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LEAD STORIES

WTO HEADED FOR AGRICULTURE MODALITIES FRAMEWORK BY JULY

WTO delegates that participated in agriculture negotiations from 22-26 March (see BRIDGES Weekly, 24 March 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-24/story1.htm>) reported a change of tone in the concluding plenary of the WTO Committee on Agriculture (CoA) special session. Reportedly, the week's intensive consultations led to a more positive negotiating climate as Members finally started listening to each other, following months marked by a generally negative tone in the post-Cancun agriculture debate. While Chair of the special (negotiating) session ambassador Tim Groser (New Zealand), said in his concluding assessment that Members had not yet reached a "problem-solving mode", he said he had sensed consensus emerging on the aim to agree on a negotiating framework by end-July, which would later be fleshed out to full modalities. Negotiators would act on the "working hypothesis" that the framework text might not include numbers. This sequencing meant that Members needed to show "conditional trust" so as to get the process moving, Groser said. On substance, market access reportedly emerged as the most contentious negotiating area. Groser scheduled another four 'Agriculture Weeks' in April, June and July. The upcoming April session will use the current negotiating format -- consisting mainly of informal negotiations -- but may be somewhat more structured, sources reported.

New Zealand's Groser, the newly appointed CoA special session Chair, has chosen to use a new approach in the negotiations, which provides Members with more room to consult and negotiate among themselves during the session in bilateral and plurilateral mode, involving the Chair less. The main negotiating groups held a number of informal meetings in different configurations. These groups included the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters, the G-10 (Switzerland, Japan and others keen to protect their domestic agricultural sector), the G-20 group of developing countries, led by Brazil and India, the

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Indonesia-led G-33 of countries pushing for special treatment for developing countries, the G-90 group comprising mostly African and least-developed countries, as well as key individual members such as the US, EC and Japan.

Groser views week as 'circuit breaker' for talks

In his assessment of this first CoA negotiating session this year, presented at the concluding 26 March informal plenary session, Chair Groser said that according to what he heard and sensed from delegations, "the prevailing opinion" was that the tone had been generally positive during the week and that Members had shifted to "listening mode". Nevertheless, "problem-solving" -- i.e. real attempts to narrow the prevailing gaps -- still laid ahead, said the Chair. He also said the interaction and understanding between the political process (i.e. ministers and capitals) and the Geneva process was much more effective. Without the political process, work in Geneva would be a "waste of time," as the framework paper "will be written in Geneva or it won't be written at all," Groser told Members. Moreover, the new negotiating approach was generally seen as productive and welcomed as a move away from speech-making and coalition building.

"Conditional trust" needed

Expanding on the underlying "working hypothesis" that the framework to be agreed might not include specific numbers (such as percentage reductions or coefficients in formulas), Groser said that the framework should deal with underlying concepts, whereas the modalities would include "levels of ambition". Last year's attempt to agree on full modalities failed precisely because the negotiations tried to tackle both at the same time (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 April 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-04-02/story1.htm>). In response to some delegations arguing that numbers might be needed to give a degree of certainty about the level of ambition of the modalities, Groser called on Members "to proceed on the basis of conditional trust," recalling that the Doha mandate on agriculture remained "the political anchor" for the negotiation outcomes.

Much more work needed on market access

According to trade sources, most Members endorsed the Chair's assessment of the negotiation week, acknowledging that market access was clearly the biggest problem to be tackled. Apparently, many participants expressed their discontent with the 'blended' tariff reduction formula, which was first introduced by the US-EU draft framework text last August (see BRIDGES Weekly, 21 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-08-21/story2.htm>) and

modified in several subsequent drafts. The blended formula combines elements of the so-called Uruguay Round (UR) formula, with sets an average reduction with a minimum reduction per tariff line -- to be applied to certain applied to certain "import sensitive" products - and the Swiss formula, which would bring down all tariffs horizontally to a maximum ceiling.

Australia, speaking for the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters, said it was unconvinced by the blended formula as it might not lead to real new market access, especially in key developed countries. A trade source indicated that the Cairns group now seemed more sympathetic to the banded tariff reduction formula developed by former agriculture Chair Stuart Harbinson (BRIDGES Weekly, 12 February 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-02-13/story1.htm>).

In contrast, G-10 leader Switzerland argued that the blended formula did not provide enough flexibility, and that the G-10 would also oppose setting maximum ceilings for tariff rates and an obligation to expand all tariff rate quotas. The EC said the blended approach would grant enough flexibility to address all issues, including non-trade concerns (NTCs) and special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing countries, and -- with appropriate numbers -- would offer a high level of ambition as well. The US said the picture would be clearer once numbers were inserted after the framework stage was over.

The US recently revealed that it could only accept two to three percent of all tariff lines falling into the UR formula band of the blended formula (see BRIDGES Weekly, 24 March 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-24/story1.htm>), with a larger -- eventually ten percent -- portion for developing countries. This reportedly led to much irritation, especially amongst G-10 countries, which aim at a target close to 25 percent. The EC signalled that the percentage should run into the double digits.

According to sources, most speakers agreed that developing countries should be allowed a category of special products (SPs) fully exempted from general reduction commitments. However, differences remained over the conditions for designating SPs. The EC reportedly responded positively to a request from China and other newly acceded Members to not have to face the same scale of reductions as others. These countries feel that they already are undertaking significant reforms, and already have low tariff rates in place. India, the main voice for developing countries that do not want to reduce their agricultural tariffs, said it would accept that all Members had to contribute to reform, but that some countries were under developmental constraints and therefore unable to contribute as much.

The following negotiations are scheduled for 20-23 April, 2-4 June, 23-25 June and 14-16 July.

ICTSD reporting; "Agriculture: WTO 'Ag Week' ends with call to shift to 'problem-solving' on market access," WTO REPORTER, 29 March 2004; "Agriculture: Mixed WTO reaction greets US Ag proposal to limit Uruguay round method in tariff cuts," WTO REPORTER, 26 March 2004.

OTHER NEWS

WTO COTTON WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS DEVELOPMENT DIMENSION

An African Regional Workshop on Cotton, held in Benin from the 23-24 March, ended with no firm commitment on development assistance. The aim of the workshop, organised by the WTO, was to address development assistance aspects of an initiative on cotton subsidies that had been presented by four West African cotton producing countries -- Benin, Chad, Mali and Burkina Faso -- prior to last September's WTO Cancun Ministerial Conference (BRIDGES Weekly, 4 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-06-04/story3.htm>). This proposal, submitted to the WTO Committee on Agriculture, called for the phase-out of subsidies to developed country cotton producers with a view to their total elimination, and for a compensation mechanism to offset the income loss experienced by producers in least developed countries until the completion of the phase-out.

No commitment on development assistance

According to a summary of the workshop outcome prepared by the WTO Secretariat, representatives of the Quad group -- the US, EC, Japan and Canada -- and intergovernmental institutions including the World Bank and IMF, merely identified existing and new programmes for financial and technical assistance and provided "positive indications of additional financial and technical assistance". However, no firm commitment was made on delivery or timelines. Members instead outlined areas of focus and delivery mechanisms for assistance, and highlighted the need for enhanced coordination and follow-up arrangements. Some participants, especially from West Africa, criticised the meeting, arguing that its focus on the development dimension was an attempt to deflect the debate from their main concern -- trade issues. The proponents of the cotton initiative have in fact stressed that they are not looking for handouts, but rather for a level playing

field and a market undistorted by subsidies on which to sell their products.

Tension between trade and development aspects of the cotton initiative

At Cancun, no deal was reached on the cotton initiative. However, since the Cancun Ministerial, the proponents of the initiative have continued to push for it to be discussed in the WTO as a separate 'stand-alone issue' rather than as part of negotiations on agriculture. Their concern is that the issue could be subsumed under the difficult and slow negotiations on agriculture, losing its importance and urgency. Civil society groups have also called on the US and EC not to use promises on development funds for the African cotton sector as an excuse for not addressing trade issues such as subsidies, which continue to drive down the world price of cotton and threatening the livelihoods of farmers in developing countries, although world market prices recently have been rising.

Participants said it was evident that the cotton meeting was not about finding a solution to the trade dimension. As noted in the WTO report, "the trade aspects could only be meaningfully and effectively addressed within the broader DDA [Doha Development Agenda] agriculture negotiations". In his opening remarks to the workshop, WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi reiterated this point, noting that the view expressed by some African countries was that "progress on the trade policy aspects can best be made within the framework of the broader agriculture negotiations" (to see the full speech visit http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/spsp_e/spsp24_e.htm). Some African trade delegates interviewed insisted that this does not represent their position, which remains unchanged -- to have the issue of cotton discussed separately from agriculture.

Related developments on Cotton

Since the cotton initiative was submitted at the WTO, the US has sought to address the problem through a proposal to eliminate tariffs on textile and garment imports as well as development assistance in the form of international restructuring aid for cotton industries in Africa. In February this year, the EC unveiled a plan to help African countries dependent on cotton. This plan falls within the framework of a series of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) being negotiated with African countries under the Cotonou Agreement (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 February 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-02-19/story3.htm>). Benin and Chad are also third parties in an ongoing WTO case brought by Brazil challenging subsidies the US grants to its cotton producers (see BRIDGES Weekly,

18 March 2004 <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-18/story1.htm>).

ICTSD reporting; "Cotton Meeting Provides No Commitment On Aid: Further Issues Left for WTO Talks," WTO REPORTER, 30 March 2004.

BOTSWANA CONFERENCE SPARKS DEBATE ON GENERICS

A meeting on generic HIV/AIDS drugs was held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 29-30 March. Prior to the meeting, civil society organisations sent a letter to the US representative, highlighting concerns that the US was blocking the use of sorely needed inexpensive generic versions of HIV/AIDS drugs in poor countries, seeking instead to secure the market for US patented drugs.

Entitled "Fixed-Dose Combination Products: Scientific and Technical Issues Related to Safety, Quality and Effectiveness," the Gaborone conference focused on how to evaluate the relatively inexpensive generic fixed-dose combinations (FDCs) of antiretrovirals. The generic drugs, regarded as the key to scaling up HIV/AIDS treatment in poor countries, meet WHO standards. They have not, however, been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The conference was organised by the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, the WHO, the Southern African Development Community and the US Department of Health and Human Services.

NGOs express concern over restricting access to affordable drugs

AIDS activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) expressed concern over the US agenda at the meeting. A letter endorsed by 381 organisations was sent to US Global AIDS Coordinator Randall Tobias condemning the Bush administration's "efforts to undermine FDC generics". Jacqueline Patterson, HIV/AIDS programme manager for Interchurch Medical Assistance highlighted the importance of generic FDCs, noting that "due to lower prices of FDCs, we can treat up to four times more people than we would be able to treat with non-FDC/branded drugs". The US has pledged to spend US\$15 billion to help fight HIV/AIDS over the next five years. This money will, at least initially, be spent on patented drugs approved by the US FDA.

Human Rights Watch, in a press release, said that while generics meet stringent WHO standards, "the US, under pressure from pharmaceutical companies selling the brand-name equivalents, claims instead that 'There are no uniform principles, guidelines or international

standards addressing the development' of generic drugs - an assertion that calls into question the WHO's widely accepted review process".

William Haddad, representing generics manufacturers, said that the US wanted to add a new level of approval, "so that US brand name companies can sell their products, and generic companies cannot use US money [to produce drugs for developing countries]". The civil society letter stated that the Gaborone meeting "needlessly casts doubt upon the clinically proven quality of generic AIDS medicines, and disregards the WHO's internationally recognised Drug Prequalification Program. The meeting is intended to justify the use of expensive, more complex branded treatment regimens, and will be used by the US as the minimum basis to justify its efforts to use bilateral assistance programs to lock generics out of developing countries".

Mark Dybul, head of the US President's Programme for AIDS Relief, defended his country's cautious stance on FDCs, focusing on the issue of drug resistance. If improper HIV/AIDS drug combinations are widely used, this raises the risk of the virus developing drug resistance. Dybul said that "we know from a decade of clinical experience that if you do not maximally suppress the virus, you significantly increase the risk of resistance. That is why we use three drug combinations, not one or two".

Following a deal cut at the WTO on 30 August last year on the conditions under which countries without pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity can import generic versions of drugs still under patent (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 September 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-09-04/wtoinbrief.htm>), access to generic drugs is expected to become more widespread. Some developed countries are currently in the process of drafting legislation to operationalise the deal.

For further information on the meeting, including the NGO letter, visit <http://www.cptech.org/ip/health/aids/fdc/>

ICTSD reporting; "U.S. May Cut Access To Generic AIDS Drugs In Poor Nations," UNWIRE, 26 March 2004; "AFRICA: Generics challenge brand-name anti-AIDS," IRIN, 30 March 2004.

IN BRIEF

**MONTREAL PROTOCOL: EXEMPTIONS
GRANTED FOR METHYL BROMIDE**

The US, several EU member states, and other developed country parties were granted exemptions for the use of methyl bromide -- an ozone damaging substance -- at a meeting held 24-26 March in Montreal, Canada. Under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, more than 180 signatory states are obligated to phase out the use of nearly 100 ozone depleting chemicals. Developed countries were to phase out methyl bromide, a fumigant that kills soil and food pests, by 1 January 2005. However, at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties, eleven states received exemptions totalling 13,438 tonnes for 2005, of which the US was granted almost 9000 tonnes.

The fact that developing countries were allowed until the year 2015 to phase out methyl bromide use led US farmers to raise trade concerns. Rodger Wasson, president of the California Strawberry Commission, said, "the 50-acre grower in California may be competing with a multinational corporation based in China who gets to use the product 10 years longer". With such fears temporarily placated, others arose from the environmental standpoint. European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström stressed that "the scientific consensus is that only full compliance with the Montreal Protocol will allow the ozone layer to regain its full protective power". Under the Protocol, developed countries have committed to taking the lead in phasing out ozone depleting substances. Many environmental groups suggested that effective alternatives to methyl bromide that do not harm the ozone layer exist and can be deployed without great cost.

"13 Countries To Seek Methyl Bromide Exemption," UN WIRE, 24 March 2004; "Eleven Countries Win UN Exemption From Ban On Ozone-depleting Pesticide," TERRA DAILY, 27 March 2004; "Top EU Environment Official Pushes Adherence To Ozone Pact," UN WIRE, 26 March 2004; "Exemptions from Global Methyl Bromide Ban Under Consideration," ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 23 March 2004.

**RUSSIA, EU NARROW TRADE
DIFFERENCES**

Russian Economic Development Minister German Gref met with EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy in Brussels on 26 March to iron out differences over trade. Both said they came closer to agreeing on the

extension of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between Russia and the EU following the accession of ten new EU members on 1 May this year - many of them former Soviet states. Russia is concerned it will lose market share in these countries, while the EU has been stressing that Russia will gain from trade with the expanded Union (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 February 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-02-12/inbrief.htm#1>).

Issues to be resolved include Russian transit access to Kaliningrad. Russia is also looking to wrap up bilateral talks with the EU on its WTO bid. Irish ambassador to Russia Justin Harman commented that the EU supports the bid, but "there are certain big questions that we have to agree on first. The main issue relates to energy, to prices on energy supplies, but progress is being made and we continue to believe that an agreement on WTO entry can be reached by the end of 2004". Informal negotiations on the Russian accession process are currently going on in Geneva, and the WTO Working Party on the Accession of the Russian Federation will meet on 2 April. Russia and the EU will meet again on bilateral trade issues on 22-23 April. A Russia-EU Summit will be held on 21 May.

"Clouds' clear in EU-Russia trade row," EUPOLITIX, 26 March 2004; "EU Urges Russia to Ink Trade Pact," MOSCOW TIMES, 24 March 2004.

CHINA, INDIA CONSIDER FTA

During a meeting in Beijing from 22-23 March, Chinese and Indian delegates held initial talks on a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) as well as a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). Chinese Commerce Minister Bo Xilai and Rakesh Mohan, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India headed the delegations of a Sino-Indian Joint Study Group (JSG). The JSG was established last June to strengthen trade ties between India and China during a summit at the head-of-state level. The March meeting considered the framework, contents and other modalities of the JSG, and agreed to discuss the possibility of signing an FTA as part of a five-year economic cooperation package. Bilateral exports and imports between the two countries are expected to reach US\$10 billion soon. Maharashtra Governor Mohamad Fazal noted that "our bilateral trade has been growing at an annual rate of 30 percent and now the neighbour on the north accounts for four percent of India's foreign trade". The two parties are set to present a study report and recommendations on measures for comprehensive trade and economic cooperation by the end of June 2004.

"India, China inch towards free trade pact," UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 24 March 2004; "India,

China begin talks on Free Trade Agreement," BUSINESS LINE, 25 March 2004; "India-China trade to touch USD 10 billion mark," INDIA EXPRESS, 25 March 2004; "India, China 2-Day Meet To Frame 5-Year Trade Blueprint From Monday," INDOLINK, 21 March 2004.

INDUSTRIAL USERS CRITICISE EU SUGAR REGIME

On 24 March, ahead of a European Council of Ministers meeting, the EU's Committee of Industrial Sugar Users (CIUS) called for the introduction of competition into the EU sugar market. According to Alain Beaumont, Secretary General of CIUS, "the EU sugar regime is a recognised bastion of anti-competitive forces and is in urgent need of substantial reform". According to CIUS, the complex EU sugar regime -- which includes large subsidies and import quotas -- has resulted in: a large gap between the EU market price and the lower intervention price, in spite of a surplus on the EU sugar market; a situation in which sugar beet is grown uneconomically, resulting in high costs for consumers; and a lack of balance between the supply and demand for sweeteners. The regulated sugar prices will also affect EU accession countries, such as Poland. The Warsaw Business Journal recently reported that the public was rushing to supermarkets to stock up on sugar, fearing that the price would increase substantially once the country entered the EU. A WTO case initiated by Brazil, Australia and Thailand against the EU sugar regime is also ongoing (see BRIDGES Weekly, 18 March 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-18/story1.htm>).

ICTSD reporting; "Panic buying for sugar sets in prior to EU membership," WARSAW BUSINESS JOURNAL, 30 March 2004.

UNCTAD TO SUPPORT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

On 29 March, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organised a meeting that brought women entrepreneurs from developing countries to Geneva. The meeting focused on how businesses can be used to reduce poverty and increase gender equality -- two issues that the UN has set as a priority for the millennium. The meeting was organised because women are disproportionately represented among the poor, and often women are the sole source for family income in developing countries. A new partnership called the Trade Initiative for Poverty Alleviation and Gender Equality was established to focus on enhancing export opportunities and increasing

earnings for home-based women. The meeting formed part of the preparations for UNCTAD XI, set to take place June 13-18 in Sao Paulo, where women and poverty will be one of three main issues on the agenda.

For further information on UNCTAD XI see <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=2594&lang=1>

"Retailers To Meet With Women Entrepreneurs From Developing Countries", UNCTAD RELEASE, 25 March 2004.

US MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CALL FOR WTO CASE AGAINST OPEC

Thirty-two Members of the US Congress sent a letter to US President Bush on 30 March, requesting the administration to file a complaint with the WTO over a move by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to restrict oil outputs. According to the Members of Congress, OPEC's move has led to soaring oil prices, and is illegal. The letter states that high oil prices "harm consumers, farmers, small businesses, and manufacturers. They will also increase the likelihood of inflation, inflate the unsustainable trade deficit, and undermine the economy". The letter notes that of the 11 OPEC countries, six are WTO Members (Kuwait, Indonesia, Nigeria, Qatar, Venezuela, and United Arab Emirates), two are applying (Saudi Arabia, Algeria), and of the remaining large oil-producing nations, Mexico and Norway are WTO Members, while Russia and Oman are acceding. The letter therefore concludes that "filing a case could have widespread impact". The Bush administration has, however, indicated that the issue does not belong in the WTO. The previous administration rejected a similar request in 2000.

OPEC members are meeting in Vienna on 31 March. They are expected to agree on further production cuts, which would likely send prices up further.

ICTSD reporting; "Opec pushes for higher oil prices," BBC, 31 March 2004; "Democrat wants Bush to file WTO case against OPEC," REUTERS, 26 March 2004.

WTO IN BRIEF

AG COMMITTEE: MEMBERS QUESTION US AID PROGRAMME

The WTO regular Committee on Agriculture (CoA) met on 25 March to address around 20 issues related to notifications by Members and the implementation of commitments. Among these was skimmed milk powder provided by the US to developing countries as food aid. Australia, Canada, the EC and New Zealand raised concerns and questions on issues such as whether the aid displaced commercial sales and hindered domestic production, and asked whether milk could be sourced domestically or in the regions concerned. They also questioned whether the skim milk, which was provided through a non-profit division of a commercial enterprise, could be considered true aid. The US responded that the skim milk powder did not displace domestic production but was meant to boost nutrition when domestic supplies could not meet the needs. The CoA also considered a domestic US food aid programme supplying orange juice to schools in low income areas. The EC and Argentina questioned why the US exempted the orange juice from "national treatment" because it was labelled food aid.

Also at the meeting, the Gambia was added to the list of net food importing developing countries. The next CoA meeting is scheduled for 17 June.

ICTSD reporting.

US INITIATES WTO CHALLENGE AGAINST CHINA TAX POLICY

Recent trade tensions between the US and China reached a new level this week as the US filed a WTO complaint against China on 18 March. The US complaint -- the first against China since it joined the WTO in late 2001 -- contends that China's value added tax (VAT) rebate policy gives domestically manufactured semiconductors an unfair advantage over foreign producers of semiconductors. According to the US, this tax policy is inconsistent with the WTO national treatment principle, which requires that countries treat imports the same as domestic products. In response, China's ambassador to the WTO, Sun Zhenyu, pointed out that the tax in question was adopted before China joined the WTO, and was never an issue in China's WTO accession talks. Semiconductors are one of the US's leading exports to China. According to the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR), the US exported US\$2.02 billion in semiconductors to China in 2003 (total exports amounted to US\$28 billion). The

filing initiates a 60-day consultation period, after which the US can request a dispute settlement panel.

"Unions Demand Sanctions on China," WASHINGTON TIMES, 16 March 2004; "US Lashes China Over Chip Trade," BBC NEWS, 18 March 2004; "US Files First WTO Case Against China," WTO REPORTER, 19 March 2004; "US Files a Complaint Against China at the WTO," NEW YORK TIMES, 19 March 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/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email events@ictsd.ch.

Coming Up: 1-7 April

1-2 April, Monterrey, Mexico: FORGING NORTH AMERICAN ENERGY SECURITY. This event is organised by the North American Forum of Integration in collaboration with EGAP (Escuela de Graduados en Administración Pública). The Conference will focus on challenges and alternatives to envision North American energy security. Speakers from the political, academic and economic spheres from Mexico, Canada and the US will debate and emphasise the relevance and challenges of creating a North American Investment Fund looking to finance Mexican infrastructure projects in the energy sector while respecting the Constitution of this country. For further information contact: tel: (514) 844-8030; email: info@fina-nafi.org; Internet: <http://www.fina-nafi.org>

1-3 April, Kampala, Uganda: ASSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA BY 2020. Organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute and the government of Uganda, this all-Africa conference will bring together the traditional and new actors and stakeholders to deliberate on how to bring about change and action to assure food and nutrition security. For more information see <http://www.ifpri.org/2020africaconference/index.htm>

1-3 April, Cambridge, UK: SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DISPUTES. Cambridge University will host a high-level series of panels exploring various facets of international dispute resolution. The panels will feature discussion of

international commercial arbitration, ICSID arbitration between investors and states, as well as World Trade Organisation dispute settlement. Speakers include Dame Rosalyn Higgins, of the International Court of Justice; Margrete Stevens, of ICSID; Jan Paulsson, of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Paris; and Professor Emmanuel Gaillard, of Shearman & Sterling, Paris. For further information contact Irene Bates or Sarah Roberts at the London Court of International Arbitration's International Dispute Resolution Centre, tel: +44 20 7405 8008; email: ib@lcia-arbitration.com.

1-3 April 2003, Berlin, Germany: ENCOS 2004. This meeting will be the first European Networks Conference on Sustainability in Practice (ENCOS) focussing on the conditions and requirements for a new European level of capacity building. Organised by Kolleg für Management und Gestaltung Nachhaltiger Entwicklung. The goal of the meeting is to obtain an inter- and transdisciplinary understanding on the latest developments in international practice, research and education on sustainability issues. For further information visit <http://www.ENCOS2004.net>

2-3 April, Brussels, Belgium: CONFERENCE ON MULTILATERALISM AT RISK - BEYOND GLOBALISATION. This Annual EU-LDC Network Conference will focus on the implications for the relationship between the EU and the developing countries in the fields of trade, aid, and international security. University students, researchers, scholars, policy makers, civil society representatives from developing countries are invited to participate. For further information on both the conference and the call for papers contact: EU-LDC Network Secretariat, tel: +31 10 453 8703, fax: +31 10 452 3660, email: mar.tuells@ecorys.com, Internet: <http://www.eu-ldc.org>

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf. 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. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

1 April: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT - SPECIAL SESSION.

1 April: WTO COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.

2 April: WTO COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS.

2 April: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES - SPECIAL SESSION.

2 April: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

7 April: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS - SPECIAL SESSION.

Other Forthcoming Events

13-14 May, Paris, France: OECD MINISTERIAL MEETING AND FORUM. Health policy and the outlook for the economy and world trade will be focal points for a series of events at the OECD in May 2004 culminating in the OECD's annual Ministerial Council Meeting. The OECD Forum 2004 on 12-13 May and a meeting of OECD health ministers on 13-14 May will address health policy in the broader context of the global economy and multilateral cooperation. Earlier in the week, the OECD will release its latest Economic Outlook on 11 May. On 13-14 May, in parallel with the meeting of health ministers, economic affairs and trade ministers will review prospects for the world economy and trade at the OECD's Ministerial Council Meeting. For further information visit <http://www1.oecd.org/media/upcoming.htm>

17 May, Brussels, Belgium: AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS - POLITICS AND PROSPECTS. The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) will hold this seminar in conjunction with the 33rd IPC Plenary Meeting. The seminar will cover the prospects for finalising a framework for the agricultural negotiations by the end of summer given the political environment in key WTO member countries and groups of countries and how the pending disputes on cotton, wheat and sugar could impact the political environment, the policy environment, and the negotiating objectives of instigating and target countries. For information and registration, visit <http://www.agritrade.org>

26 May, Geneva, Switzerland: PANEL ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION. CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS-CITEE) will be organising a panel discussion during the WTO Public Symposium 2004. The discussion will focus on a) trade and economic policy (in multilateral, regional and bilateral contexts); b) promotional activities; c) technical assistance and capacity building; and d) political economy. For further information contact Ms. Purnima Purohit, email: citee@cuts-international.org; Internet <http://www.cuts-international.org/>

26-27 May, Brussels, Belgium: CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS, TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN AN

ENLARGED EUROPE. The conference will cover the guidelines and the legislation regarding the enlargement of the EU, and the changes to business, trade investment opportunities that it brings. It has been timed to coincide very closely with the date of enlargement, and will provide political perspectives from EU officials, and investigate how both internal and external trade relations in Europe will be affected by enlargement. For further information visit <http://www.euconferences.com/fraenlargement04.htm>

12 -16 July, Geneva, Switzerland: **24TH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL.** The Open-Ended Working Group to the Montreal Protocol, convening for its annual mid-year meeting, is expected to review progress in the various committees and prepare for MOP-16 in November 2004. For further information contact the Ozone Secretariat, UNEP, tel: +254-2-62-3850; fax: +254-2-62-3601; e-mail: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/>

17-19 June, Washington, D.C., US: **SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS - TRADE, POVERTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.** Jointly organised by the World Bank and the Center for Global Trade Analysis, with additional support from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the USDA Economic Research Service, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the US International Trade Commission, this conference aims to promote the exchange of ideas among economists conducting quantitative analysis of global economic issues. For more information contact Judy Connor, tel: +1-765-494-4267; e-mail: connerjr@purdue.edu; Internet: <http://www.gtap.org>

21-23 October, Geneva, Switzerland: **ENVIROINFO 2004.** The 18th conference of the German Informatics Society (GI) will continue the series of conferences dedicated to information exchange among scientists, public administrations, private and public companies involved in environmental information processing as well as environmental informatics end-users. The conference will focus on "sharing": sharing information technologies in order to comply with the principles of sustainable development; and sharing data and knowledge. For further information visit <http://www.enviroinfo2004.org/>

RESOURCES

ORGANIC FARMING: POLICIES AND PROSPECTS. By Stephan Dabbert, Anna Maria Haring and Raffaele Zanolì (Zed Books, February 2004). This book provides an accessible introduction to the latest scientific

research on organic farming in Europe. The organic sector has moved from a marginal production fad to a serious subject of policy concern for politicians and public servants involved in European agricultural policy. This book reviews the organic farming sector today and the policies developed towards it and assesses its contributions to environment, food quality, farmers' incomes, and rural development. It explains the key factors impinging on the organic farming sector in future and makes a detailed range of recommendations for future organic farming policy. For further information see <http://www.zedbooks.co.uk>

PROTECTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT: IMPLICATIONS OF A WTO REGIME AND POLICY OPTIONS. By Carlos M Correa and Nagesh Kumar (Zed Books, February 2004). The book provides an exploration of new WTO proposals on direct investment, from the developing country viewpoint. The authors explain the North's determination to give privileged protection to overseas investments by their transnational corporations. In particular, they focus on the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and Agreement on Trade-related Investment Measures (TRIMS). They spell out their consequences for developing countries. They examine whether there is really a case for a new multilateral framework on investment within the WTO and propose various options for developing countries in resisting what amounts to a new form of Western protectionism. For further information visit <http://www.zedbooks.co.uk>

REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT. World Bank (March 2004). Regional integration agreements (RIAs) can help developing countries boost growth and reduce poverty, if they use the agreements to foster competition in domestic markets, seek access to rich-country markets, and enhance the credibility of their own economic reforms. This study reviews the experience of many of the world's over 200 regional integration agreements, and recommends eight "rules of thumb" to guide developing-country policymakers in negotiating such accords. For further information see http://www.worldbank.org/research/trade/regional_integration.htm

ANOTHER REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA: WHO WILL WIN? By Andrea Gash Durkin and Ricardo Reyes (Cato Institute, March 2004). The authors argue that the transformation of Central America from a war zone into a region of stable democracies has been remarkably rapid -- and is thus remarkably fragile. As Haiti has demonstrated, young democracies in this hemisphere can descend into chaos in the blink of an eye. By offering new avenues for commerce and incentives for reform, CAFTA can help Latin America avoid Haiti's fate. To access the report visit <http://www.freetrade.org/pubs/FTBs/FTB-009.html>

"The Puzzle of WTO Safeguards and Regional Trade Agreements". By Joost Pauwelyn in the JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW 7 (1, 2004) pp. 109-142. So far WTO jurisprudence has not resolved the puzzle of how WTO Members that also are part of a regional trade agreement (such as NAFTA or MERCOSUR) should conduct safeguard investigations and apply eventual safeguards in line with WTO rules. Can or must they exclude regional imports from the injury determination? Can or must they apply the eventual safeguard only to third parties, or are they under an obligation rather to apply all safeguards on a non-discriminatory basis? Those are the questions examined in this paper. The paper refocuses some of the attention to GATT Article XIX and criticises the Appellate Body's requirement of parallelism as well as its jurisprudence under GATT Article XXIV. It also offers an alternative way forward and ends with a list of options for WTO safeguards by members of customs unions or free trade areas.

"The Role of International Law in the Development of WTO law". By Jiaxiang Hu in the JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW 7 (1, 2004) pp. 143-167. WTO law is referred to as the single package results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations (1986--1994). Basically, WTO law is no different from other branches of international law. The general principles, customary rules and the way of interpretation of international law all apply to the operation of WTO law. Notwithstanding this, WTO law still has its unique characteristics which are sufficient enough to distinguish it from other branches of international law. These differences can normally be perceived from their institutional statuses and dispute settlement mechanisms. The influence between international law and WTO law is mutual. While general international law determines the basic structure of WTO law, the creation of WTO law has also changed the landscape of international law.

"WTO Dispute Settlement 1995-2003: A Statistical Analysis". By Kara Leitner and Simon Lester in the JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW 7 (1, 2004) pp. 169-181. Last year, we presented a statistical analysis of the first eight years of WTO dispute settlement. This year, we continue that analysis by adding data for 2003. We have also included some new data in the analysis, such as the income classification of the countries participating in dispute settlement, as well as the number of 'matters' that have been subject to dispute settlement.

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