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CONTENT

Biodiversity	1
Trade @ COP-7: What To Look Out For...	
Globalisation and Trade	4
Trade Agenda Evokes Criticism At Two World Forums	
Biotechnology	5
GMO Update: Bt 11 Approval; Belgian GM Rape Rejection	
Regional Developments	6
Farmers' Rights -- Endangered By The CAFTA?	
In Brief	7
Events & Resources	9

Biodiversity

TRADE @ COP-7: WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR...

Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) are convening for their seventh Conference (COP-7) from 9 to 20 February in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The packed agenda includes issues covering various trade-related aspects, including discussions on the transfer of technology; invasive alien species; access and benefit-sharing related to genetic resources; measures to address perverse incentives; and draft principles and guidelines for the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Technology transfer, IPRs and biotechnology

The transfer of technology is one of the three priority areas of COP-7, along with mountain biological diversity and protected areas. The draft decision under this agenda item puts forward elements of a work programme on facilitating the transfer of and access to technology. The elements stress the need to create enabling environments, including appropriate IPR regimes, for the transfer as well as absorption, adaptation and diffusion of technologies.

While not explicitly referring to biotechnology, the suggested activities include an analysis of potential benefits, risks and associated costs related to the introduction of technologies, "including new technologies"; the promotion and advancement of priority access to results and benefits arising from technologies based

upon genetic resources; and the encouragement of joint research programmes with associated jointly held patents or other IPR protection as well as other mechanisms to facilitate transfer of genetic resources-based technologies.

Invasive alien species and trade

Discussions on alien species had proven highly contentious at the last meeting of the COP when Australia, supported by some other Parties, had rejected the Guiding Principles for the prevention, introduction and mitigation of the impacts of alien species at the last minute over trade concerns (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 2 May 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-05-02/story1.htm>). The Principles were nevertheless adopted with Australia registering its formal objection. Since then, the issue has arisen during various biodiversity-related negotiations and is expected to again come up at COP-7, in particular given the extensive references to the WTO in the draft decision to be considered by the Parties. In particular, the draft decision invites the WTO and its bodies to consider the risks arising from invasive alien species in their deliberations and asks Parties to take into account the risks in their bilateral and regional trade arrangements. Furthermore, it requests the CBD Executive Secretary to collaborate with the WTO on integrating the issue into the WTO's training, capacity-building and information activities, and to renew his application for observer status in the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Alien invasive species will also be in the spotlight at the UN International Maritime Organisation (IMO)'s International Conference on Ballast Water Management from 9 to 13 February, which is expected to adopt a new international convention to prevent the potentially devastating effect of the spread of harmful aquatic organisms carried in ships' ballast water.

Access and benefit-sharing

Also on the agenda are discussions on the mandate of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to negotiate an international regime on access and benefit-sharing in the context of the CBD. The heavily bracketed draft decision highlights the key divisions among Parties regarding the nature, scope and elements of the regime and the timeframe of negotiations. Many developing countries, in particular those from the Like-minded Group of Mega-diverse Countries, are likely to renew their calls for a legally binding regime, pitching them against several developed countries, in particular the US. The timeframe of the negotiations is also likely to be contentious which in the draft decision ranges from "as soon as possible" to a more cautious "need for further analysis" of existing legal instruments and regimes, as advocated by several developed countries, including Canada, Japan, Norway and Switzerland (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 3 April 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-04-03/story1.htm>).

Regarding the scope of the agreement, Parties can be expected to focus on whether the regime should also cover the products of genetic resources and their derivatives as well as associated traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. Parties will also need to consider how the regime will relate to and integrate existing instruments and processes, including at the WTO, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), as repeatedly stressed by a number of countries, including Canada, Australia and the EU.

Of particular interest from a trade perspective will be debates on the inclusion of requirements to disclose the origin of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in applications for intellectual property rights (IPRs). This issue is likely to arise both in discussions on the international regime as well as on measures to ensure compliance with prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAT) provisions of the Bonn Guidelines (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 18 April 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-04-18/story1.htm>). The inclusion of such a requirement, together with evidence of PIC and benefit-sharing, continues to be strongly advocated by a number of developing countries -- led by Brazil and India -- in the WTO Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 13 June 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-06-13/story1.htm>).

Addressing perverse incentives

The draft decision on removing and mitigating perverse incentives -- ie policies or practices that encourage resource uses leading to the degradation and loss of biodiversity -- sets out a number of principles and guidelines for the identification and reform of such policies as well as the monitoring and enforcement of the reforms. Often mentioned in this context are agricultural subsidies, which have been cited as a major contributing factor for biodiversity loss (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 22 January 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-01-22/inbrief.htm#2>). The study by the CBD Secretariat on Domestic Support Measures and their Effects on Agricultural Biological Diversity, concludes that reducing trade-distorting subsidies at the WTO could help to achieve the CBD's objective to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity. Nevertheless, the study notes that "unfettered market forces cannot be expected to automatically give rise to biodiversity-friendly agricultural production systems", and that therefore "well-designed flanking policies" in both subsidising and non-subsidising countries were key to complement the liberalisation process.

Specifically, in the case of production-linked (Amber Box) subsidies, the overall effects of removing these clearly-trade distortive subsidies would likely be positive for biodiversity in the subsidising countries of the North, given that agricultural land could be expected to contract as a result. However, the corresponding expansion of farming in most non-subsidising countries could be expected to have negative impacts on agro-biodiversity, the extent of which would depend on various regulatory and socio-economic factors. At the same time, carefully targeted, designed and implemented agri-environmental programmes under the Green Box (decoupled and only minimally trade distorting payments) were found to potentially constitute positive incentives for conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity. Regarding Blue Box payments (partly decoupled support under production-limiting programmes), which are less distorting than Amber Box measures, the study identified "positive repercussions for biodiversity" although they seemed more limited than those under the Green Box.

Sustainable use of biological resources

At the centre of the debate under this agenda item will be the draft Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. Acknowledging the potential of sustainable use as an effective tool to combat poverty and achieve sustainable development, the draft Principles provide a framework for governments, resource managers and other stakeholders to ensure that the use of biodiversity components will not result in a long-term decline of biological diversity.

A number of principles are of particular interest from a trade perspective. Specifically, Principle 3 calls for the identification and removal of market-distorting policies, laws and regulations at the national and international levels that provide perverse incentives undermining biodiversity conservation and use (see also above). Principle 10 acknowledges the need for national and international policies to better reflect the current and potential values derived from the use of biological resources, encouraging this information to be incorporated in policy- and decision-making processes, including in trade and development policies. Principle 13 stresses the importance of also internalising the costs of management, encouraging governments to, inter alia, provide economic incentives for managers, such as tax incentives and/or the promotion of "green" labels.

Additional Resources

Documents for COP-7: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/cop-07/docs.aspx>

Draft IMO convention on ballast water management:
<http://globallast.imo.org/index.asp?page=mepc.htm&menu=true>

For further background, see the COP-6 special issue of BRIDGES Trade BioRes at <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-04-04/index.htm>.

Globalisation and Trade

TRADE AGENDA EVOKES CRITICISM AT TWO WORLD FORUMS

Critical voices could be heard at both the World Social Forum (WSF) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) regarding the negative impacts of globalisation and trade liberalisation particularly on disadvantaged groups in developing countries. The WSF -- held in Mumbai, India from 16-21 January -- drew over 100,000 participants from 132 countries, who attended numerous seminars, workshops, exhibitions and cultural displays to voice concerns and hopes for a better world. The WEF convened from 21-25 January in Davos, Switzerland, for its annual gathering, accompanied by the "Public eye on Davos" -- the alternative conference to the WEF -- and the Open Forum, co-organised by the WEF and civil society organisations.

Globalisation and trade in the spotlight at WSF

At the WSF, key topics included issues as diverse as arms control, tourism, rights of women and indigenous peoples, international trade and sustainable development including land, water and food sovereignty. The common thread linking the sessions was social impacts, particularly on weaker and under-privileged groups. The forum ended with a street march drawing tens of thousands of anti-globalisation protestors. The WTO and the collapse of talks in Cancun dominated many of the globalisation debates. In particular the G20 group of developing countries -- led by Brazil, India, China and South Africa -- met with mixed reactions, finding respect from some for its courage while attracting criticism from others for its political pragmatism and overly free trade position, which it is alleged to pursue.

Debates at the meeting repeatedly touched on the impacts of globalisation as promoted by international trade and finance. Speaking at a panel on 'Globalisation, Economic and Social Security', former World Bank economist and Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz stressed that the path of economic globalisation must be altered to avoid undermining social security -- which would continue to exacerbate poverty and therefore violence. Stiglitz called for new leaders at the helm of global lending institutions, commenting that one of the reasons for the excessive narrowness of the trade agenda was the excessive narrowness of the participants. He went on to assert the need for a new ruling body in charge of the institutions, ideally the UN. Stiglitz said the economies of developing nations were made vulnerable and volatile under the current system based on "market fundamentalism" and "unreal assumptions of the economy". He proposed that the WTO include on its agenda plans to strengthen social security and fight poverty.

Strong criticism could also be heard from Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation. Speaking at the WSF panel on 'Globalization, Global Governance and the Nation-State', Somavia noted that globalisation "has not delivered", pointing to a rise in unemployment, losses in social security protection and diminishing purchasing power in Latin America over the last twenty years. "The rules of the trade and finance are blatantly unfair to the developing world and they should change," he added. However, rather than opposing globalisation per se, he stressed that it was "patently unfair globalisation that we are discussing, which puts profits before people". Speaking at the same panel, Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, criticised the international trading system for being "unfair", as it did not "reflect the majority". Abolishing the institutions, however, might not help, she noted, calling for real reform, including "a legal commitment to implement human rights".

WEF-WTO linkages

During the conference "Public eye on Davos", civil society groups voiced strong criticism of the current round of trade negotiations. Commenting on an informal gathering of trade ministers held on the sidelines of the WEF to revive the stalled Doha round, Toni Juniper of Friends of the Earth International pointed to the strong links between the WEF and the WTO. He highlighted the linkages between economic globalisation and environmental impacts, such as damage to habitats in developing countries and the neglect of policies to save the local, national and world environment in favour of compliance with trade rules in developed countries. Moreover, he attacked the business sector for influencing trade policy and advocating the use of

trade agreements to block action for the environment or society, including on trade in genetically modified organisms, patents for drugs, privatisation of public services or undermining the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. Holding a meeting of trade ministers alongside a meeting of 1,000 chief executives from many of the world's leading companies provided ample opportunity for a "business steer" on the future of global trade policy, he added.

Background: WSF - Another World Is Possible

Created as a response to neo-liberal economic policies and a globalisation driven by capitalism, the World Social Forum is built around the slogan 'Another World is Possible'. The first WSF, held in January 2001 in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, was timed to coincide with the WEF in Davos, as the annual WEF was perceived as being an 'exclusive club' for elites to chart out a global economic agenda to the exclusion of innumerable social groups around the world. This year's WSF in Mumbai was the first one outside Brazil. A large number of Indian grassroots organisations participated in the Forum, ranging from church and tribal groups to marginalised dalit (scheduled caste) groups. The WSF is set to return to Porto Alegre next year. Commenting on the Mumbai WSF, some participants said that staging the event in India had made the Forum truly global. The challenge for the coming years of the WSF would be to prove in practical terms that another world is possible.

"A forum of contradictions," FES, 3 February 2004; "Globalisation bashing at global meet," YAHOO NEWS, 18 January 2004; "WSF delegates call for enforcing human rights," HINDUSTAN TIMES, 17 January 2004; "Ex-World Bank Chief Economist Slams Trade Rules, U.S", UNWIRE, 20 January 2004; "WSF globalisation not delivering," UNI, 19 January 2004; "The secret trade meeting in Davos - why have our trade ministers gathered with the multinational companies?" FOEI, 23 January 2003.

Biotechnology

GMO UPDATE: BT 11 APPROVAL; BELGIAN GM RAPE REJECTION

Europe Takes First Step Towards Removing De Facto Biotech Ban

The European Commission at its 28 January meeting approved a proposal to authorise Syngenta's genetically modified Bt-11 corn for food use. The Commission's approval will now be forwarded to EU member states for a decision within 90 days. If they fail to reach an agreement, the Commission would be able to authorise the transgenic maize under its own initiative. A decision to authorise the maize would put an end to the ongoing de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMO) -- at least for biotech foods -- which is currently being challenged in the WTO by the US, Canada and Argentina (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>). The Commission further agreed to submit a draft authorisation for Monsanto's GM maize NK603 to the Regulatory Committee for a decision in February.

Also at the meeting, the Commission stressed that a blanket ban of all GMOs that have been authorised in the EU would not be justified as necessary to protect human health or the environment, but conceded that GM-free zones were possible if farmers decided to produce without GMOs on a voluntary basis. It has thereby provided tentative backing for the decision of various European regions to remain GM-free (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-14/story1.htm>).

Belgium Rejects Bayer Application To Grow GM-Rape

On 2 February the Belgian government rejected an application from Bayer CropScience to grow genetically modified oilseed rape. The decision, which currently only applies to spring rape seed as the application for winter rape seed is still under consideration, is based on an expert report concluding that growing GM oilseed rape could have negative effects on biodiversity. The report from the Belgian biosafety advisory committee stated in particular that the GM crop could mix with non-GM wild varieties by vertical gene-flow,

following similar conclusions of a recent field trial report commissioned by the UK government (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 22 January, 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-01-22/story1.htm>). The Belgian report also concludes that although control measures could be taken to reduce the crop's impact on the environment, these would be "impracticable, hardly workable and hard to control in current agricultural circumstances". Although the Belgian government rejected growing GM rape, they allowed for the processing and import of the crop in Europe.

Bayer CropScience expressed disappointment with the Belgian decision claiming that it was based on politics rather than on scientific findings. The company furthermore stated that the cultivation of GM rapeseed would not be harmful to the environment if sufficient control measures were put in place. Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, on the other hand, applauded the decision as an important precedent for any future applications to grow GM rape in Europe. However, they criticised Belgium's decision to allow processing and import of the crop as inconsistent, pointing out that the growing of GM rape would harm the environment no matter where it was grown. The decision to allow for the import and processing of GM rape will now be forwarded to the European Council for a decision.

Bayer CropScience has also filed similar applications with the German government in an effort to obtain EU-wide growing licenses. Once an application has passed the risk assessment of a single Member State, it will be forward to the European Council for a final decision. If no objections are raised by other member states, the product can be marketed throughout the EU.

"GMOs: Commission takes stock of progress," EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 28 January 2004; "Belgian authorities accused of making political decision on GM rape," EURACTIV, 4 February 2004; "Europe closer to banning modified oilseed rape," FOE, 2 February 2004; "EU on line to prohibit GM oilseed rape crops," GUARDIAN, 3 February 2004; "GM oilseed rape could harm the environment," FT, 28 January 2004.

Regional Developments

FARMERS' RIGHTS -- ENDANGERED BY THE CAFTA?

The civil society group Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN) has criticised the US-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) for pushing the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) and patents on life on Central American countries. After the US finalised the agreement with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua in late December, Costa Rica has now also joined the coalition after initial disagreements (see BRIDGES Weekly, 17 December 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-12-17/story3.htm>).

According to the draft CAFTA text on Intellectual Property Rights -- released on 28 January -- the CAFTA parties El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua are requested to join UPOV Act 1991 by 1 January 2006 while the deadline for Costa Rica was set at 1 June 2007. If Parties already have effective patent protection for plants in place, they are required to make "all reasonable efforts" to join the UPOV 1991 Act. This also applies for countries that have signed up to the UPOV 1978 Act, ie Nicaragua. In addition to joining UPOV, parties have also agreed to make "all reasonable efforts" to allow patents on plants.

Background

The UPOV Convention was signed in 1961 with the aim of protecting new plant varieties of signatory countries. The UPOV Convention has since been amended in 1972, 1978 and 1991 each time strengthening the protection of plant breeders. NGOs from several developing countries, in particular from Nepal and India have warned that the UPOV agreement primarily promotes the interest of commercial plant breeders and multinational companies, limiting the rights of farmers in developing countries to freely save, exchange, reuse and sell agricultural seeds. This practice would be restricted under UPOV 1991 legislation (Article 15.2) that allows farmers to reuse protected material only if the breeder has been paid royalties. Under the

UPOV 1978 Act farmers are not allowed to sell seeds obtained from protected varieties, however they can store seeds for cultivation, replanting and development of new plants. In recent news (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 5 September 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-09-05/inbrief.htm#1>) NGOs applauded the government of Nepal for not signing up to the UPOV 1991 agreement in relation to their accession to the WTO despite pressure from the US. During the accession talks the US argued for Nepal to become a UPOV member in order to fulfil requirements under Article 27.3 (b) of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to provide protection for new plant varieties. Dinesh Pyakural, Nepal's Chief Negotiator said Nepal rejected the kind of "WTO-plus" commitment the adoption of UPOV 91 would entail. NGO also highlight that the TRIPS Agreement does not make any mention to UPOV and does not limit countries to developing their own effective sui generis system protecting new plant varieties.

"UPOV - Faulty Agreement and Coercive Practices," SAWTEE, 2004:
<http://www.sawtee.org/Policy%20Briefs/Policy%20Brief%20UPOV.pdf>

ICTSD reporting; "Cafta Pushes UPOV & Patents Of Life In Central America," GRAIN, 29 January 2004.

In Brief

INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY PANEL SUPPORTS NGO CLAIM OF SOFT DRINK CONTAMINATION

On 4 February, the Indian Joint Parliamentary Committee released its report on pesticide residues in, and safety standards for, soft drinks, fruit juices and other beverages. The report supports the findings of a study by the Indian Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) released in August 2003, documenting the presence of pesticide residues in soft drinks (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/inbrief.htm#3>). The report states that two laboratories analysing samples of 12 brands of soft drinks have found, inter alia, organochlorine and organophosphorous pesticide residues -- chemicals normally used for insect control -- 1.2 to 5.22 times higher than the EU limit for total pesticide residues in drinking water. Among the soft drink found to be contaminated were also those of Coca Cola and Pepsi. Both companies have repeatedly stressed that their Indian products were "absolutely safe" and met international standards. The CSE welcomed the findings of the report. They noted that "[the report's] findings have far-reaching consequences for public health and food safety regulations in India", as the report not only supported the CSE findings but also asked the government to set several strict health and food safety standards for soft drinks.

"Pesticides Taint India's Colas, Parliamentary Panel Confirms," ENS, 5 February 2004; "JPC report sets a "reform agenda" for environmental and public health action in India," CSE, 5 February, 2004.

WORLD BANK REJECTS WITHDRAWING FROM OIL AND GAS

According to press sources, the World Bank is expected to reject key proposals of the independent Extractive Industry Review on the World Bank's finance projects in the oil and gas sector (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-28/inbrief.htm#2>). The Extractive Industry Review had proposed that the World Bank and its private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation, should withdraw from the oil and gas sector within five years and instead concentrate on financing renewable energy projects. In a draft letter to the Bank's executive board, the management of the Bank argues that ending the financing of oil projects "would unfairly penalise small and poor countries that need the revenues from their oil resources to stimulate economic growth and alleviate poverty". The review furthermore suggested that local peoples should have the right to "prior informed consent" prior to the implementation of an oil, gas or mining project. In its response, the Bank states that this might be in conflict with national laws; but that the Bank would aim to increase the transparency of oil revenues. Commenting on the review response, WWF expressed disappointment over the Bank's rejection of some of the most critical

recommendations. However, WWF vowed that they would continue their efforts to convince the World Bank of the importance of implementing the recommended reforms.

"World Bank Chiefs Reject Proposal To Quit Oil And Coal Finance," FT, 3 February 2003.

SMALL ISLAND STATES ADDRESS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Over 300 participants convened on 26-30 January to address progress and challenges to the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), where trade was a recurrent topic. Documents emerging from the meeting, including a 'Nassau Declaration' and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Strategy Paper for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), noted that special and differential treatment under the WTO emerged as a priority for SIDS, as access to the benefits of globalisation and integration into the global economy would be limited without these provisions. Countries further noted that inability to effectively participate in multilateral negotiations and weakening economic performance since 1994 threatened sustainable development in their regions. The AOSIS strategy paper advocates for the adoption of procedures allowing smooth transition from Least-developed Country (LDC) status and an integrated framework of technical assistance and cooperation for trade and development in SIDS to be adopted by the WTO. The paper also requests the establishment of special long-term financial mechanisms to facilitate the adjustment of SIDS to the post-Uruguay Round trading environment, the recognition by the WTO to maintain subsidy measures by SIDS, greater attention to the environmental dimensions of trade and continued examination of the trade implications of multilateral environment agreements. Regarding biodiversity resources, the paper calls for financial support from the international community for building effective partnerships; addressing island biodiversity under the CBD; controlling the introduction of alien invasive species; and developing and implementing national biosafety frameworks, including the effective implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which many SIDS have ratified.

Outcomes of the Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS will be forwarded for consideration at the 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission will in turn make recommendations to the International Meeting for the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action on SIDS, to take place in Mauritius from 30 August to 3 September 2004.

"Summary of the Inter Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 10 Year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS," ENB, 2 February 2004.

EU OFFICIAL HINTS AT TRADE-OFF BETWEEN RUSSIAN WTO ACCESSION AND KYOTO

At a recent German parliamentary hearing, European Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen suggested that there may be a trade-off on the horizon between Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and its accession to the WTO. Summing up the link between the two issues, Verheugen said, "I understand it as an attempt [by Russia] to get us to relax some of our demands for Russian WTO entry and then to compensate for that by signing the Kyoto protocol". The Russian Federation has been seeking WTO membership since 1993, with intensification of its efforts under the economic programme of Vladimir Putin's administration. The EU has considerable influence at the WTO and is Russia's principal trading partner. Russia, which accounts for 17 percent of emissions, can effectively block the Protocol's entry into force, given the US decision to abstain. To come into effect, the international treaty -- designed to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases believed to be responsible for global warming -- needs to be ratified by 55 countries accounting for 55 percent of emissions. Russia continues to have reservations about the treaty's effect on economic growth and the number of participants that will adhere to its provisions. Some European states have hinted that a review of their own emissions policies may be in order if Moscow fails to ratify the treaty, fearing a competitive disadvantage due to increased costs. EU Environment Commissioner Margot

Wallström however denied any linkages between the Russian WTO Accession process and the country's signature of the Kyoto Protocol. "Our trade people are not interested in that and I don't see how it could happen," she said.

"EU's Verheugan Sees Russia WTO Entry, Kyoto Link," REUTERS, 28 January 2004; "Russia: Kyoto Pact Harms Economy," REUTERS, 2 December 2003, "European Commission Splits Over Kyoto Protocol," ENS, 2 February 2004.

EU HEARING TO BOOST ORGANIC FARMING

On 22 January 2004 the European Commission held a 'European Hearing on Organic Food and Farming Towards a European Action Plan' in Brussels. Sessions covered the place of organic farming in European agriculture and in the wider European society. The main purpose of this hearing was to gather experiences and views from the widest possible range of stakeholders. Furthermore, Franz Fischler, the EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, announced that the Action Plan on Organic Farming would be published in April this year. In his speech, he outlined three priorities concerning the market, the role of public support and the role of standards. The Commissioner supported a common EU-wide label for organic food products as an "essential instrument to increase the visibility of organic produce, and increase consumer awareness". The second important set of actions that he identified was public support for organic production, including new measures such as an animal welfare measure for which organic animal husbandry methods could qualify and a new food quality chapter to help develop the demand side. He also mentioned the necessity to update standards, as organic farming must react to new scientific and technical developments and respond quickly to changes in consumer demand. The hearing raised the need to develop animal welfare, environmental and other standards not covered so far and aim "to find ways to adopt a more scientific working method, based on consulting independent and transparent expert opinion". However, an issue of concern raised by both environmental groups and organic farmers relates to the co-existence of organic and genetically modified (GM) crops. Specifically, the groups criticised that the recently released co-existence guidelines by the European Commission did not establish thresholds for GM contamination of organic crops.

The Action Plan based on the output from the hearing, will be submitted as a Communication to the European Council and Parliament.

"European Hearing on Organic Food and Farming," EU PRESS RELEASE, 22 January 2004; "Fischler pledges EU Action Plan to boost organic farming," EURACTIV, 27 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

Until 27 February 2004: EU TRADE NEWS PUBLIC CONSULTATION: IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS. All interested parties are invited to take part in an online public consultation helping to shape EU policy. The Directorate General Trade wants to improve the current methodology used for assessing trade policy impacts on sustainable development. Written comments are invited on a draft consultation paper and may be submitted to eric.peters@cec.eu.int. To see the public consultations page and download the document, see: <http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/consultations/index.cfm>

6-8 February, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM (GBF-19). The Forum will be convened immediately prior to the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The GBF-19 will seek to demonstrate how biodiversity remains the foundation for human well-being, security and prosperity by addressing the following key issues: Livelihoods, Poverty, and Biodiversity; Technology Transfer and Capacity Building with Equity; and the Value of Biodiversity for Securing the Future. For further information, contact: Ms Caroline Martinet, tel: (+41 22) 999-0216; fax: 999-0025; email: gbf@iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.gbf.ch/>

9-10 February, Rome, Italy: FAO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (18TH SESSION). Organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Items on the agenda include FAO's Proposed Follow-up to the Report of Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases. For further information, contact: the FAO Secretariat, fax: (+39 06) 5705-3152; email: FAO-HQ@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/007/J1328e.htm>

9-20 February, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 7TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. Priority issues include: mountain biological diversity; protected areas and technology transfer. For further information, contact: the CBD Secretariat, tel: (+1 514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/cop-07> For a detailed list of side events see: <http://www.biodiv.org/register/side-events.aspx?mtg=cop-07&menu=cop7-press>

10-14 February, Bremen, Germany: 9TH SESSION OF THE UN AGENCY'S SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE. Topics to be discussed include: trade in fisheries products as a means of alleviating food insecurity and hunger and the safety and quality of globally traded fisheries products, including farmed fish, and options for developing science-based, fair and transparent safety-monitoring and labelling systems for seafood products. For further information, contact: George Kourous, FAO Information Officer; tel: (+39 06) 5705-3168; email: george.kourous@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/cofi/cofitr.asp>.

11-12 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL. On the agenda, inter alia: Iran - request for accession; Iraq - Request for Observer Status; Date of the Sixth Session of the Ministerial Conference; Report on Work Programme on Small Economies; Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies and Review of Chairmanships of Bodies under the TNC; Elections of GC Chairperson. For further information, contact: the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (+41 22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

12-13 February, Rome, Italy: RICE IN GLOBAL MARKETS AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS. The FAO Conference brings together experts from around the world to present their perspectives on latest trends and industry developments within the rice sector. The aim of the conference is to mobilise the international community to confront the most pressing issues confronting the global rice sector, from local farming practices to international trade. For further information, contact: Ms Rita Ashton, Commodities and Trade Division, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), tel: (+39 06) 5705-2057; fax: 5705-4495; email: Rita.Ashton@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/rice2004/en/e-001.htm>

19 February, Washington, D.C.: WORLDWATCH ROUNDTABLE SERIES: THE STATE OF CONSUMPTION TODAY. An internet based discussion organised by Worldwatch with Gary Gardner and Erik Assadourian, taking place at 2.00 pm (EST) 19.00 pm (GMT). The discussion will consider the effects of the consumer society on the developing world and the global environment. RSVP Required. For further information, email: sfinkelpearl@worldwatch.org; Internet: www.worldwatch.org/topics/consumption/

23-27 February, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: FIRST MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY. Substantive issues to be discussed include: decision procedure; information sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House; capacity building; handling, transport, packaging and identification; compliance; liability and redress; and monitoring and reporting. For further information, contact: the CBD Secretariat, tel: (+1 514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/mop-01/>

Other Forthcoming Events

16 March, Washington, DC: NCGA TRACEABILITY AND LABELING CONFERENCE. Recently the European Union published two new regulations regarding the sale, labeling and approval of food and feed products using biotechnology crops. These regulations, expected to go into effect mid- April 2004, will have a significant impact on all segments of the food and feed industry who do business in Europe. The conference will provide a forum for

stakeholders to discuss the impact of the regulations. For further information, contact: tel: (636) 733-9004; Internet: <http://www.ncga.com>

22-23 March, Rotorua, New Zealand: **THE ROLE OF CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND BIOENERGY IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GREENHOUSE-GAS**. Organised by IEA Bioenergy Task 38 (Greenhouse Gas Balances of Biomass and Bioenergy Systems). The conference is being organised in conjunction with the NZ Ministry for the Environment, NZ Climate Change Office and Force Consulting. The conference focuses on the role of carbon sequestration and bioenergy projects in national and international greenhouse-gas markets. It will provide a forum for discussions on bioenergy and carbon sequestration projects, carbon monitoring and accounting of agriculture, forestry and harvested wood products, among other subjects. For further information, contact: tel: (+43 316) 876-1338; fax: 876-1320; email: monika.adamek@joanneum.at; Internet: <http://www.joanneum.at/iea-bioenergy-task38/workshop/announcement.pdf>

21-23 April, Orlando, Florida: **WORLD CONGRESS ON INDUSTRIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOPROCESSING**. Organised by the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), American Chemical Society (ACS) and the National Agriculture Biotechnology Council (NABC). The convergence of biotechnology, chemistry and agriculture is opening doors to innovations that could revolutionize nearly every aspect of our lives, from industrial manufacturing to production of chemicals and consumer goods and even environmental protection. This conference will be geared toward a diverse base of participants from biotechnology, chemical and other industries, to government and academia. For further information, contact: tel: (202) 962-6655; email: register@bio.org; Internet: <http://www.bio.org/worldcongress/>

17-19 June, Washington, D.C.: **7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS: TRADE, POVERTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**. The World Bank and the Center for Global Trade Analysis, Purdue University, are organising this conference, which will bring together economists conducting quantitative analysis of global economic issues to exchange theoretical and applied ideas on applied general equilibrium methods, data and application. For further information, contact: Judy Conner, Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP), tel: (765) 494-4267, fax: 496-1224, email: connerjr@purdue.edu; Internet: http://www.gtap.agecon.purdue.edu/access_conference/participants/abs_submit.asp

27 September - 5 October, Boulder, Colorado: **SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES 2004: AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH HANDS-ON SOLUTIONS TO WORLD POVERTY**. Sponsored by The University of Colorado in collaboration with the Sustainable Village, the Marpa Centre for Business and Economics at Naropa University and Engineers Without Borders, this conference will provide a new platform of exchange where developing country poverty issues can be addressed globally and solved locally; provide unique opportunities for stakeholders to network, discuss new approaches for outreach and create new partnerships; and provide a platform for multidisciplinary exchange. Among the issues to be discussed are water, sanitation, infrastructure and energy. For further information, contact: tel: (303) 998-1323; Toll-Free: (888) 317-1600; fax: (303) 449-1348; email: info@sustainableresources.org; Internet: <http://www.sustainableresources.org/sr2003/index.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 Marianne Jacobsen, mjacobsen@ictsd.ch.

IUCN POLICY PAPERS FOR COP 7, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2004. These policy recommendation papers and information papers have been prepared by different components of IUCN as a contribution to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular they are aimed with issues on the agenda of the COP 7. The papers are available at: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/pbia/documents/positionpapers/cop7.htm>

NAFTA, FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MEXICO. By Lyuba Zarsky and Kevin P. Gallagher, 2004. This policy briefs analyses changes in foreign direct investment flows and exports following the signature of the NAFTA agreement. The main conclusions point the reader both towards the successes of the agreement as well as towards the negative impacts of the neo-liberal integration strategy arguing that it has undermined, rather than nurtured Mexico's prospects for long-term sustainable industrial development. The policy paper can be viewed at: <http://www.americaspolicy.org/briefs/2004/0401mexind.html>

THE ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBALISATION. By J. Frankel, 2003. Produced by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). This paper examines the relationship between globalisation and the environment. The paper partly

argues fears of globalisation hurting the environment through a 'race to the bottom' are not well founded. For further information, see: <http://papers.nber.org/papers/w10090.pdf>

FROM OCEAN TO AQUARIUM: THE GLOBAL TRADE IN MARINE ORNAMENTALS. Published by the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC), 2003. This 65-page report examines the international aquarium trade in which over 20 million tropical fish, 10 million animals such as mollusks, shrimps and anemones, and up to 12 million stony corals are harvested annually. For further information, see: http://www.unep-wcmc.org/resources/publications/UNEP_WCMC_bio_series/17.htm

SURVIVAL FOR A SMALL PLANET: THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. Edited by Tom Bigg (IIED), 2003. This book brings together dozens of leading experts from around the world in a 'post-WSSD' analysis of the prospects for sustainable development on all the major policy fronts including security, finance, urban governance, radical partnerships, migration, health, access to resources and the role of markets. For further information, see: <http://www.earthprint.com/cgi-bin/ncommerce3/ProductDisplay?prrfnbr=313403&prmenbr=27973>

"Is Environment Still Missing in PRSPs?" By Pumulo Roddy in NEXUS (Issue 4, January 2004). It is now acknowledged that mainstreaming environment in poverty Reduction Strategy Papers is a necessary condition for reducing poverty in developing countries, especially sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of the poor are highly dependent on natural resources. Yet recent reviews by the World Bank reveal that environment is still missing in most countries' PRSPs. For further information, see: http://www.iisd.org/economics/pov_sd/nexus_newsletter.asp

SWEET LIKE CHOCOLATE? MAKING THE COFFEE AND COCOA TRADE WORK FOR BIODIVERSITY AND LIVELIHOODS. By Kate Gooding, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), 2004. A central challenge for sustainable trade is to reconcile the demand for agricultural commodities with the creation and protection of sustainable livelihoods and environmental protection. Systems of production and trade must meet the needs and aspirations of poor rural populations in the developing world, and produce food in a way that minimises environmental damage. The RSPB has considered these issues through case studies of two key agricultural commodities: cocoa and coffee. For further information, see: http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/Sweet%20Like%20Chocolate%205%20dec_tcm5-48253.pdf

REAL WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK. Edited by Ann Pettifor, 2003. This is a yearly publication, produced by the team that launched the Jubilee 2000 campaign. It examines the global economy from the perspective of economic and environmental justice. With contributions from Joseph Stiglitz, Dani Rodrik and Herman Daly, it sets out to integrate economic, environmental, and gender themes; to challenge dominant economic orthodoxy; and to transform mainstream economic thinking. For further information, see: <http://www.palgrave.com/economics/rweo.htm>

BIOTECHNOLOGY, AGRICULTURE, AND FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. Conference documents are now available from the Regional Policy Dialogue, organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). The meeting took place on April 25-26, 2003 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Available documents include a synthesis report, minutes, and six background papers. The background papers are titled, respectively: 1) "Consensus Finding Processes in Society and Genetically Modified Organisms;" 2) "Agricultural Biotechnology in Southern Africa: A Regional Synthesis;" 3) "Agricultural Biotechnology, Politics, Ethics, and Policy;" 4) "Biosafety Policy;" 5) "Intellectual Property Rights Policy;" and 6) "Food Safety and Consumer Choice Policy." For further information, see: <http://www.ifpri.org/events/conferences/2003/042503.htm#synthesis>

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