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Chemicals

EC CHEMICALS REGULATION DRAWS RENEWED CRITICISM AT WTO

At a 1 July meeting of the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the US, Japan and other EC trading partners reiterated their criticism against the proposed European chemicals policy REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restrictions of Chemicals), saying the legislation would be too costly and burdensome and would disrupt global trade. Meanwhile, civil society groups renewed their calls for strengthening the chemicals policy, calling on the EC to resist the "US government's efforts to weaken" the legislation.

In a 51-point document submitted to the TBT Council, the US elaborated on its concerns, already expressed at previous TBT meetings (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 11 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-07-11/story2.htm>). Specifically, the US noted that the EC's latest proposal, released in October 2003 (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 31 October 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-10-31/story1.htm>), "still appears to adopt a particularly costly, burdensome and complex approach" that could "prove unworkable in its implementation, disrupt global trade, and adversely impact innovation". The US feared that the current proposal might affect the majority of US goods exported to EC -- worth over US\$150 billion in 2003 -- given that chemicals are used in the production of most manufactured goods. The US added that the impact likely would be even greater following the recent accession of the 25 new EC member states, and called on the EC to improve the regulations' cost-effectiveness so as to minimise negative trade impacts.

Several Asian countries, including, China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Thailand and Singapore on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) also voiced concerns. The countries pointed to the

expected economic impact on developing countries, in particular on small and medium sized enterprises, which they said would be unable to cope with the complex, burdensome and costly system. Moreover, they criticised the scope of obligations under the new policy as going beyond other countries' chemical management regulations. China complained that the EC had not carried out an adequate assessment of impacts on the chemicals industry in poor countries. The EC said it would respond to the comments in writing. Japan warned that the policy might be inconsistent with WTO rules, as it may end up restricting Japanese exports to EC countries.

Civil society groups, on the other hand, renewed their calls on the US to cease its "campaign to weaken the EU chemicals policy". "Rather than attacking the REACH policy, the administration should emulate it to safeguard US consumers from the tens of thousands of unregulated, potentially dangerous chemicals on the market," said Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. The TransAtlantic Consumer Dialogue -- a coalition of more than 60 consumer groups in Europe and the US -- urged the EC to strengthen the proposed policy. Among their recommendations, they demanded that hazardous chemicals not be subject to volume thresholds for registration and authorisation; that the authorisation procedure for chemicals of high concern should be strengthened, including through a strong substitution test; and that all consumer articles containing chemicals -- domestic and imported -- should be assessed, whether the chemicals were intended to be released or not.

Certain members of the US Senate also brought forth concerns. In a letter to US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Jim Jeffords (I-VT) raised questions with regard to the US government's position on the potential trade implications of the EC's proposal. "We are troubled by reports that the position of this administration on REACH may reflect the interests of a narrow segment of US industry without consideration of the broader ramifications for the US economy, national interest, public health and the environment," they noted. The senators requested Zoellick to specify which provisions of REACH he considered to be in conflict with which WTO provisions. They also called on Zoellick to explain how he had arrived at his position on REACH and who he had consulted in the process.

Background

The REACH legislation is set to replace 40 different pieces of current legislation in the EC. Among the most fundamental changes is a proposed shift of the burden of proof for the safety of chemicals from public authorities to companies that produce, import and use chemicals. A new European Chemicals Agency would administer the legislation. Registration and approval procedures would vary depending on the amount of chemicals manufactured or imported, and on the level of risk. While the vast majority of chemicals would only need to be registered, authorisation would be required for substances of "very high concern," such as carcinogens, mutagens and reproductive toxicants, subject to a risk assessment. To obtain authorisation for a specific use, the applicant would have to show that the risk from the use was adequately controlled or that socio-economic benefits outweighed the risks.

Additional Resources

To view the proposed EC policy visit <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2003/act0644en03/1.pdf>

For additional resources see <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/theme/chemicals.htm>

To access the TACD Briefing paper on REACH see <http://www.tacd.org/docs/?id=253>

To access the US Senators' letter see <http://jeffords.senate.gov/REACHLtr.pdf>

ICTSD reporting; "Washington works to weaken European chemicals policy at WTO," ENS, 24 June 2004;
"Consumer groups call on US to cease campaign to weaken EU chemicals policy," TACD, 23 June 2004;
"U.S., Japan voice concern on EU draft rules on chemicals," KYODO NEWS, 5 July 2004.

Standard Setting

CODEX DEFERS DECISIONS ON ORIGIN LABELLING, PARMESAN AND SARDINES

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at its 27th session from 28 June - 3 July in Geneva, Switzerland, failed to agree on some of the more contentious trade-related issues. Among them, further debate on the need for revising the standard on country of origin labelling was referred back to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL). The Commission also failed to reach decisions on adopting a standard for Parmesan cheese and on the recognition of a Chilean fish species under the Codex definition of sardines. Also at the meeting, the Commission renewed the mandate of the Ad-hoc intergovernmental tasks force on foods derived from Biotechnology (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-21/story2.htm>).

No headway on country of origin labelling

The CAC took up a request by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling to provide guidance on the need for revising the current Codex standard on country of origin labelling (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 May 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-05-28/story2.htm>). The UK -- along with other European countries and several non-governmental groups -- believes such a revision is necessary, arguing that the current standard based its criteria for labelling of country of origin on the place of processing, which is not enough to prevent misleading labelling. Under the existing "General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods", country of origin labelling is required if the omission of such labelling may mislead or deceive consumers. When a food undergoes processing in a second country in a way that changes its nature, the country in which the processing is performed is considered to be the country of origin.

The US, many developing countries and food industry groups at the meeting opposed the revision of the country of origin labelling standard, which they regard as sufficient to address consumer concern. They fear that particularly ingredient origin labelling would be impracticable, complicated, confusing and entail huge costs to food producers and industries, and that this could be a source of trade barriers, especially for developing countries. The International Council of Grocery Manufacturers Associations claimed that the cost of complying with such requirements would be "astronomical" for foods with multiple ingredients from different countries.

The CAC meeting Chair Stuart Slorach noted an "equal balance of opinion" on the issue, suggesting that members look in more detail into existing provisions that are considered inadequate. In the end, the Commission decided to instruct the CCFL to forward a letter to member states asking for their views on whether current Codex regulations adequately address the concerns raised by some governments. The comments will be considered at the next CCFL meeting in May 2005.

Decision on Parmesan standard blocked

The CAC also debated a request by the US, Australia and several Latin American countries put forward in the Codex Commission on Milk and Milk Products to develop a new international standard for Parmesan, establishing a global definition of the cheese. The EU blocked consensus on this point over concerns that the standard could undermine its efforts to secure international recognition for Parmesan as a geographical indication (GI). The US, in contrast, argues that Parmesan is a generic name that should not be protected.

In their assessment, the legal offices of the FAO and WHO concluded that the fact that Parmigiano-Reggiano was registered as a Protected Designation of Origin in the EU did not preclude a majority of the CAC members from deciding to elaborate a Codex standard on Parmesan cheese, if applicable criteria for acceptance of new work had been met. Also, they noted that there were no requirements to consider aspects of intellectual property protection, such as trademarks, certification marks or GIs, as criteria to be taken into consideration by Codex when deciding on acceptance of new work or adopting standards.

The divisions in the CAC mirror those in the WTO Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, where countries have long been debating the need to expand the additional protection already granted to wines and spirits to other products, as proposed by the EU, Switzerland and some developing countries (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 August 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-08-28/wtoinbrief.htm#3>).

Sardines in the spotlight again

The CAC failed to reach agreement on a Chilean request for recognition of the *Clupea bentincki* species under the Codex definition of sardines, due to objections by European countries and Morocco. These countries requested the Commission to suspend work on the issue in light of continued differences -- a suggestion opposed by the US and Latin American countries. The Codex standard on sardines had been a central element in the dispute launched by Peru against the EU in 2002 over the EU's refusal to allow the labelling of Pacific species *Sardinops sagax sagax* as sardines in the European market despite a Codex Standard 94 Article, which explicitly recognises the species as "sardines". Both the Panel and the Appellate Body had ruled in favour of Peru, arguing that the EU had failed to comply with the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade because it had not based its internal technical regulations on the Codex standard, and had failed to demonstrate that this international standard would not be 'effective' or 'appropriate' in fulfilling the EU's 'legitimate objectives' of ensuring 'market transparency, consumer protection, and fair competition' (see BRIDGES Monthly, October 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/monthly/bridges/BRIDGES6-7.pdf>).

The next meeting of the CAC is currently scheduled for 27 June - 1 July 2005.

Additional Resources

Documents of the CAC meeting are available at http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/codex/codex27_en.htm.

ICTSD reporting; "Codex Commission postpones decisions on country origin labelling," WTO REPORTER, 6 July 2004.

Agriculture

AGRICULTURE TAKES CENTRE STAGE AS WTO WORKS TOWARDS JULY DEADLINE

WTO delegates in Geneva are currently involved in intense negotiations on all trade issues on the table, with a particular focus on agriculture, the centrepiece of the Doha Round. Trade delegates are meeting regularly in small groups, bilaterals, and heads of delegation sessions in advance of a self-imposed deadline for developing "frameworks for negotiations" by the end of July. As a next step in the process, WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi, together with the Chair of the WTO General Council, is expected to circulate a draft of the framework agreement next week. This framework agreement, which in addition to agriculture will cover issues such as industrial goods, services and intellectual property law, will be held at a general level rather than providing detailed timeframes and figures for how to bring down tariffs and liberalise trade. The Doha Round of trade negotiations, launched in 2001, has been stalling almost since its inception and at this juncture, WTO Members want to signal their commitment to keeping the process going.

Agriculture at the centre of negotiations

Negotiations on a framework for lowering tariffs and cutting agricultural subsidies both for export and domestic purposes are at the centre of intense negotiations in Geneva (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-06-11/story2.htm>). Developing countries are, in general, key demandeurs in this area. They often have a comparative advantage in agricultural production, while developed countries provide massive subsidies to their farmers -- thus driving down prices on the global market, and even driving out competing domestic producers in many developing countries. The G-20, a group of key developing countries including Brazil, South Africa, China and India, emerged last year as a counterforce to big developed country subsidisers such as the EC and US. However, a number of vulnerable

developing countries have formed their own negotiating group, the G-33, pushing for the right of developing countries to designate 'special products' of development interest, which would be exempted from tariff cuts, and for a 'special safeguard mechanism' protecting developing countries from sudden import surges. These countries are particularly concerned about the livelihoods of their rural populations, which consist of small subsistence farmers.

Outcome of the latest negotiations

The latest meeting of the special session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture was held from 23-25 June. This meeting saw talks within a new grouping, the "Five Interested Parties" (FIPs) -- the US, EC, Australia, Brazil and India -- which first convened at the ministerial level on the sidelines of UNCTAD XI in early June. Following the talks, Chair Tim Groser gave a detailed and lengthy summary of the outcome (<http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=36182>). He identified emerging convergence among Members on certain issues, such as the need to end export subsidies and other export support, make overall cuts in trade-distorting domestic subsidy levels, and elaborate stronger rules on "green box" support (subsidies with minimal trade-distorting effects, including categories such as environmental and landscape protection). Further, he said Members were closer to agreement on the need to include measures for developing countries, including giving them the right to exempt 'special products' of development interest from tariff reductions, and the creation of a 'special safeguard mechanism'. Members have yet to agree on a formula for bringing down tariffs, the trickiest part of the negotiations.

Groser also singled out two possible "deal breakers": how to address the trade-distorting element of export support in parallel with the phase-out of direct export subsidies; and how to provide developed countries flexibility to protect their sensitive products, the latter being a key demand of the G-10 group of food-importing, mainly developed countries including Switzerland and Japan.

The FIPs now aim to produce an agriculture framework during a ministerial meeting from 10-11 July, which will also be attended by agriculture Chair Tim Groser. Following shortly after the FIPs meeting, the G-90 -- comprising African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the African Union and least developed countries -- will agree their official negotiating position on agriculture at a ministerial meeting.

The latest developments in the negotiations drew strong criticism from the G-10, which released a position paper on 5 July calling for a more inclusive and transparent process. The G-10, which accounts for 13 percent of the world's agriculture imports, took issue with not being included in key negotiations among the FIPs, which includes countries from all major negotiating alliances except the G-10 and G-33. The G-10 fears that the agriculture framework the FIPs are working on will not allow them enough flexibility to protect their local markets. While being insignificant exporters, these countries maintain high tariffs in order to be able to retain domestic agriculture and food security.

The way forward

With the end-July deadline rapidly approaching, Members are sending mixed signals on the state of affairs, indicating a divide between progress at high-level political meetings and concrete work on the details of a deal in Geneva. Members are set to continue working on all aspects of the draft July framework text over the coming days. Once the first draft is out, outlining the full package deal -- in which agriculture is the main sticking point -- negotiations will continue. The next set of official negotiations on agriculture is scheduled for next week. The end-July session of the WTO General Council, at which the framework text is supposed to be agreed, is scheduled for 27-29 July.

Additional Resources

For further reading on issues related to agriculture, trade and environment, see <http://www.agtradepolicy.org/page/resource/policyissues.htm#esa>.

ICTSD reporting: "Agriculture: Farm-Protective G-10 Ministers Cite Give In Agriculture Talks, Seek Place at Table," WTO REPORTER, 7 July 2004.

In Brief

EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE UPHOLDS HARVARD MOUSE PATENT

The European Patent Office (EPO) on 6 July upheld a pan-European patent on a mouse that has been genetically modified to develop cancer. The ruling applies to mice only, not all species of rodents. The patent, which had been granted to Harvard University in 1992, had been challenged by a collection of church, environmental and animal protection groups over concerns that it violated the dignity of living beings. The EPO acknowledged concerns over ethical issues and animal rights, but also said the medical uses of the patent must be considered. Christopher Then of Greenpeace expressed regrets that the EPO had not backed off on recognising patents for mammals, but nevertheless welcomed the ruling's restriction to mice as an "important partial success". While the genetically modified mouse was granted a patent in the US in 1988, Canada's supreme court ruled in 2002 that the mouse cannot be patented under current Canadian law.

"Europe upholds patent on altered mouse," AP, 6 July 2004.

NATURAL DECAF DISCOVERED IN BRAZIL

Researchers in Brazil recently discovered coffee plants that naturally produce virtually decaffeinated beans. These plants, whose beans contain 20 times less caffeine than normal coffee, were found among 3,000 seedlings at the Agronomy Institute of Campinas, brought from Ethiopia to Brazil in 1965. This discovery, which was published in the 24 June issue of the scientific journal *Nature*, could have a huge impact on the Brazilian coffee industry. If the plants can be developed commercially, Brazil could make greater inroads into the growing, and lucrative, decaffeinated market, which represents 10 percent of coffee consumed in the world. Decaf prices are 25 to 30 percent higher than regular coffee, a difference that could change the lives of coffee growers. Raw coffee prices are hovering at a 30-year low, having declined an average of three percent a year since 1970. Prices no longer cover the cost of production, leading many coffee farmers to abandon their plantations, or cultivate more profitable, but illicit, crops such as coca and khat. This discovery also has positive implications for the world-wide campaign to preserve biodiversity. According to the Maria Bernardete Silvarolla, who led the research team, this discovery shows the "importance of preserving genetic resources", and is a "full validation" of the value of maintaining germplasm banks of plants, cuttings and seeds, not only for coffee, but also for all flora and fauna.

For more information on the International Coffee Crisis, see the Oxfam Report "Mugged: Poverty in Your Coffee Cup" available at: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/campaigncoffee/art3395.html>

"Brazil: A Cup of Decaf Coffee? Naturally," TERRAVIVA EUROPE, 28 June 2004; "Oxfam Urges US to Immediately Rejoin the International Coffee Organization," OXFAM RELEASE, 24 March 2004.

WTO PANEL DELAYS PROCEEDINGS IN BIOTECH DISPUTE

The WTO panel examining the US-Argentina-Canada complaint against the EU's de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 May 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-05-28/story3.htm>) has delayed the next step in the proceedings by about a month, pushing the second panel session to the middle of September. The delay could be even longer (mid-October or early November) if the panel grants the EU's request to set up an expert panel to examine technical issues related to the case. Parties now have until 19 July to submit rebuttals in the case and until 22 July to comment on the need for an expert group. The US has already told the panel that it did not consider the establishment of a panel necessary. The timing of the interim and the final rulings remained unclear in view of the revised schedule. The delay in the GM case follows the announcement last week that the panel examining the EU-sugar case will need more time to provide a ruling (see BRIDGES Weekly, 30 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-06-30/wtoinbrief.htm>).

ICTSD reporting.

CONCERNS RAISED AS FAO TREATY ENTERS INTO FORCE

With the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT)'s entry into force on 29 June (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 8 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-04-08/story6.htm>), some civil society groups remain dubious about the Treaty's effectiveness. While clearly recognising the significance of the Treaty, the UK Food Group noted that much work needed to be done "to make sure its laudable purposes are not undermined by economically powerful countries seeking rights to extract and privatise genetic resources covered by the Treaty". Specifically, the group pointed to ambiguities in the text on whether, and to what extent, countries would be able to impose intellectual property rights (IPR) on genetic resources, obtained from the Multilateral System, which had been modified. Others also raised questions about the consistency of the Treaty with existing national IPR regimes and international agreements, including the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights. Underlying these considerations are growing concerns over the continued erosion of plant biodiversity -- it is estimated that three-quarters of the genetic diversity found in agricultural crops has been lost over the last century, and currently 80 percent of plant energy comes from only 12 crops.

A copy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is available at: <ftp://ext-ftp.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/it/ITPGRe.pdf>

For more information on this topic, see "Agrobiodiversity and Intellectual Property Rights: Selected Issues under the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture", Robert L.J. Lettington. Available at: http://www.iprsonline.org/unctadictsd/dialogue/2004-06-29/2004-06-29_lettington.pdf

"International Seed Treaty Becomes Law," UK FOOD GROUP, 29 June 2004.

MIXED SIGNALS FOR FUTURE OF BIOTECH IN EUROPE

At their 28 June meeting, European environment ministers failed to reach a decision on whether to authorise Monsanto's genetically modified herbicide-tolerant maize NK 603. This marked the second time ministers were unable to agree on an application, and it will again be up to the Commission to take the decision (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 May 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-05-28/story3.htm>). The approval would only apply for the use of the maize in animal feed and not for planting. The application for food use is pending in the EU Agriculture Council. Meanwhile, the Commission presented its vision for plant biotechnology for the coming 20 years, as drafted by stakeholders from industry, consumer organisations and research institutions. The paper's authors note the potential of plant biotechnology to address challenges arising from population growth, fossil fuels shortage and the resulting need for renewable plant-based resources. The authors call for a European technology platform on research in this area. The paper comes at a time of growing concern that biotech research is likely to collapse in Britain with the pull-out of the last major biotech company Syngenta, which is moving its operation to the US. Many predict that university research will be negatively affected as business funding is reduced and unlikely to be substituted by public funding. Among the EU countries, the UK has witnessed the most extensive consultation and assessment process on biotech, highlighting the public's concern over its use in the country (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 3 October 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-10-03/story2.htm>).

"Member states still divided over new GM products," EurActiv, 29 June 2004; "Plant biotechnology - a silver bullet for global challenges," EurActiv, 28 June 2004; GM research collapses in UK as lat big firm quits," INDEPENDENT, 5 July 2004.

Events & Resources

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar, <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/2004calendar.htm>. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies.

Coming up in the next two weeks

6-8 July, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT 2004. The third Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly. For further information contact the African Union Secretariat, tel: +215-1-517-700; fax: +215-1-517-844; email: webmaster@africa-union.org; Internet: <http://www.africa-union.org>

10-11 July, Paris, France: GROUP OF FIVE INTERESTED PARTIES (FIPS) MINISTERIAL MEETING. Ministers from the US, EU, Brazil, India and Australia are meeting to work on an agricultural deal. WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi and Tim Groser, Chair of the WTO agriculture talks are also set to participate. The FIPS ministerial-level meeting will be preceded by meetings among officials from the five countries in Geneva.

10-12 July, Beijing, China: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE: CURRENT AND FUTURE. This symposium will convene under the theme of "Innovation and Development in Agricultural Science and Technology". Its purpose is to promote the academic exchange and cooperation among the agricultural communities in China and other countries. For further information contact the World Food Prize Foundation, tel: +1-515-245-3783; fax: +1-515-245-3785; email: wfp@worldfoodprize.org; Internet: <http://www.worldfoodprize.org/chinaconference.htm>

11-14 July, Montreal, Canada: ISEE 2004 - 8TH BIENNIAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS. Organised by the Institut de Sciences de l'environnement. The Conference will explore the scientific basis for the modelling, regulation and management of international and interdisciplinary problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss. It will examine the many boundaries -- between disciplines, between ecosystems and political entities -- that structure our approach to such environmental problems, and will assess the impact these boundaries have on both science and governance. For further information, contact ISEE, tel: (+1 514) 287 1070; fax: 287 1248; email: info@iseemontreal2004.com; Internet: http://www.iseemontreal2004.com/main_menu.htm.

13-14 July, Mauritius: G-90 MINISTERIAL MEETING. The G-90, comprised of the least developed countries (LDCs), African, Caribbean, Pacific states (ACP) and African Union will meet to consolidate positions in preparation for the WTO end-July deadline for negotiating frameworks. Trade ministers from other key countries in the negotiations are also scheduled to attend. For further information see http://www.crn.org/ca_july.htm

13-16 July, Geneva, Switzerland: 24TH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. The Open-Ended Working Group to the Montreal Protocol, convening for its annual mid-year meeting, is expected to review progress in the various committees and prepare for MOP-16 in November 2004. For further information contact the Ozone Secretariat, UNEP, tel: (+254 2) 62 3850; fax: 62 3601; email: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/>

14-16 July, Barcelona, Spain: INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE "TOURISM CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT". Organised by the Instituto de Turismo Responsable. This Dialogue will place top priority on generating participation and debate, and will encourage interested parties to work together toward responsible tourism. New opportunities and benefits will be highlighted, as will the conflicts inherent to an industry that has such a major impact on society as a whole. For further information, contact Clos Joan; tel: (+ 34 933) 320 9010; fax: 317 0139; email: Itr@biospherehotels.org; Internet: <http://www.biospherehotels.org/tourism2004/>

Other upcoming events

20-24 October, Udine, Italy: MEETING ON THE ROLE OF MULTI PURPOSE AGRICULTURE IN SUSTAINING THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT. The theme of the fourth Agro Environ symposium is "The role of multi-purpose agriculture in sustaining the global environment". It will address key environmental and agricultural issues and consider new technologies that aim at sustaining agricultural systems, monitoring the environment and conserving natural resources. For further information contact Giuseppe Zerbi, University of Udine, tel: +39-43-255-8670; fax: +39-43-255-8603; email: zerbi@dpvta.uniud.it; Internet: <http://www.dpvta.uniud.it/~agroenv/docs/brochure.pdf%20>

17-21 November 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION (COP-1): COP-1, preceded by a last meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in September, is tentatively scheduled for November 2004. For more information contact the Joint Interim Secretariat: Niek van der Graaff, FAO; tel: +39-6- 5705-3441; fax: +39-6-5705-6347; email: Niek.VanderGraaff@fao.org; or Jim Willis, UNEP Chemicals; tel: +41-22-917-8111; fax: +41-22-797-3460; email: chemicals@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int>

6 December, Copenhagen, Denmark: SEMINAR ON WTO, TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT. This seminar is organised by the 'WTO, Trade & Development' network, an initiative based at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). The aim of the network is to provide an international forum for the discussion and dissemination of research and policy-relevant information on trade and development issues. The seminar is part of the 'Trade Mondays' series, with a seminar once a month at DIIS. For further information on the network and the 'Trade Mondays', contact Stefano Ponte, Seminar Coordinator, email: spo@diis.dk

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 Heike Baumüller, hbaumuller@ictsd.ch.

REALISING THE PROMISE AND POTENTIAL OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURE. By the InterAcademy Council, 2004. Drawing on the expertise of 90 national science academies, the report recommends a wide range of initiatives for enhancing the contribution of science and technology to Africa's food needs. Available at <http://www.interacademycouncil.net/report.asp?id=6959>

ASSURING BIODIVERSITY - A BRAND-BUILDING APPROACH. By Tim Kitchin, The Glasshouse Partnership, 2004. This discussion paper was commissioned as part of an UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) project on 'Communicating Biodiversity'. The project is exploring different approaches and ideas - further activities will explore other perspectives, including views from outside the UK and the conservation community. Available at <http://www.glasshousepartnership.com/branding.pdf>.

FAIR TRADE IN TROPICAL CROPS IS POSSIBLE: INTERNATIONAL COMMODITY AGREEMENTS REVISITED. By Niek Koning, Muriel Calo & Roel Jongeneel, June 2004. The paper addresses three questions: Are supportive arrangements for tropical export crops desirable? Why did international commodity agreements collapse? Are sustainable arrangements possible? The authors argue that the failure of past agreements were the result of political rather than economic causes, and that regulations can be made self-financing and resistant to free rider problems. They also discuss how developing countries may overcome the resistance that is met from governments of developed countries. Available at <http://www.north-south.nl/index.php/item/666>.

DUMPING ON THE WORLD: HOW EU SUGAR POLICIES HURT POOR COUNTRIES. By Oxfam International, March 2004. The authors criticise European sugar policies for hampering global efforts to reduce poverty, in particular export subsidies which they claim are used to dump five million tonnes of surplus sugar annually on world markets, destroying opportunities for exporters in developing countries. They call for reforms to stop such practices and improve market access for the poorest countries. Available at http://www.oxfaminternational.org/eng/pdfs/bp61_sugar_dumping.pdf.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: RELATING RULES (AND STANDARDS) IN THE EU AND THE WTO. By Joanne Scott in the *European Journal of International Law* 15 (2, 2004): 307-354. This article examines the relationship between 'negative' (market) and 'positive' (policy) integration in the EU and the WTO. It does so in relation to trade in goods, and takes as its example the area of environmental law. It argues that the strong role accorded to instruments of policy coordination in the EU is tied to the fact that such measures are contestable, so that authority and contestability go hand in hand. In the WTO, by contrast, the Appellate Body has shown a marked reluctance to accord authority to international standards and deep uncertainty persists as to the relationship between the free movement norms and MEAs.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHINESE ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE. By Cheng Xu in *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology* 11 (1, 2004): 54-62. The paper argues that, in parallel to the evolution of sustainable agriculture -- mainly in developed countries -- since the beginning of the 1980s, Chinese agricultural scientists and technicians have already innovated their own unique form of Chinese Ecological Agriculture (CEA), on the basis of traditional agriculture that has been sustained for more than 4000 years. The basic principle of CEA emphasises the obeying of both ecological rules and economic rules, as well as the approach of systematics and ecological engineering exactly corresponding to those adopted by sustainable development.

GLOBAL TRADE PATTERNS IN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. By the Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture, June 2004. International trade in fruits and vegetables has expanded at a higher rate than trade in other agricultural commodities. Over the years, three regions -- the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) area, and Asia (East, Southeast, and South) -- have remained as both the major destinations and sources of supply. A substantial share of their trade is intraregional, particularly that of the EU. All the three regions, however, depend on Southern Hemisphere countries for imports of juices and off-season fresh fruits, and on equatorial regions for bananas, the leading fresh fruit import. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/WRS0406/>.

AGRICULTURE AND THE WTO: CREATING A TRADING SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPMENT. Edited by John Nash and Merlinda Ingco (World Bank, March 2004). This book explores the key issues and options in agricultural trade liberalisation from the perspective of developing countries. Experts in trade and agriculture from both developed and developing countries provide key research findings and policy analyses on a range of issues that includes market access, domestic support, export competition, quota administration methods, food security, biotechnology, intellectual property rights, and agricultural trade under the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture. For further information visit http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product-detail?product_id=2297276&

FOOD REGULATION AND TRADE: TOWARD A SAFE AND OPEN GLOBAL SYSTEM. By Tim Josling, Donna Roberts and David Orden (Institute for International Economics, Washington D.C., March 2004). This book assesses food regulation and highlights reforms to achieve more open trade with sustained or enhanced food safety and quality. The authors document positive effects from adoption of the multilateral WTO Agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and other technical barrier to trade. Selected cases of newly-emerging or longstanding trade-frictions over food regulation are examined, and the limits to what the existing WTO disciplines can accomplish in resolving these frictions are analysed. For further information see <http://bookstore.iie.com/>

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