



International Centre for Trade
and Sustainable Development

BRIDGES **Trade BioRes**



6 August 2004

Volume 4, N°15

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Note To Subscribers

BRIDGES Trade BioRes will not be published during the WTO August recess. The next issue, Vol. 4, No. 16, will be published on 10 September 2004. We thank you for your continued support and welcome your comments on how we can improve our publication.

Agriculture

WTO: NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK AGREED AT ELEVENTH HOUR

After almost a year of stalled talks following the breakdown of talks at the last Ministerial meeting in Cancun (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 19 September 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-09-19/story1.htm>), WTO Members on 31 July agreed on a framework package to keep the Doha Round trade negotiations alive. While many WTO Members welcomed the agreement, civil society groups expressed strong criticism, in particular with regard to the 'undemocratic' negotiating process.

The 31 July framework emphasises the need to push ahead with the talks in five areas, namely agriculture, non-agricultural market access, development issues, trade facilitation and services, while simply reaffirming Members' commitment to the rest of the Doha mandate, including intellectual property, dispute settlement, rules and environment. In recognition of the limited progress made so far in the Doha Round, Members postponed the 1 January 2005 deadline for concluding the talks to an as-yet unspecified date, at least until the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005.

Agriculture - "The beginning of the end of subsidies"?

Among the priority issues, the framework for future agriculture negotiations, adopted as a separate Annex, was widely seen as the main breakthrough. Among the significant decisions, Members agreed to phase-out export subsidies and export credits by an as-yet unspecified date. Such subsidies allow farmers, in particular from developed countries, to sell surplus production in foreign markets at prices, which do not reflect the true cost of production. Developing country farmers are often not able to compete with these subsidised agricultural goods.

Moreover, Members included a new category of 'special products' to be designated by developing countries, which would be subject to more flexible treatment based on the criteria of food security, livelihood security and rural development needs. Detailed modalities for selection and treatment of these products will be elaborated during the negotiations. In addition, Members agreed to work towards eliminating trade-distortive practices in food aid in an effort to prevent "commercial displacement". The distribution of food aid has often been criticised as a way of dumping surpluses into poor countries' markets.

Most WTO Members welcomed the agriculture text. "This is the beginning of the end of subsidies," said Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim. A developing country delegate described the agreement as a 'major-breakthrough' and a 'remarkable turn-around' from Cancun. Nevertheless, many Members acknowledged that the text simply laid down the basic pillars and a 'framework' for conducting future talks. Negotiations on modalities of substance, much of which has been left undetermined, will be a 'real challenge' that Members have yet to confront.

Cotton now part of broader ag talks as priority issue

Discussions also continued on the 'cotton initiative', a proposal by Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali to eliminate cotton subsidies worldwide (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 2 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-06-02/story1.htm>). Following a deal struck between the US and the four Western African countries on 29 July, Members agreed to make discussions on cotton an integral part of the agriculture negotiations rather than treating the issue on a separate track. In order to address the issue "ambitiously, expeditiously, and specifically", a special sub-committee will be established as part of the effort to "ensure appropriate prioritisation of the cotton issue independently from other sectoral initiatives".

Commenting on the text, Senegal's Minister of Commerce Ousmane Ngom described the agreement as "an important step in the right direction". The US cotton industry, however, criticised the deal. National Cotton Council Chair Woody Anderson said, "Efforts in the WTO negotiations to target US cotton are unfair and threaten the round". Celine Charveriat of Oxfam criticised the agreement for failing to address the issue of US cotton subsidies, calling the deal a "serious betrayal of developing countries", in particular in light of the recent WTO ruling against US cotton subsidies (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-06-25/inbrief.htm#6>).

Members welcome agreement, while civil society remains critical

WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi welcomed the framework text as a "truly historic" achievement. Many of the major players also expressed their satisfaction with the deal. "The Doha Round is back on track," said EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, cautioning, however, that "we have only walked half of the way". According to US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, "We have laid out a map for the road ahead, adding that "the speed limits for how far and how fast we will lower trade barriers" remained to be negotiated. Brazil's Foreign Minister Celso Amorim described the agreements as "a good deal for trade liberalisation" as well as "a good deal for social justice". This more than adequately addresses India's concerns," said India's Commerce Minister Kamal Nath, referring in particular to future reductions in domestic support.

However, many civil society groups sharply criticised the 31 July deal. They pointed to what they saw as a secretive and undemocratic process of negotiations, which they said had excluded civil society organisations and even many governments. Friends of the Earth International accused governments of turning a "blind eye to potential environmental and social implications" of trade liberalisation. They singled out the non-agricultural market access negotiations in particular, which they warned could deepen deindustrialisation in poor countries, forcing them to rely more heavily on unsustainable and harmful exports of natural resources. Celine Charveriat of Oxfam lamented the lack of "cast-iron commitments" and a "clear timeline for reform", adding that "if rich countries do not immediately put their promises into action, this declaration will become just one more stage in a long journey of disappointment and deception."

Additional Resources

The 31 July text is available at

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/draft_text_gc_dg_31july04_e.htm.

For a more detailed assessment, see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 August 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-08-03/index.htm>.

ICTSD reporting; "Round-the-clock meetings produce 'historic' breakthrough," WTO, 31 July 2004; "WTO agrees to framework pact," HINDU, 31 July 2004; "Subsidies deal revives stalled Doha trade talks," FT, 2 August 2004; "Trade Talks Progress, Enviros Try to Shield Natural Resources," ENS, 2 August 2004; "Doha round enters stage of convalescence," TERRAVIVA, 2 August 2004; "WTO deal endangers environment, development", FOEI, 1 August 2004; "International Groups Denounce World Trade Pact," ONEWORLD, 2 August 2004.

Forestry

TROPICAL TIMBER CONFERENCE DIVIDED OVER SCOPE OF REVISED ITTA

The United Nations Conference for the Negotiation of a Successor Agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), convening from 26-30 July in Geneva, Switzerland, decided to close with two issues -- the objectives of the successor agreement and the financial arrangements -- left for further discussions when the Conference reconvenes in February. Despite the remaining difference, there was widespread support for a continuation of the ITTA and its overall structure.

Just prior to the Conference, the International Tropical Timber Council convened for its 36th session (ITTC-36) in Interlaken, Switzerland. Among the issues discussed, civil society and trade groups put forward joint proposals on how the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) could help to address illegal logging and illegal trade in tropical timber.

Narrow versus broad scope

Despite extensive discussions in working and contact groups, countries did not succeed in bridging their difference over the objectives of the successor agreement to the ITTA. Positions were broadly divided into two camps, including producer and consumer countries on both sides. Among the major producer countries, Brazil and Malaysia favoured a narrow focus exclusively on timber, opposing a possible dilution of the ITTA's position as a global marketing association. To the surprise of some observers, the EU -- among the consumer countries -- also preferred a narrow focus, arguing that broader conservation issues should be dealt with by other international forums, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity or the United Nations Forum on Forests.

In contrast, several producer countries, such as Indonesia, India, Colombia, Ecuador and Ghana among others, would like to see continuation of the current scope which effectively includes non-timber forest products (NTFP) and forest services. Work in these areas, as well as forest restoration and protection activities, has already been carried out under the auspices of the ITTO over the past few years. Most consumer countries also favour a broader scope, which they regard as more promising for adding value to the conservation of tropical timber given the continuing decline in tropical timber trade and the growth in NTFPs and services markets. The US, while supporting a broad focus, remained wary of the ITTA becoming another multilateral environmental agreement, stressing the need to preserve its status as a commodity agreement.

For their part, civil society groups called on countries to acknowledge that sustainable production and trade of NTFPs and forest-related services are legitimate and important contributors to sustainable tropical timber forest management. They also called for a re-dedication of the ITTA and ITTO to their primary objective of sustainable management of tropical forests; the promotion of sustainable forest management and trade in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals; commitment of the ITTO to deal with illegal logging and trade; and acknowledgement of the legitimate rights and interests of indigenous peoples and other local communities.

The negotiations will continue from 14-18 February 2005 in Geneva.

Combating illegal timber trade

At a joint workshop held just prior to ITTC-36, the ITTC's Advisory Groups on Trade and Civil Society joined forces to voice their concerns over continued illegal logging and illegal trade of tropical timber. The groups agreed that the ITTO should step up its efforts to address these problems, calling on the organisation, *inter alia*, to improve data and understanding of timber production and trade; support transparency in the tropical timber trade and access to information; and to encourage national, regional and international trade regimes to promote legal trade. ITTC Chair Jan McAlpine welcomed the outcomes of the workshop. "This has been an historic event," she said. "That two groups with often contrasting views could sit down and jointly propose such strong and substantial actions is a credit to them ... Sometimes it takes civil society and trade to lead governments in contentious areas."

Background on the ITTA

The ITTA, which was adopted in 1983 and entered into force in 1985, is a commodity agreement negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Agreement, which was set up in response to growing concerns over the future of tropical forests, explicitly recognises the need to balance conservation and sustainable use of tropical forests -- several years ahead of the Brundtland report and the Rio Summit. The ITTA was revised in 1994 to include broader provisions for information sharing, including non-tropical timber trade data, and greater consideration of non-tropical timber issues as they relate to tropical timber. The ITTA established the ITTO, headquartered in Japan, which includes 58 government members (33 producer and 25 consumer countries) representing 95 percent of world trade in tropical timber and 75 percent of the world's tropical timber forests. The ITTC is the governing body of the ITTO, which is composed of all ITTO members. The Trade Advisory Group and the Civil Society Advisory Group were established by non-member stakeholders to facilitate their participation in the Council and to provide input to the Council's decision-making process.

Additional Resources

Further information on the ITTA: <http://www.itto.or.jp/>.

Daily coverage of the two meetings provided by IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/itc36/> and <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/itta/>.

Civil society statement: [http://www.forest-trends.org/whoweare/_doc/\(CSAG\)%20Statement%207-04.doc](http://www.forest-trends.org/whoweare/_doc/(CSAG)%20Statement%207-04.doc)

ENB Vol. 24 No. 29, 26 July 2004; ENB Vo. 24 No. 44, 2 August 2004; "Trade, civil-society organizations agree on measures to combat illegal logging," ITTO, 23 July 2004.

In Brief

BRAZIL CLAIMS VICTORY AFTER WTO RULING ON EU SUGAR SUBSIDIES

In its preliminary ruling released on 4 August, the WTO dispute settlement panel assessing the legality of EU sugar subsidies supported complaints put forward by Brazil, Australia and Thailand, thereby adding further pressure on the trading block to reform its heavily subsidised sugar regime (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 23 July 2004; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-07-23/story2.htm>). The interim ruling comes more than one year after the three countries had launched the case, alleging that the EU provided export subsidies to its sugar producers in excess of the levels it had committed to in the WTO agreement (see BRIDGES Weekly, 18 March 2004; <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-18/story1.htm>). Although the report is confidential and will not be released until it is finalised in September, some details have already been leaked. Specifically, the panel found that US\$ 1.4 billion of the EU's subsidised sugar exports are illegal, and that the EU exports up to four times more subsidised sugar each year than allowed under WTO agreements. Brazil's Foreign Minister Celso Amorim expressed satisfaction with the interim ruling, describing it as "a Brazilian victory" -- the second after another WTO panel ruled in favour of Brazil's complaint against US cotton subsidies earlier this year (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-06-25/inbrief.htm#6>). The EU would not officially comment on the interim report other than to acknowledge it had been released. The EU will have an opportunity to appeal the panel's final decision once it is released.

Civil society groups welcomed this ruling. In a recent press statement, Oxfam -- which has been leading a campaign to end EU sugar subsidies -- applauded the ruling, stating it was a "triumph for developing countries and a death knell for unfair EU sugar export subsidies". Trade experts have also commented on the decision, saying the ruling could hamper the bargaining position of EU trade negotiators in current agricultural trade negotiations by giving developing countries more leverage in opposing subsidies. The ruling will put further pressure on the EU to reform its sugar regime.

"WTO to Rule on Sugar Subsidies: Complaint Says Payments Provide Farmers in the EU With an Export Advantage," WSJ, 4 August, 2004; "WTO Report Jolts EU Sugar Producers," TERRA VIVA, 5 August 2004; "WTO Rules Against EU's Policy of Subsidizing Sugar Exports," IHT, 4 August 2004.

BETTER TESTING NEEDED FOR ALL NOVEL FOODS, NOT JUST GMOS

A new report released by the US National Academies' National Research Council and Institute of Medicine calls on the US federal agencies to assess the safety of genetically altered foods -- whether produced by conventional breeding or genetic engineering. Thus, rather than differentiating on the basis of techniques used in the production, safety evaluations should apply to any foods containing new compounds or unusual amounts of naturally occurring substances. While noting that genetic engineering was not an inherently hazardous process, the report acknowledges that such techniques were more likely to cause unintended changes than conventional methods, such as simple selection. The authors, however, stressed that they did not see a need for re-examining past approvals of genetically engineered foods and that the main focus of future work should be on the pre-approval process rather than post-market tracking. Both sides of the debate regarded the report as supporting their position. Industry groups expressed satisfaction with the report's conclusion that the risks from biotech foods are not unique, which according to Michael Philipps of the Biotechnology Industry Organization "should lay to rest the few naysayers who continue to question the safety of these crops". For their part, consumer groups welcomed the acknowledgement that biotech foods could have unintended consequences and that further research was needed. In response to the report, the Washington-based Centre for Food Safety called for a mandatory pre-market assessment and approval process for genetically engineered foods, as well as mandatory labelling of such foods to effectively track human health impacts after commercialisation.

For further information on the report, see http://books.nap.edu/catalog/10977.html?onpi_newsdoc07272004.

"Composition of Altered Food Products, Not Method Used to Create Them, Should Be Basis for Federal Safety Assessment," NATIONAL ACADEMIES, 27 July 2004; "NAS Says Genetically Engineered Foods Not Proven Safe," CFS, 27 July 2004; "Panel sees no unique risk from genetic engineering," NYT, 28 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 five weeks

1-10 August, Arusha, Tanzania: SECOND WORLDWIDE SYMPOSIUM ON GENDER AND FORESTRY. Organised by the Hedmark University College. The meeting will focus on women and forestry, gender, poverty and sustainable development, forest resource utilization and income generating activities for local people, ideology, religion and environmental responsibility. For further information, contact Merete Furuberg, tel: +47 90 163092; fax: +47 62 945753; email: merete.furuberg@hedmark-f.kommune.no.

5-8 August, Lima, Peru: SEGUNDO SIMPOSIUM INTERNACIONAL DE PLANTAS MEDICINALES Y FITOTERAPIA - FITO. Organised by Medicina Verde. For further information, contact Medicina Verde, tel: (+51 511) 564-7554; fax: 51 1 564 7554; email: infaperu@hotmail.com; Internet: <http://www.medicinaverde.org/>.

9 August: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. For further information, see <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/indigenous/>.

16-20 August, Stockholm, Sweden: WORLD WATER WEEK: WATER SYMPOSIUM: DRAINAGE BASIN MANAGEMENT - REGIONAL APPROACHES FOR FOOD AND URBAN SECURITY. Organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute. The aim of the World Water Week is to serve as a link between practice, science, policy and decision-making in the search for sustainable solutions for water resources management. While the character of the World Water Week in Stockholm is comprehensive and reflective, the agenda also includes discussions on specific issues. For further information, contact: the Secretariat, tel: (+46-8) 5221-3975; email: sympos@siwi.org; Internet: http://www.siw.org/downloads/WWW-Symp/2004_Water_Week.pdf

19-20 August, Nairobi, Kenya: TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC RENEWAL: DESIGNING NEW POLICY TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. Organised by the Millennium Project's Task Force on Science, Technology and Innovation and Kenya National Academy of Sciences. The conference will focus on addressing the recommendations of the Task Force interim report "Science, Technology and Innovation: Challenges and Opportunities for Implementing the Millennium Development Goals". For more information about the conference, contact: Brian Torpy, tel: (+1 617-496-5574); email: brian_torpy@harvard.edu; Internet: <http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/events.cfm?program=STPP&ln=upcoming&gma=25>.

22 August - 3 September, Joensuu, Finland: UNIVERSITY OF JOENSUU - UNEP COURSE ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW-MAKING DIPLOMACY. For further information, contact the University of Joensuu or UNEP, tel: (+358 13) 251 2709; fax: 251 4893; email: unepcourse@joensuu.fi or env.edu@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=303&ArticleID=4395&l=en>.

24-27 August, Texcoco, Mexico: V CONGRESO NACIONAL DE BIOTECNOLOGÍA AGROPECUARIA Y FORESTAL. For further information contact: Carmen Jacinto Hernández; tel: (595) 95 4 28 77 Ext. 130; email: carmenjh8@yahoo.com.mx; Internet: <http://www.chapingo.mx/Fitos/eventos/anabaf/index.htm>.

1-4 September, Johannesburg, South Africa: JOHANNESBURG + 2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE. This event will be held on the occasion of the second anniversary of the WSSD, incorporating a National Sustainable Development Conference, Thematic Round Tables, Sustainable Development Best Practice Exhibition, a Learning Centre, Media Capacitation Workshop and Doing Business in Africa Workshops. The Conference and Exhibition's themes include: water and sanitation, human settlements, energy, agriculture and food security, technology, natural resource management, regional development and NEPAD. For further information contact DEAT, tel: (+27 12) 310 3911; fax: 322 2682; Internet: http://www.environment.gov.za/Documents/Documents/2004Jun28/jhb2_28062004.html

2-3 September, Iquitos, Peru: II CUMBRE DE MINISTROS DE TURISMO Y DE MEDIO AMBIENTE DE IBEROAMERICA Y EL CARIBE / SUMMIT OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT FOR THE AMERICAS. Organised by the Ministerio de Comercio Exterior y Turismo of Peru. For further information, contact: tel: (+511 224) 3117; fax: 3236.

5-10 September, Iquitos, Peru: 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE IN AMAZONIA AND LATIN AMERICA: LESSON LEARNT / VI CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL SOBRE MANEJO DE FAUNA SILVESTRE EN LA AMAZONÍA Y LATINOAMÉRICA: LECCIONES APRENDIDAS. Organised by the Universidad Nacional de la Amazonía Peruana. For further information, see: <http://www.vicongreso.com.pe>.

6-10 September, New York: AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON CONSIDERATION WITH A VIEW TO RECOMMENDING THE PARAMETERS OF A MANDATE FOR DEVELOPING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON ALL TYPES OF FORESTS. Organised by the United Nations Forum on Forests. For further information, contact: Luz Aragon, tel: (+ 1 212) 963 1393, fax: 963 4260; email: aragonm@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-legal.html>.

Other upcoming events

26-30 September, Montpellier, France: EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE BIOSAFETY OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS. Organised by the International Society for Biosafety Research, this symposium will be held under the theme "How Scientific Research Informs Biosafety Decisions". A special workshop will discuss North-South issues related to biosafety of GMOs. For further information contact the International Society for Biosafety Research; tel: +33-1-30-83-37-30; fax: +33-1-30-83-37-28; e-mail: isbgmo@versailles.inra.fr; Internet: <http://www.inra.fr/gmobiosafety/aboutsymposium.php>

21-29 October, Cambridge, UK. 21ST CENTURY TRUST CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE. For further information on the conference, contact John Lotherington, tel: +44-20-7323-2099; fax: +44-20-7323-2088; e-mail: trust@21stcenturytrust.org; Internet: <http://www.21stcenturytrust.org/2004.html#2>

30 November - 4 December, Penang, Malaysia: SEVENTH ASIAN FISHERIES FORUM. Organised by the Asian Fisheries Society, this Forum will include symposia, plenary and technical sessions to address the status of Asian fisheries. It will include a technical session on globalisation and the WTO. For further information contact the Forum Secretariat, tel: +60-4-653-3888 ext.3961; fax: +60-4-656-5125; email: 7aff2004@usm.my; Internet: <http://www.usm.my/7AFF2004>

14-16 December, Beirut, Lebanon: MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY; TECHNICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION. Organised by the Team on Technology for Sustainable Development at the UN Economic & Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in cooperation with FAO, the meeting focuses on developing strategies for policies and interventions related to the implications of biotechnology and genetic engineering for socio-economic development and its impact on employment creation and poverty reduction in the largely agrarian-based economies of the countries of the region. For further information, contact Omar F. Bizri; tel: (+961-1)

978506; email: bizri@un.org; Internet: <http://www.escwa.org.lb/information/meetings/events/2004/14-16dec/main.html>.

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.

ABSP BASIC WORKBOOK IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT. Published by the Institute of International Agriculture at Michigan State University. The objective of this online training handbook is to provide the reader with basic information regarding the management of intellectual properties; to answer questions concerning the types of agreements used in transferring intellectual properties from one organisation to another or one researcher to another researcher; and to provide awareness as to the important sections of agreements and why these sections are important. Available at <http://www.iaa.msu.edu/iprworkbook.htm>.

REACH AND 'PROPORTIONALITY' UNDER WTO RULES. A briefing for WWF by Alice Palmer, FIELD (June 2004). On 29 October 2003, the European Commission issued its proposal for new legislation regulating chemicals in the European Union (known as REACH). Underpinned by the precautionary principle, the proposed regulation requires chemicals to undergo a process of registration in the European Union which is to be administered by a newly created European Chemicals Agency. This Briefing provides a background on REACH, the WTO and the proportionality of REACH. It outlines the WWF position on REACH. To access the paper visit http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/reach_prop_0604.pdf

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS. By Frank Biermann and Steffen Bauer in *Global Environmental Change* 14 (2, 2004). This article suggests some novel ways in which to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of intergovernmental organisations in international environmental regimes.

THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION ON THE PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT PROCEDURE FOR CERTAIN HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND PESTICIDES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE: SOME LEGAL NOTES. By Ted L. McDorman in *RECIEL - Review of European Community & International Environmental Law* 13 (2, 2004). The author analyses the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, which entered into force on 24 February 2004. He reviews the obligations imposed on parties to the convention, and the manner in which the processes and procedures established by the convention can be expected to operate.

ASSESSING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA. By the UN Economic Commission for Africa, July 2004. This report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the state of Africa's integration process, showing where efforts have succeeded or failed including why intra African trade remains low; and how lack of macro-economic policy convergence and insufficient infrastructures hamper integration. The report finds that although progress has been made in a number of areas, overall, this has been limited relative to the goals established by African leaders. The report makes several recommendations on accelerating the integration process. Available at <http://www.uneca.org/aria/>.

BRIDGES Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org>, in collaboration with IUCN - World Conservation Union, <http://www.iucn.org>, and IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, CEESP, <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/index.html>. This edition of *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* was edited by Heike Baumüller. Contributors to this issue were Heike Baumüller, Sarah Rogers and Mahesh Sugathan. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 13, ch. des Anémones, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editors or the Director. *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* is made possible in 2004 through the generous support of the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL) and the State Secretary for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of The Netherlands (VROM). It also benefits from ICTSD's core funders: the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK), the Rockefeller Foundation, MISEREOR, NOVIB (NL), Oxfam (UK) and the Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations (Switzerland). ISSN 1682-0843

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