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LEAD STORIES

AGRICULTURE: NEGOTIATIONS STALLING, NGOS VOICE CONCERN

WTO Members are currently meeting in a 24-28 February negotiating session of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA), with very little progress reported. The meeting takes place in the aftermath of a storm of criticism of Chair Stuart Harbinson's first modalities draft for agriculture negotiations, circulated on 12 February (BRIDGES Weekly, 19 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-19/story2.htm>). WTO Members at the CoA are currently reviewing the draft, seeking to find solutions to the many contentious issues in the ongoing agriculture negotiations. The modalities - setting out the scope of the negotiations, the methodology to be followed during the actual process, and the end-results expected -- are scheduled to be finalised by the end of March this year.

In the meantime, a coalition of some 50 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) met on 19-21 February in Geneva, and issued a statement rejecting the draft text as unacceptable from both a Southern and Northern perspective. Further, French President Jacques Chirac surprised observers of the current agriculture negotiations by calling for a suspension of subsidies on farm exports to African countries for the duration of the Doha negotiating round.

Harbinson modalities draft under critical review

According to the plan for the five-day special CoA (negotiating) session, Members are to work their way through the various elements of the first modalities draft in plenary focusing on: market access; export competition; domestic support; and cross-cutting issues and other matters. Members were also to meet in bilateral negotiations, and for coordination within informal negotiating groupings such as the 'Friends of the Development Box,' or the 'Friends of the NTCs' groups.

As of Wednesday, 27 February, Members had not moved on from the second item on the plenary agenda. Chair Harbinson commented that the negotiators seemed to have an "insatiable appetite for repeating

positions," and small group consultations may be delayed until next week so as not to clash with the plenary. In terms of progress -- taking into account the strategic dynamics in the current negotiation phase -- the actual work is expected to take place in the consultations, where Members need to find mutually acceptable solutions on how to consolidate the most contentious aspects of the negotiations. These include the interlinkages between the level of ambition in further reduction commitments and the reflection of agricultural non-trade concerns (NTCs), such as consumer protection and food safety. The amount of overall special and differential treatment (S&D), and developing countries' willingness to accept a certain degree of differentiated treatment amongst themselves, also remains up for compromise.

In his opening remarks to the group, Harbinson had defended his modalities proposal, stating that the criticism of his draft text from virtually all sides -- including the US, the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters and the EU -- had not surprised him (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-19/story2.htm>). He explained that he had had to prepare his first draft without Members' collective guidance on how to develop commonly acceptable proposals for e.g. further tariff and subsidy reductions, S&D for developing countries, and the treatment of agricultural NTCs. Harbinson specifically called on Members to enter into real negotiations now to fill the many remaining gaps in their positions so that they could provide him with "clear guidance and constructive ideas for the preparation of the second draft," which is to be prepared prior to the forthcoming end-March negotiating session.

NGO coalition rejects modalities draft, calls for new trade rules

Meanwhile, civil society groups -- representing farmers associations, consumers, development and environmental organisations -- from both the South and the North met in Geneva from 19-21 February to discuss Harbinson's draft modalities. Taking place right before the negotiations at the WTO, the civil society "hearing" on the draft agricultural text issued a highly critical statement, which 50 groups signed on to. The statement focuses in particular on the draft's failure to tackle development concerns, and to adequately address food security and sustainable rural livelihoods. It especially criticises the draft for allowing continued dumping of agricultural products, and stresses that until the causes of dumping have been tackled, developing countries need import control measures to safeguard their farming communities.

Bob van Dillen, CIDSE (Catholic Aid Agencies), stressed that "the WTO talks continue to be driven by a

'you liberalise, we subsidise' approach from the EU and US. Hypocrisy and double standards still rule the day". The statement signatories instead call for new trade rules that, inter alia, address the monopolistic power of global agri-business, take food security and food sovereignty fully into account, and allow countries to introduce import controls and tariffs on dumped agricultural products.

French call for subsidy-free trade with Africa

In a surprise move on 21 February, French President Jacques Chirac called for a moratorium on developed country export subsidies on agricultural products sold to Africa during the current round of WTO negotiations. Chirac made this statement at the end of a meeting of 52 African heads of state in Paris, and said he would take the initiative to the Group of Eight (G-8) summit in France in June. France is a strong supporter of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, including its farm aid, export subsidies and minimum price guarantees, and has on many occasions resisted its reform. France also blocked the EC's WTO negotiating position on agriculture in December 2002, because the country wanted to retain certain export subsidies. Chirac stressed that "Africa's huge imports of cheap meat, milk powder, poultry or rice" was ruining subsistence farmers in some of the poorest nations in the world. He did not suggest opening up the EU market to imports of African agricultural products, however, but said they should get better terms of trade, and also suggested that developed countries should provide developing countries with protection against fluctuations in commodities prices.

Key agricultural exporters welcomed the initiative, while pointing out that the moratorium should be extended to poor countries worldwide. Civil society groups also gave the initiative a cautious welcome. Justin Forsyth, Oxfam's policy director, commented that "it's welcome news that Chirac has put the crisis facing millions of poor coffee and cocoa farmers onto the international agenda". Critics pointed out, however, that much more would be needed to improve conditions for poor African farmers. African sources report that Chirac's proposal has not been picked up by African countries in the current modalities negotiations at the WTO, due to fears that pushing for such an approach could upset other key developed country trading partners, which could cost them their preferential trade terms e.g. under the US African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Additional resources:

The full NGO statement, including a list of its signatories can be viewed at: http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2003/JD_24_Jan_statement_WTO_and_CAP.htm.

ICTSD reporting; "Statement from the International Civil Society Hearing on the WTO Agriculture Agreement," 21 February 2003; "Chirac calls for subsidy-free trade with Africa," REUTERS, 21 February 2003; "Cautious praise for French trade plans for Africa," REUTERS, 21 February 2003; "Canada Urges G7 Farm Subsidy Cut After Chirac Talk," REUTERS, 22 February 2003.

TRIPS COUNCIL FOCUSES ON TECH TRANSFER AND GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

The Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), at its regular session on 18-20 February, adopted a decision on technical transfer to least-developed countries, thereby fulfilling one of the mandates adopted at the Doha Ministerial Conference. Earlier in the meeting, Members had failed to finalise negotiations on TRIPs and health and no new date has been set for continuing the discussions (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-19/story3.htm>).

During the special (negotiating) session of the TRIPs Council on 21 February, Members continued negotiations on a multilateral system for geographical indications (GIs) for wines and spirits based on a compilation of positions put forward by the Secretariat. Members remained divided over the next steps in the negotiations, in particular on the need for and timing of a potential Chair's first draft agreement.

Council adopts tech transfer decision

The Council adopted a decision on "Implementation of Article 66.2 of the TRIPs Agreement" (IP/C/28), thereby giving effect to one of the Doha mandates in the Decision on Implementation-related Issues and Concerns, which calls on countries to put in place a mechanism for ensuring the monitoring and full implementation of Art 66.2. This Article instructs developed country Members to "provide incentives to enterprises and institutions in their territories for the purpose of promoting and encouraging technology transfer" to LDCs.

Specifically, the decision requires developed country Members to submit annual reports on actions taken or planned in pursuance of their commitments under Article 66.2. The reports will provide an overview of the incentive regime put in place, the type of incentives and government agency or entity making it available, eligible enterprises and other institutions, and any information available on the functioning in practice of these incentives. The TRIPs Council will review the reports at its last meeting of each year, providing an

opportunity for Members to ask questions and discuss the effectiveness of the incentives.

The TRIPs Council elected Ambassador Vanu Gopala Menon of Singapore as the new Chair to replace Ambassador Eduardo Perez Motta (Mexico). The next regular Council meeting will be held on 3-5 June.

Members split over way forward on GIs

At the special session, the Secretariat submitted its compilation of various positions on GIs, which formed the basis of subsequent discussions (TN/IP/W/7). Positions remained unchanged. The EC, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Sri Lanka and others are advocating that Members should be required to protect the GIs registered in the multilateral system and that "voluntary" registration would allow countries to choose whether to register a particular GI. In contrast, Australia, Canada, Japan, the US and others envisage the system to function mainly as a database and that the protection of registered terms should be "voluntary".

Countries were divided along the same lines over how to move forward in the debate. The EC and supporters noted that the five hours of discussions in the session had produced "nothing new", calling on the Chair of the special session, Ambassador Eui Yong Chung of Korea, to prepare and circulate a first draft agreement by the first half of March. Australia et al urged caution, arguing that the positions were still far apart and that it was too "early" in the process to begin discussing a first draft.

Members are mandated to finalise the negotiations on a multilateral system by the next WTO Ministerial Conference in September. The Chair said that he would aim to circulate a first draft "well before" the next special session on 24-25 April.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER NEWS

WTO GOODS COUNCIL APPROVES KIMBERLEY PROCESS WAIVER

On 26 February, the WTO Council for Trade in Goods approved a request of eleven Members -- Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Thailand, the UAE and US -- for a waiver from WTO rules for the Kimberley Process rough diamonds certification scheme. The Kimberley Process is an international initiative established to sever the link between illicit international trade in rough diamonds and armed conflict -- a link that has been particularly

prevalent in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Launched in May 2000 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly, the Kimberly Process was initiated by several southern African countries to stop the flow of conflict diamonds to the markets, while at the same time protecting the legitimate diamond industry. The Kimberley Process includes approximately 44 countries that produce, process, import and export rough diamonds, accounting for 98 percent of global trade and production.

The parties to the process -- meeting at the ministerial level in Interlaken, Switzerland on 5 November 2002 -- committed to simultaneously implement the Certification Scheme at national levels, and at a 22 November meeting of the Council for Trade in Goods, Canada put forth a proposal for a WTO waiver relating to the Kimberley Process (BRIDGES Weekly, 28 November 2002 <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-11-28/wtoinbrief.htm#2>). Specifically, the request sought to institute "a waiver from the provisions of Article I: 1 (Most Favoured Nation Treatment), Article XI: 1 (Elimination of Quantitative Restrictions) and Article XIII: 1 (Non-Discriminatory Administration of Quantitative Restrictions) of the GATT 1994" between 1 January 2003 and 31 December 2006. Members requested time to examine the details of the proposed waiver for domestic measures to implement the Certification Scheme, and informal consultations conducted by Canada took place in January and February this year to iron out Members' differences (BRIDGES Weekly, 29 January 2002 <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-01-29/wtoinbrief.htm#2>). The main disagreement stemmed from the fact that some countries did not see the need for a waiver, as they considered GATT Article XXI (Security Exemptions) to cover issues such as the Kimberly Process.

The decision arrived at for the waiver states that "the trade in conflict diamonds is a matter of serious international concern, which can be directly linked to the fuelling of armed conflict, the activities of rebel movements aimed at undermining or overthrowing legitimate governments, and the illicit traffic in, and proliferation of, armaments, especially small arms and light weapons". In order to accommodate all Members' concerns, a new paragraph was added to the original draft decision text, noting that "this Decision does not prejudice the consistency of domestic measures taken consistent with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme with provisions of the WTO Agreement, including any relevant WTO exceptions, and that the waiver is granted for reasons of legal certainty". Further, a new paragraph was added noting a recent UN Security Council resolution supporting the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

The General Council will formally approve the waiver at its next meeting. At the Goods Council meeting, the US noted that the process under the waiver is open for WTO Members to join also in the future if they have not done so yet. Chinese Taipei stressed that the waiver did not preclude the right of affected Members to have recourse to WTO dispute settlement. The WTO decision, G/C/W/432/Rev.1, and the waiver request G/C/W/431, are available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>.

ICTSD Reporting.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AIR CONCERNS AT WTO MARKET ACCESS GROUP

At a 20-21 February meeting of the WTO Negotiating Group on Market Access, Chair Pierre-Louis Girard (Switzerland) sought input for an overview paper on negotiating modalities for the market access talks (i.e. the way to structure the negotiations). He had produced an advance copy on 5 February (TN/MA/6, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>) that presented all the formulas submitted thus far in the Group, based on previously circulated written submissions by participants. Fourteen March has been set as the deadline for all new submissions on modalities for negotiations on tariff and non-tariff barriers, after which the Chair will present a second overview at the end of March. Based on last week's meeting and on the Chair's overview paper, Members remain far from agreement on which modalities to use to move forward on market access for industrial goods.

At the meeting of the Negotiating Group, delegates discussed 12 new submissions from a broad range of Members, including developing countries such as Bangladesh on behalf of the least-developed countries (TN/MA/W/22), and Kenya on behalf of a number of African countries (TN/MA/W/27), and Mauritius (TN/MA/W/21). In their submissions, these countries emphasised such factors as the extension of preferential market access arrangements, less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments from developing and least-developed countries, and the need for caution in liberalisation commitments by developing and least-developed countries due to the potential for de-industrialisation.

Bangladesh pointed out the serious adverse impact that the liberalisation measures taken by the country during the last two and a half decades is having on its industrial development, trade and economy.

Kenya called, inter alia, for the Negotiating Group to take into account the "dismal" experience of

liberalisation in African countries, and said any further liberalisation should be determined by the countries themselves. Kenya also requested that maximum attention be given to reducing tariff escalation and tariff peaks on products of export interest to developing countries, and that special and differential treatment (S&D) be based on economic benchmarks, including the protection of infant industries. On environmental goods, the group of African countries said that it would be "futile" to introduce issues such as process and production methods into the debate.

Mauritius, which often defends the interests of small island developing states, said that the modalities to be used in the negotiations should be flexible enough so as to accommodate the specific situations of countries and to stagger the liberalisation process for products that are highly sensitive. An across the board formula approach, its proposal stated, would neither take account of the different regimes under which countries trade, nor would it ensure the maintenance of at least the current preferential market access of some of the poorest and most vulnerable countries. It proposed a trade weighted average tariff reduction with a longer staging period of tariff reductions for sensitive products. Mauritius further proposed that tariff cuts should be on 'bound' rates, as opposed to 'applied' rates, which are usually much lower.

Environmental goods

While there was little discussion around environmental goods at the meeting (definitional issues in this area are being addressed for the most part at special sessions of the Committee on Trade and Environment, see <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-19/story4.htm>), a submission by Japan on sustainable development and trade in forestry and fisheries products (TN/MA/W/15/Add.1) elicited a number of negative reactions from other Members. The Japanese paper put forward the case for substantial flexibility in setting tariff and non-tariff measures to restrict imports of forestry and fisheries products -- of which it is a major importer - in order to advance sustainable development objectives. Chile said that Japanese subsidies in these areas were already contributing to overexploitation of natural resources, while Malaysia objected to what it saw as an attempt by Japan to bring the concept of multifunctionality into the non-agricultural market access negotiations. Some countries in the negotiations on fisheries subsidies in the Negotiating Group on Rules have also focused on the need for Japan to reduce subsidies to its fisheries sector as a means to reduce pressure on global fisheries resources (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-02-21/story2.htm>).

The next meeting of the Negotiating Group on Non-agricultural Market Access is scheduled for 14-16 April.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

US REMAINS UNDECIDED OVER WTO CHALLENGE OF EU GMO MORATORIUM

The US has yet to decide whether to formally challenge the EU's de facto moratorium on the approval of genetically modified organisms (GMO) 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". While the US has recently postponed a decision on a possible challenge (see BRIDGES Weekly, 6 February 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-06/wtoinbrief.htm>), support for a case persists, including by Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. Veneman said last week that US patience was "growing very thin" and that "very strong action was needed". The EU will hold a member state expert meeting on 7 March to review all pending applications for GMOs under the Novel Foods Regulation, to check which applications should be processed under existing rules and which under forthcoming rules (on labelling and traceability).

"No US decision on EU biotech trade case - USDA aide," REUTERS, 24 February 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 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, which have so far been neglected, including sorghum, millet, pigeon pea, chickpea and groundnut. 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.

G-7 MEETS AMIDST WAR FEARS

Finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) wealthy nations met from 21-22 February to discuss the current global economic situation. Their discussions mainly focussed on the need to stimulate economic growth, support developing countries, and improve oversight of global financial markets. The ministers produced a draft communiqué that recognises "the fundamental importance of rules-based trade in driving economic growth and poverty reduction". The statement also said that they plan to build upon the outcomes of Monterrey and Johannesburg and further contribute to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). During the meeting, Canadian Finance Minister John Manley welcomed and followed up on French President Jacques Chirac's comments regarding the suspension of subsidisation by wealthy countries on farm exports to Africa (see related story, this issue). In general, the ministers found themselves preoccupied dealing with the current situation in Iraq, the US' planned tax cuts and budget deficit. They said they would take action as a group should the global economy begin to experience serious economic problem over the coming months.

"Canada Urges G7 Farm Subsidy Cut After Chirac Talk," REUTERS, 22 February 2003. "G-7 finance ministers prepare for possible war," CTV, 23 February 2003.

DEVELOPING COUNTRY COMPETITION POLICY UNDER SCRUTINY

On 19 February, the Consumer Unity & Trust Society Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS-CITEE) held a symposium on competition policy and pro-poor development. Attended by 100 participants from 50 countries, the event examined the results of a two-year research and advocacy project comparing investment regimes in developing countries. The 7-Up Project studied competition law and its framework for implementation -- aimed at benefiting consumers through promoting a fair market that cannot be exploited by dominant

businesses -- of seven Commonwealth countries, including India, Kenya, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zambia. A key message emerging from the symposium, which queried how competition policy and law can help the poor, was that a "one size fits all approach" does not work for developing countries. Further, the level of awareness regarding competition policy is generally very low in developing countries, and civil society should seek to raise awareness. Participants highlighted prospects for competition policy at national, regional, and international levels, pointing out difficulties and benefits. While a number of the developing nations discussed during the symposium do not have a competition policy in place, others that do have encountered difficulties in their implementation. During one of the panels Beatriz Boza, Director of Ciudadanos al Día (CAD), Peru, stressed that competition policy was not an end in itself, but a means to further development. On 20 February, CUTS formally launched the International Network of Civil Society Organisations on Competition (INCSOC), "to promote a healthy competition culture". With 35 civil society organisation members from both the South and the North, the network will focus on capacity building, advocacy and the preparation of a World Competition Report.

ICTSD Reporting.

NEW INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC TASK FORCE LAUNCHED

In order to facilitate international trade, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launched an International Task Force on Harmonisation and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture on 18 February. The new Task Force will function as an open-ended forum for conversation between the different public and private bodies involved in organic agricultural trade and regulatory activities. It will seek to eliminate many of the difficulties associated with a lack of uniformity of organic regulations, standards, and labels, and it will also help increase access to organic markets in developing countries. The joint initiative was the outcome of a meeting in Nuremberg, Germany, where the three organisations gathered to follow up on recommendations they made during a similar joint meeting last year.

For more information, please visit:
http://www.unctad.org/trade_env.

ICTSD Reporting.

WTO IN BRIEF

**DSU REVIEW NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED,
SLOWLY**

In meetings of the special session of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on 17 and 18 of February, Members carried on with the negotiations on the review of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU), progressing on an article-by article basis. As in the two previous meetings of the DSB special session, the work was based on the Compilation of Draft Text Proposals (JOB (03)/10) prepared by the Secretariat (BRIDGES Weekly, 6 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-06/story5.htm>). Members are currently reviewing the DSU, with a 31 May 2003 deadline (Doha Declaration paragraph 30).

Ahead of the meeting, the EU signalled its willingness to support an 'early harvest' of some of the less contentious issues in the slow negotiations. Speaking at the recently concluded mini-ministerial meeting in Tokyo, the European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy was quoted as saying that "the EU would be willing to agree to a small package of changes to the Dispute Settlement Understanding in time for the May deadline to conclude negotiations if there were procedures in place for reaching a broader deal later". The idea of achieving some minimal success by the May deadline has been on the lips of several delegations since last year, particularly in view of the divisive nature of some of the issues on the table and the close deadline, hence the EU's signal should be seen in this light.

ICTSD Reporting; "Lamy Proposes Small DSU Package by May as WTO Negotiations Lag", INSIDE US TRADE, 21 February 2003.

**NGO REGISTRATION FOR CANCUN
MINISTERIAL NOW OPEN**

On 24 February, the procedures for the registration of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to attend the fifth WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico, from 10 to 14 September 2003 were posted to the WTO website. As previously referenced in BRIDGES Weekly, 12 February 2003 (<http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-13/story4.htm>), requests for registration should be sent by 30 April, and registration forms will be sent by 31 May to all NGOs that fulfil the registration criteria.

The procedures can be found at the WTO website by going to the following link:

http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min03_e/ngo_acc_e.htm.

**TRADE AND COMPETITION GROUP
CONSIDERS MULTILATERAL
FRAMEWORK**

During a 20-21 February meeting of the WTO Working Group on Interaction between Trade and Competition Policy, Members considered a new study on issues relating to a possible multilateral framework on competition policy. The study, produced by the World Trade Institute, provides an overview of current literature on competition policy, case studies, and summaries of proposals tabled so far in the Working Group, and is expected to serve as the basis for future discussions. During the meeting, Korea submitted a paper on "Hardcore Cartels and Voluntary Cooperation: Conceptual and Practical Enforcement Issues". Korea stressed the need to deal with hardcore cartels in a multilateral manner, and suggested the establishment of a WTO Competition Policy Committee serving as a forum for information exchange. Members discussed, without agreeing, on the role of competition policy in the WTO, with the EU noting agreement only as regards hard-core cartels. Canada underscored concerns with a competition framework under WTO dispute settlement, and expressed preference for peer review and non-binding procedures. Also at the meeting, Hong Kong (China) presented a paper outlining developing country concerns related to the work of the group, and the EU submitted a report on its technical assistance programmes and projects on competition policy. The next meeting is scheduled for 26-27 May this year.

ICTSD Reporting.

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 This Week: 27 February to 5 March

24-28 February, Rome, Italy: 25TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES. For further

information on this session, visit:

<http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/cofi/cofi25/default.asp>.

27 February, Brussels, Belgium: FOURTH SYMPOSIUM ON MARKET ACCESS: "A NEW CENTURY OF ADVANCES IN MARKET INTEGRATION: THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MARKET ACCESS STRATEGY". Chaired by European Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, this symposium will be a follow-up to the 1996 EU market access strategy. European institutions, member states, and business representatives will discuss their previous market access strategies and ways to improve market access for the EU in the future. For further information, please visit: <http://mkacddb.eu.int>.

28 February to 1 March, Quezon City, Philippines: PHILIPPINE CONFERENCE ON GLOBALISATION, WAR AND THE WTO. The IBON Foundation is arranging this conference at the University of the Philippines in order to initiate a broad-based educational campaign against the World Trade Organization (WTO), globalisation, and war. There will be a main conference, workshops, a media conference, and a plenary. For more information, please visit: <http://www.ibon.org/activities/2003/01/01.htm>.

2-4 March, Brussels, Belgium: GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TRADING CONFERENCE. The Emissions Marketing Association (EMA) is hosting this conference to promote a better understanding of the greenhouse gas and emission markets. Industry experts will speak on risk management, case studies from the industry, and greenhouse gas business opportunities. For more information on the conference, visit: <http://www.emissions.org/conferences/default.html>.

3 March, Geneva, Switzerland: WORKSHOP ON FRESH WATER AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW. Co-hosted by the Graduate Institute of International Studies, the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva, and the Georgetown University Law Center, this forum will bring together scholars and policy-makers concerned with issues of water supply, trade and investment. Its purpose is to make clear problems of trade law for water management and international water law for trade agreements. For further information on the conference, please contact Makane Mbengue, email: Makane.Mbengue@droit.unige.ch.

5 March, Chicago, US: NAFTA IN A WTO WORLD - THE FUTURE OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS IN A MULTILATERAL TRADING ENVIRONMENT. This event will include sessions on: NAFTA at 10 years - a remarkable record; trade dispute case study - softwoods; and investment - Chapter 11 and other

issues. For further information please contact N. Heard, tel: +1 312 906-5134; email: nheard@kentlaw.edu.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: 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.

27 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.

27 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS.

28 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON CUSTOMS VALUATION.

28 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES.

28 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

3 March, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES.

3 March, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY.

4-5 March, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE.

Other Forthcoming Events

12-14 March, New Delhi, India: GOVERNANCE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH POVERTY REDUCTION. Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is organising a Partnership Conclave to celebrate its 20th Anniversary. For more information, contact: Apurva Dayal or Mukta Srimali at tel: +91-141- 2207482; fax: +91-141-220 7486/220 3998; email: 20thAnniversary@cuts.org; and internet: <http://www.cuts.org/CUTS-Anniversary.htm>.

31 March to 3 April, Marrakech, Morocco: EXPERT MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND

PRODUCTION. This international expert meeting will report to the 11th session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-11). For further information, contact Ralph Chipman, UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-5504; fax: +1- 212-963-4260; e-mail: chipman@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev>.

12-13 May, London: 3RD ANNUAL EMISSIONS TRADING CONFERENCE. This conference is on the global emissions trading market and will cover the latest developments in this field through various case studies focused on the EU. For more information, please visit: http://www.euromoneyenergy.com/event_programme.asp?eventid=ECK75&site=energy.

4-6 June, Montreal, Canada: INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONGRESS (IEDC). The conference, entitled "Global Alliances," will bring competitors together and document the successes of those businesses that have achieved economic development. It will also provide current perspectives on the EU, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Europe, and the Pacific Rim. For more information, please visit: <http://www.iedconline.org/InternationalCongress/index.html>.

9-11 July, San Francisco, California: WORLDWIDE SYMPOSIUM ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in cooperation with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), is organising this symposium in order to facilitate the exchange of information on geographical indications at the national, regional and international levels. For more information, please visit: <http://www.wipo.org/meetings/2003/geo-ind/en/index.html>.

5-7 September, Cancun, Mexico: GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM (GBF). The 18th session of this forum will precede the WTO Ministerial Conference on 10-14 September. Entitled "Environment, Trade, and Development: Towards a Sustainable Future," the event will provide a platform for the trade and biodiversity communities to consider how their respective goals and objectives might complement or hinder each other, and will serve to build and strengthen networks among the two communities. For more information, please visit: <http://www.gbf.ch/>.

20-21 November, Miami, Florida: FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS (FTAA) MINISTERIAL MEETING. This meeting is an important marker in the negotiations among the 34 FTAA members to remove tariffs, trade barriers, and promote regional economic development and integration in the Western Hemisphere. For more

information, please visit: www.ustr.gov/releases/2003/01/03-06.htm.

Call for abstracts/papers

24-28 July, San Francisco, California: BUSINESS & ECONOMICS SOCIETY (B&ESI) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. The coordinators are seeking panel organisers, paper presenters, moderators, discussants, observers, and a chair for the conference. The deadline for abstract submission is March 30th. For more information, contact B&ESI at: tel +011-508-595-0089; email: hkan@besiweb.com; internet: <http://www.besiweb.com>.

RESOURCES

ICTSD Resources

DOHA BRIEFING SERIES. ICTSD and IISD have prepared a 'midterm review' of the current WTO negotiations, consisting of a series of 13 Doha Round Briefings. These briefings provide a comprehensive overview of the current status of the negotiations, as well as other mandates arising from the Doha Ministerial Conference, including on agriculture, trade in services, intellectual property rights, negotiations on WTO rules, dispute settlement review and special and differential treatment for developing countries. To access the briefings online, visit: <http://www.ictsd.org/pubs/dohabriefings/index.htm>.

BRIDGES MONTHLY REVIEW. Available in print or pdf format, ICTSD's monthly publication provides timely information and analysis on the interface between trade and sustainable development for the growing number of actors involved in the global trade debate. The January/February 2003 issue -- including articles on the midterm of the Doha Round, the Byrd Amendment, traditional knowledge and credits for autonomous liberalization -- is now available at: <http://www.ictsd.org/monthly/index.htm>.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS INSIGHTS/ ECLAIRAGE SUR LES NÉGOCIATIONS COMMERCIALES. This bi-monthly publication on the major issues faced by all African and ACP countries in their international trade negotiations at the WTO and with the EU in the context of the Cotonou Agreement is produced by ICTSD in collaboration with the European Centre for Development Policy Management and the Overseas Development Institute. The February 2003 issue includes articles on challenges and prospects for ACP countries beyond Lomé and on dispute resolution under the ACP- EU Cotonou Agreement. It is available online at: <http://www.ictsd.org/tni/index.htm>.

Other Resources

US DUMPING ON WORLD AGRICULTURAL MARKETS: CAN TRADE RULES HELP FARMERS? By Mark Ritchie, Sophia Murphy and Mary Beth Lake at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP, February 2003). This report shows that the US is selling primary farm commodities -- such as corn, soybeans, cotton, wheat and rice -- on the world market at dumped prices and thereby distorting international market conditions. The IATP notes that these practices are especially damaging to developing countries and their farm sectors. To remedy the situation, the IATP suggests that visible export subsidies be eliminated as soon as possible, and that exporting countries commit to keeping products priced below the cost of production out of the global market. The IATP believes that to accomplish these goals, international trade rules would need to be strengthened. To access the report, visit: http://www.wtowatch.org/library/admin/uploadedfiles/United_States_Dumping_on_World_Agricultural_Ma.pdf.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE US FACE CHALLENGE - AND CHANCE FOR HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGH - ON WORKERS' RIGHTS. The Carnegie Endowment (February 2003). By Sandra Polaski. The author notes that violations of the rule of law and workers' rights occur often in Central America. Building on the experience with previous trade agreements, her paper provides a proposal for the US - Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which would create incentives for Central American governments and firms to treat their workers better. Her approach, she writes, "aligns private sector incentives with public interests," and will, therefore, "succeed where Central American governments alone have not". To view the paper, visit: http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/2003-Feb_CAFTA-labor-page.asp?p=43&from=pubdate.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TO ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE US - CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS. The Carnegie Endowment (February 2003). By John Audley. The author presents several suggestions for improving the trade regime in Central America in the areas of environmental protection, the rule of law, and good governance. His recommendations include: building on current environmental protection; creating trade incentives; and including provisions on good governance. To view the paper, visit: http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/2003-Feb_CAFTA-enviro-page.asp?p=43&from=pubdate.

GLOBALISATION, LABOUR STANDARDS AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS: DILEMMAS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD. Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, United Kingdom

(2002). By Naila Kabeer. The author argues against universal labour standards that are implemented from "the top-down" because they disregard country-specific situations and can contribute to unemployment. She advocates "bottom-up" social policies such as a "social floor" that would be custom-built to fit individual countries on a case-by-case basis. To view the paper, please visit: <http://www.gapresearch.org/production/globlabourwom-en.pdf>.

WATER IN THE CURRENT ROUND OF WTO NEGOTIATIONS ON SERVICES. By Ellen Gould, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Briefing Paper Series: Trade and Investment 4:1, January 2003). Regarding the WTO decision on whether water services are to be covered entirely by the General Agreement on Trade in Services, this paper examines potential impacts, including: on local decision making capacity; the risk of trade challenges; and on conservation measures. To view the report, see: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: VICTIMS OF PARTICIPANTS - THEIR CHANGING ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS. By Sheila Page, the Overseas Development Institute (2003). With the importance of international system negotiations on the rise, particularly for developing countries, this paper focuses on a number of related questions. For example, the author asks whether developing countries can participate effectively in these negotiations, and whether they can obtain benefits from such participation? Answers to the questions are sought in research on developing country participation in various negotiating processes, such as successive multilateral trade rounds. To view the paper, see: <http://www.odi.org.uk/iedg/Publications/index.html>.

POVERTY REDUCTION, EQUITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE SYNERGIES OR CONTRADICTIONS. By Michael Richards, the Overseas Development Institute (2003). In the context of the climate change negotiations, this paper examines the broader equity issues, as well as sustainable development and poverty issues. To conclude, the paper assesses strategies to link equity, environmental outcomes, and poverty. To view the paper, see: <http://www.odi.org.uk/iedg/Publications/index.html>.

"Out-licensing: a practical approach for improvement of access to medicines in poor countries," in the LANCET (January 2003). By Michael A Friedman, Henk den Besten, and Amir Attaran. In response to the debate over access to crucial patented medicines in developing countries, the authors suggest a practical consensus approach. In their proposed solution, the authors

discuss the possibilities of using out- licenses or voluntary licenses in "appropriate instances".

WORLD TRADE POINT FEDERATION WEBSITE (February 2003). This new website serves as a global e-business marketplace. The Trade Point Programme -- an UNCTAD creation -- primarily targets small and medium enterprises in developing countries, disadvantaged by structural and geographic factors, and seeks to help them integrate and take advantage of international trade opportunities. To view the site, see: <http://www.wtpfed.org>.

WTO Resources

New TRIPs-related documents now available on the WTO website at: <http://docsonline.wto.org>.

* Implementation Of Article 66.2 Of The TRIPs Agreement - Decision of the Council for TRIPs of 19 February 2003 (IP/C/28);

* Reflection Paper On Transfer Of Technology To Developing And Least- Developed Countries (EC, IP/C/W/398); * Review Of The Provisions Of Article 27.3(b) (WTO Secretariat, IP/C/W/273/Rev.1);

* Discussions On The Establishment Of A Multilateral System Of Notification And Registration Of Geographical Indications For Wines And Spirits: Compilation Of Issues And Points (WTO Secretariat, TN/IP/W/7).

A searchable archive of **BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest**© can be accessed at: http://www.newsbulletin.org/bulletins/WhichBulletin.cfm?Bulletin_ID=14&SID=

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