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## Note To Subscribers

This is the last issue of *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* for the year 2004. The first issue of 2005 -- Vol. 5, No. 1 -- will be published on 21 January. The *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* team would like to thank our reporting contributors all over the world and our funders for their critical assistance. We are grateful to our readers for their interest and feedback and send to you all our best wishes for the holiday season and 2005.

## Climate Change

### CLIMATE CHANGE MEETING TAKES CAUTIOUS LOOK AT POST-KYOTO ERA

On 18 December -- a day behind schedule -- climate change negotiators wrapped up two weeks of discussions by agreeing to engage in further talks on what might come after the Kyoto Protocol. The tenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convened on a high note in Buenos Aires, Argentina, following the recent Russian ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and its imminent entry into force (see *BRIDGES Trade BioRes*, 19 November 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-11-19/inbrief.htm#2>). 2004 also marked the tenth anniversary of the UNFCCC, with the largest greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme in the world, in the EU, set to take off on 1 January 2005.

Despite all the positive momentum, the climate change conference in Buenos Aires quickly became bogged down in disagreement, with negotiators haggling over the turn of phrase on just how to move beyond the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012, and on how to treat oil exporting countries that might be adversely affected by climate change mitigation measures taking off around the world. The US and oil exporters such as Saudi Arabia provided fierce resistance to attempts to move the process ahead, and large developing countries with soaring emissions, such as India and China, were explicit about not yet wanting to take on any emissions reduction commitments.

### **Efforts beyond 2012**

Early on in the meeting, Argentina's lead negotiator Raul Estrada introduced the concept of "seminars" to discuss future actions under the UNFCCC. The concept raised expectations among countries ready to implement the Kyoto Protocol, who would like to see non-Kyoto countries like the US and major developing countries join the process at some stage. Non-party countries however sought to water down any decision language. The Kyoto Protocol itself requires that parties start negotiating post-2012 commitments by 2005.

A final compromise was hammered out late in the game, proposing that one seminar be held in June 2005 for exchanging information rather than to formally set negotiations on post-2012 commitments in motion. The seminar will promote "an informal exchange on actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to assist Parties to continue to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change; and b) policies and measures adopted by their respective governments that support implementation of their existing commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol".

Commenting on the process and outcome, Jeff Fiedler of US-based Natural Resources Defense Council said, "This is a new low for the United States, not just to pull out, but to block other countries from moving ahead on their own path. It's almost spiteful to say, 'You can't move ahead without us.' If you're not going to lead, then get out of the way."

### **Adaptation and response measures**

Adaptation to climate change also featured high on the COP agenda. Already in advance of the meeting, the meeting had been termed the "adaptation COP", and countries were expecting concrete outcomes. These outcomes were partly blurred due to the insistence of oil exporting countries that possible adverse impacts on their economies of implementation measures in Kyoto Protocol countries should be compensated for on par with adaptation support for the most vulnerable countries, such as small island developing states.

The Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures adopted by the COP consists of four components focusing on the adverse impacts of climate change, the impact of the implementation of response measures, further multilateral activities in this area, and a work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. A number of workshops and papers will be prepared on these issues, as well as further scientific assessments of vulnerabilities and options for adaptation, and support for mainstreaming adaptation into sustainable development planning.

Certain issues were left unresolved at the COP, and will be addressed at the next set of technical meetings, to be held in Bonn in June 2005. These issues included "Good Practices" in policies and measures that countries take to address climate change, as well as issues related to the adverse effects of policies and measures under the Kyoto Protocol. These adverse impacts would mainly be felt by oil exporting countries, which blocked progress in this area.

The COP was attended by over 6000 participants, and featured numerous exhibits and 150 seminars on the sidelines. The next step in the climate process will be the annual meetings of the subsidiary (technical) bodies in June 2005.

### **Additional Resources**

Documents for COP-10: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_10/items/2944.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_10/items/2944.php)

Daily coverage provided by IISD Linkages: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop10/>

ICTSD reporting; "U.S. Waters Down Global Commitment to Curb Greenhouse Gases," NY TIMES, 19 December 2004; "Buenos Aires conference advances efforts to adapt to climate change and meet Kyoto targets," UNFCCC RELEASE, 18 December 2004; "Summary Of The Tenth Conference Of The Parties To The UN Framework Convention On Climate Change," ENB, 20 December 2004.

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## Fisheries

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### EU, ACP REVIEW FISHERIES; NEW EU QUOTA PROPOSALS RELEASED

In an attempt to resolve differences of opinion and process, experts from Europe and from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries met on 13-14 December to address the developmental implications of EU-ACP fisheries relations. Meanwhile, fishing quotas proposed by the European Commission for 2005 proved a source of controversy within the EU.

#### ACP-EU fisheries expert meeting

Representatives from the European Commission and ACP countries, along with several non-governmental organisations, met in Brussels on 13-14 December to build capacity, share information, review policy tools, and discuss opinions in an expert seminar entitled 'ACP-EU Fisheries relations - Maximising socio-economic benefits for the ACP fisheries communities'. The meeting was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA), and followed a similar seminar held in April 2003. Although Roman Grynberg of the Commonwealth Secretariat described it as "a fruitful exchange of views," sources suggest that participants were unable to resolve key points of contention on how to improve the developmental impacts of EU fisheries policy.

The European Commission made a presentation on fisheries partnership agreements (FPAs), a relatively new form of agreement between the EU and ACP states that moves from older bilateral fisheries access agreements -- wherein the EU paid for the right to fish in ACP waters -- to 'partnership agreements', which aim to contribute to responsible fishing in the mutual interest of the parties concerned. Partnership agreements are supposed to ensure that the interests of the EU distant-water fleet are protected while simultaneously reinforcing the conditions to achieve sustainable fisheries in the waters of the partner concerned.

However, at the seminar, ACP representatives questioned whether there was in fact any substantive difference between FPAs and the old bilateral access agreements. In particular, they said that they would prefer to negotiate on a regional basis with the EU to avoid power asymmetries that can arise in bilateral negotiations between small ACP states and the EU. However, EU representatives said that they had "no mandate to negotiate regionally". As well, ACP countries asked for a framework or model FPA agreement from the EU that they would be able to use in planning and conducting their negotiations with the trading bloc.

Representatives also discussed the issue of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and noted the variety of regional, national, and private efforts to stem illegal fishing. However, they noted that curtailing the proliferation of illegal boats was difficult. The meeting supported the notion of developing a positive, or "white" list of approved boats which have passed EU, regional or national tests as a means of preventing IUU fishing, rather than using a negative "black" list of bad vessels.

In a session on fisheries subsidy negotiations at the WTO, participants grappled with how to incorporate special and differential treatment for developing countries into WTO rules for the sector (see BRIDGES Weekly, 10 November 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-11-10/story2.htm>). In particular, participants raised the question of whether the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) definition of "artisanal fisheries" needed to be reconsidered so as to ensure that any exemptions to fishery subsidy disciplines for this sector are supportive of sustainable development. ACP countries were encouraged to bring up these issues at the WTO and take advantage of supportive positions already forwarded by the US and the 'Friends of Fish' countries in favour of artisanal fishery exemptions.

A number of the other issues were raised as important for ACP and EU policymakers which remain to be resolved in the WTO and in bilateral and regional negotiations, including sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues, process questions on the fragmentation of EU fishery and development directorates, and questions of rules of origin and market access.

### **Europeans propose selective fishing bans**

The European Commission released its proposed total allowable fisheries catches (TAC) for 2005 on 8 December, saying that the aim of EU fisheries policy was to strike a balance between the environmental need to replenish depleted stocks and protect healthy populations and the economic needs of the fishing industry. Although the Commission did not go so far as to fully adopt the recommendations of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), which called for a total ban on cod fishing in the seas around Scotland in 2005, the Commission proposal nonetheless calls for restrictions and, in some cases, fishing bans on cod and other species in areas of the North Sea, Kattegat, Skagerrak, the eastern English Channel, the west of Scotland and the Irish Sea. The plan also proposes to create restricted TACs for other species and areas in which recovery plans are in the pipeline.

The Scottish White Fish Producers' Association and Scottish Ministers reacted angrily to the EU proposal, claiming that the scientific justification for the fishing bans is murky at best. "[Previous] proposals on closed areas have already been overtaken by the advice from the Commission's own technical advisers and fly in the face of representations by the newly formed North Sea Regional Advisory Council," said Scottish Fisheries Minister Ross Finnie. Minister Finnie vowed to fight the proposed regulations, which will be considered at the EU Council of Ministers on 20-22 December. The European Council of Fisheries Ministers faced similar resistance last year, when proposals from scientists to impose a total catch ban on cod and hake in certain areas resulted after all-night Council meetings in more lenient quotas and a recovery plan (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 22 January 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-01-22/story3.htm>)

### **British Royal Commission slams environmental impacts of fishing**

In a new report released on 7 December entitled "Turning the Tide: Addressing the Impact of Fisheries on the Marine Environment", the UK's Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution delivered a scathing critique of the adverse impacts that commercial fishing activities have on the marine environment. The report focuses on the North East Atlantic area and suggests that activities such as trawling, drift netting, industrial fishing and fish farming have led to overfishing and the collapse of fisheries in many areas. The Commission report forwards a number of recommendations for the fishing industry and policy-makers, including inter alia, the establishment of marine reserves that would be closed for commercial fishing in 30 percent of the UK's exclusive economic zone.

The Royal Commission, a group of scientific advisers to the British government, are expected to meet with EU Fisheries Commissioner Joe Borg and members of the European parliament's fisheries and environment committee to discuss the report within the next few weeks.

### **Additional Resources**

To access the press release and proposed EU regulation on 2005 stocks, visit [http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/news\\_corner/press/inf04\\_52\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/news_corner/press/inf04_52_en.htm)

To access the Royal Commission report, visit <http://www.rcep.org.uk/fishreport.htm>

ICTSD Reporting; "Finnie pledges better fish deal," BBC NEWS, 9 December 2004; "Fisheries News," MERCOPRESS, 13 December 2004; "'Outdated' fishing plan attacked," BBC NEWS, 8 December; "ACP-EU fisheries relations: executive brief," AGRITRADE, February 2004.

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## Biotechnology

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### GMO UPDATE: MEXICO, ZAMBIA, ARGENTINA

#### Mexico Approves New GM Law

On 16 December the lower house of the Mexican Congress approved a new genetically modified organisms (GMO) law that aims to create a regulatory process to fully evaluate possible risks posed by GMOs to human health and the environment. The legislation was approved by the Senate in April 2003 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 1 May 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-05-01/story2.htm>) and will allow the limited release of GM crops, requiring GM seeds to be declared risk-free before they are released for human consumption or commercial planting. The legislation will also require GM products to be labelled. However, the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution and environmental groups such as Greenpeace attacked the law, saying that it would endanger corn diversity in Mexico, the "centre of origin" of the grain. Greenpeace has called the legislation "the Monsanto Law", insisting that it protects the economic interests of the multinational producer of GM crops. The passing of the law comes only two weeks after the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), an environmental organisation created shortly after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), released a controversial report calling for restrictions on GM imports to Mexico to safeguard the biodiversity of corn (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 19 November 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-11-19/story3.htm>). This concern was addressed by Mexican legislators in an amendment that aimed to prevent GM corn from being released in centres of origin of corn such as Oaxaca, Veracruz and Yucatan.

#### Zambia drafts biosafety legislation

The Zambian government has drafted new legislation to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and plans to submit it to parliament between January and March next year for approval. "The legislation, which will help us regulate and monitor GMOs, will also establish the National Biosafety Authority," said Paul Zambezi, permanent secretary for the Zambian Ministry of science, technology and vocational training. The proposed legislation is part of the country's five-year National Biosafety and Biotechnology Strategy Plan to initiate biosafety research and biodiversity protection. According to Felix Mwangala of the National Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research, the legislation will enable the government to penalise organisations and companies that do not meet biosafety requirements. "Our intention is to make Zambia GMO-free, but we have not got there yet," Zambezi said. In 2002, Zambia rejected GM food aid despite food shortages because of concerns that accepting the food donation of whole-grain maize might threaten its beef exports to the EU (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 27 June 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-06-27/inbrief.htm>).

#### Argentina, Monsanto to create "technology compensation fund"

On 14 December the government of Argentina and biotechnology firms agreed on the key elements of a "technology compensation fund" to compensate companies such as Monsanto for the illegal use of their GM seeds. The government aims to send a bill to Congress within 30 days that will allow for compensation for all types of GM seeds used in the 2005/2006 growing season. Monsanto has been the main driver behind the agreement in the hopes of avoiding in the future previous losses of millions of dollars in revenue from

farmers that sowed its GM Roundup Ready (RR) soybean seeds without paying royalties (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 23 September 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-09-23/story3.htm>). Under the proposed agreement, there will be an extra charge on GM soybeans that will be applied at the moment the commodity changes hands in Argentine markets and will not be a tax on production.

In January 2004 Monsanto stopped selling RR soybean seeds in Argentina, saying that the black market for the seeds makes it impossible for the company to earn back its investments. This led to fears that Argentina might lose out on biotech advances and new seed varieties and that farmers who would have wanted to buy the seeds legally might instead not plant them at all, resulting in lost productivity, or buy them on the black market. In late September 2004 Monsanto suggested the government of Argentina create a royalty collection system in which farmers purchasing new seed would be required to sign a sworn statement testifying to how much seed they were saving for the next season, and to re-pay for that seed a fixed amount of, reportedly, US\$1.50 for every 25 kilos exported from Argentina, a proposal that the Argentinean government and many farmers said they were unwilling to accept. Under a 1973 Argentinean seed law intended to protect small producers, an exemption exists which recognises the right of farmers to cull seeds for replanting in the case of self-fertilizing plants like soy or wheat. The new law would have to supersede the 1973 one and would thus be likely to draw the anger of Argentinean farmers.

The Argentinean seed business is worth approximately US \$1 billion a year and Monsanto says that 18 percent of the 14 million hectares of soybean crops in Argentina are seeded with certified seeds and sold in the legal market.

ICTSD Reporting: "Mexican Lawmakers Approve Controversial GM Law", REUTERS, 16 December 2004; "Govt drafts biosafety legislation," ALLAFRICA.COM, 14 December 2004; "Monsanto exits Argentina soy despite soy boom," REUTERS, 18 January 2004; "Reports: Argentina Rejects Monsanto business plan," ST. LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL, 20 September 2004; "Monsanto Fights With Farmers in Argentina Over Seed Saving," INTER PRESS SERVICE, 10 February 2004; "Argentina and biotech firms agree on royalty bid," REUTERS, 15 December 2004.

## CHINA CONSIDERS GM RICE APPROVAL

The Biosafety Committee of the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture is considering the approval of at least four varieties of genetically modified (GM) rice and is expected to make a decision on the approval of their commercialisation as early as January 2005. If approved, it will be the first time that GM rice has been approved globally and the first time the Chinese have approved a GM crop for human consumption. Even if approved, however, the Chinese government has indicated that it would conduct additional field trials and tests about the safety of the crops for at least two years, setting 2006 as the expected date when the crop would be available for planting and harvest.

Hopes have been riding high on the potential for GM rice to solve the challenge of feeding China's booming population, with one Chinese study suggesting that adopting GM rice could result in an annual increased profit to China's agricultural sector of "roughly \$5 billion in 2010". Sources also suggest that approval by China of GM rice could lead to a ripple effect throughout Asia, with India potentially jumping on the bandwagon.

However, despite the lack of broad-based mobilisation seen in Europe against GMOs, several sources are challenging the decision to approve of GM rice. "China is a centre of origin of rice," the environmental group Greenpeace said. "The biggest danger is the contamination of wild and conventional rice varieties with GM rice, which can encourage more troublesome weeds and will lead to the loss of wild species." The organisation also criticised the approval process, saying that the ministry's "behind closed doors process" was "scientifically and ethically flawed" and warned that scientists "still know too little about the unintended impacts of genetic modification." Commenting on the biannual GMO safety assessment meeting held in early December in Beijing, which began consideration of the GM rice varieties, the People's Daily Online

said, "People should not be used as guinea pigs with food they eat every day". Concerns have also been raised over potential risks to trade relations with areas where GM rice remains unapproved.

In related news, on 15 December Researcher Takuji Sasaki of the Japanese National Institute of Agrobiological Science announced that an international team of scientists from 10 countries had completed the sequencing of the rice genome. Sasaki, the head of the Japanese team in the international effort, said that scientists had completed mapping some 370 million out of 390 million base pairs -- or 95 percent of the genome -- with an accuracy of 99.99 percent. This development is expected to lead to the acceleration of research on rice and the potential development of new varieties of rice.

ICTSD Reporting: "Of Rice and Men," NEWSWEEK, 13 December 2004; "People must not be guinea pigs in GM rice," PEOPLE'S DAILY ONLINE, 13 December 2004; "No GM Rice Yet," CHINA DAILY, 3 December 2004; "China cooks up a rice storm," ASIA TIMES ONLINE, 5 November 2004.

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## In Brief

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### HIGHLIGHTING TRADE-CLIMATE LINKAGES

ICTSD and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on 14 December co-hosted a side-event to the tenth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC - see related story, this issue) to discuss synergies and conflict between the trade and climate regimes at. Among the specific issues discussed, the event -- entitled Trade Implications for Kyoto Implementation: Making it Work -- addressed ongoing negotiations on environmental goods and services (EGS) within the Doha Round, and how these negotiations might open the door for the expansion of trade in climate friendly equipment and other goods, including biofuels. Also on the agenda was the issue of economic diversification, foreign direct investment (FDI), the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), as well as a case study of biofuels as a climate-friendly energy source. Biofuels are linked to ongoing trade negotiations due to their potential impact on land use and potential for expansion through global markets. The discussions at the side event highlighted that more work needs to be done on the interactions between the trade and climate regimes, especially as the Kyoto Protocol enters into force. While some participants felt confident that the two regimes will not stand in the way of one another, and indeed can be mutually supportive, others felt that potential conflicts needed to be explicitly addressed and remedies sought to ensure that the trade regime does not have a chilling effect on measures to address climate change.

For further information and to access the presentations of the side event, visit <http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2004-12-14/12-14-desc.htm>

ICTSD reporting.

### CONSULTATIONS ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS GET UNDERWAY

At the first meeting of technical consultations under the WTO July Framework (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 6 August 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-08-06/story2.htm>), Members on 16 December considered on how to proceed in discussions on whether or not to extend the additional protection for geographical indications (GI) currently accorded to wines and spirits under the Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to other products. Most of the meeting's discussions circled around traditional arguments on whether or not to extend GI protection (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 6 December 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/01-12-06/story1.htm>). Members also differed over whether future discussions should focus only on GI extensions, as suggested by advocates of extension such as Switzerland, the EU and Bulgaria, or should be broadened, as proposed by the opponents of extension, such as Australia, to also include other GI-related issues, such as the Multilateral Register for GIs currently being negotiated in the TRIPS Council and the issue of "clawback", i.e. the EU's proposal to reclaim terms used in other countries which has been submitted as a market access issue in the agriculture negotiations. The Chair of the

meeting, WTO Deputy Director-General Mr Thompson-Flôres, will prepare a list of topics to be covered by the following informal meetings, based on suggestions by Members.

The issue of GI extensions, which had been raised as one of the 'outstanding implementation issues' at WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha in 2001, has effectively blocked progress on other implementation issues under Article 12(b) of the Ministerial Declaration. While the implementation issues had been put forward by developing country Members, the GI extension issue has also found strong backing from the EC and Switzerland who have been calling for negotiations on this issue

The next consultations will take place in February and March 2005. For further information on GIs, see [http://www.iprsonline.org/ictsd/docs/Rangnekar\\_Bridges8-8.pdf](http://www.iprsonline.org/ictsd/docs/Rangnekar_Bridges8-8.pdf)

ICTSD reporting

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## Events & Resources

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### 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

10 January 2005, Copenhagen, Denmark: SEMINAR ON COMMODITY TRADE AND THE ELUSIVE PROMISE OF DEVELOPMENT. This seminar is organised by the Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS) as part of the 'Trade Mondays' series where a seminar is held once a month on issues pertaining to the WTO, trade and development. This seminar will feature Stefano Ponte and Peter Gibbon of DIIS as well as other speakers. For further information contact Stefano Ponte, tel: +45 3269 87 10; fax: +45 3269 8800; email: [spo@diis.dk](mailto:spo@diis.dk); Internet: <http://www.diis.dk>

13-14 January 2005, New York, US: CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES: LEARNING FROM THE LEADERS. This conference, organised by the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) of the Hermann von Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, will bring together leaders of the corporate, financial and legal sectors together with some of the world's foremost experts on climate change policy to discuss the legal and practical implications of the problem for US businesses. For further information contact Robyn Stewart, Center for Economic and Environmental Partnership, tel: +1 518 432 6400; email: [robyn@ceepinc.org](mailto:robyn@ceepinc.org); Internet: <http://www.itas.fzk.de/veranstaltung/000416.htm>

10-14 January 2005, Port Louis, Mauritius: INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR THE 10-YEAR REVIEW OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION (BPoA) FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS). The United Nations conference will discuss recommendations for further and successful implementation of the BPoA, which sets forth specific actions and measures at the national, regional, and international levels in support of the sustainable development of the SIDS. For further information contact the Small Island Developing States Unit, Division for Sustainable Development, email: [mauritius2004@sidsnet.org](mailto:mauritius2004@sidsnet.org), Internet: <http://www.un.org/smallislands2005/>.

17 January - 13 February 2005, Online: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING REGARDING GMOS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: HOW TO EFFECTIVELY INVOLVE RURAL PEOPLE. This online forum is the 12th organised by the FAO with the aim of providing quality balanced



information on agricultural biotechnology in developing countries and to make a neutral platform available for people to exchange views and experiences on this subject. For further information contact the FAO, email: [mailserv@mailserv.fao.org](mailto:mailserv@mailserv.fao.org); Internet: <http://www.fao.org/biotech/forum.asp>

24-28 January 2005, Paris, France: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY: SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE. This conference is sponsored by UNESCO and organised by the French Ministry of Research and New Technologies. The Conference aims to contribute to and strengthen the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, other relevant international conventions, international organisations and programmes, including through enhancing public opinion about scientific and social issues connected to biodiversity. The debate will highlight the link between biodiversity and sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and the Millennium Development Goals. For further information contact the conference secretariat, email: [biodiv2005paris@recherche.gouv.fr](mailto:biodiv2005paris@recherche.gouv.fr); Internet: <http://www.recherche.gouv.fr/biodiv2005paris/en/index.htm>

31 January - 5 February 2005, The Hague, the Netherlands: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WATER FOR FOOD AND ECOSYSTEMS. Organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Government of the Netherlands, this conference will provide a high-level platform to help governments identify management practices, share practical lessons learned and determine the enabling environment for harmonizing food production and ecosystem management with a view to implementing internationally-agreed commitments. For further information contact Mathieu Pinkers, e-mail: [m.j.h.p.pinkers@minlnv.nl](mailto:m.j.h.p.pinkers@minlnv.nl); Internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/wfe2005/>

1-4 February 2005, Gland, Switzerland: 12TH MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (STRP) OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION. The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The 12th meeting of the STRP will review the draft "Ramsar Synthesis Report" being prepared as part of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment's contribution to the Ramsar Convention. It is anticipated that the draft of this report will become available for review in early December 2004. For further information contact the Ramsar Convention Secretariat, tel: +41 22 999 0170; fax: +44 22 999 0169; email: [ramsar@ramsar.org](mailto:ramsar@ramsar.org); Internet: <http://ramsar.org/w.n.strp-datechange.htm>

## 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](mailto:hbaumuller@ictsd.ch).

THE GLOBAL DIFFUSION OF PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY: INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION AND RESEARCH IN 2004. By C. Ford Runge (Council on Biotechnology Information, 8 December 2004). This report laments the attention given by the international press to opposition to biotechnology and instead points out the increasing adoption and diffusion of biotechnology crops globally. It predicts continued expansion of commercial and scientific possibilities for plant biotechnology in the next decade and beyond. The value of biotechnology crops was approximately \$44 billion in 2003-2004 in the five countries -- the US, Argentina, China, Canada and Brazil -- that account for almost 98 percent of all biotechnology crop hectares and values. Soybeans, cotton, maize and canola continue to account for virtually all of planted biotechnology products. To access the report visit <http://www.thecampaign.org/globalbiotech04.pdf>

A CAPABILITIES APPROACH TO TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: USING SEN'S CONCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENT TO RE-EXAMINE THE DEBATES. By Aaron Cosbey, International Institute for Sustainable Development, November 2004. This paper takes the thinking of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and uses it to fashion a comprehensive new definition of sustainable development. It then asks how trade and trade liberalization might contribute to sustainable development so defined, surveying a complex web of potential impacts. It draws important lessons for civil society, developing countries and the WTO negotiations from the analysis. To access the report visit <http://www.iisd.org/publications/publication.asp?pno=661>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING REGARDING GMOS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: HOW TO EFFECTIVELY INVOLVE RURAL PEOPLE. (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), December 2004). Published by the FAO as a background document for an upcoming FAO e-mail conference of the same name, this document seeks to provide an easily-understandable overview of public participation in decision-making in developing countries on issues relating to GMOs for food and agriculture. It provides a brief summary of the current state of GMO presence in food and agriculture in developing countries; a discussion of the decision-making areas where the public could be involved; a brief overview of relevant international agreements and some of the details of the challenges of ensuring information access and participation of people in rural areas in developing countries. For more information and to access the report, visit <http://www.fao.org/biotech/C12doc.htm>

"Strategy And Trade Liberalization: Implications For Poverty And Environment In The Phillipines." By Ian Coxhead and Sisira Jayasuriya in ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS, 9 (5, 2004) pp 613-644. Poverty and environmental degradation or deforestation in developing countries have common determinants in underlying economic and institutional conditions that determine factor and product prices and incentives for migration and resource-depleting activities. These determinants include property rights failures (open access to forest lands) but also 'government failures' in the form of policies that indirectly promote resource use and retard poverty alleviation. A general equilibrium analysis identifies influences that such distortions have on poverty and environment. The results suggest that though reforms would increase poverty in the short term, in the longer run trade liberalisation is poverty reducing. The environmental impact can also be positive, provided liberalised trade is combined with appropriate government action to address market failures.

"Agricultural trade reforms in the Doha Round: a developing country perspective". By Perma-chandra Athukorala in JOURNAL OF WORLD TRADE 38 (5, 2004) pp 877-897. This article examines the reform outcome of the Uruguay Round relating to trade in agriculture, the nature of the unfinished reform agenda and policy choices for the Doha Round, with special emphasis on the position of developing countries in trade negotiations.

"Health Biotechnology Innovation in Developing Countries". By H. Thorsteinsdóttir, U. Quach, D.K. Martin, P.A. Singer and A. Daar in the NATURE BIOTECHNOLOGY SUPPLEMENT December 2004 (Vol 22, No. 12s). This special issue of Nature Biotechnology presents the results of an in-depth study of the health biotechnology sector of seven developing nations. It suggests that poorer nations can successfully exploit the biotechnology sector to build their own wealth and improve the well being of their own people. The study is the collaborative product of a group of researchers at the Canadian Program on Genomic and Global Health at the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics. To access the issue visit <http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidtech>

"Intellectual Property: Enhanced: An International Appraisal". By Bonwoo Koo, Carol Nottenburg and Philip G. Pardey in SCIENCE (306, Issue 5700) pp 1295-1297. This article reviews the variety of plant-related intellectual property legislation in place worldwide. The authors discuss direct patenting of plants or plant products (such as seeds), and approaches that allow 'benefit sharing' -- in which both those who preserve or develop the resource (for example, plant breeders and farmers) enter into a mutually beneficial agreement with those wanting to use the resources (such as researchers). They also analyse the policy of 'sui generis' systems of protection -- created on a case by case basis -- that allow plant breeders to control the commercialisation of their plant varieties. The authors also believe that the development of intellectual property rights legislation does not threaten crop research or commercialisation of new varieties in developing countries.

### Electronic Resources

WTO WEB-BASED TRAINING MODULE ON THE AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES. This web-based training module has been developed by the WTO for anyone interested in developing a basic understanding of the WTO Agreement on the

Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures ("SPS Agreement"). The online course includes interactive tests, course material and links to reference documents such as legal texts and other official WTO documents. A chapter is also dedicated to the study of GMOs and the precautionary principle in context to the SPS Agreement. The module is available in English, French and Spanish and can be accessed at [http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/d\\_learn\\_e/d\\_learn\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/d_learn_e/d_learn_e.htm) or by contacting [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org).

ECOLOGICS INTERNATIONAL. This independent website includes an updated Biosafety section with numerous new documents and analyses. The first Meeting of the Parties of the Biosafety Protocol and the presently ongoing WTO dispute *EC-Biotech* have resulted in an increased awareness of the importance of biosafety issues for policy discussions and for the development of public international law. The role of precaution, the consumers' right to information, and the science/technology/law interface are at the centre of this domain. It is rendered particularly dynamic by the difficult interactions between environmental and biotech sciences, economic and political interests, development policies, and regulatory innovation. The website is available online at <http://www.ecologics-international.org>

### Call For Papers

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION 05 CONFERENCE: GLOBAL 'STATE OF THE ART' IN SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT/SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN. Organised by an advisory board, the O2 - global network of sustainable designers, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), this conference will focus on the global 'state of the art' in sustainable product/service development and design and will provide an update on worldwide developments. The event will analyse the obstacles and opportunities for sustainable product/service development and design. Papers are welcomed on topics such as product policy, product development processes, supply chain management, product-service-systems (PSS), education and training, tools and techniques, management systems, organisational dimensions, performance measurement and metrics, new business models, newly industrialised and 'developing' country perspectives, and case studies. For further information contact Professor Martin Charter, tel: + 44 (0) 1252 892772; fax: + 44 (0) 1252 892747; email: [mcharter@surrart.ac.uk](mailto:mcharter@surrart.ac.uk); Internet: [www.cfsd.org.uk/events/tspd10](http://www.cfsd.org.uk/events/tspd10)

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