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NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

LEAD STORIES

WTO: MEMBERS DECIDE ON WAY FORWARD IN DOHA ROUND 1

OTHER NEWS

G-20, EC AGREE TO INTENSIFY DOHA ROUND TALKS 3

CAFTA NEGOTIATIONS ENCOUNTER LAST-DITCH HURDLES 4

IN BRIEF

JAPAN, ASEAN TO COOPERATE MORE CLOSELY 5

CHINA CONSIDERING GREEN GDP INDEX 5

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS TNC POWER 5

LEADERS ADOPT COMMON VISION ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY 6

WTO IN BRIEF

G-35 DEMANDS GREATER ROLE FOR SP, SSM 6

CONCEPTS IN AG NEGOTIATIONS 7

VIET NAM TO SPEED UP ACCESSION TALKS 7

EVENTS & RESOURCES

EVENTS 7

RESOURCES 9

NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

This is the last issue of ICTSD's BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest for 2003. The first issue of 2004 -- Vol. 8, No. 1 -- will be published on 14 January. The producers of the Weekly as well as the rest of the ICTSD team would like to thank our contributors and funders for the critical assistance they provide. We would also like to thank our readers for their interest and feedback and wish you all the best for the holiday season and 2004.

LEAD STORIES

WTO: MEMBERS DECIDE ON WAY FORWARD IN DOHA ROUND

WTO Members met from 15-16 December in the last General Council (GC) session of the year. WTO ambassadors devoted most of the session to follow-up to September's Cancun Ministerial, ultimately agreeing to reactivate the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and the negotiating bodies under it. The mood of the meeting was reportedly positive. While the outcome of the meeting was limited and focused on procedure rather than substance, no one had expected more.

Since the collapse of trade talks in Cancun, GC Chair Carlos Perez del Castillo and WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi have been conducting informal consultations on four key issues: agriculture, industrial market access, cotton, and the Singapore issues (investment, competition, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation). However, at a Heads of Delegation meeting on 9 December, Chair Perez del Castillo concluded that Members were not yet ready to relaunch talks (see BRIDGES Weekly, 11 December 2003).

GC Chair, D-G outline progress and plan

Chair Perez del Castillo started by outlining the process since Cancun and developments so far, noting that while Members have been willing to engage in

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substantive discussions, differences persisted and there had been little real negotiation, nor a sense of urgency to move forward (to see the speech, visit http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news03_e/stat_gc_chair_15dec03_e.htm). He highlighted, in particular, a divergence between political statements of commitment that Members had made, and their lack of willingness to put that political willingness into play in actual negotiations. He went into more detail with regard to the state of play of the four key issues, noting areas that should be dealt with as a matter of priority. On the Singapore issues, he said the idea of unbundling was generally accepted, but there was no consensus on the way forward. Therefore, he suggested moving ahead by exploring possible modalities for trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement, without prejudice to the outcome.

On future work, he suggested all negotiating bodies should be reactivated -- once their Chairs had been selected -- in order to ensure the transparency and inclusiveness of the negotiating process. He said the horizontal integration of the issues remained key, and said the TNC played an important role in this regard. He also indicated that objectives and indicators for the work in 2004 would be set by the GC and TNC. He concluded by stating that while some progress had been made in getting the round back on track, "we are not there yet," and the window of opportunity to do so early next year should be used to its fullest.

The Director-General then addressed delegates, saying that while the talks are not at a point where they could resume full momentum, there was no reason to be disheartened (see http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news03_e/stat_gc_dg_15dec03_e.htm). He highlighted his meetings with key ministers, who had confirmed their commitment to the Doha round, and said that in order to move ahead, the political will shown by ministers should be translated into concrete work and flexibilities in Geneva. He noted that, "our collective task is indeed to find that elusive link between political will and concrete progress".

Members react

In response to the Chair's report, a number of delegates expressed their support for his approach to moving forward. Many noted a lack of urgency in talks, and reiterated their commitment to the round, with some saying they wanted to see it concluded on time by the start of 2005.

Brazil, for the G-20, stressed that concluding the round -- by the 1 January 2005 deadline -- was in the interest of developing countries. Brazil stressed agriculture as the cornerstone and basic reason for the entire round. While welcoming the reactivation of the TNC, he called

for more interactive talks and real negotiations. The US also called on Members to stop negotiating with the Chair, and start negotiating with one another. China cautioned that reactivating the negotiating groups was no guarantee for success, but that real negotiations were needed.

Mauritius, speaking for the African group, stressed the importance of a transparent process and attention to development issues. India, supported by Kenya, called for the creation of a separate body to deal with implementation issues and special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing countries.

The US said it remained fully committed to the round, and supported basing talks on the Derbez text. Bangladesh, speaking for the group of least developed countries (LDCs), said the group could accept the use of the Derbez text in most areas, but would like to see major changes in how it dealt with cotton, and some small changes in the areas of agriculture and industrial market access. India stressed the need to avoid wasting time on procedural questions and called on Members to base work on progress so far. South Africa agreed that not too much time should be wasted on procedure, and said that once movement was seen in agriculture, the rest would follow.

The EC said it had shown flexibility in its negotiating position, and called on other countries to reciprocate. The EC representative warned that without a framework for talks and concrete commitment to them, 2004 might become a lost year in the Doha round.

The US and several other countries highlighted concerns with the current draft related to industrial market access. While the US and Korea said they would prefer a more ambitious approach, China and other developing countries said they were looking for less than full reciprocity of commitments between developed and developing countries.

On cotton, the US and Japan said the issue should be dealt with as an integral part of agriculture negotiations. The African group, Benin, Burkina Faso and others felt it should be dealt with on a stand-alone basis.

On the Singapore issues, the EC said it accepted the unbundling of the issues, and said it could accept one or more issues falling outside the current negotiating structure. Bangladesh raised concern with the undue emphasis falling on the Singapore issues, and called for more focus on development issues. India supported a multilateral deal to enhance the power and abilities of customs authorities. South Africa said the Singapore issues should not hold up talks in other areas, said investment and government procurement no longer were part of the single undertaking, and opposed a

plurilateral approach to the Singapore issues. Korea wanted negotiations to proceed on all four issues.

Brazil and Chile reported on the positive outcome of a recent G-20 meeting in Brasilia (see related story, this issue). The EC said the meeting it had had with the G-20 provided a good basis for further talks.

Numerous developing countries call for three Singapore issues to be dropped

Just prior to the GC meeting, Bangladesh, on behalf of the LDC group and along with 15 other developing countries including China and India, submitted a communication on the Singapore issues (WT/GC/W/522, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>). In the communication, the countries requested that investment, competition and transparency in government procurement be dropped. They stressed that "due to continued division over such a long period among Members on the status and substance of the Singapore issues and in the interest of early completion of this round of negotiations, we should concentrate our efforts first and foremost on issues of core competence of the WTO, namely agriculture, non-agricultural market access, services and development issues". They rejected a plurilateral approach to talks, and felt that while clarification of trade facilitation could proceed, Members are not ready to start negotiating yet.

Civil society reactions

Some civil society groups cautioned against a decision to reactivating the negotiating groups at the WTO. Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, said that Members had no business discussing the Singapore issues, as their mandate had expired in Cancun, where no decision had been taken to start negotiations based on "explicit consensus". Friends of the Earth International, in anticipation of the GC meeting, said that no deal would be better than a bad deal. According to Ronnie Hall, "WTO negotiations have stalled again and again because they cannot deliver what people really need -- healthy, thriving local economies everywhere and sustainable levels of natural resource use". She said "now is the time for the EU and the US to realise that they must give up their corporate-driven market-opening agenda, exchanging it for a progressive approach to developing fair and sustainable economies that work for everyone," suggesting that an independent review of the outcomes of the Uruguay round be undertaken, that the Singapore issues be rejected outright, and exported-oriented agricultural policies be replaced by a focus on food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture.

Over forty civil society groups issued a joint letter on 15 December, demanding that the WTO stay out of the

food and agriculture sectors. According to the letter, a number of groups representing peasants, family farmers, fisherfolk and their supporters would like to see the concept of "People's Food Sovereignty" embraced as an alternative to US/EU and G20 positions. Speaking on this concept, George Naylor, president of the National Family Farm Coalition, said "food sovereignty is a commonsense idea that every one can understand," adding that "the values embodied in the traditions of farm communities around the world - respect for nature, history, families and neighbours - cannot be measured in dollars or economic efficiency, and should not be sacrificed for the profits of multinational grain traders, processors, and retailers".

The civil society statement is available at http://www.viacampesina.org/art_english.php3?id_article=286

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. The first GC session is tentatively scheduled for 11-12 February.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO Geneva Meeting: No Deal Better Than A Bad Deal," FOE RELEASE, 15 December 2003; "World Trade Talks to Restart, Peasants Want WTO Off the Farm," ENS, 15 December 2003..

OTHER NEWS

G-20, EC AGREE TO INTENSIFY DOHA ROUND TALKS

The G-20 group of developing countries met in Brasilia from 11-12 December, and were joined by both WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi and EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy. Focussing on the issue of farm talks, Supachai urged flexibility from all sides. The G-20 issued a joint statement with the EC at the close of the meeting, which noted that the parties had engaged in "fruitful" and down-to-business discussions and had agreed to intensify talks early in the new year in order to move the Doha round of trade negotiations forward and conclude by the agreed January 2005 deadline. While the meeting gave a symbolic boost to the Doha round and the relations between the G-20 and the EC, no substantive results or concrete compromises were reached.

After the close of the meeting, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said he invited other trading partners to engage with the G-20 the way the EC had, focusing especially on the US, which he felt had been the most significant absentee in the post-Cancun process. He also stressed the role of the G-20 as an "indispensable intermediary" in the international negotiations.

In related news, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva suggested the G-20 form a free trade area. He said to ministers that "this does not mean we are placing the developed nations aside, as they will continue being fundamental. Rather, we are going to fully exploit the potential among us, which does not depend on the concessions of the rich countries". At this point in time, the idea of an FTA among the G-20 remains at the conceptual stage, although a number of G-20 countries already are moving towards freer trade among themselves.

The G-20 alliance was formed at the eve of the Cancun ministerial meeting, and comprises key developing country Members, including Brazil, China and India (see BRIDGES Daily Update from Cancun, 10 September 2003). The group seeks to provide a counterforce to the US and EC, focusing on the area of agriculture. While a number of small Latin American countries have left the G-20, other developing countries have joined, and the group now reportedly comprises 19 members.

To view the joint G-20/EC Press Communiqué, visit http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/issues/newround/doha_da/jpc121203_en.htm

ICTSD reporting; "WTO chief looks for G20 flexibility," REUTERS, 11 December 2003; "G-20 regroup in Brazil to fight agricultural subsidies," EFE, 11 December; "Brazil proposes creation of G-20 free trade area," XINHUANET, 12 December 2003; "Amorim quer EUA junto ao G20," FOLHA DE SAO PAULO, 13 December 2003.

CAFTA NEGOTIATIONS ENCOUNTER LAST-DITCH HURDLES

During the past week, negotiators from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala have been meeting with US trade negotiators in Washington, DC, to hash out the final sections of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Although they may be in their final round of talks -- which were scheduled to finish by the end of the year -- many obstacles to reaching an agreement have surfaced due to disagreements over agriculture, textiles and services (see BRIDGES Weekly, 5 November 2003).

On Tuesday, 16 December, Costa Rica -- the second largest economy in the region -- walked out of talks with the US, saying they neelate stage in the talks. Albert Treios, Costa Rica's trade minister, noted that Costa Rica wanted to resume negotiations next month and that their actions were not "dramatic". The US continued negotiating, hoping to reach an agreement with the other four countries. Nicaraguan President Enrique Bolanos stressed the need to wrap up talks, telling reporters that "Central America cannot wait for more time. Central America needs to advance rapidly". Carlos Sequeira, the chief trade negotiator for Nicaragua, said, "an agreement is near closing, but it is not closed yet," referring to the differences that must be resolved in textiles and agriculture. ded more time to complete the deal. The US had been pushing for Costa Rica's liberalisation of insurance and telecommunications sectors, making new requests at a

The US administration hopes to expand export opportunities in Central America and to have as many free trade pacts as possible with willing countries, in order to put pressure on countries such as Brazil to speed up progress on the 34-nation Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations, set to conclude by January 2005.

Current talks have encountered mixed reviews. US labour unions, textile makers and the sugar industry oppose the CAFTA. US Republican Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo of Idaho and Conrad Burns of Montana wrote to President Bush in early December affirming that it would be difficult to convince the Senate to accept the agreement "if harmful concessions on sugar are included in the final CAFTA treaty". The administration is trying to the counter possible opposition in preparation for elections next year, to garner votes in congressional districts with large Dominican Republic immigrant populations, by considering this country's inclusion in the CAFTA early next year.

The US currently has free trade agreements with Chile, Singapore, Mexico, Canada, Israel and Jordan. Free trade deals with Australia and Morocco, scheduled for completion by the end of 2003, were recently postponed (see BRIDGES Weekly, 11 December 2003). The US hopes to start free trade talks next year with Bahrain, Colombia, Panama, Thailand and possibly Ecuador and Bolivia.

"5 Nations Work on Free Trade Pact," AP, 16 December 2003; "Costa Rica Balks at US Trade Demands," AP, 16 December 2003; "Costa Rica walks out of US talks on trade deal," FINANCIAL TIMES, 16 December 2003; "Minn-Dak fears free trade pact," AGRINEWS, 16 December 2003; "Trade talks get allies," THE LAFAYETTE DAILY ADVERTISER, 17

December 2003; "Bush Admin. Works to Wrap Up Trade Deal," AP, 17 December 2003; "Sugar Remains Sticking Point in CAFTA," HIGH PLAINS JOURNAL, 12 December 2003.

IN BRIEF

JAPAN, ASEAN TO COOPERATE MORE CLOSELY

The ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit -- a first-ever ASEAN meeting hosted by a non-member country -- was held in Tokyo from 11-12 December 2003. A "Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring ASEAN-Japan Partnership in the New Millennium" and an "ASEAN-Japan Plan of Action" were signed at the Summit. The Declaration and Plan expressed Japan's intention to liberalise trade, improve security, and create a broad "economic partnership" within the region. Japan intends to start free trade talks with Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines in early 2004, aiming for a conclusion by the start of 2005, when Tokyo wants to start talks on an ASEAN-wide pact to be implemented by 2012. Japan also agreed to support ASEAN's integration by enhancing regional and sub-regional developments in the Mekong region and Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). Japan also pledged USD 3 billion in aid to Southeast Asia.

Analysts noted that this two-day summit was a way for Japan to catch up with China and India in asserting regional influence. "I think all of it, including Japan's (intention) to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) of ASEAN (a regional non-aggression pact ratified in 1976), is Koizumi's way of showing the ASEAN countries that Japan is treating them well, out of concern about China's influence," said Hisao Iwashima, a Japanese commentator. ASEAN members include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

"Japan Pledges \$3 Billion in Aid for Asia," AP, 12 December 2003; "Japan, ASEAN Boost Economic and Security Ties," REUTERS, 12 December 2003; "Japan, ASEAN leaders set to declare efforts to create East Asian community," AP, 12 December 2003.

CHINA CONSIDERING GREEN GDP INDEX

China is looking into the possibility of using a green Gross Domestic Product (GDP) index to track economic growth in relation to the environment. The Chinese State Environmental Protection Administration will be working with the National Bureau of Statistics on a project in this area; they will calculate a green GDP by subtracting resource depletion and other environmental externalities from the GDP, the traditional measure of economic growth. The green GDP index will evaluate the performance of local governments with the aim of fulfilling Premier Wen Jiabao's vision of "balanced" and "sustainable" development. An official from the National Bureau of Statistics noted that although adopting such an index was a positive step towards sustainable development, difficulties in implementation and transparency remained, noting that, "people criticise our economic GDP figure for being a fake. What about the green GDP figure?"

For the past 25 years, China's environment has suffered on many fronts as the country's GDP has grown by eight percent on average every year. Ninety percent of cities have polluted water, the land is overcrowding due to high population density, deserts are advancing from the north and the Yellow River often dries up before it reaches the sea. According to Li Peiling, deputy director of the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, China "might end up with a green GDP figure that is negative" if a green GDP index is adopted.

"Green GDP to push healthy growth," XINHUA online, 9 December 2003; "Researchers in China draw up green index," FINANCIAL TIMES, 9 December 2003.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS TNC POWER

The ETC Group -- a public interest group that, inter alia, monitors the consolidation of corporate power -- has released a new report that analyses trends in commercial farming, food, health and nanotechnology (the manipulation of matter at the level of atoms and molecules). According to the report entitled "Oligopoly, Inc. -- Concentration in Corporate Power 2003," transnational firms are becoming more powerful in shaping social, economic and trade policies. Based on the World Development Indicators Database, 51 of the world's 100 largest economic entities were transnational corporations in 2002. Wal-mart, for example, earned more revenue that year than the GDP of Sweden or Austria. In pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, pesticide markets and food retail, the top ten companies control over 50 percent of world market shares. "Global

technology cartels" have been created to allow corporations to sidestep the need for patent regulation by cross-licensing technology. The report highlights the need for the international community, with the aid of the United Nations to carefully monitor, raise awareness, and evaluate new technologies to ensure that corporate governance is regulated.

To access the report, please see:
<http://www.etcgroup.org/documents/oligopolyfinal.pdf>

ICTSD reporting.

LEADERS ADOPT COMMON VISION ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) came to a close on 12 December with head of state and ministers from all over the world endorsing a common vision of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society," and adopting a plan of action for bringing the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) to underserved countries. The overarching goal of the Summit had been to "gain the will and commitment of policy-makers to make ICTs a top priority, and to bring together public and private sector players to forge an inclusive dialogue based on the interests of all". A number of public-private partnerships were announced at the Summit, such as a Microsoft and UNPD five-year collaboration programme bringing ICT skills to underserved communities. In parallel to WSIS, civil society groups adopted their own declaration, emphasising the human rather than technological element of information and communication societies.

Phase two of WSIS will be held in Tunisia in 2005, set to address developmental aspects of ICTs.

To access the WSIS Declaration and Plan of Action, see http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_single-en-1161.asp and http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_single-en-1160.asp

"Global Information Society Summit Spurs Solidarity, Alliances But Hard Work, Action Ahead," WSIS PRESS RELEASE, 12 December 2003; "Civil Society Goes for Own WSIS Declaration," IPS, 12 December 2003.

WTO IN BRIEF

G-35 DEMANDS GREATER ROLE FOR SP, SSM CONCEPTS IN AG NEGOTIATIONS

At a 4 December consultation with WTO General Council (GC) Chair Carlos Perez del Castillo, the so-called Alliance for Special Products (SPs) and a Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), or G-35, called on the GC Chair to give greater attention to the concepts of SPs and the establishment of an SSM for developing countries in the post-Cancun agriculture consultations. Representatives of the group of developing countries stated at a subsequent press briefing that these concepts were necessary tools to address food security, poverty alleviation and rural development, all of which were core concerns and principles driving the Alliance. The grouping voiced its frustration about the "fact that these issues have not been given the attention they deserve" during the recent Chair-led consultation, a fact "which may lead to the erroneous impression that these issues are not central to moving the agriculture negotiations forward," the G-35 added.

The Alliance on SPs and SSM, which was formed shortly before and during the Cancun Ministerial Conference, demands that appropriate flexibility be granted to developing countries to self-designate a number of SPs which would be exempted from any tariff reduction or tariff rate quota (TRQ) commitment. Moreover, a new SSM for developing countries should be established to provide them with an operational tool to counter market volatility and sudden import surges. The new mechanism should apply both to SP and selected non-SP tariff lines.

The most recent draft text on a framework for agriculture modalities (Derbez text) provides for an SP category, but only within one of the three bands of the proposed tariff reduction formula. Reduction commitments on such SPs would be significantly less than for the other tariff lines. The Derbez text further provides that a "special agricultural safeguard (SSM) shall be established for use by developing countries," but whose conditions and applicability would be determined at a late stage. The following countries are currently members of the G-35 group: Barbados, Botswana, China, Cuba, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"SP/SSM Alliance complain about neglect of their concepts in agriculture negotiations," TWN INFO SERVICE, 9 December 2003.

VIET NAM TO SPEED UP ACCESSION TALKS

The WTO Working Party on the Accession of Viet Nam met from 11-12 December to start to create a draft report outlining basic information, including terms and conditions for the accession. In the interim since the last meeting of the Working Party, Viet Nam provided new information and offers in the goods and services sectors, and progressed in bilateral talks with WTO Members. During the talks, a number of countries nonetheless requested more, and clearer, information. They also disagreed over whether Viet Nam should be classified as a "low-income and highly indebted poor country" or also as a "competitive developing economy with great potential," with related rights and obligations within the WTO. Vietnam, with a number of developing countries, preferred the former option, while the EC, Australia and others supported the latter. At the end of the talks, the chief negotiator of Viet Nam, Trade Vice Minister Luong Van Tu, commented that "we really expect negotiators to show more understanding and sympathy with the low-level developing economy and the modest trade of Viet Nam, by demonstrating flexibility, allowing preferential treatment and necessary transition periods as applied for in our action plans and offers, in order to smooth Viet Nam's development progress and positively contribute to the WTO's success".

As the meeting came to a close, Members warned that a lot of work still remained to be done. Viet Nam hopes to join the WTO on 1 January 2005, and has requested three meetings of the Working Party in 2004 to make this possible.

"Viet Nam starts its quantum jump but still some way to go," WTO RELEASE, 12 December 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/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email events@ictsd.ch.

Coming Up In January 2003

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). This Summit will discuss many concerns, seek solutions and develop a shared vision for their 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: (+1 202) 458-3665; email: summit-info@oas.org; Internet: <http://www.summitsoftheamericas.org/default.htm>

12-16 January 2004, Gland, Switzerland: 30TH MEETING OF THE RAMSAR STANDING COMMITTEE. Organised by Ramsar. Ramsar is the first of the modern global intergovernmental treaties on conservation and wise use of natural resources. 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>

15-16 January 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNECE REGION. The First Regional Implementation Forum On Sustainable Development is being 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

16 January 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR UNCTAD XI - CIVIL SOCIETY HEARING. This meeting will be held at the Palais des Nations. UNCTAD XI will be held from 13-18 June 2003 in Sao Paulo, Brazil and is seen as an opportunity for tackling the most pressing developmental challenges confronting developing countries. For questions, including future meetings and accreditation to the Conference, please contact Amel

Haffouz, email: amel.haffouz@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org>

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

21-25 January 2004, Davos, Switzerland: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING. For more information on the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum contact the secretariat at tel: +41-22-869-1212; fax: +41-22-786-2744; email: contact@weforum.org; Internet: <http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Events+subhome>

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

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

further information contact IFD, email: ifd@cuts.org or incsoc@incsoc.net

WTO Events

At the time of print, the January 2004 WTO schedule was not yet available. For an updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings, see http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf. 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. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

Other 2004 Events

1-3 April 2003, Berlin, Germany: ENCOS 2004. This meeting will be the first European Networks Conference on Sustainability in Practice (ENCOS) focussing on the conditions and requirements for a new European level of capacity building. Organised by Kolleg für Management und Gestaltung Nachhaltiger Entwicklung. The goal of the meeting is to obtain an inter- and transdisciplinary understanding on the latest developments in international practice, research and education on sustainability issues. For further information visit <http://www.ENCOS2004.net>

28 August-3 September 2004, St. Louis, Mauritius: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION. Organised by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division of Sustainable Development. UN Undersecretary General Anwarul Chowdhury will serve as secretary general for the review of the 1994 Barbados Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Small Island Developing States. The review will focus on the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing states, including the issues of poverty eradication, reducing the threat of HIV/AIDS, increasing trade and coping with climate change. For further information contact Diane Quarless, SIDS Unit; tel: +1 212 963-4135; fax: +1 917 367-3391; email: Mauritius2004@sidsnet.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sids/sids.htm>

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 three-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 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: (+41 22) 999-0020; email: ursula.hiltbrunner@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.iucn.org>

RESOURCES

WHERE NEXT FOR THE WTO? VIEWS, IDEAS AND PROPOSALS BY TRADE MINISTERS. Published by the Federal Trust for Education and Research. A compendium of articles by trade ministers has been released in anticipation of the 15 December 2003 meeting of the WTO General Council. In a series of articles, key trade ministers map out their positions in the current trade impasse. The articles have been written by, inter alia, Billie A. Miller, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Barbados, Celso Amorim, Foreign Minister, Brazil, Pierre S. Pettigrew, Minister for International Trade, Canada, Yousef Boutros Gali, Minister of Foreign Trade, Egypt, and Pascal Lamy, Commissioner for Trade, EC. For the full text please see: <http://www.fedtrust.co.uk>

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 fifth 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, organisation 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) pp. 116-123. This article presents a case study of the implications of overlapping multilateral paradigms - the World Trade Organisation and 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

"E-commerce and the Environment: Good News or Bad?" in the JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL ECOLOGY. Vol. 6, Issue 2. A series of articles analyse how small decisions related to e-commerce can have large effects on the environment, and how the diverse and complex use of information technologies leads to unintended consequences and indirect impacts on the environment that are hard to predict. To access the articles see: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/JIE/e-commerce>

"Energy and carbon embodied in the international trade of Brazil" in MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES FOR GLOBAL CHANGE 8 (2, 2003) pp. 139-155. By Mauricio Tiomno Tolmasquim and Giovani Machado. In the last decades, structural changes in the Brazilian economy were closely related to changes in the country's trade specialisation. This paper analyses to what extent energy use and its associated CO₂ emissions of Brazil in the 90's may be overloaded by changes in the country's trade specialisation towards a more energy-intensive mix. The study finds that Brazil exported, in net terms, significant amounts of energy and carbon (C) embodied in goods traded with the rest of the world in the 90's. In fact, some 6.6% of the final energy used by the industrial sector and around 7.1% of its C emissions are prompted by international trade. By overloading the country's energy use and its associated environmental damage (both local and global), this situation seems to contribute to increase not only local but also global environmental damage, since C leakage from non-Annex I countries due to international trade may lead to higher C concentration in the atmosphere.

WTO Resources

UNDERSTANDING THE WTO. A new edition of the basic guide to the WTO is now available for download at

http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/tif_e.htm

On The Move

Duncan Brack has stepped down as Head of the Sustainable Development Programme of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House). He remains an Associate Fellow of the Institute and will continue to work on international environmental crime, trade and environment, and other environment issues. Richard Tarasofsky, formerly an independent international lawyer based in Berlin and specialising in trade, biodiversity, climate change, and European environmental law, has been appointed the new Head of the Sustainable Development Programme.

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http://www.newsbulletin.org/bulletins/WhichBulletin.cfm?Bulletin_ID=14&SID=

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