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Biodiversity

BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION INTEGRATES WSSD OUTCOMES INTO WORK PROGRAMME

Sustainable development-related issues featured strongly at the 17-20 March Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work for the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada. Building on the political momentum created by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the meeting focused, inter alia, on the international regime for access and benefit sharing, legal and socio-economic aspects of technology transfer, and the CBD's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

Legal nature of benefit-sharing regime remains controversial

Delegates focused most of their attention on the WSSD mandate to negotiate "within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, bearing in mind the Bonn Guidelines [on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilisation], an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources". Among the more straightforward issues was a decision to broaden the mandate to include 'access' in addition to benefit-sharing, which was adopted without any major controversy.

Debates on the legal nature of the regime, however, saw similar divisions among countries, as had been apparent in Johannesburg. Many developing countries, including Mexico on behalf of the Like-minded Group of Megadiverse countries, called for a legally binding regime based on the Bonn Guidelines, arguing that a voluntary regime would not guarantee fair and equitable benefit-sharing. The US reiterated its view that WSSD had deliberately left out the term "legally binding" from the Plan of Implementation, which

indicated that the regime would be voluntary. Several countries, including Canada, Australia and the EU, stressed the need to take into account related processes in other forums, such as the WTO, WIPO and FAO, in an effort to ensure coherence and avoid overlap. Canada, supported by Japan, Norway and Switzerland, called for work on applying and assessing the implementation of the Bonn Guidelines at the national level before starting negotiations on the international regime.

In the end, countries instructed the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing at its next meeting on 1-5 December 2003 to consider the process, nature, scope, elements and modalities of an international regime and provide advice to COP-7 (19-30 April 2004 in Malaysia). In support of this work, they invited countries to provide information on experiences gained when implementing the Bonn Guidelines and, along with indigenous and local communities and relevant organisations, to submit their views on process, nature, scope, elements and modalities of a possible regime.

Strong emphasis on sustainable development in CBD's work

A strong focus on sustainable development-related issues as raised by the WSSD characterised the decisions adopted at the meeting. This included a request for the CBD's Executive Secretary to assess the relevance of the MDGs for the CBD's work and explore how in each programme of work biodiversity conservation and sustainable use could facilitate the achievement of the Goals. In addition, the decision on the multi-year programme of work up to 2010 highlighted the need to consider priorities identified by the WSSD, including inter alia "poverty alleviation, human health [and] sustainable communities and livelihoods", in the context of the CBD's existing programmes. Each COP until 2010 should assess as an explicit agenda item the state of progress regarding the Convention's 2010 targets and the MDGs.

On technology transfer -- one of the priority issues at COP-7 -- the meeting instructed the Executive Secretary to analyse the information contained in the thematic report on this issue submitted by Parties and provide a report to the upcoming COP. The meeting furthermore invited WIPO to further explore and analyse the role of intellectual property rights in technology transfer in the CBD context. Developed countries were invited to provide the necessary incentives that would facilitate technology transfer, while developing countries were asked to create an enabling legal, administrative and policy environment to facilitate foreign investment and promote South-South cooperation.

In related developments, the apparent momentum created by the WSSD towards a greater focus on sustainable development was also apparent in the CBD Secretariat's decision to change the theme of the International Day of Biodiversity 2003 (22 May). Rather than focusing on "mountain biodiversity", the day will now be devoted to focusing on "Biodiversity and poverty alleviation - challenges for sustainable development".

The meeting documents are available at: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?wg=MYPOW-01>.

For daily coverage, see IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/biodiv/mypow/>.

ICTSD reporting; ENB Vol. 9 No. 256, 24 March 2003.

Water and Trade

PEOPLES' WATER FORUM MILES FROM WORLD WATER FORUM

Two World Forums convened in March to discuss issues related to water. The Third World Water Forum from 16-23 March in Japan focused on water as a driving force for sustainable development, while an alternative People's World Water Forum, held from 21-22 March in Florence, Italy, highlighted, inter alia, the impact of trade liberalisation on water services. The two Forums were not only miles apart from each other geographically but also in terms of their focus and conclusions.

In the meantime, the ten-plus WTO Members that met the 31 March deadline for submitting their initial services offers to the WTO have stayed clear of water supply services, focusing instead on wastewater management.

Two Forums -- two conclusions

The Third World Water Forum in Japan was attended by more than 24,000 delegates from all over the world, discussing 38 interlocking themes dealing with water. They focused in particular on water resource management and benefit sharing; safe drinking water and sanitation; water for food and rural development; and water pollution prevention and ecosystem conservation. In the (preliminary) Forum statement, delegates stressed the need to balance increasing human requirements for adequate water supplies and improved health and sanitation with food production, transportation, energy and environmental needs. To achieve this, they noted the need for more effective governance, improved capacity and adequate financing.

Various civil society groups expressed disappointment with the Forum's outcome, which they said did not pay enough attention to a number of controversial issues raised by water experts. The environmental group WWF regretted that the forum did not prioritise the conservation of freshwater but rather emphasised the need for more water and energy infrastructure, including more dams, in order to meet the growing water demand. "We have to ask how credible a forum like this is when governments do not draw on the [more than] 12,000 water specialists gathered together to identify common sense solutions to water problems, but instead continue to promote massive infrastructure as the sole solution to the world's water crisis", said Jamie Pittock, Director of WWF's Living Water Programme. NGOs were also disappointed that although this was the most debated issue during the conference, no references were made to the linkages between trade liberalisation and ongoing WTO negotiations and water services.

In contrast, the trade-water linkage was one of the key issues discussed at the first Peoples' World Water Forum in Italy where participants examined requests made under the WTO General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) negotiations for countries to open their water markets to private service providers. Meeting participants criticised the ongoing GATS negotiations as a first step toward privatising global water supplies, making water another resource to be "bought, sold and monopolised by wealthy nations and corporations". In a move to reverse this trend, trade campaigning groups promised to escalate their 'take services out of the WTO' campaign before and after the September 2003 WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico.

Little reference to water in services offers at WTO

As part of the services negotiations at the WTO, a few countries have recently submitted their initial offers of services liberalisation, adhering to an end-March deadline. According to the negotiating mandate adopted at Doha in 2001, "participants shall submit initial requests for specific commitments by 30 June 2002 and initial offers by 31 March 2003". The countries presenting their offers to the Council on Trade in Services by the deadline -- mainly developed countries -- included Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US. The EU was not yet able to agree on its offer, but is expected to present it over the next few weeks. The WTO Secretariat indicated it expected offers to trickle in up until the next WTO Ministerial in September.

With regard to water services, countries have been wary of including water supply services in their offers. Australia, while including wastewater management, stressed that "Australia will not be making any offers in the areas of public health, public education or the ownership of water". The US offer also covers wastewater management, but excludes water for human use and sanitation and similar services. Canada only includes sanitation and similar services and New Zealand's offer covers sewage services under wastewater management. While many countries -- both developed and developing -- are interested in the current services negotiations, developing countries have seen no rush in this area, as other negotiating deadlines essential to their interest, such as intellectual property and health, special and differential treatment and agriculture, have lapsed. To date, only about 30-plus developing countries have presented their services requests and none have presented offers.

Regarding the requests submitted by countries in June 2002, the EU included certain water services in their liberalisation requests, such as water for human use and wastewater management, including water collection, purification, and distribution services. The European 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". Civil society groups have specifically pushed the Commission to

leave basic public services untouched when drafting the EU offers (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 10 March 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-10/story2.htm>).

Additional Resources

Third World Water Forum: <http://www.world.water-forum3.com/>

Daily reporting of the Forum: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/sd/3wwf/>.

WTO services offers available at <http://www.ictsd.org/issarea/services/index.htm>.

"Governments plunge backwards at World Water Forum," WWF, 23 March 2003; "World Water Forum ends with important commitments but vague declaration," EurActive, 25 March 2003; "Forum Bulletin," ENB, 23 March 2003.

Agriculture

AGRICULTURE MODALITIES: DEADLINE MISSED, EYES NOW ON CANCUN

During a 31 March wrap-up meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture (CoA), Chair Stuart Harbinson formally declared that Members' efforts to agree on agricultural modalities by the end-March deadline had failed. Nevertheless, Harbinson said he would continue consultations on technical issues such as tariff formulas and Strategic Products for developing countries after the mid-April Easter break, and that further CoA special sessions had been scheduled for June and July. While Harbinson is hoping to have the modalities established before the next WTO Ministerial meeting in Cancun (September), some sources noted that it is more than unlikely that modalities could be agreed before trade ministers meet in Mexico.

Harbinson made clear that Members would have to work even harder in the coming period to develop the basis and framework for the necessary compromises. "To achieve this will require greater appreciation by all sides of the sensitivities and expectations of others," he added. At a news conference following the formal plenary session, Harbinson further declared that the "ball is clearly in Members' court now," as he felt that he had done all he could in terms of hammering out a draft compromise text for possible modalities. "I need a clearer signal from Members that they are in a more receptive mood to have another look at a new piece of paper," he added.

The US blamed Members such as the EU and Japan for the failure. Hinting at the internal EU mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) starting in June this year, the statement called on EU member states to endorse the CAP reform proposals presented last year by EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler (see BRIDGES Weekly, 17 July 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-07-17/story3.htm>) so as to "give the [European] Commission more flexibility to meet the mandate of the 'Doha Development Round'". Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile also lashed out at the EU, blaming it for "continuing to oppose efforts to bring about genuine reform of agricultural trade".

The EU, however, countered that it had done its homework with regard to moving the WTO agriculture talks. "The EU modalities proposal represents a middle way between extreme positions," EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler said. Fischler also defended the EU's major use of export subsidies, stating that "bogus food aid," export credits (both mainly used by the US), and the pricing practices of certain state trading enterprises" (as in the case of Australia) also would have trade-distorting effects.

ICTSD reporting; "Agriculture: trade diplomats downplay impact of missed deadline in WTO agriculture negotiations," WTO REPORTER, 1 April 2003; "Australia blames EU, Japan for missed WTO farm deadline," DOW JONES, 1 April 2003; "WTO farm talks: 'We will plough on', Fischler says," EU PRESS RELEASE; "European Union to challenge Australia's protectionist food import regime at WTO," EU PRESS RELEASE.

Fisheries

FISHERIES SUBSIDIES: DEEP DIVISIONS PERSIST IN WTO

Meeting from 19-20 March, the WTO Negotiating Group on Rules considered a new US paper on fisheries subsidies. Similar to the "Friends of Fish" submission tabled by Argentina, Chile, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Peru at the last Rules Negotiating Group meeting (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 February 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-02-21/story2.htm>), the US submission was intended as a move from simply reviewing the problem of fisheries subsidies to considering possible solutions. Following the usual pattern, Korea and Japan took a different view with Korea presenting its own submission on this issue.

The US paper (TN/RL/W/77) raises several ideas for initial discussion, including expanding the category of prohibited "red light" subsidies under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures to include fisheries subsidies that "directly promote overcapacity and over-fishing, or have other direct trade-distorting effects". It further suggests creating a "dark amber" category of fisheries subsidies that would be presumed to be harmful, unless the subsidising government could demonstrate that the subsidy did not lead to overcapacity or over-fishing, nor other adverse trade effects. The paper also proposes improved notifications of fisheries subsidy programmes under WTO rules.

Ambassador Linnet Deily, presenting the US paper at the meeting, said Members had "an historic opportunity" to harness trade liberalisation in order to advance sustainable development. The US estimates global fishing subsidies at US\$10-\$15 billion a year. Deily called for closer cooperation with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and NGOs in the ongoing WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies.

While the paper received support from Norway, Peru, Iceland, Chile, Australia, Argentina, EC, New Zealand, the Philippines and Mauritius, Korea continued to take another approach. In its submission (TN/RL/W/69), Korea questioned the need for a categorisation of fisheries subsidies as suggested by the "Friends of Fish" group, calling on Members to "present clear views on the necessity and the objective of the categorisation to the satisfaction of all Members of the rules negotiation". Korea furthermore noted that categorisation should be carried out by FAO and the OECD, given their longer and deeper institutional experiences in the study of fishery subsidy issues in comparison with the Rules Negotiating Group.

Japan supported Korea, while China supported the US proposal, stressing, however, that fish farming should not be included under new rules. The EU is taking a low profile in the negotiations for the time being, as its internal fisheries reform is ongoing, but is expected to submit its own paper on fisheries subsidies to the WTO in May. A representative of an environmental NGO indicated support for the US paper, noting that the debate in the Rules Negotiating Group was moving beyond the issue of the Group's mandate to concrete proposals on how to address fisheries subsidies.

WTO documents are searchable at <http://docsonline.wto.org>.

ICTSD reporting; "U.S. wants tougher trade rules for fish subsidies," REUTERS, 20 March 2003; "U.S. Proposes Tougher WTO Disciplines on Fishing Subsidies," REUTERS, 21 March 2003.

In Brief

STARK DIFFERENCES APPARENT OVER OUTLOOK FOR CAP REFORM

The European Commission's January 2003 reform proposal for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP, see BRIDGES Trade BioRes; 7 February 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-02-07/story1.htm>) is expected to favour the extensification of production and secure significant income gains for EU farmers, according to two new impact analyses published by DG Agriculture. This would result from implementing the Commission's proposed decoupling scheme, which would lead to a severing of the link between production and subsidy. The resulting improvement of production efficiency is expected to benefit both existing and new EU member states.

A recent report published by Consumers International on the global impact of the CAP, however, is far less optimistic. The report contends that the Commission's proposals are "too limited and too gradual to prevent a large reduction of the well-being of EU citizens in the next decade" resulting from extending the CAP to new members states. Rather than benefiting accession states, the CAP is expected to make food more expensive in these countries, where incomes are already lower than in the current EU. The report furthermore notes that the CAP is damaging the interests of developing countries, especially through the export of heavily subsidised surplus produce and import restrictions.

Additional Resources

"Reform Of The Common Agricultural Policy: A Long-Term Perspective For Sustainable Agriculture - Impact Analysis", European Commission DG Agriculture, March 2003, http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/publi/reports/reformimpact/index_en.htm.

"Cultivating a Crisis: The Global Impact of the Common Agricultural Policy", Consumers International, March 2003, http://www.consumersinternational.org/document_store/Doc341.doc.

BRAZIL GOVERNMENT AUTHORISES SALE OF GM SOY

The Brazilian government's decision to authorise the sale of genetically modified (GM) soybeans until January 2004 was met with outrage by environmental activists while farmers raised concerns over the terms and temporary nature of the measure. "It's a serious attack on Brazilian justice", said Marianne Paoli of Greenpeace, referring to the ongoing injunction by a federal court on the planting of GM soy in the country. Paoli accused President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva's government of breaking an election promise to adopt a precautionary approach to GM crops. While welcoming the opportunity to sell GM soybeans, producers expressed concern over the process of segregating GM from conventional beans. "We aren't equipped to segregate and label," said Calros Sperotto of the Sio Grane do Sul Agricultural Federation. Others noted the temporary nature of the measure, which only applied to the current harvest, and called for fixed rules for next year. The measure is expected to dispel market uncertainties and boost trade in Rio Grande do Sul where 80 percent of the soy crop is thought to be transgenic. Analysts noted that six harvests of GM soybean had already been marketed in Rio Grande in the past without publicity.

"Brazil GM soy move sparks green fury, farmer doubt," REUTERS, 31 March 2003.

PRESSURE ON US TO CHALLENGE EUROPEAN GM POLICY CONTINUES

Despite a recent decision by the US government to not challenge the EU's de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs) at the WTO (BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 7 February 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-02-07/inbrief.htm>), calls for launching a case continue to be heard in the country. Talking to the House Agriculture Committee at a hearing on 26 March, House Speaker Dennis Hastert (Rep) described WTO action as the "only course that would send a clear and convincing message to the world that prohibitive policies on biotechnology, which are not based on sound science, are illegal". Jo Ann Emerson (Rep) alleged that the EU moratorium had a "chilling effect" on developing countries that had most to gain from biotechnology. The claim that the moratorium has led to starvation as a result of African countries' rejection of GM food aid continues to be strongly rejected by anti-GMO campaigners. Rather, starvation was being used as a lever to sell biotech crops to Europe, according to Jane Rissler of the Union of Concerned Scientists. The US "is using free trade agreements as the battering ram to force unwanted [biotech] food and crops on to the rest of the world," added Anuradha Mittal of the US-based think tank Food First.

"U.S. leaders push Europe to allow biotech crops," ENS, 27 March 2003.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCHES CONSULTATIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

With the release of the Communication "Developing an action plan for environmental technology" on 25 March, the European Commission has begun a wide stakeholder consultation in an effort to enable research and business communities, governments and other players to assess the barriers holding back the take up of environmental technologies. Such barriers include, inter alia, poor access to finance, long investment cycles

and poor dissemination of new technologies. "The purpose is not only protecting the environment, natural resources and quality of life. It is also a matter of economic competitiveness," the Commission noted. The Communication raises a range of questions in the context of four environmental areas, namely climate change, soil protection, sustainable production and consumption and water, on which stakeholders are invited to comment by 15 May.

The Communication is available at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0131en01.pdf.

"Breaking down barriers to technologies to protect the environment and boost competitiveness," IP/03/430, 25 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

31 March - 4 April, Rome, Italy: FAO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, 17TH SESSION. For further information, contact: FAO; tel: (39) 06-57051; fax: 5705-3152; email: fao-hq@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/unfao/bodies/coag/coag17/coag17-e.htm>.

1-5 April, Girdwood, Alaska: INTERNATIONAL BERING SEA CONFERENCE. The conference, which is sponsored by Pacific Environment, will focus on the Bering Sea as a shared international resource of concern to fisheries managers, conservationists and scientists but also of political concern to several countries, including the United States and the Russian Federation. The goal of the conference will be to create an action plan and recommendations to assure better international cooperation in the Bering Sea. For information contact: Jennifer Eyres; Pacific Environment Coordinator; tel: (510)251-8800-307; email: jeyres@pacificenvironment.org; Internet: www.pacificenvironment.org/marine/beringconference.htm.

2-3 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO 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. For more information contact: Ms. Alida Jay Boye; University of Oslo; tel: (47) 22 85 89 00; fax: 85 89 20; email: alida.boy@sum.uio.no Internet: <http://www.sum.uio.no/bioprospecting/cbd.html>

4-6 April, St. Louis, US: 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 information, contact: tel: (314) 935-7988; fax: 935-7961; email: IGLS@wulaw.wustl.edu; Internet: <http://law.wustl.edu/igls/>

7 - 11 April, Colorado, US: INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT. Organised by the US Bureau of Reclamation. This Workshop aims to provide an overview of planning and management practices, evaluate inter-organizational cooperation and demonstrate actual procedures, facilities, and techniques used in integrated water resources management. For information

contact: US Bureau of Reclamation; tel: (1) 303-445-2127; fax: 445-6322; email: lpincipe@do.usbr.gov; Internet: http://www.usbr.gov/international/trn_integrated.htm

6 -11 April, Dehra Dun, India: REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE. Organised by Regional Biodiversity Programme Asia. For information contact: Mr. Balakrishna Pisupati; Regional Biodiversity Programme Asia; tel: (94) 74 710439; fax: (94) 1 682470

7 - 11 April, Paris, France: 18th SESSION CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES. For information contact: CODEX Secretariat; tel: (39) 06 57051; fax: 5705 4593; email: Codex@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccgp18/gp03_01e.htm;

7 - 11 April, Rome, Italy: FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (ICPM). For information contact: the IPPC Secretariat; tel: (39) 06 5705-4812; fax: 5705-6347; email: ippc@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/AGPP/PQ/>

8 - 9 April, Geneva, Switzerland: TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

8-10 April, Manila, Philippines: SOUTH EAST ASIA FORUM ON GHG MARKET MECHANISMS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This Forum is organised by a partnership of IETA, WBCSD, World Bank/PCF, ADB, UNDP, UNCTAD, Development Bank of Japan, YBUL, BP, Lafarge, JPower and Unocal. The meeting will provide the opportunity discuss, amongst others, recent developments in climate change policy, their impact on market mechanisms and GHG market and the overall contribution they can make in the drive for sustainable development in the region. For information contact: The IETA Secretariat; tel: (41-22) 839 31 54; fax: 839 31 81; email: dornau@ieta.org; Internet: <http://www.ieta.org>

8-10, April, Norwich, UK: GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY. Organised by RSPB, WWF-UK, English Nature, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. For information contact: Dr. Rhys Green; The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; tel: (44) 01 767 680551; fax: 692365; Internet: <http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/biodiversityconf/>

12-13 April, Washington, D.C., US: IMF-WORLD BANK SPRING MEETING. At the spring meeting the two organisations will discuss progress on the work of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. For information contact: the World Bank; tel: (202) 473-1000; fax: 477-6391; Internet: <http://www.imf.org/external/am/index.htm>

14 - 16 April, Geneva, Switzerland: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON MARKET ACCESS. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

Other Forthcoming Events

27-30 May, Cairo, Egypt: 1ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ON CHALLENGES OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD: A TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CONCEPT OF GMOS. The conference will focus on: GM foods of plant origin; foods obtained from GM animals or animals fed on GM grains; the impacts of GMOs on public health, the environment, economics, society, and ethics; technology transfer of techniques used to detect GM food; local and international legislation; and international corporations. For information see <http://www.scienceinafrica.co.za/events.htm#gm>.

30 May - 12 June, Havana, Cuba: IV INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. For information contact: Araceli Mateo de Acosta Fernández, Convention Organizational Secretary, tel: (537) 867-0606 and 860-3411 ext 1291; fax: 33-8054; email: mateo@citma.cu; Internet: <http://www.medioambiente.cu/convencion/ingles/default.htm>.

23 - 27 June, Trondheim, Norway: FOURTH TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY: THE NORWAY/UN CONFERENCE ON TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND CAPACITY BUILDING. Organised by The Trondheim Conference. For further information contact Laila Saksgard; tel: +47 22 24 5700; fax: 73 801401; email: laila.saksgard@nina.no; Internet: <http://chm.dirnat.no>.

5 - 9 September, Sydney, Australia: 19TH WORLD ENERGY CONGRESS. A Technical Programme will focus on key energy issues covering a wide range of topics within the energy industry. The Congress will include oral and poster sessions, workshops, tutorials, symposia and panel sessions. For more information contact: 19th World Energy Congress Managers; tel: +612-9248-0800; fax: 9248-0894; email: energy2004@tourhosts.com.au; Internet: <http://www.tourhosts.com.au/energy2004/>

8 - 17 September. Durban, South Africa: FIFTH WORLD PARKS CONGRESS - BENEFITS BEYOND BOUNDARIES. The congress occurs once each decade and is sponsored by the IUCN. For more information contact: Peter Shadie, IUCN Programme on Protected Areas, tel: +41-22-999-0159; fax: +41-22-999-0025; email: pds@iucn.org; Internet: <http://wcpa.iucn.org/wpc/wpc.html>

Courses

31 March - 4 April, London, England: CLIMATE CHANGE: SCIENCE, IMPACTS AND RESPONSES. This course, arranged by Imperial College, will consist of five one-day modules presented by leading experts to provide in-depth coverage of climate change issues. For information, contact: Imperial College; tel: (44-20) 7594-6882/6884/6886; fax: 7594 6883; email: cpd@imperial.ac.uk; Internet: www.imperial.ac.uk/cpd/climate.htm.

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.

GENES FOR AFRICA: GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. By Jennifer Thomson, Juta Academic, 2002. The book explains benefits and risks of GM foods for developing countries; examples of controversial issues surrounding GM foods; explanations of the origins of agriculture and GM crops; and useful definitions and appendices regarding biotechnology. For further information see <https://www.tmza.co.za/juta/moreinfo.asp?productId=1446167> or contact Duncan Johansen at DJohansen@juta.co.za.

SCIENCE AS A SMOKE SCREEN? A REPORT ON THE FARM SCALE EVALUATIONS OF GM HERBICIDE TOLERANT CROPS. By Emily Diamand of Friends of the Earth (UK), February 2003. This report argues that the UK government's farm scale evaluations (FSEs) of herbicide-tolerant GM crops will not be able to definitively conclude whether or not those crops "will lead to ecologically important reductions in biodiversity." The report focuses on the ability of the FSEs to detect biodiversity differences between fields of GM crops and non-GM crops. Available at http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/science_smokescreen.pdf.

TERMINATOR TECHNOLOGY – FIVE YEARS LATER. By the Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group), Communiqué 79, May/June 2003. A report on new issues and controversies surrounding the ongoing development of genetic seed sterilisation - plants genetically engineered to render sterile seeds. Available at <http://www.etcgroup.org/documents/TermCom03.pdf>.

TOWARDS A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND TRIPS AGREEMENT: AN INTERFACE AMONG INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS ON BIOTECHNOLOGY, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, AND BENEFIT SHARING. By Jonathan Curci Staffler, 2002. This document proposes several approaches for reconciling the "legal tensions" that exist between the CBD and the TRIPs Agreement. Available at <http://www.botanischergarten.ch/Patents/Staffler-CBD-TRIPS.doc>

THE EMPTY OCEAN: PLUNDERING THE WORLD'S MARINE LIFE. By Richard Ellis, Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2003 (to be published in May). The author tells the story of the continued plunder

of life in the sea and weighs the chances for its recovery. Through portraits of a wide array of creatures, he introduces readers to the many forms of sea life that humans have fished, hunted, and collected over the centuries, from charismatic whales and dolphins to the lowly menhaden, from sea turtles to cod, tuna, and coral. Available at <http://www.islandpress.org> or contact Taryn Roeder, Island Press. Tel: (202) 232 7933, ext 24; email: troeder@islandpress.org.

AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES - A DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT. By G.J. Persley & L.R. MacIntyre, CABI Publishing, 2001. This book addresses the progress and potential of agricultural biotechnological research in developing countries. It considers the social as well as environmental problems that stand to be affected by public and private sector investment in this field. For further information see http://www.cabi-publishing.org/Bookshop/book_detail.asp?isbn=0851998164.

"Increasing the Openness of the Trade Policy Process: Challenges and Implications", by Grant E. Isaac in THE ESTEY CENTRE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TRADE POLICY 4(1), 2003. Trade policy is now a central concern on the public policy agenda as trade issues have become increasingly entwined with traditionally domestic policy issues. Consequently, demands have been made for more openness in trade policy formation and, in response, many governments have undertaken openness initiatives. In this paper, the general issue of increasing the openness of trade policy is examined, an openness framework is proposed and the implications for trade policy are assessed. Available at <http://128.233.58.173/estey/>.

WOODS WERE LOVELY DARK AND DEEP. A film by Dinesh Lakhanpal on biodiversity conservation with a special focus on access and benefit sharing. For further information contact Lakhanpal Productions, India, tel: (+91 22) 639 33 55; fax: 639 166 66; email: lpd@vsnl.com.

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BIOTECHNOLOGY RISK ASSESSMENT DATA: FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS. By the US Department of Agriculture and University of Florida. The website is designed to help users understand the process by which regulatory decisions are made regarding GMOs and the US regulatory agencies that are responsible for ensuring the safety of GMOs. It provides background information about gene engineering, data relating to the safety of GMOs, and risk assessments. Accessible at <http://www.riskassess.org>.

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