

To subscribe to *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, send a blank email to subscribe_biores@ictsd.ch

CONTENT

Biotechnology	1
European Commission Raises Issues Of Coexistence And GMO Approvals	
Water and Trade	3
Water-Trade Linkages In The Spotlight	
Fisheries	4
FAO Committee Focuses On Responsible Fishing and Fisheries Subsidies	
In Brief	5
Events & Resources	7

Biotechnology

EUROPEAN COMMISSION RAISES ISSUES OF COEXISTENCE AND GMO APPROVALS

The European Commission on 5 March released an internal communication on the co-existence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops. The communication sets out policy options to address the economic consequences of the accidental presence of GM crops in non-modified crops. Civil society groups accused the Commission of "dodging its responsibility" and called for "hard" legislations to be established.

In related news, the Commission informed the Council of Environment Ministers at its 4 March meeting that approvals of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) would be resumed, even though a decision on authorisations was not expected before autumn 2003. This would end the current "de facto" moratorium on approvals, which has come under increasingly strong criticism from the US and other GMO exporters.

Communication focuses on economic aspects of co-existence

The Commission's communication specifies two policy options for addressing coexistence, namely (1) implementing national-level measures with the advice of the Commission, or (2) legislative action at the Community level. The latter could include a broad framework with specific measures to be set at the national level, or detailed requirements developed at the Community level. In the view of the Commission, an approach based on "subsidiarity" -- along the lines of the first option where the Commission's role would be limited to coordinating and advisory functions -- would be most suitable.

Citing studies conducted by the EU Joint Research Centre and the Danish Working Group on co-existence, the Commission notes that the probability of admixture (i.e. the adventitious mixing of GM and non-GM crops resulting, inter alia, from seed impurities, cross-pollination and harvesting and storage practices) as

well as measures for reducing it were highly crop specific. Thus, while appropriate farm management measures were already being developed for most crops, some, mainly oilseed rape and to a lesser extent maize, would need significant changes in farming practices.

The communication stresses that measures to address co-existence relate "solely and exclusively to the economic consequences" resulting from the accidental crossover. These could include income losses for conventional and organic farmers who might have to sell their crops at a lower price because of the adventitious presence of GM crops. Similarly, the value of a GM crop might be lessened due to admixture with non-modified crops. The measures would not address environment or health concerns as these are already dealt with during the authorisation process.

The civil society groups Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth Europe and the European Environmental Bureau sharply criticised the Commission's preference for a national-level approach, calling for "clear and coherent EU legislation on co-existence". They also demanded that any costs associated with avoiding admixture should be borne by the GMO growers responsible for contamination. They thereby rejected the Commission's suggestion that the burden of co-existence measures "should fall on the economic operator (farmers, seed suppliers, etc.) that intends to gain a benefit from the specific cultivation model they have chosen", which they said would place the financial burden of avoiding contamination on growers of conventional and organic crops.

Approvals likely to resume later this year

The Commission's announcement that it would resume GMO authorisations, likely by autumn 2003, evoked mixed reactions in the Environment Council. While some member states insisted that labelling and traceability regulations would need to be in place before approvals can re-start, others supported the Commission's initiative arguing that the revised Directive 2001/18 on the environmental release of GMOs, which entered into force in October 2002, provided an adequate legal framework to move forward. Currently, 19 applications for new GMO products are pending, 10 for cultivation purposes and 9 for other uses.

The issue of whether the cultivation of GMOs could be banned at the national or sub-national level is also taken up in the Commission's communication on co-existence. Specifically, the communication notes that based on a preliminary legal assessment the Commission believes that establishing such GM-free areas would not be feasible since "the protection of economic interests alone cannot be invoked as a legally-valid justification for imposing such strong limitations on fundamental liberties". Local arrangements, however, were "always possible".

The Commission's communication and announcement might go some way towards alleviating the US' concerns over the continued de facto moratorium. The US has yet to decide whether to formally challenge the moratorium at the WTO, according to David Hegwood, special trade adviser at the US Department of Agriculture. This recent statement by Hegwood contradicts remarks by a US Embassy official in London, Peter Kurz, who had told the BBC that the US administration had decided against a challenge. "He's got no basis for saying that," Hegwood noted, adding that Kurz was "not privy to all the discussions that may be taking place in Washington".

Additional Resources

Questions and Answers on the regulation of GMOs in the EU,
[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action=gettxt=gt&doc=MEMO/02/160|0|RAPID&lg=EN&dis](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action=gettxt>&doc=MEMO/02/160|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)play=

"Scenarios for co-existence of genetically modified, conventional and organic crops in European agriculture," European Commission - Joint Research Centre, May 2002,
http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/download/GMCrops_coexistence.pdf

Report from the Working Group on the co-existence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic crops - Conclusion and Summary, January 2003, <http://www.fvm.dk/file/Summary.pdf>

"Commission addresses GM crop co-existence," EUROPEAN COMMISSION; 5 March 2003; "Co-existence of GMOs and non-GM agriculture: the EU Commission dodges its responsibility," EEB, FOEE, GREENPEACE, 3 March 2003; "EU heading for fierce debate on genetic contamination in agriculture," EURACTIV, 5 March 2003.

Water and Trade

WATER-TRADE LINKAGES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A number of experts came together in Geneva, Switzerland, on 3 March to identify and assess the interlinkages between freshwater and international trade law, with discussions ranging from geopolitical, trade and legal issues associated with transboundary exports of fresh water, to services and agriculture. Participants agreed that water was a unique good, possibly even "sacred," due to the impossibility of finding substitutes, and commented that this feature heightened the sensitivity of action and called into question the role of bodies such as the WTO in the area.

Civil society groups have repeatedly raised concerns regarding the water-trade linkages, particularly in the context of negotiations on environmental services in the WTO. Most recently, they levelled their criticism at the EU for including certain water services in the liberalisation requests submitted to its trading partners.

Water exports - a 'good' under GATT?

Professor Edith Brown Weiss from the Georgetown University Law Centre noted that it was still unclear whether bulk water exports involving the public and/or the private sector qualified as a 'good' and were consequently covered by the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). If the Agreement did apply, there was further uncertainty as to how it might impact the sector. She pointed out that the GATT could cover the various possible forms of water transfer, but that another interpretation would require that the resource must undergo some kind of change to become a product. One participant believed that the lack of clarity regarding the ownership of fresh water could complicate the application of the GATT further, or mean that the Agreement did not apply to this area at all. Brown Weiss stressed that regardless of the uncertainty that surrounded fresh water under the GATT, markets for this resource were already beginning to be established in different countries around the world.

Nathalie Bernasconi Osterwalder from the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) discussed the relationship between water and agriculture, and particularly focused on the environmental damage inadvertently caused by irrigation subsidies, such as excessive water use and cropland salinisation. She noted that while the WTO Agreement on Agriculture includes reduction(s) in both the developed and less developed world's subsidies, these reductions could be spread out, and target specific areas or products. As such, the CIEL lawyer said this option of selectivity could become a problem if the overall objective is the decrease of irrigation subsidies.

The Workshop on Freshwater and International Trade Law was co-hosted by the Graduate Institute of International Studies, the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva and Institute for International Economic Law at the Georgetown University Law Center.

Water services feature in EU's services offer and requests

The European Commission has incorporated water for human use and wastewater management, including water collection, purification, and distribution services in several requests submitted to its trading partners in the context of the current round of trade negotiations. The Commission however, stressed that "this sub-sector only concerns the distribution of water through mains" and "excludes any cross-border transportation...and does not imply access to water resources." Regarding further liberalisation of the EU's

own services sector, the European Commission proposed in its draft offer under the category 'environmental services' that "access to foreign providers of waste water, sanitation and similar services, who wish to establish in the European Union, is allowed" (most Member States already committed these services during the Uruguay Round).

Civil society groups have voiced strong opposition to the liberalisation of the water sector in general and have specifically pushed the EU to leave basic public services untouched. Friends of the Earth Europe expressed concern that sector liberalisation could strengthen the already dominant positions of certain European corporations, such as Suez, Vivendi, Thames Water/RWE and SAUR. The group, along with other environmental and development groups and trade unions around the world, called for the GATS negotiations to be suspended immediately to allow for assessment of the effects of liberalising trade in services, both in the North and the South and to make room for an open debate on the desirability of such liberalisation.

The groups are particularly concerned about the mandate adopted at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in November 2001 to negotiate on the "reduction or, as appropriate, elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services". They fear that this mandate could open the door to the liberalisation of water services, which they regard as fundamental public services. "Everything from your town's municipal drinking water to the local electricity utility to the US postman are headed for sale on some Geneva 'trade' negotiating table," warned consumer group Public Citizen's Lori Wallach.

Background: International Year of Fresh Water

The UN has proclaimed 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater and has encouraged governments, the UN system and all other actors to work to improve the awareness of management, protection, and sustainable use of freshwater. This week the UN has released a report on freshwater stating that we are "destroying ecosystems which play an essential role in filtering and assuring freshwater resources". Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO warned, "if we fail to react (in dealing with the water crisis), this could jeopardise the future of these resources and with it, the quality of life, and even the survival, of future generations". The report will be formally presented at the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan this month.

Additional Resources

For further information on the International Year of Freshwater, see:

http://www.wateryear2003.org/ev.php?URL_ID=1456&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201

For further information on GATS and the EU's negotiating documents, see: <http://www.gatswatch.org>.

ICTSD Reporting; "About Water Year 2003," UNESCO, 2003; "Summary of the Commission's Proposal For the EU's Services Offer," EUROPEAN COMMISSION, July 2002; "UN: World Water Crisis Due to Leadership Inertia," ENS, 5 March 2003; "Friends Of The Earth Europe Bulletin," FoEE, March 2003.

Fisheries

FAO COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON RESPONSIBLE FISHING AND FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

On 24-28 February, government officials and experts met in Rome for the 25th meeting of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to review a report on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Related International Plans of Action. Food security, illegal fishing, sustainable fisheries management and fisheries subsidies were among the issues discussed.

The meeting, organised by COFI under the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), focused in particular on strategies for increasing the role and sustainability of small-scale fisheries with regard to food security and poverty alleviation. It also considered the implementation of an ecosystems approach to

fisheries management in an effort to restore fisheries resources in marine environments. In this context, the Japanese delegation presented its preliminary findings from a whale research programme, arguing that whales consume large volumes of fish and undermine fisheries conservation efforts -- and ultimately world food security. In light of the research findings, the Japanese delegation urged the committee to continue its work on implementing an ecosystem model to manage fisheries and take into account the competition between marine mammals and fisheries. A number of other delegations requested the committee to increase its work on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) and to strengthen regional fisheries management organisations.

Another subject discussed during the meeting was the role of the FAO and COFI with regards to fisheries subsidies. Participants reaffirmed the coordinating role the FAO holds on fisheries subsidies among intergovernmental institutions, and furthermore supported COFI in analysing the impacts fisheries subsidies can have on the sustainability of marine resources, on alleviating poverty and on fostering food security. However, while acknowledging the important roles of FAO and COFI in this area, countries also urged the committee not to block progress in the negotiations on fishing subsidies in the WTO. Developing countries furthermore highlighted the importance of positive subsidies for development and the need for special and differential treatment. The meeting also acknowledged the need to categorise the effects of subsidies on the environment and to conduct further work on this issue.

At the end of the meeting Japan announced its financial support for the next meeting of the committee to be held in early 2004, which will focus on IUU issues as well as on fisheries subsidies.

Additional Resources

For further information, see <http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/cofi/cofi25/default.asp>.

ICTSD reporting; "Fish consumption by marine mammals concerns Japan" SCOOP Media, 28 February, 2003. "Strong support for firmer action against IUU fishing," FAO, 3 March, 2003.

In Brief

US BANS SHRIMP IMPORTS OVER CONCERNS FOR TURTLES

On Thursday the US State Department announced that it would bar some shrimp imports from Honduras and Venezuela, which are not meeting the US requirements. US law bans imports of shrimp harvested in such a way that it harms turtles, unless a country has a "sea turtle protection program" or has a fishing environment not posing a threat to turtles. The US requires countries to use sea turtle "excluder devices" to prevent turtles from drowning in shrimp trawls. Shrimp harvested by "artisanal" and other methods may still be imported. The US hopes that the ban will only be temporary and said that it might send teams to the two countries to confirm that adequate measures were taken to protect sea turtles.

The harmful effect of fishing on sea turtles made headlines when the leatherback sea turtle -- one of the oldest and widest-ranging marine animals -- was found to be under threat of extinction. Amongst other factors, these turtles get caught by gill nets and long-lines used for fishing tuna and swordfish. The leatherback turtles, which have existed for the last 100 million years, could become extinct within the next 10 to 20 years. In response to this threat, conservationists have begun to put pressure on the international fish markets through consumer information.

"Turtle hurtles towards extinction," GUARDIAN, 27 March, 2003; "US raps Venezuela, Honduras for harming sea turtles," REUTERS, 10 March, 2003

FAO STRESSES NEED TO BRIDGE 'MOLECULAR DIVIDE'

The Assistant Director-General and Head of the Agriculture Department of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Louise Fresco, in a statement issued on 18 February warned of a "molecular divide", noting that the promises and potential of biotechnology were not equally shared between developing and developed countries. She added that the "gap between rich and poor farmers, between research priorities and needs, and between technology development and actual technology transfer, is widening". To bridge this divide, Fresco said, "biotechnology must be redirected to address the pressing needs of the poor and the new requirement for food quality and quantity and new agriculture products". This should include investment in research for crops of importance to the developing world, including sorghum, millet, pigeon pea, chickpea and groundnut, which have so far been neglected. She also stressed that biotechnology was only one way to increase food quality and quantity and that it must form part of existing integrated approaches, not replace them.

"FAO warns of 'molecular divide' between North and South," FAO, 18 February 2003.

WORK ON GLOBAL CONSERVATION TRUST GETS UNDERWAY

The interim Panel of Eminent Experts for the Establishment of the Global Conservation Trust met for the first time on 25-26 February to discuss the work plan of the Global Conservation Trust. Specifically, they considered legal options and rules of governance of the Trust and drafted ethical guidelines for the receipt, management and disbursement of funds. The Trust, which was spearheaded by the Future Harvest Centre of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), aims to conserve the world's seed varieties and protect crop diversity from natural disasters, war and other threats. "[The] gene bank in Afghanistan, like so many others, probably contained plant varieties that are already extinct in the wild and which now may be lost forever," said Geoffrey Hawtin, director general of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). Independent experts and scientists plan to raise USD 260 million to maintain seed banks and to duplicate seed stores in different countries. So far, the US, Switzerland, Egypt, Colombia, the UN and Gatsby Foundations have donated USD 25 million.

"Interview-UN backs fund to save biodiversity," REUTERS, 5 March, 2003; "International drive to safeguard world's seed collections," IPGRI, 4 March 2003.

BIODIVERSITY MEETING FOCUSES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AFTER JO'BURG

On 2-4 March, 160 representatives from governments, international organisations, NGOs, academia and the private sector convened in London to discuss the linkages between biodiversity and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Delegates met in four working groups to discuss and formulate recommendations on: poverty, hunger and biodiversity; health and biodiversity; water, sanitation, urban poverty and biodiversity; and MDG 8 (building a global partnerships). The latter group focused on how the pursuit of the MGD 8 on aid trade and debt might undermine biodiversity. Regarding market access, the group agreed that new mechanisms for sustainable natural resource management should be integrated into the WTO Doha round of negotiations. The group furthermore stressed the need to redirect OECD agriculture subsidies and to develop tools for valuing biodiversity services. During the final plenary, Jeffrey McNeely from IUCN - The World Conservation Union stressed the need for broader political support and outreach to other international forums and institutions such as the WTO.

The meeting was organised by the Equator Initiative, RSPB, The Nature Conservancy, UNDP, UNEP-WCMC and DFID UK. For further information see <http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/secondary/biodiversity.htm>. The second meeting of the 'Biodiversity after Johannesburg' initiative will be held on 21-23 May to discuss the target of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

"Biodiversity after Johannesburg: The Critical Role of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals," ENB vol. 81, no. 1, 5 March, 2003.

Events & Resources

Events

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at <http://www.ictsd.org/html/calendar.htm>. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies.

Coming up in the next two weeks

10 - 14 March, Montreal, Canada: EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CBD SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE (SBSTTA-8). For further information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: (51-4) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?wg=SBSTTA-08>

10 - 14 March, Rome, Italy: 16TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY. Organised by U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. For further information, contact: tel: (39) 06-57051; fax: 5705-3152; email: fao-hq@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/unfao/bodies/cofo/cofo16/cofo16-e.htm>

10 - 14 March, Rome, Italy: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS OF FORESTS (CPF). Organised by U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. For further information, contact: Mr. Jacques Diouf; tel: (39) 06-57051; fax: 06-5705-3152; email: fao-hq@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org>

10 - 21 March, Nairobi, Kenya: ACTION MONITORING FOR EFFECTIVENESS: IMPROVING COMMUNITY-BASED WATER AND SANITATION PROJECTS. Organised by the Network for Water and Sanitation (NEWAS), this course introduces approaches to participatory monitoring within communities and agencies. It emphasises the utilisation of monitoring information, particularly at the lowest levels where action can be taken. For further information, contact: tel: (1 254-2) 890-555/6/7; fax: 890-553/4; email: netwas@nbnet.co.ke; Internet: <http://www.netwasgroup.com/courses/courses?year=2003&id=3>

11 - 14 March, Yokohama, Japan: AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON FOOD DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY, 4th SESSION. For further information, contact: tel: (39-06) 57051; fax: 5705-4593; email: Codex@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccfbt4/bt03_01e.htm

14 March, Geneva, Switzerland: A NEW CONSTELLATION: SPS, TBT AND THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS IN LIGHT OF THE HORMONES AND SARDINES CASES. This event will be held at the Faculty of Law, University of Geneva, and include presentations by Alejandro Gamboa-Alder, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade and Environment Division, WTO, and Arthur E. Appleton and Veijo Heiskanen, Attorneys, Lalive and Partners. For further information, contact: Urs Thomas, tel: (41-22) 705-8491; email: urs.thomas@droit.unige.ch.

14 - 15 March, Brussels, Belgium: CITIZENS' PARLIAMENT ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION. The Brussels Institute for the Management of the Environment, together with the Consumer Organisations Research and Information Centre is organising this international event, which aims to promote changes in consumer behaviour in Europe. The Citizens' Parliament will provide a platform to exchange information and learn from projects, both private and public, local and regional. For further information, contact: IBGE-BIM Secretariat; tel: (32-2) 775-7575; fax: 775-7621; email: info@ibgebim.be; Internet: <http://www.ibgebim.be/EVENTS/ENG/CitizensParliament/index.htm>

15 March, Montreal, Canada: JOINT MEETING OF THE COP BUREAU AND ICCP BUREAU. Organised by Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. For further information, contact the CBD Secretariat; tel: (5-14) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>

16 - 23 March, Kyoto, Japan: THIRD WORLD WATER FORUM. This international event organised by the World Water Forum seeks to, inter alia: raise the importance of water on the political agenda; support the deepening of discussions towards the solution of international water issues in the 21st century; formulate concrete proposals and bring their importance to the world's attention; generate political commitment; and provide space not only for expression of opinions in each individual sector, but also for discussions across sectors and regions. A Ministerial Conference will be held during the Forum, where Ministers will work towards framing and adopting a political declaration concerning global water problems. For further information, contact: the Forum Secretariat; tel: (81-3) 5212-1645; fax: email: office@water-forum3.com; Internet: <http://www.worldwaterforum.org>

17 - 18 March, McGill University, Montreal, Canada: GREENING THE FTAA? TOWARDS THE PROTECTION OF ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY IN OUR HEMISPHERE. Organised by Environmental Law McGill. This international conference will highlight issues of environmental governance and sustainable development in the context of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations. For further information, contact: William Amos; tel: (5-14) 845-3605; fax: (514) 425-2021; email: wamos@po-box.mcgill.ca; Internet: <http://www.law.mcgill.ca/elmftaaconference>

17 - 20 March, Montreal, Canada: CBD OPEN-ENDED INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING ON THE MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES UP TO 2010. Ad hoc inter-sessional meeting on the multi-year programme of work of the CBD Conference of the Parties, for further information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: (5-14) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?wg=MYPOW-01>

19 - 21 March, Orlando, Florida: SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS. The Global Environmental Management Initiative (GEMI) is hosting a conference on partnerships that promote sustainability in order to identify and assess emerging issues vital to achieving a sustainable world while maintaining business growth, and develop options and approaches to solving related problems amongst other issues. For further information, contact: GEMI; tel: (2-15) 428-9655, fax: 428-9652; email: gemiconference@rdinc.net; Internet: <http://www.gemi.org/docs/GEMI2003conf.htm>

20 March, Geneva, Switzerland: COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

20 - 21 March, Geneva, Switzerland: DEVELOPMENTS IN WTO LAW. This conference, organised by the International Bar Association, will cover current WTO activities, focusing in particular on issues relating to the Doha round and dispute settlement. For further information, contact: IBA; tel: (+44-20) 7629-1206; fax: 7491-4460; email: iba@int-bar.org; Internet: <http://www.ibanet.org/general/ConferenceOverview.asp?ID=655&Section=&Committee>

Other forthcoming events

23 - 27 March, Zurich, Switzerland: FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE OF AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS. Following the World Day for Water in the International Year of Freshwater, the fifth ICEF will assess threats to resilience and likely changes in 21 major aquatic systems over the next 25 years. For further information, contact: Christiane Rapin Nussbaumer, Swiss Federal Institute for Environmental Science and Technology; tel: (41-1) 823-5336; fax: 823-5315; email: icef@eawag.ch; Internet: <http://www.icef.eawag.ch/>

24 - 25 March, Geneva, Switzerland: SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

24 - 27 March, Manila, Philippines: SECOND INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL MARINE ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM. Organised by International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). This event plans to provide an opportunity for managers to engage in multidisciplinary discussions and sharing of experiences and lessons learned to identify gaps and priorities for future management action. For further information, contact: Mr. Robert S. Jara, International Coral Reef Initiative; tel: (63-2) 925-8275; fax: 926-2693; email: secretariat@icriforum.org; Internet: http://tools.coralreef.org/calendar/item.tcl?calendar_id=680

24 - 28, March 2003 in Florence, Italy: ADVANCED RESEARCH AND PROCEDURES IN BIOSAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASE OF GMOs. Organised by the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) and the Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare (IAO). For further information, contact: Ms. Chiara Villanovich; tel: (39-040) 375-7345; fax: 22-6555; email: courses@icgeb.org; Internet: http://www.icgeb.trieste.it/TRAINING/CRS03/BSF_Florence.htm

26-28 & 31 March, Geneva, Switzerland: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (special and regular sessions). For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

31 March - 3 April, Beijing, China: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CLIMATE CHANGE. Organised by China Meteorological Administration. This event plans to assess an assortment of climate change issues. For further information, contact: Dr. Dahe Qin; tel: (86-10) 6840-6424; fax: 6217-5928; email: ISCC@cma.gov.cn; Internet: <http://www.cma.gov.cn/tongzhi.htm>

31 March - 4 April, Rome, Italy: SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. Organised by U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. For further information, contact: Mr. Eric Kueneman; tel: (39-06) 5704-4930; email: Eric.Kueneman@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/unfao/bodies/coag/coag17/coag17-e.htm>

1 April, New York, USA: BIODIPLOMACY: GENETIC RESOURCES, GMOs AND INTERNATIONAL POLICYMAKING. Organised by the United Nations University. For further information, contact: Prof A.H. Zakri; tel: (81-3) 5467-2323; fax: 5467-2324; email: zakri@ias.unu.edu; Internet: <http://www.ias.unu.edu>

2 - 3 April, Geneva, Switzerland: COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

3 April, Oslo, Norway: MEDICINAL PLANTS: ACCESS, USE AND BENEFIT SHARING IN LIGHT OF THE CBD. Organised by University of Oslo. The event will examine and advance the elaboration of critical terms and concepts of the CBD related to access to genetic resources and benefit sharing. For further information, contact: Ms. Alida Jay Boye, University of Oslo; tel: (47) 2285-8900; fax: 2285-8920; email: alida.boy@sum.uio.no; Internet: <http://www.sum.uio.no/bioprospecting/cbd.html>

4 - 6 April, Duke University, USA: INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC GOODS AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY AFTER THE TRIPS AGREEMENT OF 1994. Organised by the Center for the Study of the Public Domain at Duke Law School. This major conference will focus the attention of leading economic and legal scholars on the bigger picture that is emerging from the upward harmonization of international intellectual property rights (IPRs) since the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of 1994. For further information, contact: Lynn Martin; tel: (9-19) 613-7206; email: martin@law.duke.edu; Internet: <http://www.law.duke.edu/trips/index.html>

4 - 6 April, St. Louis, USA: BIODIVERSITY, BIOTECHNOLOGY, AND THE PROTECTION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. The event organised by the Washington University School of Law will gather key individuals and parties to discuss the protection of biodiversity, the protection and regulation of agricultural and plant biotechnology, and the international intellectual property implications of both, with

particular attention to the protection of traditional knowledge and other intellectual property mechanisms of interest to the developing world. For further information, contact: tel: (3-14) 935-7988; fax: 935-7961; email: IGLS@wulaw.wustl.edu; Internet: <http://law.wustl.edu/igls/>

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy for review by the BRIDGES staff to Heike Baumüller, hbaumuller@ictsd.ch.

INDIA'S PLANT VARIETY AND FARMERS' RIGHTS LEGISLATION: POTENTIAL IMPACT ON STAKEHOLDER ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES. By Anitha Ramanna, January 2003. This piece looks at how developing countries may attempt to fulfil demands to extend intellectual property protection for agriculture in their countries and also protect breeders and farmers' rights. It examines whether or not the distribution of ownership rights to multiple stakeholders could create a threat of an "anticommons" and looks at other potential effects. This exercise is carried out in India. Available at <http://www.ifpri.org/divs/eptd/dp/papers/eptdp96.pdf>.

SEEDS OF CONCERN: THE GENETIC MANIPULATION OF PLANTS. By D A Murray, January 2003. This book addresses the debate concerning implications and applications of gene technology, examining the situation from a plant biologist's perspective. The author attempts to answer various questions regarding GMOs, from how they are produced to which breeding goals are worth undertaking. For further information, see: http://www.cabi-publishing.org/Bookshop/book_detail.asp?isbn=0851997252.

"Equitably Sharing Benefits from the Utilization of Natural Genetic Resources: The Brazilian Interpretation of the Convention on Biological Diversity" by J. Peña-Neira, C. Dieperink and H. Addink in the **ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE LAW** 6(3), October 2002. This paper examines how Brazil has interpreted and applied the provisions of equitable and fair benefit-sharing laid out in the Convention on Biological Diversity. Available at <http://www.ejcl.org/63/art63-2.html>.

Courses

KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT EXECUTIVE PROGRAM ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION POLICY. This program provides high-level leaders from government, academia, industry and civil society with a unique opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and strengthen their ability to integrate science and technology into national development policy. The program will take place from 30 November - 12 December, at Harvard University. For further information, contact: Kathy Eckroad; tel: (617) 495-1101; fax: 496-4474; email: kathy_eckroad@harvard.edu; Internet: www.execprog.org.

Electronic Resources

MILKING IT: SMALL FARMERS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, A GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP RESOURCE. Oxfam. This site includes farmers' stories, discusses major issues and international organisations involved in the area of small farmers and international trade. It also provides links to other resources. For further information, see: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/milkingit/index.htm>.

FORESTS.ORG - IMPROVED FOREST, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY WEBSITE. Forests.org, Inc., February 2003. This improved site has more original commentary and increased capacity for web searches. For further information, contact: Glen Barry; tel: (1 608) 213-9224; email: gbarry@forests.org. Internet: <http://www.forests.org/>.

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

BRIDGES Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org>, in collaboration with IUCN - World Conservation Union, <http://www.iucn.org>, and IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, CEESP, <http://www.cenesta.org/ceesp/>. This edition of *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* was edited by Heike Baumüller, hbaumullern@ictsd.ch. Contributors to this issue were Jordan Gold and Marianne Jacobsen. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 13, ch. des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editors or the Director. *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* is made possible in 2003 through the generous support of the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment (Netherlands) and the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL). It also benefits from ICTSD's core funders: the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK), the Rockefeller Foundation, MISEREOR, NOVIB (NL), Oxfam (UK) and the Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations (Switzerland). ISSN 1682-0843

To subscribe to *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, please send a blank email to subscribe_biores@ictsd.ch.

To become a member of the CEESP Working Group on Environment, Trade and Investment, please send an email to: mjacobsen@ictsd.ch