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Biotechnology

GMO UPDATE: EU, UK, GERMANY, GLOFISH

Commission delays decision on GM maize, moves on regulations

The European Commission has postponed its decision on the approval of transgenic maize (Syngenta's Bt-11), thereby further delaying the lifting of the five-year de facto moratorium on the approvals of new genetically modified organisms (GMO) in the EU. The Commission is now expected to discuss the issue on 28 January. Following the failure of the European Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health at its December 2003 meeting to reach a qualified majority required for approving the GM maize, the decision has now been transferred to the Commission (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 12 December 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-12-15/story1.htm>). If approval is given, member states have three months to take a decision.

As part of its efforts to finalise the EU labelling and traceability regulations, the Commission has adopted draft regulations for establishing a system to identify GMOs. The system would assign a 'unique identifier' composed of letters and digits to each GMO approved for use in the EU. Operators must provide documentation listing the codes of the GMOs that were used to constitute the original raw material for products intended for food, feed or processing. In its notification to the WTO (G/TBT/N/EEC/44), the EU stressed that the system followed OECD guidelines and took account of identification requirements under the Biosafety Protocol. The new EU regulations, which enter into force in April, continue to attract widespread criticism from Europe's trading partners. The Argentine government is currently looking for support among other countries, including the US, for challenging the rules at the WTO.

UK, Germany reassessing their positions on biotech

The UK Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) on 14 January released its advice on implications of the GM crop farm-scale evaluation results, published in October last year. While not making specific recommendations on the commercial release of GM crops in the UK, the Committee notes that herbicide-tolerant GM maize did not have a harmful effect on biodiversity compared with conventional maize varieties. Regarding transgenic beet and oilseed rape, ACRE points to adverse effects on arable weed populations. However, the Committee stresses that such negative impacts were a result of herbicide management, not the genetic modification itself.

The ACRE advice comes as part of an extensive process of public consultation, scientific assessment and socio-economic analysis on the future of biotechnology in the UK. Based on the results, the government is expected to make a decision on the commercial release of GM crops in the country within the next six weeks. According to news reports, the government is expected to approve only GM maize, for one season and under strict conditions, in an effort to strike a balance between responding to public concerns and not abandoning GM technology. In the European Council, the UK has so far taken a more favourable approach to biotechnology, supporting the approval of Bt-11 and the greater flexibility to manage co-existence.

Germany, which in the past had been one of strongest supporters of the de facto moratorium, appears to be moving towards a more lenient position, signalling that the government expects approvals to resume in the near future. Nevertheless, Consumer Protection and Agriculture Minister Renate Künast insisted that she would continue to support the possibility of GM-free areas in Germany. Moreover, releases of GMOs would be governed by strict rules on co-existence, currently being discussed in the German Parliament, which would set minimum distances for GM crops and make GMO farmers liable for contamination.

GloFish making waves in the US

A coalition of environmental and food safety groups led by the US-based Center for Food Safety (CSF) has initiated a lawsuit against the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for not regulating the GloFish -- a fish genetically engineered to glow red which has gone on sale as an ornamental fish in the US. The group is calling for sales of the fish to be suspended until government regulations are in place. "It's clear this sets a precedent for genetically engineered animals," said Joseph Mendelson, CSF's legal director. "It opens the dams to a whole host of non-food genetically engineered organisms." In December last year, the FDA had announced its intention to not regulate the fish, arguing that it was not used for food purposes. The fish had originally been developed in Singapore to monitor water quality.

Additional Resources

ACRE report: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/acre/fse/index.htm>

"EU Commission postpones decision on GM maize," REUTERS, 14 January 2004; "GM corn to be approved for one year only," INDEPENDENT, 19 January 2004; "Germany sees biotech foods advancing," AP, 16 January 2004; "Germany: Farmers to be liable for GMO pollution," EURACTIV, 13 January 2004; "Lawsuit seeks to dim glowing fish," BBC, 15 January 2004; "GloFish draw suit," THE SCIENTIST, 7 January 2004.

Regional Developments

REGIONS DIFFER IN PRIORITISING ENVIRONMENT

On 6 January, seven countries from the South Asian region agreed on a free trade agreement. Among other things, the agreement recognises the need for regional cooperation on environmental issues, including for the countries' coastal zones. In contrast, the Summit of the Americas on 12-13 January left environment aside as a marginal issue, instead focusing on security, free trade and democratic governance.

South Asian countries include environment

The foreign ministers of the seven countries in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) signed the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) on 6 January at their 12th summit in Islamabad, Pakistan. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka thereby hope to improve economic cooperation and development in the region that is populated by 1.4 billion people of which 40 percent live on less than a dollar per day. In the Islamabad declaration adopted at the meeting, ministers recognised the need to "undertake and reinforce regional cooperation in the conservation of our water resources, environment, pollution prevention and control as well as our preparedness to deal with natural calamities". Ministers also encouraged the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Centre in the Maldives. Five out of seven SAARC members have long coastal zones and this management centre would study the nature of problems such as tidal surges, cyclones and the greenhouse effect. Ministers furthermore "stressed the early submission of the State of the Environment reports to expedite the preparation of SAARC State of Environment report and the commissioning of the work on drafting a Regional Environment Treaty". In a statement, the Director-General of WWF Pakistan, Ali Hassan Habib congratulated Pakistan for recognising the need for a sound regional "environmental protection regime".

Americas Summit short on environment

Democratic governance, free trade and combating terrorism topped the agenda of the Special Summit of the Americas, which took place from 12-13 January 2004 in Monterrey, Mexico. Environment issues took a backseat at the meeting and only found passing mention in the final declaration when leaders expressed their commitment to: increase cooperation and strengthen the institutions responsible for coordinating and implementing measures to reduce the impact of natural disasters on people; and belief that ensuring environmental health for the people was an investment for long-term well-being and prosperity. Ministers were also "encouraged by the new alliance between our Ministers of Health and Environment in the Americas and we instruct them to develop a cooperation agenda to prevent and minimise the negative impacts to the environment and human health". The fourth summit of the Americas will be held in Argentina in 2005.

The Summit of the Americas brings together the Heads of State and Government of the Western Hemisphere to discuss common concerns, seek solutions and develop a shared vision for their future development of the region, be it economic, social or political in nature. During the first Summit meeting held in Miami in 1994 governments embraced the concept of sustainable development, consisting of social progress, economic prosperity and sound environmental management, as well as they committed to protecting the natural environment for future generations.

SAFTA agreement: <http://www.dawn.com/2004/01/07/top6.htm>

Islamabad declaration: <http://www.saarc-sec.org/summit12/summit12declaration.htm>

Declaration of the Americas Summit: http://www.summit-americas.org/SpecialSummit/declaration_monterrey-eng.htm

ICTSD reporting; "SAARC eco agenda earns pat from WWF", THE HINDU, 10 January 2004; "Summit of Americas has little time for environment", ENS, 16 January 2004.

Marine Resources

EU AGREES COD RECOVERY PLAN AND 2004 QUOTAS

In late December 2003, the European Council of Fisheries Ministers adopted a long-term recovery plan for cod as well as 2004 quotas for cod, hake, whiting and other fish species. Commenting on the reform plans scientists and environmentalists criticised the plans for being based on short-term thinking disastrous for fish resources. In related news a ban on fish imports from Kenya and Egypt to Europe was lifted.

Following all-night talks on 19 December, the annual three-day Council meeting agreed on more lenient quotas than proposed by fisheries scientists -- who had suggested a total catch ban on cod and hake in certain

areas -- given that long-term recovery measures would be in place for the most threatened species. The Council also agreed to limit the days at sea of the EU fishing fleet, and to improve monitoring to ensure that the fishing industry kept to the set quotas. While cod and hake quotas were kept at 2003 levels, the quotas for prawn and haddock, deemed in better health, were increased. During the talks, Spain, Denmark, France and the UK pushed for higher quotas in the talks, while countries such as Germany and Sweden spoke up in favour of following the advice given by the scientists.

Last week, the EU Commission also presented long term plans to reduce by 10 percent annually, catches and the number of fishable days for sole and hake caught in southern waters and for the Norway lobster. The plan also includes closing five fishing grounds around the Iberian Peninsula to replenish Norway lobster stocks. The plans would run between five and ten years, or until scientists deem the stocks as no longer threatened.

The aim of the reform plans is to allow severely depleted stocks to recover at rates ranging from 5 to 30 percent per year. "The long-term aim is to keep fishing and if there are no fish, we cannot do that," said EU Fisheries Commissioner Franz Fischler. The 2002 EU Common Fisheries Plan reform had placed emphasis on a longer-term approach to managing fisheries, rather than short-term, annual plans (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 23 January 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-01-23/story2.htm>).

Scientists, environmentalists call for stricter measures

Reacting to the 2004 quotas, the environmental group WWF said that "in supporting a zero catch for cod, the European Commission could have aided the recovery of the fishery, and ensured a future for fishermen", but instead "the Commission has compromised too much, and fish stocks and fishermen will both suffer from this gross mismanagement".

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the EC Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF) had recommended a moratorium on several cod stocks, and green groups pointed to the fishery off eastern Canada where authorities did not impose a commercial moratorium, resulting in that the cod became commercially extinct in the early 1990s and never has recovered. European cod stocks are now at only one-tenth of their 1970s levels. UK scientists at the Royal Society stressed that fishing quotas set by politicians were, on average, 20 to 30 percent too high and that "essentially this is condemning the fishing industry in 10 to 20 years time. Putting the short-term interests of the constituents before the long-term interests of the industry is not a solution".

In related news, the EU also ratified the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish in December.

EU lifts fish import bans for Kenya and Egypt

During the recent meeting of the EU Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health member countries agreed to lift a ban on fish imports from Kenya and Egypt. The agreement came after EU inspectors indicated that Kenya and Egypt meet all the conditions that were imposed on the imports two and four years ago, respectively. The import ban was imposed due to health and sanitary concerns and limited fish exports to bilateral trade agreements with individual European countries. Kenya is now looking forward to raising its exports to the EU by 100 percent.

Additional Resources

To view the EU 2004 catch quotas, visit http://europa.eu.int/lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/l_344/l_34420031231en00010119.pdf

"Europe Sets Recovery Plan, Not Ban, for Cod Fishing," ENS, 22 December 2003; "Outcome of the Fisheries Council of 17-19 December 2003," EC RELEASE, 22 December 2003; "Fish quotas aim to halt decline," BBC, 19 December 2003; "European fishery officials inching toward agreement," AP, 19 December 2003; "EU fishers protest protections for depleted fish stocks," AP, 11 December 2003; "EU floats more plans to save fish from extinction," PLANETARK, 16 January 2004; "EU lifts ban on fish exports," EAST AFRICAN STANDARD, 20 January 2004; "EU lifts ban on Egyptian fish imports: minister," EUBUSINESS.COM, 16 January 2004.

In Brief

SHRIMPS UNDER ATTACK

On 31 December 2003, the American Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) filed an antidumping complaint with the US Department of Commerce, arguing that producers in Thailand, China, Vietnam, India, Brazil and Ecuador are selling shrimps on the US market below production costs. According to the SSA, the complaint is aimed at restoring trade, which currently is unfair to American producers and has resulted in unemployment as well as health and safety concerns. Senator Lott, who supports the complaint, called on the US government to "take bold steps to ensure that free trade is fair trade". Currently 80 percent of the total shrimp consumption in the US consists of imported shrimps. In reaction to the lawsuit, the six shrimp exporting countries have issued a joint statement stating that "no legal action will change the fact that farm-raised shrimp from exporting countries is more cost effective than US wild-harvested shrimp", arguing that shrimp production in the US simply is not competitive due to high production costs. The exporting countries furthermore noted that the increase in shrimp imports had benefited the US economy by supporting the domestic processing sector. In protest of the lawsuit, Thailand's private sector said that it would stop buying US produced soybeans and soybean meal. The Commerce Department is set to decide on 17 February whether they want to hear the case or not; should the department agree to hear the case, the shrimp exporters face immediate tariff surcharges of 57 percent.

"Thai Shrimp Spat Could Grow," THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL, 16 January 2004; "Shrimp Exporters Join Up For Fight," VIETNAM NEWS, 13 January 2004; "Retaliatory Measures Against US supported," BANGKOK POST, 14 January 2004; "Indian Shrimp Exporters To Fight US Move," REDIFF, 17 January 2004.

EU'S CAP BLAMED FOR DECLINE IN BIRD-DIVERSITY

The UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Birdlife International have urged EU accession countries to put environment and wildlife at the heart of farming policy. A recently released report by the two organisations shows that the population of farmland birds has declined rapidly in European countries and in particular in areas of intensive agricultural production systems. The indicators of the report show that common farmland bird species have declined by 30 percent since 1980. The report also states that many of the bird species, which have already been lost in north-west Europe, are still found in the eastern European states scheduled to join the EU in May. Graham Wyne, Chief Executive of RSPB, noted that "for more than three decades the wildlife of the European Union has been ravaged by agricultural production subsidies encouraging intensive farming ahead of sustainability and the environment", warning the new EU countries of massive declines or even extinctions of wildlife relying on farmed landscapes. Furthermore, commenting on the relationship between the Common Agricultural Policy and the decline of bird species he said "in fact, this has been so marked you can pick out the outline of the Common Agricultural Policy imprinted on the distribution map of the bird".

"EU Urges Rapid Action to Save Endangered Species," ENS, 19 January 2004; "Dire Warning for Europe's Farmland Birds," RSPB, 19 January 2004; "Farming 'killing Europe's Birds'," BBC, 19 January 2004.

WTO: US SURPRISE INITIATIVE TO RE-START TRADE TALKS

On 11 January US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick sent a letter to the trade ministers of WTO Members, aimed at re-energising talks. In particular, he outlined the US stance on agriculture, industrial goods, services, special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing countries and the Singapore issues of investment, competition, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation (see: <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/cancun/docs/Zoellick-letter.pdf>). Zoellick, *inter alia*, suggested to start negotiations with market access in agriculture and said that a date should be set for the elimination of export subsidies, thereby putting much of the burden to restart negotiations on the EC. Furthermore, he supported substantial openings of markets in both developed and developing countries with competitive agriculture sectors, implying that major agriculture exporting developing countries could only be granted limited S&D.

Nevertheless, he recognised the need to address the issue of cotton as a part of the agriculture negotiations, both from a trade and from a development perspective.

EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy welcomed Zoellick's letter as a "good move" and said that "it looks as though the two big trade blocs -- the EU and the US -- are beginning to think along the same lines". He said the EC was ready to show flexibility in a number of areas, including the Singapore issues and geographical indications, and was ready to engage seriously on agriculture.

Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler also commented on the letter, highlighting specific preconditions for reducing agricultural export subsidies (see <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/cancun/docs/Fischler-comment.pdf>). He also highlighted an EC proposal to phase out all export subsidies on sensitive products for developing countries.

Developing country trade officials generally welcomed Zoellick's letter as a clear sign of renewed US commitment to the multilateral talks, but asked for more time to further study its strategic implications before they could come up with a more detailed assessment.

Mini-ministerial at Davos

Two dozen trade ministers will meet on 23 January in Davos, Switzerland, to discuss the 2004 WTO work programme, and ways out of the current deadlock. WTO Members are furthermore, expected to reactivate the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and its negotiating bodies after a new set of chairs have been selected. The first meeting of the General Council is scheduled for 11-12 February.

For a more detailed account see BRIDGES Weekly, 14 January 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-01-14/story1.htm>

ICTSD reporting; "U.S. Outlines Ideas to Revive Doha Round; Trading Partners Give Cautious Welcome," WTO REPORTER, 13 January 2004; "Mini WTO ministerial planned on sidelines of Davos economic forum," AFP, 13 January 2004; "US moves to restart stalled trade talks," FINANCIAL TIMES, 12 January 2004; "Brussels prepares to negotiate with US," FINANCIAL TIMES, 12 January 2004.

ASIAN EXPERTS TARGET KEY REGIONAL TRADE & ENVIRONMENT PRIORITIES

At a 14-15 January consultation in Sri Lanka, 20 regional experts in trade and environment met to articulate the central issues of concern to South and Southeast Asia on environment in the WTO. They looked not only at the major regional priorities in the ongoing Doha round negotiations, but also envisioned elements of a proactive trade-environment agenda for developing countries in the WTO for the future. At the Sri Lanka consultation -- which included a diverse range of academics, non-governmental organisations, and representatives from regional capitals and Geneva-based trade missions -- participants identified five regional priority areas relating to trade and environment at the WTO, including agriculture; environmental measures; intellectual property rights; risk and precaution; and environmental goods and services. Specifically, participants highlighted the fact that the impacts of northern agricultural subsidies on commodity prices and on local environments in developing countries were poorly understood, as was the impact of developing countries' own agricultural subsidies.

The informal deliberations in Sri Lanka, organised by ICTSD, IISD and IUCN, formed part of the 'Southern Agenda' project, which aims to assist developing countries in bringing forward their own environmental concerns as these relate to the multilateral trading system. The Southern Agenda is a partnership between ICTSD, IISD and a group of regional NGOs (the RING). The Sri Lanka meeting was the third in a series of six such meetings held across Asia, Africa and Latin America. The regional meetings are supplemented with ongoing Geneva-based consultations with developing country trade negotiators.

Further information on the project and its outputs is available at:
<http://www.ictsd.org/issarea/environment/partnerships/sagenda/index.htm>.

For a more detailed account of the meeting see: BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest, 21 January 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-01-21/story3.htm>.

HALTING BIODIVERSITY LOSS BY 2010

During a meeting of European states in Madrid on 21 January, EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom said that although EU leaders had agreed on halting the loss of biodiversity at all levels by 2010, much more needed to be done in relation to habitat loss, land use and climate change if this target was to be reached. Environment ministers from Europe, Russia and central Asian countries agreed in Madrid on a proposal to be presented to the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-7), to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next month. They agreed on, *inter alia*, developing a network of protected areas both on land as well as on the sea, which currently fall outside of national jurisdictions. The proposal, however, was criticised by environmental groups as not ambitious enough and for lacking financial commitments to implement the plans. Achim Steiner from IUCN - The World Conservation Union reminded delegates of the global impact of decisions taken within Europe, as well as he introduced IUCN's Countdown 2010 Initiative aimed at promoting action on issues crucial to the success of achieving the 2010 targets.

"Countdown 2010 Initiative takes shape across Europe," IUCN, 20 January, 2004; "Europe Agrees on Proposals to Save Species," ENS, 22 January 2004. In Brief

For more information on the Countdown 2010 Initiative see: <http://www.iucn.org/places/europe/rofe/>

LAKE BALKHASH FACING SAME FATE AS ARAL SEA?

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently raised concerns that the second biggest lake in Central Asia -- lake Balkhash -- might face the same fate as the Aral Sea and dry out due to unsustainable water management practices. The Balkhash Sea -- forty times the size of Lake Geneva and located in Kazakhstan -- is fed with water from several rivers the main one being the Ili river, which flows through China. Recent industrial and agricultural developments as well as population growth have led to an increased use of the Ili river water. The UNDP team manager highlighted the urgent need for Kazakhstan to come to an agreement with China with regards to how much water China could use from the Ili. Achieving such an agreement could prove to be politically sensitive although necessary to save the lake, according to UNDP. "If there is no agreement with China on the amount of water it can use from the Ili, Balkhash will be damaged in the same way the Aral was," said UNDP's environment team chief in Almaty. He furthermore added that another issue to be dealt with the use of the water by the Kazakh's themselves who do not pay market rates for it as well as agricultural system consumes too much water in relation to its production.

"Kazakhs May Face Another Aral Sea Disaster, UN Says," REUTERS, 16 January 2004.

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 four weeks

23 January, Bonn, Germany: WHITHER WTO? OLD INTERESTS AND NEW COALITIONS AFTER CANCÚN. Organised by the Centre for Development Research (ZEF). Professor Rolf Langhammer, the Acting President of the Institute of World Economics, Kiel, Head of Department "Development Economics and Global Integration", will be lecturing on this subject. For further information, contact Gisela Ritter-Pilger, tel: (+49 0) 22873-1861; fax: 22873-1869; email: g.ritter.pilger@uni-bonn.de; Internet: <http://www.zef.de/events/>

26-30 January, Nassau, Bahamas: INTER-REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 10-YEAR REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION. The meeting at Ministerial Level will provide representatives of SIDS Member States and Territories the opportunity to consolidate their national and regional review processes, and to determine their common priorities to advance SIDS efforts towards sustainable development, with the support of the international community. As well as approve a draft proposal from for a Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. For further information, contact the UN Division on Sustainable Development, SIDS Unit, tel: (+1 212) 963-2803; fax: 963-4260; email: dsd@un.org; Internet: http://www.sidsnet.org/Mauritius2004/Regional_Meetings/Bahamas.html

28 January, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: FTAA MEETING ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS CHAPTER. Drafters of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Treaty have scheduled a meeting to discuss the controversial issues in the treaty's final chapter on intellectual property rights. The meeting is open to accredited civil society organizations. For further information, contact: Roberto Obando, tel: (+809) 860-5043 ext.2350 and 2356; fax: 535-9610; email: cnnc-alca@serex.gov.do; Internet: http://www.ftaa-alca.org/SpComm/SOC/Thema_e.asp

26-27 February, Marseilles, France: WATER AND POLITICS WORKSHOP. Organised by the World Water Council. The workshop is expected to explore the realm of water and political issues. One of the outcomes should be the formulation of directions for the WWC's future activities. An additional input to the workshop will be provided by the publication of a special edition of the WWC "Water Policy" Journal on "Water and Politics". For further information, contact: Marie Lagier, Project Officer, World Water Council, tel: (+33 49)199-4100; fax: 199-4101; email: m.lagier@worldwatercouncil.org; Internet: http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/download/Water&Politics_invitation_for_contribution.doc

29-30 January, Washington, DC, United States: NCSE'S FOURTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE, POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: WATER FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND SECURE FUTURE. Organised by the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), this conference aims to develop science-based strategies for achieving water sustainability. The event will address: Sustainable Water Management and Institutions, Water Technologies, Quality of Water and Sanitation; and Estuaries and Coastal Resources Management. For further information, contact: Craig Schiffries, Conference Chair, NCSE, tel: (1 202) 530-5810; email: conference@NCSEonline.org; Internet: <http://www.ncseonline.org/NCSEconference/2004conference/>

4-6 February, Geneva, Switzerland: UNCTAD-COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT WORKSHOP ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. This workshop on will focus on "Elements of National Sui Generis Systems for the Preservation, Protection and Promotion of Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices and Options for an International Framework". The objective is to draft a menu of actions and policies, which could be included in holistic national systems for the preservation, protection and promotion of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. For further information, contact: Sophia Twarog, UNCTAD, tel: (+41 22) 907-5082; email: sophia.twarog@unctad.org; Internet: http://r0.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/meetings/tk2.htm

4-7 February, New Delhi, India: FOURTH DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2004. This summit, organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), will focus on the theme of Partnerships for Sustainable Development and address the WEHAB Agenda. For further information, contact: the Summit Secretariat, TERI at tel: (+91 11) 2468-2138; fax: 2468-2144; email: dsds@teri.res.in; Internet: <http://www.teriin.org/dsds>

Other Forthcoming Events

22 February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: INTERNATIONAL BIOSAFETY SEMINAR. Organised by the Third World Network in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology and the New Zealand Institute of Gene Ecology. The seminar (to precede the 1st Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena

Protocol on Biosafety) will highlight some of the latest independent scientific biosafety research, including socio-economic research and case studies, emerging trends in genetic engineering and biological weapons, implications for biosafety regulation, and the new genetics of gene ecology and the fluid genome. The objective is to provide delegates to the MOP1 with critical information for their discussions and negotiations. For further information, contact: Third World Network, email: twinkl@po.jaring.my; tel: (+603) 2300-2585; Internet: <http://www.twinside.org.sg>

25 February, Adelaide, Australia: SYMPOSIUM ON WHY HAVE A WTO? FOCUSING ON THE WELFARE EFFECTS OF WTO LAW. Organised by the Institute for International Business, Economics and Law (The University of Adelaide) and the Sydney Centre for International and Global Law (University of Sydney). Sessions include Accommodating Non-economics objectives in WTO Law; SPS, Food Safety and GMOs; and Intellectual Property. This symposium is an opportunity for lawyers and economists to hear presentations and to engage in discussion on the underlying principles of WTO law. For further information, contact: Marie Gutsche, Institute for International Business, Economics and Law, The University of Adelaide, tel: (+08) 8303-6944; fax: 8303-6948; email: marie.gutsche@adelaide.edu.au; Internet: <http://www.iibel.adelaide.edu.au/symposium/index.html> or http://www.law.usyd.edu.au/centres_institutes/SCIGL/FutureEvents.htm

24-26 March, Montreal, Canada: EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was adopted on 16 September 1987 at the Headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal. The Protocol was designed so that the phase out schedules could be revised on the basis of periodic scientific and technological assessments. For further information contact the Ozone Secretariat, tel: (+254) 262-3850; fax: 262-3601; email: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep.org/ozone/Events/7Bi_events_meeting2004.asp

2 - 6 May, Vancouver, BC, Canada: FOURTH WORLD FISHERIES CONGRESS. The Congress will explore issues related to the challenge of managing aquatic ecosystems in particular the reconciliation of fisheries with conservation through the promotion of scientific advice, cooperation and partnership among the world's fisheries scientists, managers, the fishing industry, and conservationists. For more information contact: the Congress Secretariat; tel: (+1 604) 688-9655; fax: 685-3521; email: fish2004@advance-group.com; Internet: http://www.worldfisheries2004.org/program/congress_theme.htm

14-25 June, Bonn, Germany: TWENTIETH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO THE UNFCCC. The twentieth sessions of the subsidiary bodies to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will continue negotiations relating to the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. It is the first major negotiating session following the ninth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, held in Milan in December 2003. The UNFCCC's two subsidiary bodies are the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). For further information contact the UNFCCC Secretariat, tel: (+49 22) 8815-1000; fax: (+49 22) 8815-1999; email: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy or review by the BRIDGES staff to Marianne Jacobsen, [mjacobson@ictsd.ch](mailto:mjacobsen@ictsd.ch).

PREVIEW: GLOBAL STATUS OF COMMERCIALIZED TRANSGENIC CROPS: 2003. Published by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA), 2003. The report assesses the commercial use of genetically modified crops around the world, including by country, crop and trait, and the global value and contribution of GM crops. Available at <http://www.isaaa.org/kc/>

AN OVERVIEW OF BIOTECHNOLOGY STATISTICS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES. By the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This report provides country-by-country information about the

current state of the biotechnology industry. Also included is a brief overview of some national biotechnology policies. Information contained in the report is based primarily on official statistical sources. The report can be viewed online at: <http://www.seedquest.com/News/releases/2003/december/7276.htm>

REGULATING BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR THE POOR? By Peter Newell (Institute of Development Studies (IDS)). This briefing paper, the seventh in a series from the U.K.- based IDS, examines whether priorities emerging from the global discussion of biotechnology regulation will benefit the poor in developing countries. The piece says that while there is a "clear drive" for "standard approaches" to risk assessment and regulation of genetically modified (GM) crops, international organizations and policy instruments often send "inconsistent and mixed messages" regarding the relative priority of trade, environmental protection, and socio-economic impacts in the process of developing regulatory programs. Countries Briefing Series are available from IDS at the link below: www.ids.ac.uk/biotech

HARMONISATION, DIVERSITY AND UNCERTAINTY IN INTERNATIONAL BIOSAFETY REGULATION, by R. Mackenzie and D. Glover. (The Institute of Development Studies (IDS)) This briefing paper discusses the formation of biosafety regulations in the developing world, with particular attention to the role and impact of international agreements. It says that although the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety provides countries with an opportunity to assess the potential risks associated with genetically modified organisms (GMOs), much uncertainty remains as to the future state of the international regulatory environment. The paper is available online at the link below: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/env/biotech/pubsBriefings.html>

"Transnational corporate interests and global environmental governance: negotiating rules for agricultural biotechnology and chemicals," by Jennifer Clapp in *ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS* 12 (4, 2003): 1-23. This article examines the role of the agricultural input industry in the negotiation of two environmental treaties: the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. It seeks to explain why industry players were willing to accept a phase-out of POPs chemicals but were reluctant to accept strict regulation of the trade in genetically modified organisms. This comparison is an important one to consider, as the line that once divided the agricultural chemicals and agricultural biotechnology industries has become more blurred, such that many of the same firms now are involved in both pesticide production and agricultural biotechnology.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND POVERTY REDUCTION: SOME ISSUES AND EVIDENCE. By the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). This book is a compilation of essays that examines how research and the creation of knowledge can lead to options for alleviating rural poverty. The book presents a series of case studies and discusses a range of topics, including the role of gender and communication between research managers and policy makers. More information is available online at the link: <http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/>

STATE OF THE WORLD 2004: SPECIAL FOCUS - THE CONSUMER SOCIETY. By the Worldwatch Institute (January 2004). This book examines how we consume, why we consume, and what impact our consumption choices have on the planet and our fellow human beings. From factory-farmed chicken to old-growth lumber to gas-guzzling cars, many of the things we buy support destructive industries. But businesses, governments, and concerned citizens can harness this same purchasing power to build markets for less-hazardous products, including fair-traded foods, green power, and fuel-cell vehicles. For further information see: <http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/sow/2004/>

"Realities for Latin American and Caribbean Biotech," by Rafael Rangel-Aldao in *NATURE BIOTECHNOLOGY*. This opinion cites several reasons why "rosy assessment" of the potential for biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean, given at a recent meeting of the United Nations Organization for Industrial Development (UNIDO), may not be realized for many years. The piece notes that many countries in the region lack the systems required to bring together parties from the research, development, and manufacturing communities into productive enterprises.

GLOBAL STATUS OF COMMERCIALISED TRANSGENIC CROPS: 2003. By the Global Knowledge Centre on Crop Biotechnology. In 2003, the global market value of GM crops is estimated to be \$4.50 to \$4.75 billion, having increased from \$4.0 billion in 2002 when it represented 15% of the \$31 billion global crop protection market and 13% of the \$30 billion global commercial seed market. The market value of the global transgenic crop market is based on the sale price of transgenic seed plus any technology fees that apply. The global value of the GM crop market is projected at \$5 billion or more, for 2005. This report will discuss: global status of GM Crops in 2003, GM crop area, by country, crop and trait, the potential contribution of GM crops, the global value of GM crops and future prospectives. The report is available online at: <http://www.isaaa.org/kc/>

Background Paper #13: "Export Controls: Impediments to Technology Transfer" by the Sunshine Project. This paper, for government and other delegates to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), discusses export controls on biological technology and knowledge, as applied by the Australia Group club. The paper calls for action by the Convention on Biological Diversity at its upcoming meeting in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004, where a working group on implementation of technology transfer obligations is expected to be created. It is available at: <http://www.sunshine-project.org>

ANNUAL LIST OF AMERICA'S TEN MOST ENDANGERED NATIONAL PARKS. By the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). Air pollution, years of inadequate funding, and damaging policies are among the troubles besetting national parks named to this annual list including four new parks and six that are still plagued by persistent problems. Parks on the list include: Big Thicket National Preserve, Biscayne National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Shenandoah National Park, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. For further information, see http://www.npca.org/media_center/PressReleaseDetail.asp?id=168

MINING AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: A BRIEF ASSESSMENT FROM IUCN'S SOCIAL POLICY PERSPECTIVE, by the World Conservation Union. (2003) This paper sets out IUCN's perspective on mining and indigenous peoples, in the context of its high profile partnership with the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). The partnership, a joint dialogue on mining and biodiversity aims to provide a platform for communities, corporations, NGOs and governments to seek the best balance between the protection of important ecosystems and the social and economic importance of mining. For further information, see <http://www.iucn.org/themes/spg/Files/mining>

Electronic Resources

The Liaison Office of the Food and Agriculture Organization (LOGE) is announces its new website: <http://www.fao.org/loge>. The LOGE website aims to complement the main FAO trade website (www.fao.org/trade) by offering a flexible and more focused platform for reporting trade policy developments in Geneva and elsewhere, provide a guided access to the vast amount of specialized information and resources available in the main FAO website (www.fao.org), from the perspective of the interests of the Geneva trade community and maintain a calendar of events related to agricultural trade, together with links to background information and material that may be available from the sponsors of such events.

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