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LEAD STORIES

MARKET ACCESS DISCUSSED DURING SECOND 'AGRICULTURE WEEK'

Members are meeting from 19-23 April for a second 'agriculture week' seeking to rebuild momentum in the agriculture negotiations. In a formal plenary session held on Monday, 19 April, New Zealand's Timothy Groser, who chairs the talks, called on Members to focus on market access -- the issue where the widest gaps in positions prevail. Sources reported that members of the G-20 group of developing countries and the Cairns group of agricultural exporters were trying to 'kill' the so-called blended tariff reduction formula championed by the EC and US, replacing it with a banded formula developed by former agriculture chair Stuart Harbinson in a 2003 modalities drafts. Developed countries such as the US, EC, Canada, Switzerland and Japan were reportedly rejecting this move. The current 'agriculture week' will be concluded with informal and formal special (negotiating) sessions on 23 April.

Agriculture talks kick off

On 19 April, Members met for a half-hour informal meeting to kick off four days of bilateral and plurilateral consultations. At the informal meeting, Committee on Agriculture (CoA) special session Chair Timothy Groser proposed that Members focus on market access in their upcoming discussions. Groser, in his wrap-up of the March 'agriculture week,' characterised market access as the area of negotiation where "not even the outline of a possible basis for a political decision is evident" (see BRIDGES Weekly, 31 March, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-31/story1.htm>). In contrast, "some shape" had emerged during the last negotiating week on how to settle key issues on domestic support and export competition, Groser said.

"Blended formula dead"

During the agriculture talks so far, most WTO Members, and particularly the G-20 and Cairns Group countries, have indicated that they have problems with the so-

called blended tariff reduction formula. 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 "import sensitive" products -- and the Swiss formula, which would bring down all tariffs horizontally to a maximum ceiling (effectively addressing tariff peaks). It also involves a commitment to provide zero-tariff access to a certain number of products. According to sources, both G-20 and Cairns are currently in the process of consolidating their approach to market access and "exploring new alternatives" for the tariff reduction methodology. The two groups, which partly have overlapping membership, are reportedly aiming to agree on a common position on market access by the end of the 19-23 April negotiating week.

Both groupings have lately proposed returning to the so-called banded formula developed by former CoA special session Chair Stuart Harbinson in his 2003 modalities drafts (see BRIDGES Weekly, 20 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-03-20/story1.htm>). Under this approach, the UR formula would be applied across-the-board, but very high tariffs would be subject to much deeper average and minimum cuts than low ones.

During the consultations on 19 and 20 April, developed countries such as the EC, US, G-10 members (including Switzerland, Norway and Japan) and Cairns group member Canada reportedly voiced opposition to the banded approach. While the US criticised the approach for failing to bring about significant new market access, the EC, Canada -- and the G-10 countries in particular -- said the banded formula would prevent countries from effectively protecting their sensitive sectors. "It would be like placing a bomb in the negotiations," a G-10 official warned.

However, G-10 countries also stoutly oppose the blended formula, especially in combination with a maximum ceiling for tariff rates and an obligation to expand all tariff rate quotas. On the other hand, the pro-liberalisation camp -- including most Cairns group and G-20 members -- regards the blended formula as too weak, as it would not provide for real new market openings in the North. Many developing countries, such as India, further criticise the blended formula for discriminating against developing countries which -- due to their specific tariff profiles -- would have to make larger overall reductions than their developed country counterparts.

In the face of the fact that most Members do not seem comfortable with the blended reduction approach, many observers doubted that this formula would be incorporated in the modalities 'framework' to be established before the WTO summer break. "The

blended formula is dead," a developed country delegate remarked.

The blended formula was developed by the US and EC in the immediate lead-up to Cancun, and later found its way into the various framework draft texts. As the blended formula merges elements of the very flexible UR reduction formula with the ambitious Swiss formula, it is seen by many as a tailor-made tool to accommodate the US's call for substantial market access improvements, while providing the EC with enough flexibility to protect sensitive products such as dairy, beef and sugar.

Mercosur to stay firm in G-20

The four members of the South American free trade pact Mercosur -- Argentina (G-20/Cairns), Brazil (G-20/Cairns), Paraguay (G-20/Cairns) and Uruguay (Cairns) -- have rejected recent accusations that they might water down their demands for subsidy and tariff reduction at the WTO in exchange for preferential access under the ongoing EU-Mercosur free trade talks (see related story, this issue) to otherwise protected EC markets such as dairy and beef. In consultations prior to the 19-23 April 'agriculture week', Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay reportedly reassured their G-20 partners that the WTO negotiations and the EU-Mercosur bilateral talks were two separate tracks, and that the WTO negotiating stance of the group would not be affected. Some had warned earlier that the EC could make an attempt to split the G-20 by conditioning increased import quotas for key Mercosur products through the regional agreement on the latter group easing pressure on the EC to significantly reduce its subsidies and agricultural tariffs at the WTO.

Zoellick plans "micro-ministerial" in late April

Geneva sources revealed that US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick had scheduled an informal ministerial-level meeting on 30 April in London, aimed at forging common ground between a core group of senior decision-makers. Reportedly, the EC, Brazil (G-20/Cairns), India (G-20), Mexico (G-20), South Africa (G-20/Africa Group) and Kenya (G-33/Africa Group) were invited to the meeting. Notably, no member of the G-10 of net-food importers would be represented at the 30 April meeting. G-10 member Japan cautioned that the planned meeting "may lack some balance" if Japan -- globally the largest agricultural net-importer -- were to be excluded.

"This smells like a serious effort to get things going," a Geneva trade delegate commented rumours about the planned meeting. Another said that it was intended as a "micro-ministerial" prior to a planned WTO 'mini-ministerial' on 14 May in Paris at the margins of the

annual ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The next issue of BRIDGES Weekly will provide a final report on the ongoing 'agriculture week'.

ICTSD reporting; "Agriculture: developed countries warn against revival of 'banding' formula for tariffs in WTO talks," WTO REPORTER, 21 April 2004; "Agriculture: Zoellick seeks ministerial push to WTO negotiations on agriculture," WTO REPORTER, 16 April 2004; "Exclusive talks planned to break Doha stalemate," FT, 16 April 2004; "Agriculture: Mercosur countries vow to continue push for subsidy cuts in WTO agriculture talks," WTO REPORTER, 19 April 2004.

SUPACHAI SAYS FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS NEEDED BY JUNE

The WTO Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) met briefly on 21 April to take stock of negotiations, with only a few Members making interventions. The TNC meeting was the first since the Cancun Ministerial in September 2003, and included statements by the TNC Chair and WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi as well as the Chairs of the various negotiating groups established under the TNC. It took place at the same time as the agriculture talks (see related story, this issue), widely seen as the key to the Doha round. While Supachai urged Members to focus on finding solutions and building bridges, there were no imminent signs of progress.

In his introductory statement, Supachai stressed the need for motion in the Doha round negotiations, and the translation of political will in capitals to the Geneva process. He said "We should be under no illusions about the scale and the urgency of the tasks ahead of us... There is a window of opportunity but it is a window that is closing rapidly". In fact, he suggested that Members should agree on the elements of a framework for negotiations as early as the end of May, as the framework itself needed to be in place before the WTO summer break in August. If Members could not agree on a framework by then, little progress was expected during the rest of the year due to the fact that key Members such as the US would be focusing on presidential elections, and new European Commissioners would take over from the present ones. According to Supachai, "the coming days and weeks are critical for the Doha agenda and the multilateral trading system". If no results were achieved, Members might focus their efforts elsewhere, thus weakening the role of the WTO.

Among the other Chairs reporting on the status of work in their negotiating groups, Tim Groser said he was

picking up tentative signs of Members moving into problem solving mode, but said he did not have great expectations for the current set of talks. The other Chairs -- heading talks on trade and development, intellectual property, industrial market access, trade rules, services, environment and special and differential treatment and outstanding implementation issues -- submitted written progress reports (TN/CTD/9, TN/IP/9, TN/MA/13, TN/RL/8, TN/S/15, TN/TE/8, and TN/C/W/16).

In a statement following the reports, Kenya drew attention to a new grouping called the 'Friends of Geographical Indications,' which he said included more than 50 Members, and called for accelerated progress in this area. A few other Members intervened, urging progress and reiterating Supachai's call for the translation of political will at the national level to concrete work in Geneva.

The next TNC will be held on 30 June.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO chief gives one month challenge to member states for trade round," AFP, 21 April 2004.

WTO ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE CONSIDERS ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS

The WTO special (negotiating) session of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) met on 19 April, and a regular CTE session took place on 20 April. The CTE special session considered an EC submission on the CTE and global governance, and continued discussions on environmental goods. The regular session of the CTE focused on how to move on the mandate to consider sustainable development implications of negotiations in all areas of the Doha round. Delegates also considered a Canadian proposal for how to create a more focused debate in the CTE.

Mandate

In paragraph 31 of the WTO's Doha Ministerial Declaration, adopted in November 2001, Members agreed to negotiations on: (i) the relationship between WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); (ii) procedures for regular information exchange between MEA secretariats and relevant WTO committees, and the criteria for granting of observer status; and (iii) liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services. These issues are being addressed in the special CTE sessions. Paragraph 32 instructs the CTE to focus on issues around market access, intellectual property rights and eco-labelling, with a view to making

recommendations, where appropriate, with respect to future action, including the desirability of negotiations.

Special session focuses on global governance

Chaired by Ambassador Toufiq Ali (Bangladesh), the CTE special session (CTESS) considered a document submitted by the EC on the relationship between WTO rules and MEAs in the context of the global governance system (TN/TE/W/39, searchable at <http://docsonline.wto.org>). The EC outlined basic principles for the relationship between WTO rules and MEAs in this regard, including: the recognition of the importance and necessity of MEAs; the fact that multilateral environmental policy should be made within MEAs; the need for close cooperation and information exchange to enhance the mutual supportiveness between international trade and environment policies; and the recognition that MEAs and the WTO are equal bodies of international law.

While some Members supported the EC paper, many others, and developing countries in particular, felt that the question was beyond the scope of the CTES mandate. They also said that the paper was unclear, and they did not understand where the EC wanted to go with it. According to trade sources, Norway and Switzerland said the document provided a good basis for the examination of questions on how to improve the exchange of information between the WTO and MEAs and the issue of MEAs obtaining observer states at the CTE. They also felt the paper offered some useful insights on the coordination between trade and environment officials nationally. Venezuela asked whether a reference in the paper to common but differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries meant that this principle was acceptable as the basis for negotiations.

Goods discussion continues

On the liberalisation of environmental goods, the US presented a submission it originally had made in July 2003 on modalities for moving environmental goods negotiations forward (TN/TE/W/38). The US proposed that two lists be established: a core list of goods that everyone agrees are environmental (e.g. sewage treatment equipment); and a second, complementary list of other proposed environmental goods. Tariffs would be eliminated on the core list of goods by 2010, and countries would be required to liberalise a certain percentage of products from the complementary list by 2010 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 10 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-07-10/story2.htm>).

Members did not have the time to discuss the US proposal during the last CTE special session in July 2003, and now took the opportunity to ask the US for

further clarification on the thinking behind the paper. In particular, developing countries asked for more information on possible special and differential treatment, which had not been included in the core list, and only insufficiently in the complementary list. The US said it would return with answers at the next session. Developing countries including Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia and China preferred a "more balanced" list containing products of export interest to them, as they felt that the US list focused on industrial goods exported by developed countries. China said it was considering creating a list of its own towards this end. Some Members preferred relying on existing lists produced by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Regular session seeks to move on para. 51 mandate

In the regular CTE session on 20 April, Members discussed how to further address para. 51 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, requesting Members to consider how sustainable development is being reflected in the negotiations. While the Secretariat has provided briefings on the environmental aspects of negotiations in other groups, such as agriculture and industrial market access, not many Members have made submissions. During the meeting, the EC said it was surprised Members had not made submissions on the topic. Some Members called for technical assistance and coordination among developing countries in this regard, and said developing countries needed to provide input on this "development" issue.

The Chair Naéla Gabr (Egypt) will consult with the Chair of the Committee on Trade and Development, in order to better coordinate work under the para. 51 mandate.

Also at the meeting, Canada made a suggestion for changing the CTE work programme in light of changes that have taken place since it was first agreed ten years ago and with the goal of revitalising the CTE (WT/CTE/W/234). In Canada's view, the Committee would benefit from more focus to its work, with each meeting addressing a particular part of the CTE mandate, rather than delegates struggling to deal with all issues at once. With specific meeting themes, delegates would be able to come better prepared to the meetings, setting the stage for a substantive debate. Not all Members agreed with the Canadian suggestion, however. Some Members took a cautious stance and preferred not to make any change to the existing CTE work programme.

The EC also brought up the issue of labelling for environmental purposes, but other Members said this

discussion belonged with the Committee for Technical Barriers to Trade.

The next meeting of the CTE will be held on 21 June, and the next special session on 22 June.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER NEWS

WTO APPELLATE BODY: DIFFERENTIATION POSSIBLE UNDER PREFERENCE SCHEMES

In a landmark ruling on the EC's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme on 7 April, the WTO Appellate Body pronounced that developed countries are not prohibited by WTO rules from granting different tariffs to products originating in different developing countries under the GSP, provided that such differential treatment meets certain conditions under the so-called 'Enabling Clause'. The Enabling Clause was adopted under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) -- the predecessor to the WTO -- and enables developed Members to give more favourable treatment to developing countries. It is also the WTO's legal basis for GSPs -- under which developed countries offer non-reciprocal preferential treatment to products originating in developing countries. The EC and the US grant developing countries specific preferences based on actions related to, inter alia, combating illegal drugs, protecting the environment or upholding certain labour standards. The case brought by India targeted an EC GSP granting countries preferential treatment due to their efforts to combat illegal drugs.

Differentiation permitted under the Enabling Clause

The Appellate Body decision is the outcome of an appeal lodged by the EC against an earlier decision of a WTO Panel in this case (see BRIDGES Weekly, 5 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-11-05/story1.htm>). That panel had interpreted the word "non-discriminatory" in the case of the Enabling Clause to mean that identical tariff preferences under GSP schemes be provided to all developing countries without differentiation. The Appellate Body, however, disagreed with this interpretation and concluded that the word "non-discriminatory" does not prohibit developed countries from granting different tariffs to products originating from different GSP beneficiaries, provided that such differential tariff treatment meets the

remaining conditions in the Enabling Clause. Nevertheless, the Appellate Body cautioned that in granting such differential tariff treatment, preference-granting countries are required by virtue of the term "non-discriminatory" to ensure that identical treatment is available to all "similarly-situated" GSP beneficiaries that have the "development, financial and trade needs" that the treatment in question is intended to respond to.

Drug arrangements inconsistent with Enabling Clause

Examining the EC's special arrangement for combating the production and trafficking of illegal drugs (drug arrangements) in the context of its interpretation of the term "non-discriminatory" noted above, the Appellate Body found that as the preferences granted under the drug arrangements were not available to all GSP beneficiaries that are similarly affected by the drug problem, they were not justified under the Enabling Clause. In particular, the Appellate Body highlighted the point that the EC Council Regulation, under which the drug arrangements are administered, provides no mechanism or objective criteria that would allow for other developing countries that are similarly affected by the drug problem to be added to the list of existing beneficiaries. Moreover, the regulation in question offers no criteria according to which a beneficiary would be removed from the drug arrangements on the basis that it is no longer "similarly affected by the drug problem".

Background: The thrust of India's claim

Before the panel, India challenged the WTO consistency of tariff preferences accorded under the drug arrangements with the 'Most Favoured Nation Principle' (MFN) of the GATT 1994. The MFN principle demands that Members grant to the products of other Members treatment "no less favourable" than that accorded to products of any other country. India claimed that the drug arrangements were "discriminatory", as the benefits the EC granted were available only to certain specified developing countries. India argued that countries excluded from the scheme experienced adverse impacts on certain exports to the EC. In particular, India pointed out that Pakistan's entry to the scheme has affected US\$250 million of Indian textile exports, which face higher tariffs than their Pakistani equivalents on the EC market.

Who really won?

As the Appellate Body provided its ruling, India described the decision as a "significant gain", as the EC drug arrangements as such had been deemed illegal due to the lack of clarity regarding their eligibility. The Indian Commerce Ministry noted that the ruling would

provide relief to Indian exporters to the EC, which had been negatively affected by the duty concessions to Pakistan under the drug arrangements. On the other hand, as a result of the "new reasoning" on the issue of differentiation, the EC will be able to maintain the drug arrangements, with necessary modifications. Reacting to the decision, the EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said "today's decision makes it clear that we can continue to give trade preferences to developing countries according to their particular situation and needs, provided this is done in an objective, non-discriminatory and transparent manner". It remains to be seen however if India's drug problem will meet this "new" criteria, or if countries, whose exports to the EC under the scheme threaten India's own, will be excluded.

The importance of the Appellate Body decision

From a broader perspective, the importance of this decision is two-fold. First, the concern that an unfavourable outcome would prejudice the EU and US GSP schemes that developing countries currently have access to have been dispelled. Officials in both Brussels and Washington had warned that the panel's original finding on non-discrimination, if upheld, could jeopardize their respective drug eradication programs and other special GSP tariff benefits. Second, the Appellate Body noted that the EC's "special incentive arrangements for the protection of labour rights" and the "special incentive arrangements for the protection of the environment," which were not at issue in this case, in contrast to the drug arrangements, included detailed provisions setting out the procedure and substantive criteria that apply to a request by a country to become a beneficiary. This would indicate that these arrangements are WTO compatible, implying that WTO Members are free to include sustainable development concerns in their GSP schemes provided they meet the relevant conditions and are justified under the relevant WTO rules.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO Appeals Body Reverses Panel," WTO REPORTER, 8 April 2004; "India Wins WTO Case Against EU," THE HINDU, 8 April 2004; "WTO Judges Back Ruling Against EU Anti-drug Plan," DAILY TIMES PAKISTAN, 21 April 2004.

TRIPS COUNCIL SCRUTINISES GI NEGOTIATING MANDATE

The Council for Trade-related Aspects on Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) met on 7 April for its first special (negotiating) session since the Cancun Ministerial Conference, to continue negotiations on a multilateral register for geographical indications (GI) for wines and spirits. Discussions focused on the key

outstanding issues in the negotiating mandate provided in the TRIPs Agreement, with fundamental divisions remaining among Members. Discussions at the meeting broadly fell under the two key outstanding issues related to 'participation' and 'legal effect' (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-06-12/story2.htm>). The meeting made virtually no headway, with one observer noting that in contrast to other negotiating areas, such as agriculture, the TRIPs discussions had not even entered the "listening" phase.

Article 23.4 of the Agreement notes that "in order to facilitate the protection of geographical indications for wines, negotiations shall be undertaken in the Council for TRIPs concerning the establishment of a multilateral system of notification and registration of geographical indications for wines eligible for protection in those Members participating in the system". The mandate was reiterated in the Doha Declaration, with negotiations to be finalised by the Cancun Ministerial meeting. Members, however, failed to reach agreement and are now discussing how to proceed.

Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, El Salvador, New Zealand and the US, supported by Ecuador, submitted a 'joint proposal' (TN/IP/W/9, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org/>), outlining a number of questions and answers clarifying a previously submitted proposal (TN/IP/W/5 and 6). The Members submitting the joint proposal would like the GI register to function as a searchable database for GIs, to provide national intellectual property offices with the information on GI rights claimed by producers in the territory of another WTO Member. The register would be voluntary, ie Members would be able to choose whether to register their GIs. Enforcement of GI protection would remain grounded in national law. The supporters of the joint proposal believe that the European approach, which would allow Members to challenge proposed registrations and would require registered terms to be protected in all WTO Member countries, would amount to "TRIPs-plus" by increasing the obligations under the TRIPs Agreement.

In response, the Europeans, including the EC, Hungary, Switzerland, Bulgaria and Turkey, and supported by Bolivia, noted that such a database would be unreliable -- and consequently not 'facilitate' protection -- if Members were unable to challenge a term internationally. They believe that allowing Members to opt out of the system would make it 'plurilateral' rather than 'multilateral', as required by the mandate. Rather than increasing obligations, they stated that the system would simply facilitate Members' compliance with existing obligations under the Agreement. Hungary also pointed out that in any case, even the 'joint proposal' could be regarded as "TRIPs-plus" as it would require a notification that does not currently exist.

Special sessions of the TRIPs Council are currently scheduled for mid-May (date to be determined) and June (back-to-back with the 15-17 June TRIPs Council's regular session).

ICTSD reporting.

CARIBBEAN ACP COUNTRIES LAUNCH NEGOTIATIONS WITH EU

On 16 April, Ministers from 15 Caribbean countries in the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States joined their EU counterparts in Jamaica to launch the EU-CARIFORUM (Caribbean Forum of ACP States) 'Economic Partnership Agreement' (or EPA) negotiations. The First Joint EPA Ministerial Negotiating Meeting, which followed the launch, aimed at agreeing on a "road map" for the work ahead, as well as a joint work programme and timeline for the negotiations, which are to conclude by the end of 2007. All participants welcomed the opportunity to enhance the "longstanding friendship, political cooperation, shared history and economic partnership" of the two regions. However, some participants from the Caribbean reiterated concerns over the future of preferential market access arrangements. Civil society group Eurostep also sent a letter to EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy raising concerns over the negotiations (see related story, this issue).

Concerns over preference erosion

One of the main concerns for the Caribbean countries, and most ACP countries negotiating EPAs, is the impact that the new WTO-compliant, reciprocal EPAs will have on their preferential access to EU markets (especially for commodities). While Trade Commissioner Lamy assured Caribbean officials that preferences for bananas and sugar would not be disrupted over the course of the reforms to be undertaken, Caribbean officials appeared less optimistic. Richard Bernal, Director-General of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) -- the body tasked with coordinating the overall trade negotiating strategy for the region -- noted, "[it] is intended that the EU will continue to provide preferential arrangements, but these arrangements have to be WTO-compatible," implying that this would inevitably bring about changes. Commenting on the possible impacts of the current WTO challenge by Brazil and others to the EU's sugar regime, which calls into question, inter alia, the treatment of ACP imported sugar into the EU (see BRIDGES 18 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-18/story1.htm>), Ambassador Bernal indicated that "the case has just started; it would be wrong to try to pre-judge the outcome".

Structuring the negotiations

Negotiators for the EU-CARIFORUM agreement will be organised on three levels: ministerial, principal negotiator and subject-specific negotiators. For the Caribbean countries, Dame Billie Miller, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade for Barbados will serve as Lead Ministerial Spokesperson. The Principal Negotiator will be Ambassador Richard Bernal, the Director-General of the Caribbean RNM; and the technical negotiations will be led by the 'EPA College of Negotiators'. For the EC, Pascal Lamy will lead the talks at the Ministerial level. A senior official at the EC's Directorate General (DG) Trade will act as the Principal Negotiator, with others in DG Trade coordinating the technical talks. To act as a bridge between the trade negotiations and development cooperation, both sides will take part in a Regional Preparatory Task Force (RPTF). In addition to representatives from the regional and national authorising officers (ACP ministers in charge of managing their countries preferential arrangements with the EU), members on the RPTF for the Caribbean will include officials from regional secretariats, academia, civil society, and a CARIFORUM Member of the ACP Development Finance Committee. For the EC, members will include officials from DG Trade, DG Development, the EuropeAid Cooperation Office, and a delegation based in the Caribbean.

Timeline

The schedule of negotiations is to proceed in four phases. The initial phase, running from April to September 2004, will look at establishing the EPA negotiating priorities for both parties. The second phase, running from September 2004 to September 2005, will aim to identify the requirements for bolstering CARIFORUM regional integration. The third phase, from September 2005 to December 2006, is for consolidating the various discussions held to date and working towards a first draft of the EPA document. The final phase, expected to last from January 2007 to December 2007, will concentrate on finalising all areas of the negotiations.

Background

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement, signed in Cotonou, Benin on 23 June 2000 between 77 ACP countries and the EU, provides the framework for the negotiation of new reciprocal WTO-compatible trading arrangements (EPAs) between the EU and the ACP. ACP countries are able to enter into such arrangements individually, or as part of a group -- the latter intended to build upon existing regional integration schemes. The current EPA negotiations are the fourth of their kind to be launched between the EU and ACP countries.

Negotiations began between the EU and West Africa, Central Africa, and East & Southern Africa (ESA) in February this year (see BRIDGES Weekly, 12 February 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-02-12/story4.htm>). EPAs are aimed at reducing and eventually eradicating poverty while contributing to sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy. The EPAs are mandated to enter into force from 2008 until 2020.

The 15-member Caribbean Forum of ACP States (CARIFORUM) includes Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago. All countries, barring the Dominican Republic, are also members of the Caribbean Community or CARICOM.

For more information on the ACP-EU EPA process visit <http://www.acp-eu-trade.org/> or <http://www.epawatch.net>.

ICTSD reporting; "EU And Caribbean Launch Negotiations For An Economic Partnership Agreement," EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 15 April 2004; "RNM DG: CARIFORUM Negotiating Structure/Schedule Endorsed," CARIBBEAN REGIONAL NEGOTATING MACHINERY, 17 April 2004; "Lamy Assures CARIFORUM Preferences Will Stay During Trade Talks," THE JAMAICA OBSERVER, 18 April 2004.

IN BRIEF

SMALL ISLAND VULNERABILITIES CONSIDERED IN LEAD-UP TO SUMMIT

The UN Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD) from 14-16 April to consider the challenges facing Small Islands States (SIDS) in preparation for a summit in to be held in Mauritius in August this year. The Mauritius summit will review the performance of a ten-year programme to enhance the situation of SIDS, the so-called Barbados Plan of Action, which addressed issues such as climate change, tourism, natural disasters, waste, energy and transport. Speaking at the meeting, Undersecretary General for the Least Developed Nations Anwarul Chowdhury -- who will preside over the upcoming summit -- stressed that "no single group of countries is as vulnerable" as the 41 small island states and territories to issues such as climate change, global economic swings and environmental degradation. At the meeting, the Alliance

of Small Island States (AOSIS) presented a strategy paper highlighting new, crucial issues affecting SIDS, such as trade and declining commodity prices, HIV/AIDS, and the impact of new security concerns on their tourism sectors. Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius, AOSIS Chair, said that "while these are no doubt concerns for many developing countries, their effects on small islands are certainly more catastrophic".

The International Meeting on the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will be held on Mauritius from 30 August to 3 September this year.

ICTSD reporting; "PrepCom #1-3", EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 14-16 April 2004; "Small Island States Want Expanded Agenda For Mauritius Meeting," UN WIRE, 15 April 2004; "Small Island Nations To Discuss Mutual Challenges At U.N. Forum," UN WIRE, 14 April 2004.

NGOS CHARACTERISE EPAS AS NEW BARRIERS TO ERADICATING POVERTY

In a 13 April letter to EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, Eurostep -- a network of autonomous European non-governmental development organisations -- called on the Commissioner to respond to concerns regarding the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP). These concerns were identified in a 30 March joint ACP-EU civil society report entitled "New ACP-EU trade arrangements: New barriers to eradicating poverty?". Sent just prior to the launch of the EPA between the EU and a group of Caribbean countries (see related article, this issue), the Eurostep letter points to a five-country study (Benin, Cameroon, the Dominican Republic, Ghana and Jamaica), which indicates that the EPAs could actually prevent poverty eradication rather than support it. In this regard, the report highlights the heavy focus of EPAs on the removal of tariff barriers, which would increase EU exports to the ACP countries. On the other hand, non-tariff barriers and supply-side constraints are singled out as the main impediments to increasing ACP exports to the EU. The group further cautions against the impact of the EU's strict interpretation of 'WTO compatibility', which due to delays in WTO negotiations has yet to be defined. The report concludes that if the EPAs materialise as the free trade agreements envisaged by the EU, "they will be detrimental to poverty reduction in the ACP, as they will worsen many of the causes and traits of the poverty in the ACP such as unemployment, food insecurity, weak access to resources and credit, poor availability of social services,

and the disproportionate vulnerability of women". They predict such EPAs could "derail" national and international poverty reduction strategies, including national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, the Millennium Development Goals and the EU and ACP's own Cotonou Agreement.

The letter to Commissioner Lamy also proposes a variety of actions, including, inter alia, cooperation between the EU and ACP to ensure flexibility in the WTO for trade agreements that best address poverty; to focus the EPAs more on EU non-tariff barriers; to ensure ACP markets can be protected from the detrimental effects of large EU import surges (including addressing the issue of supply-side constraints); and incorporate the impacts of EU agricultural programmes in the EPA negotiations.

A copy of the Eurostep letter is available at http://www.eurostep.org/pubs/trade_study/ltr_Lamy_130404.pdf

The under laying report can be accessed at http://www.eurostep.org/pubs/trade_study.pdf

ICTSD reporting; "Eurostep Expresses Its Concerns Over The EPAs To Commissioner Lamy," EUROSTEP, 15 April 2004.

NEW IMF LOANS TO HELP COUNTRIES ADJUST TO DOHA ROUND EFFECTS

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently approved a new loan programme that aims to aid developing countries in adjusting to changes brought about by the Doha round of trade negotiations. Called the Trade Integration Mechanism (TIM), the new programme seeks to help countries adjust and overcome adverse impacts as their economies are further opened up. "We would hope that this will make it easier to move forward in the Doha round," IMF's trade policy division head Hans Peter Lankes said. The programme will assist countries -- such as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states -- which stand to lose trade preferences currently granted by developed countries. The programme also seeks to help countries deal with the new situation created by the phase-out of textile quotas at the end of 2004, which is expected to hit small textile producing countries hard while providing China, India and other strong exporters with a larger market share. Stressing that the loans were transitional only, IMF Managing Director Anne Krueger said that "at the time of the review of experience with the policy in three years, a decision will be taken on the duration of the TIM".

"IMF Approves Loan Program To Allay Trade Disruptions," UNWIRE, 14 April 2004; "IMF approves new loan program to deal with trade disruptions," AP, 13 April 2004.

EU-MERCOSUR: STEPS TOWARDS A BILATERAL AGREEMENT

EU officials met in Buenos Aires from 18-19 April with the coordinators of the four Mercosur member nations - Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay -- as well as with Mercosur associates Bolivia and Chile, to continue hashing out a deal for a free trade agreement, expected to be completed in October this year. According to trade sources, significant progress was made and "specific methodologies for accessing the European market with agriculture produce as demanded by Mercosur have begun to be considered". For Brazil and Argentina, priorities lie in securing increased access to EU markets for beef, poultry and especially sugar, while the EU wants improved offers from Mercosur in the areas of services, government procurement, investment and non-agricultural market access. If the agreement were completed to expectations, bilateral trade with the EU, Mercosur's main trading partner and investor, would increase by 15 percent in the first two years. The latest progress in the talks, which have been going on for five years, comes after Brazil and Argentina encountered hurdles in negotiating the Americas-wide free trade agreement with the US (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-04-08/inbrief.htm#4>). According to Marcos Saway of the Sao Paulo-based Institute for International Trade Negotiations, "Two years ago, nobody through the talks with the EU were serious; everyone said the FTAA would come first. What is so surprising is that now it's the other way around".

The two blocs are scheduled to meet again in Brussels from 3-7 May. The first draft of the deal might be available as soon as 28 May for the summit between the EU and Latin America on in Guadalajara, Mexico.

"Plans for EU-Mercosur trade deal move forward," REUTERS, 21 April 2004; "EU, Mercosur trade talks," REUTERS, 20 April 2004; "EU nears trade pact with Latin America," NYT, 20 April 2004; "Mercosur and EU closer to the October target," MERCOPRESS, 20 April 2004.

NEW EU BIOTECH REGULATIONS ENTER INTO FORCE

On 18 April, new EU labelling and traceability regulations for genetically modified (GM) material,

adopted in August last year, came into effect (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>). The new regulations set a labelling threshold of 0.9 percent of GM content in a product. Under this threshold GM products are exempt from labelling, and the new rules contain a 0.5 percent threshold for the adventitious presence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that are unauthorised but have nevertheless been assessed as risk-free. The rules also require labelling of products derived from, but no longer containing GMOs. The US is coming under increasing pressure from domestic farm groups to bring a WTO dispute against the new EU regulations, in addition to a dispute against the EU's de facto moratorium on the approval of new GMOs currently underway (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 5 March 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-03-05/inbrief.htm>). EU Agricultural Ministers will have to take a decision on Syngenta's genetically modified Bt-11 corn at their 27-28 April meeting. If approved, the decision would effectively end the de facto moratorium, at least for GM foods. If not approved, it will be up to the European Commission to take a final decision.

For further information, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/biotechnology/gmfood/index_en.htm

ICTSD reporting.

WTO IN BRIEF

WTO PANEL REJECTS EC PROCEDURAL CLAIM IN GMO CASE

In a preliminary ruling circulated on 8 April, a WTO dispute settlement panel dismissed a procedural claim made by the EC against a request filed by the US, Argentina, and Canada challenging the continued EC de facto moratorium on the approvals of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>). In its request for a preliminary ruling, the EC argued that by failing to identify the "specific measures at issue" in the dispute and providing a "brief summary of the legal basis of the complaint sufficient to present the problem clearly," the complainants had failed to meet the requirements of Article 6.2 of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU). With this hurdle cleared, it is expected that the dispute now will run its normal course. In accordance with the DSU procedural rules, the first panel hearing, scheduled for early June,

will be preceded by the presentation of the parties' first written submissions to the panel.

In a related development, Senator Grassley, chair of the US Senate Finance Committee has commented on the implementation of two of the EC's biotech labelling regulations which were adopted on September 2003 and implemented on 18 April 2004 (see related story, this issue). In a memorandum released to the press, the Senator asserted that the EC biotech regulations are yet another example of the "official stigmatisation" of GMOs, which would further restrict US commodity and food shipments. He warned that he would follow the implementation process closely "as well as look into their possible inconsistencies with the WTO obligations of the European Union".

ICTSD reporting; "WTO Panel Rejects EU Procedural Claim Against Request for Ruling on GMO Barriers" WTO REPORTER 9 April 2004.

ACP COUNTRIES DEFEND THEIR EC SUGAR EXPORTS

African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) sugar producing states recently warned that if the WTO challenge brought by Thailand, Brazil and Australia against the European Communities (EC) sugar regime is successful, their preferential access for sugar exports to the EC would be seriously destabilised. The fourteen ACP countries, third parties in the EC-Sugar case (see BRIDGES Weekly, 18 March 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-03-18/story1.htm>), presented their submissions to a WTO panel on 18 March. In a statement issued by the ACP secretariat in Geneva, the ACP countries cite the example of Guyana, where 150,000 of the total population of 750,000 depend on the sugar industry, and of Swaziland where sugar production accounts for 60 percent of agricultural production and 11 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product, and call for their preferential access to be retained. "It is in good faith, and with the conviction that their preferential trade agreements would be implemented in a stable and predictable manner that the ACP countries joined the WTO in 1995," the statement adds.

Under the Sugar Protocol of the Cotonou Agreement between the EC and the ACP countries, the EC guarantees to import agreed quantities of sugar from the ACP countries. The protocol fixes specific import levels for cane sugar imported from Barbados, Fiji, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Swaziland, and Tanzania, all of whom are third parties in this case in the case.

To access the ACP statement see http://www.acpsec.org/InternalSheet.aspx?ArticleFileName=2004/cmnqsucre_en.html&sessLang=1

ICTSD reporting; "ACP Eyes Thailand Complaint," WTO REPORTER, 5 April 2003; "Fiji defends its sugar exports to the EU before WTO dispute panel," FIJI GOVERNMENT ONLINE, 2 April 2004; "Caribbean States Outline their Position Before WTO Panel Examining Sugar Dispute," COUNTRY WATCH, 2 April 2004.

WTO REPORTS DECLINE IN ANTI-DUMPING INVESTIGATIONS

On 20 April, the WTO Secretariat released a reporting stating that it has observed a significant decline in anti-dumping investigations. Fourteen members initiated 115 anti-dumping investigations from 1 July to 31 December 2003, marking a decrease from the corresponding period of 2002, during which 18 WTO Members initiated 161 anti-dumping investigations. India initiated the most investigations, with the US a close second. China remains the country subject to the most anti-dumping investigations, with 30 investigations initiated on its exports during the second semester of 2003. Sectors most affected by final measures were chemicals, base metals and plastics; India accounted for the majority of measures imposed on chemical products.

For more detailed information and statistics see http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres04_e/pr374_e.htm

"WTO Secretariat Reports Significant Decline In New Anti-Dumping Investigations," WTO PRESS RELEASE, 20 April 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.

ICTSD Events

22 April, New York, US: ENSURING ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION - THE TRADE DIMENSION. This ICTSD-IUCN (World Conservation Union) side event to the twelfth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12) will consist of a series of short presentations. It will seek to inform, educate and sensitise stakeholders at CSD-12 to the key issues, priorities and concerns regarding trade liberalisation and their potential impacts on access to water and sanitation. The event is organised with the support of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in collaboration with the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation. For further information contact: Mahesh Sugathan, tel: +41-22 917-8351; email: smahesh@ictsd.ch; Internet: http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2004-04-22/side_event.pdf

19 May, Geneva, Switzerland: BIOTECHNOLOGY AND TRADE - UNTANGLING KEY ISSUES. Organised by ICTSD and the Geneva Environment Network. The roundtable will offer an informal setting for exploring a number of policy questions relating to trade and biotechnology, including: To what extent will trade considerations constrain the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol when finalizing and implementing biosafety measures under the Protocol? What flexibilities does the multilateral trade regime provide for countries to implement their biosafety regulations and how will these flexibilities be impacted by the WTO dispute? Will it be possible to strike an adequate balance between a precautionary approach to policy-making and existing obligations under international trade rules? The roundtable will be held at the International Environment House. For further information, contact Sofie Flensburg; email: Sofie.flensburg@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.environmenthouse.ch/roundtables.htm>.

Coming Up: 22-28 April

19-30 April, New York, US: TWELFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The 12th session of the CSD will be the first Review Session under the Commission's new Implementation Cycle. Participants will determine how a task- and action-oriented CSD will respond to the challenge of implementation and how future Review Sessions will be organised. The results of the CSD-12 review should bring about an improved understanding of priority concerns of the thematic issues selected for this Cycle - namely Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements - and pave the way for an effective policy session at CSD-13. CSD-12 will also continue the tradition of side events. For further information contact the UN Division for Sustainable Development, tel: +1-212 963-2803; fax: 963-4260; email: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd12/csd12.htm>

20-23 April, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: UNEP-GEF SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORKS FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA. This workshop aims to help participants acquire a better understanding of the different options for regulatory regimes and administrative systems for biosafety, as well as legal and administrative requirements of the Cartagena Protocol. For further information contact Christopher Briggs, tel: +41-22-917-8411; fax: +41-22-917-8070; email: chris.briggs@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/devsubregwrkshops.htm>

22 April, Geneva, Switzerland: PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR UNCTAD XI: THIRD HEARING WITH THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. Provides an opportunity for dialogue among delegations from member States and civil society representatives on priority and concrete issues under the four sub-themes of the Conference: development strategies in a globalising world economy; building productive capacity and international competitiveness; assuring development gains from the international trading system and trade negotiations; and partnerships for development. For further information see <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=2675&lang=1>

23-24 April, Hanoi, Vietnam: LAUNCH MEETING FOR THE 7-UP MARK II PROJECT. This two-year research-based advocacy and capacity building programme conducted by the CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (CUTS-C-CIER) seeks to accelerate the process toward formal competition law and policy, and advance the environment in which these laws and policies will be enforced. The focus is on Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. For further information contact Nupur Mehta at tel: +91 141 2207482; fax: +91 141 2207486; email: 7upmarkii@cuts-international.org; Internet: <http://cuts-international.org/7-up%20project.htm>

24-25 April, Washington DC, US. 2004 SPRING MEETING OF THE IMF AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP. The International Monetary and Financial Committee Meeting will take place on 24 April, and the Development Committee Meeting will be held on 25 April. For more information contact Annual Meeting inquiries, tel: +1-202-473-7272; fax: +1-202-623-4100; email: bfcoffice@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://www.imf.org/external/am/>

26 April, New York, US: SPECIAL HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF ECOSOC AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) together with the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organisation and the UN Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD) will hold a special high-level meeting at the UN headquarters in New York. The meeting will focus on specific issues within the integrated approach of the Monterrey Consensus. For more information contact e-mail: esa@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/>

26-27 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WORKSHOP ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT. The Economics and Trade Branch (ETB) of the United Nations Environment Programme will convene this workshop. For further information contact Anja von Moltke, UNEP ETB, tel: 41-22-917 8137; email: etb@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.unep.ch/etu/Fisheries%20Meeting/FishMeeting2004.htm>

26-28 April, Uppsala, Sweden: FOOD 21 SYMPOSIUM - TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION. For further information contact the Symposium Secretariat, tel: +46-18-67-10-03; fax: +46-18-67-35-30; email: food2004@slu.se; Internet: <http://www-conference.slu.se/food2004/>

26-29 April, Vancouver, Canada: IAIA'04: IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT - WHOSE BUSINESS IS IT? This 24th Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) will focus on the role of the private sector in impact assessments, including implications for improving the professional practice and processes of impact assessment. Impact assessment of trade policy and agreements is one of the key topics of this year's conference, including a joint session with the IAIA Biodiversity Section, on principles and practice for biodiversity impact assessment of trade. The IAIA'04 conference event offers an opportunity for experts, decision makers, industry, and professionals of different visions and expertise to explore this issue. For submission instructions or more information on IAIA'04 visit <http://www.iaia.org> or contact Bridget John, tel: +1.701.297.7908; email: bridget@iaia.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.

22-23 April: WTO COMMITTEE ON ANTI-DUMPING PRACTICES.

23 April: WTO COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT.

23 April: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE - SPECIAL SESSION.

26 April: WTO NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES.

27 April: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS.

28 April: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY - SPECIAL SESSION.

Other Forthcoming Events

10-14 May, Montreal, Canada: 32ND SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING. This meeting is organised by the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat. For further information contact the Secretariat, tel: +39-06-5705-2287; fax: +39-06-5705-3369; e-mail: codex@fao.org; Internet: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccfl32/fl04_01e.htm

10-14 May, Chisinau, Moldova: SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS. This meeting will be held under the auspices of the Department for Statistics and Sociology of the Republic of Moldova and the FAO Statistics Division. For further information contact Edward Gillin, FAO, tel: +39-6-5705-3599; fax: +39-6-5705-5615; e-mail: Edward.Gillin@fao.org; Internet: http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/ECONOMIC/ESS/meetings/moldova_2004.asp

12-14 May, Hamburg, Germany: CONFERENCE ON THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY. This international conference on climate policy is being hosted by the Hamburg Institute of International Economics. The conference will offer briefings on various aspects of climate policy, including the history of the international policy process, as well as the role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, NGOs, business groups, and other key stakeholders in influencing climate policy and the multilateral negotiations on climate change. The Kyoto Protocol, and in particular its flexible mechanisms, will also be examined. For further information contact Axel Michaelowa, Hamburg Institute's Climate Policy Programme, tel: +49-40-4283-4309 or 49-40-; e-mail: a-michaelowa@hwwa.de; Internet: <http://www.hwwa.de/climate.htm>

22 May, Worldwide: INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY. The UN has proclaimed May 22 the International Day for Biological Diversity, to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The Day is organised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and will focus on the theme of "Biodiversity:

Food, Water and Health for All" this year. For further information contact the CBD Secretariat, tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2004.asp>

7-9 June, Copenhagen, Denmark: SYMPOSIUM ON UNCERTAINTY AND PRECAUTION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT. This international symposium will address the engineering/science - policy/management interface, focusing in particular on the uncertainty and ignorance associated with predictions in science for policy, and on examining the implications of the Precautionary Principle from the scientific, ethical and legal perspectives. The specific areas of application that will be emphasized are water resource management and the risk assessment and regulation of chemicals. For further information contact MIACON, Meeting and Conference Services, tel: +45-4585-9727; fax: +45-4583-9727; e-mail: mia@miacon.dk; Internet: <http://upem.er.dtu.dk/>

RESOURCES

DUMPING ON THE WORLD. (Oxfam Briefing Paper, March 2004). According to this new report, EU taxpayers are giving 819 million euros in subsidies each year to six European sugar processing companies to dump around five million tons of sugar annually on world markets. Although Least Developed Countries are allowed limited access to the EU market under the "Everything But Arms" initiative, the total annual quota allowance for the 49 LDCs is equivalent to only three days' EU consumption of sugar. Three of the world's poorest countries, Mozambique, Malawi and Ethiopia, have already lost approximately 198 million euros since 2001 in potential earnings from sugar. The report calls for reforms to end EU export dumping, reduce European production levels and increase access to Europe's markets for LDCs at fair prices. To access the report go to http://www.oxfam.org/eng/pdfs/bp61_sugar_dumping.pdf

'WHITE GOLD' TURNS TO DUST: WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR COTTON IN WEST AFRICA? (Oxfam Briefing Paper, March 2004). Tens of millions of small cotton farmers in West and Central Africa are suffering the effects of low cotton prices and falling deeper into poverty. Several African governments have been at the forefront of demands seeking compensation and the lessening of cotton subsidies in industrialised countries like the US or the EU. These demands were not resolved at the Cancun Ministerial Conference in September 2003, and since then activity at the WTO has been stagnant on the issue. Recently efforts to

address the issue have been resumed by the WTO at Cotonou in Benin, but Oxfam is fearful that promises of aid will drop African governments' demands for subsidy reform. Aid is not the answer to the problem; the issues of artificial overproduction and dumping must be resolved to have a long-term solution. To access the report visit http://www.oxfam.org/eng/pdfs/pp040319_cotton_wafrica_58.pdf

SUGAR POLICIES: OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE. Donald Mitchell (World Bank Report, February 2004). The EU, Japan, and the US all have highly distorted sugar policies. With increasing trade commitments and internal market changes, however, opportunities for change exist. These changes can have varied consequences for developing countries. For example, the benefits of removing all trade protection under multilateral agreements are estimated to increase global welfare by as much as US\$4.7 billion per year. However, many developing countries with preferential access to US and EU markets would lose as sugar policy preferences change. The paper is part of a larger effort by the World Bank Development Prospects Group to better understand the structure of commodity markets, including policy implementation. The report can be accessed at <http://econ.worldbank.org/view.php?type=5&id=33194>

TRADE PREFERENCES AND GROWTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRY: ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA. Sandeep Singh (Tata Energy and Resources Institute Working Paper, 2004). The advanced members of the WTO stand to gain the most from the liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services (EGS). Most developing countries, like India, are net importers of these products. The paper begins with a summary of the state of India's environmental industry and stresses the need for technology transfer to stimulate its domestic industry. More generally, it examines the options India has as a net importer of EGS, and concludes with the broader analysis that to strike a balance of interest among WTO members the transfer of technology to developing countries must be done on favourable terms. To access the report, visit <http://www.teriin.org/discussion/envirom/trade.pdf>

HIGH TIDE: NEWS FROM A WARMING WORLD. Mark Lynas (Flamingo Press, March 2004). This book explores the effects of global climate change presently and in the future. Targeting a wide readership, it was written based on the author's travels to several areas of the globe and is intended to raise awareness on the significant impact of climate change today. The global impact of this phenomenon is revealed through everything from glacial melting to desertification. For

more information or to buy the book, visit <http://www.marklynas.org/books/>

DIAMOND INDUSTRY ANNUAL REVIEW: SIERRA LEONE 2004. Partnership Africa Canada and the Network Movement for Justice and Development (March 2004). The diamond trade was responsible for much of the financing of Sierra Leone's brutal civil war during the 1990s. Today however, the 'blood diamonds' are being turned into 'development diamonds,' as the government has regained control over the diamond industry and turned it into exports worth US\$75 million in 2003. The report examines the major players in the diamond business all the way down to blue collar workers, as well as the industry's effect on the environment and child labour. It also addresses issues for management in the diamond sector and looks at its potential as a tool for development. To access the report visit http://www.pacweb.org/e/pdf/sierraleone_e.pdf

"The Road to Doha and Beyond: Some Reflections on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health". By Haochen Sun in the EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 15 (1, 2004) pp. 123-150. Designed to respond to concerns about the negative impact of the TRIPS Agreement on access to medicines, the Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health (Doha Declaration), adopted at the Doha Ministerial Conference, explicitly clarified for the first time what flexibilities inherent in the TRIPS Agreement can be used by WTO Members to combat a public health crisis. Nevertheless, the Doha Declaration did not fully dismantle the obstacles created by the TRIPS Agreement. Even after the most recent agreement on access to generic medicines in poor countries, serious differences of interpretation and implementation difficulties under the TRIPS Agreement are likely to persist. This article explores the global debate on the TRIPS Agreement and public health, as it has evolved over the years. Specifically, it focuses on the implications, and limitations, of the Doha Declaration. It is argued that the TRIPS Agreement should be implemented and interpreted so as to allow WTO Members the maximum flexibility in increasing access to essential medicines for all.

Electronic Resources

UNCTAD XI CONFERENCE OFFICIAL WEBSITE. The UNCTAD XI website is now online. It is divided into five sections on: the conference; the programme; the press room; documents; and info for participants. In addition, the home page contains a message from UNCTAD's Secretary-General as well as links to pre-conference events, accreditation information, and the subthemes of the conference. To visit the site, go to

http://www.unctadxi.org/templates/Startpage____4.asp

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