, Namibia and New Zealand will form the Task Force, which will be headed by the British Minister of State for the Environment under the auspices of the OECD. The taskforce is set to prepare national, regional and international recommendations on sound, politically realistic and financially viable measures to eliminate or prevent such fishing. Scientists, legal experts and civil society groups will be provided with the opportunity to partake in discussions. The taskforce has initially been established for the next one and a half years.

Additional Resources

The WWF-Traffic report "Managing risk and uncertainty in deep-sea fisheries: lessons from Orange Roughy" is available at: http://www.traffic.org/news/press-releases/deep_sea.html

For further information on the "FAO Progress Report on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing" see: <http://www.fao.org/english/newsroom/news/2003/25379-en.html>

"Ministerial task force to tackle illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing," OECD PRESS RELEASE, 30 November 2003; "Hodgson to join international pirate fishing taskforce," THE NEW ZEALAND HEARLD, 1 December 2003; "FAO calls for intensified action to combat illegal fishing," FAO PRESS RELEASE, 3 December 2003; "Unregulated Fishing Threatens Deep Sea Species," ENS, 2 December 2003.

In Brief

DOHA ROUND: TALKS STALL, NEGOTIATING GROUPS TO RESUME IN 2004

On 9 December, WTO General Council Chair Carlos Perez del Castillo (Uruguay) announced that Members would not be able to relaunch talks at the 15 December General Council meeting. Instead he told Members attending a Heads of Delegation (HODs) meeting that he would present a Chair's report on 15 December --

instead of a new negotiating draft -- which, would outline progress thus far, identifying key issues and setting out a process for advancing the Doha round. Members have been engaging in informal talks on four key issues -- agriculture, industrial market access, cotton and the 'Singapore' issues of investment, competition, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement -- in order to reach a framework for restarting trade negotiations launched at Doha in 2001, and stalled since the failure of the fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancun in September 2003 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 December 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-12-04/story1.htm>). Chair Castillo pointed out that although Members are still committed to the multilateral trade system and the round, little real negotiation and bridging of positions had taken place. Castillo suggested that all negotiating bodies, including the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) overseeing their work, would be re-activated next year after new chairs were elected. In this context some developed country Members questioned the utility of restarting negotiating groups even though no real progress had been made in talks. Other Members, such as India, were content to return to negotiating groups, as this would ensure a transparent process. In 2004, GC Chair Perez del Castillo will spend much of the first two months on the selection process for new chairs for the various WTO working groups, after which negotiations can resume. Chair Perez del Castillo has also indicated that Members should address the issue of the overall timetable for the Doha round early next year, as the January 2005 deadline is looking increasingly out of reach. The first GC session is tentatively scheduled for 11-12 February.

For a more in-depth account of the meeting see the forthcoming BRIDGES Weekly, 18 December 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/index.htm>.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO Negotiator Concedes Govts Won't Resume Talks By Dec," REUTERS, 9 December 2003; "G-20 trade group meets in Brasilia as WTO's Doha Round stalls," AP, 10 December 2003.

REGIONAL CONSERVATION FORUM CONSIDERS TRADE ISSUES

Conservationists, government officials, donors and business leaders gathered from 10 to 13 December in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to identify critical conservation and environmental issues of the Asia region and identify a plan of action to address these over the next five years. Organised by IUCN - The World Conservation Union and the Sri Lankan government, the overall heading of the conference was "Growing Together Ecosystems and Livelihoods" and covered issues related to: ecosystems and landscapes; conservation as a poverty reduction strategy; and trade globalisation and poverty. On trade and poverty participants shared their knowledge on the state of the multilateral trade negotiations and the related challenges to biodiversity conservation and on how these challenges best could be addressed. In this context the President of the IUCN Committee of Bangladesh said "the current focus on poverty alleviation says that people are the centre of the development debate; but in reality trade is at the heart of this debate". In this regard participants discussed various case studies on how international trade influences the conservation of biodiversity, such as the reduction of crop diversity in the remote Northern Areas of Pakistan.

With regards to the relationship between biodiversity conservation and poverty, participants grappled with two fundamental questions: how can IUCN mainstream poverty in its conservation work and how can conservation make a contribution to poverty reduction. Sunita Narain, IUCN Councillor from India said: "environment is not a luxury -- poverty and environment are two sides of the same coin. Environmental degradation and poverty go hand in hand". Ahead of the meeting, Sri Lanka's Minister of Environment and Natural Resources had commented on the interlinkages between economic growth and natural resources use, saying that it would be crucial to find the right balance between the two in order to ensure sustainability. The IUCN President furthermore highlighted that "the conservation of natural resources is a fundamental necessity for economic development". The outcomes of the meeting will be used to define Asia's environmental priorities and actions, and will feed into the IUCN World Conservation Congress, to be held in November 2004. More information on the meeting can be found at Internet: <http://www.rcfasia.org>

"A Conservation Agenda for Asia," IUCN, 10 December 2003; "Regional Conservation Forum Consolidates IUCN's Work in Asia - Experts tackle poverty, trade, ecosystems and governance," 12 December 2003.

SUSTAINABLE COFFEE INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH NEW PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM

On 8-9 December, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Sustainable Coffee Initiative (SCI) held a meeting on "Sustainability in the Coffee Sector: Exploring Opportunities for International Cooperation - Assessment and Implementation". Participants established an interim Steering Committee for the creation of a Sustainable Coffee Partnership (SCP) as a platform for global research, policy development and cooperation around sustainable coffee trade. Among others, the Steering Committee would include the International Coffee Organisation (ICO), the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank. The workshop, held in Geneva, attracted some 80 to 90 representatives from coffee grower associations, the coffee trading and roasting business, Fair Trade and Organic labelling organisations, the funding community, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations. The meeting was a follow-up to a February 2003 SCI multistakeholder brainstorming workshop that had identified key issues (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-19/inbrief.htm#3>). These issues, which were addressed at the meeting, included: financing for sustainability in coffee; sustainable contracts; sustainability standards; and the creation of a Sustainable Coffee Partnership (SCP). Participants brought up questions such as whether grants or credits would be the appropriate financing tool to achieve sustainability in the coffee sector; whether the contractual relationship between producer and buyer could be a means through which sustainability could be promoted, and how harmonisation of, mutual recognition amongst, and cooperation between the many different standard systems could be a big step towards sustainability.

ICTSD reporting.

CAN COCOA SAVE THE RAINFOREST?

Cocoa could be grown in a way that helps preserve and restore the northern part of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest, according to a new study from the Worldwatch Institute. The report entitled "Venture Capitalism for a Tropical Forest" suggests that Brazil would have the opportunity to boost its domestic industry, provide rural employment and support the conservation of biodiversity by growing, manufacturing, and exporting chocolate products derived from cocoa trees grown in rainforests. The report highlights that if Brazil, the fifth largest cocoa-producing country, would get engaged in producing cocoa products, which are produced on an ecologically and socially sound basis. Chris Bright, one of the authors of the report points out: "Forest cocoa could really use some outside investment. As a global commodity, chocolate is worth more than USD 40 billion a year. We should be able to find the relatively modest sums necessary for developing cocoa as an eco-business." In related news, a recent study by Cornell University points out that hot cocoa can also help fight cancer, heart disease and aging, as it contains more antioxidants per cup than a similar serving of red wine or tea.

For more information on the study "Venture Capitalism for a Tropical Forest" see:
<http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/paper/168/>.

For the Cornell University study, please see Volume 51 Issue 25 (December 03, 2003) of the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry: <http://pubs.acs.org/journals/jafcau/index.html>

"Chocolate Offers New Hope for Saving Endangered Rainforest," WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE PRESS RELEASE, 4 December 2003; "Hot Cocoa, the Healthy Drink?," DRKOOP.COM, 5 December 2003.

PIC TREATY SET TO ENTER INTO FORCE

On 27 November, Armenia became the 50th country to ratify the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, triggering the treaty's entry into force in February 2004. Klaus Töpfer, UNEP's Executive Director, commented that "thanks to the Rotterdam Convention, we now have an effective system in place for avoiding many of the deadly mistakes made in past decades when people were less aware of the dangers of

toxic chemicals". Jacques Diouf, the Director-General from the UN FAO, added that "inappropriate pesticides and their misuse still threaten health and environment in developing countries... the Rotterdam Convention provides countries with a major tool to reduce the risks associated with pesticide use". The PIC procedure is aimed at making information about hazardous chemicals readily available in order to facilitate informed decisions by Parties on the import of chemicals and associated risks.

The PIC intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) recently met in Geneva to prepare for the treaty's entry into force (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-28/story1.htm>). The first meeting of the PIC Conference of the Parties is expected to take place in November 2004.

"Informed Consent Treaty For Hazardous Chemicals To Become Law," ENS, 28 November 2003; "Treaty on hazardous chemicals and pesticides trade to become law," UNEP RELEASE, 27 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 4 Weeks:

15-16 December 2003, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL. Organised by the World Trade Organization. The General Council is the WTO's highest-level decision-making body in Geneva, meeting regularly to carry out the functions of the WTO. It has representatives (usually ambassadors or equivalent) from all member governments and has the authority to act on behalf of the ministerial conference, which only meets about every two years. For further information, contact: WTO Secretariat, Environment Division, tel: (+41 22) 739-5111; fax: 739-5458, Internet: www.wto.org

15-17 December 2003, Chennai, India: THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH. Organised by the University of Madras and Karnataka Environment Research Foundation. The overall theme of this conference is: urban planning and environmental management for human health, with sub-themes including: the local environment of slum areas and human health, water quality, water borne diseases and public participation in management of environment and health problems. For further information, contact: Dr. V. Madha Suresh, Department of Geography, tel: (+91 44) 2658-3044; Internet: <http://www.yorku.ca/bunchmj/ICEH/index.htm>

12-16 January 2004, Gland, Switzerland: 30TH MEETING OF THE RAMSAR STANDING COMMITTEE. Organised by Ramsar a Multilateral Environment Agreement concerned with the conservation and wise use of natural resources of wetlands. The Standing Committee meets annually to carry out interim activity between each COP on matters previously approved by the Conference; prepare documentation for consideration at the next COP; supervise implementation of policy by the Ramsar Bureau and execution of the Bureau's budget; and decide upon applications for project support from the Ramsar Small Grants Fund. For further information, contact: Dwight Peck, Executive Assistant for Communications, tel: (+41 22) 999-0170; fax: 999-0169; email: peck@ramsar.org; Internet: <http://ramsar.org/meetings.htm>

12-13 January 2004, Monterrey, Mexico: SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS. A special meeting of the Presidents and Prime Ministers of 34 member countries of the Organisation of American States (OAS). The Summit will discuss concerns, seek solutions and develop a shared vision for the future development of the region, be it economic, social or political in nature. For further information, contact: Secretariat for the

Summit Process, OAS, Suite 680, Washington, DC, 20006, tel: (+1 202) 458-3127; fax: 458-3665; email: summit-info@oas.org; Internet: <http://www.summitsoftheamericas.org/default.htm>

15-16 January 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION. The First Regional Implementation Forum On Sustainable Development is organised by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The Forum aims at providing substantial inputs to the Review Year of the UNECE and contribute to the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12) scheduled for 16-30 April 2004. For further information, contact: the UNECE Secretariat, tel: (+41 22) 917-4444; fax: 917-0107; email: subashini.narasimhan@unece.org; Internet: http://www.unece.org/env/wgso/Sustainable%20Development/sd_forum.jan2004.htm

Other Forthcoming Events

16 January 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR UNCTAD XI - CIVIL SOCIETY HEARING. This meeting will be held at the Palais des Nations in preparation for UNCTAD XI, which will be held from 13-18 June 2003 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. UNCTAD XI is seen as an opportunity for tackling the most pressing developmental challenges confronting developing countries. For questions, including future meetings and accreditation to the Conference, please contact Amel Haffouz, email: amel.haffouz@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org>

9 May - 26 September 2004, Barcelona, Spain. FORUM BARCELONA 2004. The forum will bring together people from all over the world to debate issues around the themes of sustainable development, cultural diversity and conditions for peace. For 141 days, this will be the place where visitors experience cultures and entertainment from around the world through exhibitions, markets, performances, games and more. For further information, tel: (+34 93) 320-9010; email: forum@barcelona2004.org; <http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/>.

17-25 November, Bangkok, Thailand: THE 3RD IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: "PEOPLE AND NATURE, MAKING THE DIFFERENCE". Organised by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The Congress will consist of a 3 day World Conservation Forum and a four-day Members' Business Assembly. During the Forum, IUCN members, partners and interested stakeholders will debate options that safeguard the ecosystems upon which future prosperity depends. During the Assembly, IUCN members - governments and NGOs - will approve the 2005-2008 IUCN Programme Framework and Financial Plan, elect officers, consider resolutions and recommendations, and set the membership dues. For further information, contact: IUCN, tel: (+41 22) 999-0232; fax: 999-0020; email: ursula.hiltbrunner@iucn.org; Internet: www.iucn.org

17-21 November 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION (COP-1): COP-1, preceded by a last meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in September, is tentatively scheduled for November 2004. For more information, contact: the Joint Interim Secretariat, Niek van der Graaff, FAO, tel: (+39 65) 705-3441; fax: 705-6347; email: Niek.VanderGraaff@fao.org; or Jim Willis, UNEP Chemicals; tel: (+41 22) 917-8111; fax: (+41 22) 797-3460; email: chemicals@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int>.

Vacancy Announcement

ISEAL Alliance, an association that supports socially responsible and environmentally sound production is seeking an Executive Director. This person will be responsible for long-term planning, fundraising and program implementation, as well as coordination of the policy analysis and advocacy program. The ideal candidate will have at least five years experience in a senior management position and demonstrated success in raising funds. The person will be comfortable analysing and communicating complex ideas in international trade and standardization policy environments, and will have practical experience of voluntary standards and conformity assessment. This position will be based at the ISEAL Secretariat in Bonn,

Germany. For further information, see: www.isealalliance.org. Please forward your resume by 15 January 2004 to: ISEAL Alliance, Box 1227, Kaslo, BC, V0G 1M0 Canada; email: secretariat@isealalliance.org.

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.

THE STATE OF THE FOOD INSECURITY IN THE WORLD 2003. By the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This report analyses issues such as: food insecurity and HIV/AIDS, water and food security, causes of food emergencies in developing countries, yields and water requirements of irrigated and rain-fed agriculture and the importance of agriculture and agricultural trade in food security. For further information see: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/j0083e/j0083e00.htm>

THE WORLD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVEY 2003. By the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs (DESA). This is the United Nations' annual analysis of current developments in the world economy and emerging policy issues. It contains the Secretariat's forecast of short-term global and regional economic trends. It reviews major developments in international trade and it discusses the net transfer of financial resources of developing countries. The Survey includes statistical tables which give standardized data on macroeconomic, international trade and finance. To access the report, see: <http://www.un.org/esa/analysis/wess/>

GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS: REALIZING THE DEVELOPMENT PROMISE OF THE DOHA AGENDA By the World Bank, 2003. Based on a 'pro-poor' scenario the World Bank Report estimates that "a deal to lower global trade barriers could add more than USD 500 billion a year to global incomes by 2015, lifting 144 million people out of poverty. For further information: <http://www.agpolicy.org/weekcol/173.html>

AUSTRIA BIOTECHNOLOGY, STATUS OF BIOTECH REGULATIONS, 2003. By the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agriculture Service (USDA-FAS). This report finds that Austrian consumers perceive that America is trying to force them to consume genetically modified (GM) products rather than their own organic products. "Science-based pro-biotech discussions with government regulators provide no change in consumer opinions and thus no change in Austrian laws," the report says. The report concludes that Austrian consumer opinion must change in order for anti-GM laws to be changed. For further information see: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200310/145986564.pdf>.

"Europe Responds to UK's GM Field Trials," by Peter Mitchell in NATURE BIOTECHNOLOGY. This article discusses how European attitudes towards genetically modified (GM) crops will be affected by the recently released results of the U.K. Farm Scale Evaluation (FSE). It says that despite pressure from the European Commission to end the de facto moratorium on GM crops by May 2004, the decision of each European government depends more on the direction of public debate, relayed by national media coverage of the GM issue, than on the results of scientific studies.

DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW. By Philippe Cullet. (Ashgate Publishing, 2003). This book is a comprehensive study of differential treatment for developing countries in international environmental law. It offers an analysis of the legal dimension of the relationship between developed and developing countries in the environmental field and beyond. It first critically examines the principle of legal equality of states and then explores the conceptual framework behind the notion of differential treatment in international law and its relevance in bringing about substantive equality. The book examines the development of differentiation in international environmental law, considers its application in various environmental treaties and evaluates the legal status of existing differential norms. For further information see: www.ielrc.org

"Mutual Misgivings: Civil Society Inclusion in the Americas" By Yasmine Shamsie in VOICES -- THE RISE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL VOICES IN MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS. The author analyses the participation of Civil Society Organisations in the hemispheric-wide processes, providing essential background for those seeking to understand the dynamics in and around negotiations and in the streets. The document analyses the why, what, who, and how of government engagement with civil society organizations and raises issues for further debate. For further information see: http://www.nsi-ins.ca/ensi/news_views/news57.html

"International Law on Investment: The Minimum Standard of Treatment (MST)". By the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL). This is a briefing note analysing the minimum standard of treatment under international investment law. The note surveys the origins of the concept in international law, its incorporation in investment treaties, and its invocation by investors in the context of disputes with host governments (particularly under the NAFTA). For further information see: http://www.ciel.org/Publications/investment_10Nov03.pdf

CONSERVATION FARMING IN ZAMBIA. By Steven Haggblade and Gelson Tembo. (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Michigan State University). This report finds that conservation farming (CF) techniques used in Zambia appear to increase levels of agricultural productivity and farmer income. Results from a survey of 125 farms during the 2001/02 growing season show that maize yields for hand hoe farmers using CF techniques were double those of conventional ox-plow farmers. The report notes that part of this difference is likely due to greater use of agricultural inputs on CF farms, made possible through donor support. However, it says results from cotton farming provide a valuable contrast since all cotton farmers in the survey used the same inputs.

WTO DISCUSSION PAPERS NO. 2: IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF TRADE FINANCE DURING FINANCIAL CRISES. By the WTO. This discussion paper explores the reasons behind the failure by private markets and other institutions to meet demand for cross-border and domestic short-term trade finance during financial crises such as the one, which affected emerging economies in the 1990s. For further information: https://secure.vtx.ch/shop/boutiques/wto_index_boutique.asp?language=E&rayon=free_eng

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE WTO: LEARNING THE LESSONS OF CANCUN TO REVIVE A GENUINE DEVELOPMENT ROUND. By the House of Commons International Development Committee. The WTO's 5th Ministerial in Cancún, Mexico, collapsed on 14 September 2003 without reaching an agreement. This report tries to explain why it happened and points out the lessons that should be learned in the process such as: improvements in timing, organization and substance. For further information see: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmintdev/92/92.pdf>

"The WTO and the Cartagena Protocol: International Policy Coordination or Conflict?" by Grant E. Isaac in CURRENT AGRICULTURE, FOOD & RESOURCE ISSUES (4, 2003) 116-123. This article presents a case study of the implications of overlapping multilateral paradigms – the World Trade Organization and an MEA known as the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety – for international market access of biotechnology-based agri-food products. For further information, see: http://128.233.156.252/j_html/isaac4-1.htm

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