



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT

# Bridges

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### LEAD STORIES

#### WTO GENERAL COUNCIL FRAMES NEGOTIATIONS AHEAD OF END-JULY DEADLINE

The WTO General Council (GC) convened from 17-18 May in Geneva to consider, inter alia, progress in negotiations under the Doha Round. Taking place in the aftermath of ministerial-level talks at the sidelines of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) summit in Paris from 13-14 May (see related story, this issue), the meeting -- which was attended by a number of high level officials from capitals -- underscored the need for the political commitments to be operationalised and translated into concrete textual proposals in Geneva. Members are aiming at concluding a general framework package for the negotiations by the end of July this year, fearing that momentum will be lost due to, inter alia, US presidential elections and a change in the helm of the European Commission, if they fail to do so.

In addition to discussing progress in the Doha Round, Members heard a presentation by IMF Acting Managing Director Anne Krueger on the newly launched Trade Integration Mechanism (TIM), and a number of developing countries responded by questioning its utility to them as it stands. Cuba, strongly supported by China, criticised recent measures by the US to tighten its embargo on the island state claiming these measures were inconsistent with WTO law.

#### DG underscores need to translate political momentum into work in Geneva

WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi reported back to the GC on recent developments, including on the meeting held in conjunction with the OECD summit. He also drew attention to upcoming meetings of the African Union, the G-90 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Generally, Supachai noted a trend of convergence on the substance of the key issues, and a new sense of focus and determination. However, he cautioned that much still remained to be

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done in Geneva. During the ten weeks left until the end of July, he asked Members to work intensely under the guidance of the chairs of the negotiating groups. He stressed the need for ensuring transparency during this phase of the negotiations, and said he would convene open-ended informal meetings on a regular basis with this objective in mind. He added that he would also call meetings of the Trade Negotiations Committee. He stressed that the results expected in July had to be seen in the context of the longer-term process, and that while the focus now should be set on the upcoming deadline, there were issues -- such as timing and benchmarks -- that Members would deal with later at the appropriate time. He concluded by saying that "Overall, we have a window of opportunity but it is small and it is closing rapidly. This is the time for us to move into a cooperative problem-solving mode and show the world that Geneva is capable of delivering significant results". The full text of the Director-General's speech is available at [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news04\\_e/gc\\_chair\\_stat\\_18may04\\_e.doc](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news04_e/gc_chair_stat_18may04_e.doc).

GC Chair Shotaro Oshima (Japan) also urged delegates to build on the recent political momentum, and said that in the process leading up to the end of July he would continue to meet with chairs and delegations in different configurations, and was planning on holding informal Heads of Delegation meetings on a regular basis, the first one on 1 June. On the Singapore issues (investment, competition, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation), he noted a new level of flexibility and invited Members to respond on this topic.

The Chair of the agriculture negotiations, Tim Groser (New Zealand), intervened to say that Members were close to drafting a framework on agriculture. He stressed that the text needed to be written in Geneva and nowhere else; that the input could come from any of the texts previously discussed; that negotiations would have to start immediately and not at the scheduled special sessions of the Committee on Agriculture; that the framework would not yet include any numbers; and that a balance would have to be struck between the three agricultural pillars (market access, domestic support and export subsidies).

### **Members respond**

A number of Members intervened in response to the presentations by the Director General and the GC Chair. The US noted increasing common ground among Members, and called for a pragmatic approach at this point in time, stressing that the July framework was to be taken for what it was -- just a first step in a longer process. The US welcomed the recent EC move on agriculture (see BRIDGES Weekly, 13 May 2004), in

which the EC had signalled a willingness to eliminate exports subsidies, and said the US was ready to negotiate the subsidy elements of its export credit system and the distortive elements of its food aid programme. The EC stressed that Members now had to get down to negotiating the details after ministers had built up the political momentum to move ahead in the Doha Round. On agriculture, the EC noted that a balanced deal had to be struck between all three pillars, and that non-trade concerns had to be included in this balance. The EC also stressed that the weakest Members should only have to make limited commitments.

India stressed that fundamental differences between Members still remained to be breached, in particular in the key area of agriculture. India also noted that due to its recent elections and change in governments, there would be some delays in its positions. Brazil welcomed the recent flexibility shown by the EC and US, and proposed that Members work together to come up with a new formula for market access in agriculture, rather than having the G-20 and Cairns group of agricultural exporters come up with an alternative formula of their own. Australia echoed this call for cooperation, which followed after the G-20 group of countries and the Cairns group had rejected an approach favoured by the US and EC (see BRIDGES Weekly, 13 May 2004). Japan supported the launch of negotiations on trade facilitation, and called for the remaining three Singapore issues to be dealt with in their respective WTO working groups. Malaysia questioned the status of the Singapore issues, noting that while Members would go ahead with trade facilitation, the fate of the other three was unclear. Chair Oshima responded that the three issues were not part of the Single Undertaking or the Doha Round, but nothing prevented Members from placing the issues back on the table.

### **TIM spurs controversy**

Anne Krueger, IMF Acting Managing Director introduced the recently launched Trade Integration Mechanism (see BRIDGES Weekly, 22 April 2004), which she said was set to aid developing countries in adjusting to changes brought about by the Doha round. She noted that the initiative was an example of increased coherence between the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF, and would focus on helping Members deal with balance of payment problems.

A number of developing country Members, including Mauritius, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Colombia reacted negatively to the TIM, noting, inter alia, that its focus on balance of payment problems was too limited. The US, EC, Japan and Canada welcomed the TIM.

The next GC is scheduled for 27-28 July. An informal Heads of Delegation meeting will be held on 1 June.

ICTSD reporting.

## MINISTERS SIGNAL WILLINGNESS TO MOVE ON DOHA ROUND

Trade ministers from 28 countries, coming out of a meeting at the sidelines of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) summit in Paris from 13-14 May, said they were optimistic an end-July deadline for a framework deal to move the Doha Round of trade negotiations forward could be reached. WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi said, "We are beginning to see a shape for the final outcome of our July package", and according to EC Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, "After a period of relative calm -- with only some underground activity -- the (trade) volcano is smoking again". Lamy added that "I think everybody around the table is committed to work hard and move to make the compromises which we need so that by July we can reach 50 pct of the Doha agenda". Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim noted that "I sense a positive movement of all major actors and it makes me optimistic".

The participants in the mini-ministerial were Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, the EC, Egypt, Guyana, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, and the US.

### Agriculture key to the round

Agriculture was the main focus of the talks in Paris, with ministers welcoming a recent move by the EC to eliminate export subsidies (see BRIDGES Weekly, 13 May 2004). The US said it would move in parallel to eliminate distortive elements of its export credit and food aid programmes. While both sides signalled their willingness to work on this issue of "parallelism," they were not yet able to come to any conclusion. This work would likely take place after the July framework had been agreed.

Coming out of the meeting, the G-20 group of countries including Brazil and South Africa, and the Cairns group of agricultural exporters said they would work together on a counter proposal to a formula preferred by the US and EC for cutting tariffs for agricultural goods. Speaking later on at the WTO General Council in Geneva, however, the countries invited all Members to

collaborate on a new formula (see related story, this issue).

Japan willing to move ahead on trade facilitation, drop other Singapore issues

The gathering also discussed the fate of the Singapore issues (investment, competition, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation). The EC, once a demandeur for talks on all four issues, had already signalled its willingness to go ahead with negotiations on trade facilitation only (see BRIDGES Weekly, 13 May 2004). In Paris, Japanese trade minister Shoichi Nakagawa signalled Japan would also be willing to go along with such a deal.

In addition to agriculture and the Singapore issues, the July framework is expected to cover industrial goods, cotton, and developing country concerns such as special and differential treatment. Members are under pressure to reach a deal by end-July, as trade talks are expected to lose momentum when the US goes into presidential elections and the European Commission is up for a changeover.

### OECD ministerial session also discusses Doha Round

In addition to the mini-ministerial involving both developing and developed countries, the OECD meeting also addressed trade issues. Chaired by Mexico's Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez, the meeting, inter alia, affirmed its commitment to the multilateral trading system and its determination to reach a framework agreement by the end of July. The ministers acknowledged the key role of agriculture, and that movement in this area would generate movement in other core areas. On the Singapore issues, they felt negotiations should go ahead on trade facilitation while the rest should be handled in study groups. The meeting noted that more progress was needed on development issues. In conclusion, the meeting stressed that the Geneva-based process must move on translating political commitment into concrete progress.

The OECD Ministerial Council Meeting Chair's Summary is available at [http://www.oecd.org/document/39/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_31753703\\_119690\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/39/0,2340,en_2649_201185_31753703_119690_1_1_1,00.html)

"Trade ministers buoyant at key Paris meeting," REUTERS, 14 May 2004; "WTO Members Say Trade Talks on Track," AP, 14 May 2004; "Cairns group and G20 team up to produce WTO plan," AP, 14 May 2004; "Japan agrees to limit WTO 'Singapore issue' to single issue," KYODO NEWS, 15 May 2004; "EU's Lamy says

50 pct of Doha WTO round could be agreed by July," AFX, 14 May 2004.

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## OTHER NEWS

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### US, ANDEAN FTA TALKS LAUNCHED

From 18-19 May, representatives of three Andean nations -- Peru, Ecuador and Colombia -- met with US officials in Cartagena, Colombia for the first round of negotiations aimed at a US-Andean free trade agreement (FTA). The mood of the negotiations was reportedly positive, with both sides outlining the benefits of the accord.

#### Ready to move ahead

The head of the Peruvian trade team, Pablo de la Flor, indicated that his country was "sale a ganar," ready to win, stressing that the agreement with the US would represent real gains for the Andean bloc. Ecuadorian representative Cristian Espinosa and Colombia's Hernando José Gómez echoed these sentiments. Negotiators from the Andean nations hope the accord will draw foreign investment needed to compete with other Latin American countries that have signed free trade accords with the US. In addition, they seek to extend existing trade accords -- set to expire in 2006 -- which allow them to export items such as fresh-cut flowers without tariffs. These accords have allowed the Colombian and Ecuadorian fresh-cut flower industry to corner about 90 percent of the US rose market. These trade concessions were originally put in place to help the countries fight against the illegal drug trade.

#### US building on past FTAs

"The US has been busy completing top-notch FTAs with our neighbours in the hemisphere, so we are delighted that the Andean countries want to work with us to remove barriers for our farmers, workers, exporters and businesses," remarked US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick. In addition to the benefit of increased access to 80 million consumers, US negotiators hope that the accord would build on momentum gained in Central America and the Caribbean, where the US recently concluded negotiations for a Central American Free Trade Agreement (see BRIDGES Weekly, 26 February). A US-Chile trade accord also entered into force earlier this year (see BRIDGES Weekly, 14 May 2003). Trade analysts noted that a US Andean FTA would pressure Brazil, one of Washington's greatest obstacle to a Free

Trade Area of the Americas, to concede in negotiations. "The hope would be that Brazil would worry about getting beaten out (by regional rivals) in the US," said Ed Gresser, Trade Director at the US-based Progressive Policy Institute.

#### Obstacles remain

Commentators have, however, also observed that obstacles remain on the road towards a US-Andean FTA. Due to the US Presidential race, analysts have expressed doubt that President Bush would publicly support the talks, as his rival Democratic candidate John Kerry has taken up the case of jobs moving overseas due to free trade agreements. Furthermore, intellectual property violations and security issues still stand in the way of investment in the Andean region. "I think that if you ask US companies, the biggest detriment to investment here is the insecurity of the judicial system," noted Francisco Fernandez, US Counsellor for Economic Affairs in Colombia. Medecins Sans Frontieres, on the other hand, presented a report in Peru calling on the governments of Peru, Colombia and Ecuador to exclude intellectual property from the negotiations. According to the report, new IP requirements might raise the cost of AIDS drugs by a factor of ten in these countries. Juana Ramos, Executive Director of Ecuador's Association of Pharmaceutical Laboratories echoed such concerns, "We share MSF's concern because of what we've seen in Chile and in Central America's negotiations with the United States". Two thousand people also marched through Cartagena towards the conference centre where the negotiations took place, holding signs that read "Colombia is not for sale" and "No free trade deal".

The talks are scheduled to conclude in early 2005.

To access the MSF report see <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/news/ftaa.shtml>

"Hora cero para el TLC," PORTAFOLIO.COM, 18 May 2004; "Andean countries scramble for US free-trade pact," REUTERS, 12 May 2004; "US Free Trade Pact Puts Cheap Drugs at Risk-Lobby," REUTERS, 15 May 2004; "US-Andean FTA negotiations," USTR press release, 3 May 2004; "US, Andean Countries Hold Free Trade Talks," VOA NEWS, 18 May 2004; US kicks off Andean free trade talks, FORBES, 18 May 2004; "Clashes erupt as three Andean nations open free trade talks with US," AP, 18 May 2004.



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**IN BRIEF**

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**AUSTRALIA AND US SIGN FTA**

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On 18 May, the US and Australia officially signed a free trade agreement (FTA) in Washington, DC. The negotiations on the treaty began last March in Canberra (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 February), and US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick said he hoped the US Congress would approve the legislation before its August recess, along the treaty to enter into force on 1 January 2005. According to Robert Hunt, of Invest Australia, an Australian federal agency, the agreement will encompass "the virtual elimination of tariffs, except on beef, dairy and sugar... It's probably the most comprehensive agreement anywhere by any two countries." While US manufacturing sector has strongly supported the agreement, labour federations oppose it. Australian sugar farmers, pork producers and local software developers are also among those concerned about potential negative impacts of the agreement, as they will not be granted the market access they had hoped for. The Australian Conservation Foundation stressed in a recent analysis that the potential environmental impacts of this agreement "have not been formally assessed," and that "many serious questions about the environmental consequences" remain.

To access the Australian Conservation Foundation's analysis of the agreement see <http://www.acfonline.org.au/docs/general/00521.pdf>

"Farmers warn on FTA impact," THE AGE, 17 May 2004; "FTA threatens local developers," THE AUSTRALIAN, 18 May 2004; "US, Australia commerce to leap forward with free trade agreement," SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 15 May 2004; "Kerry undecided on U.S.-Australia free trade pact," REUTERS, 17 May 2004; "Australian conservationists warn against USA free trade pact," ENS, 7 May 2004.

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**SEAHORSE PROTECTED BY CITES**

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On 15 May, seahorses were added to the list of species to be protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). A number of the world's species of seahorses are threatened because of overfishing and unsustainable trade. IUCN lists nine seahorse species as vulnerable and one as endangered. Trade in recent years has been increasing at an 8-10 percent annual rate and an estimated 24 million seahorses are taken from the wild every year. Aquarium trade and use for traditional Chinese medicine are the two main uses of a seahorse. At least

77 countries are involved in the trade, making international regulations necessary to ensure the protection of seahorses. The conservation group Project Seahorse and the wildlife trade-monitoring organisation TRAFFIC recently produced an ID manual to help ensure the seahorse regulations are successful in conserving the animals. Ernie Cooper of TRAFFIC noted the manual will be distributed to customs agents and law enforcement officials in 165 countries to help them enforce the new rules through proper identification of the different species. The CITES regulations for seahorses were approved in November 2002 but delayed for 18 months -- until May 2004 -- to allow countries time to put in place enforcement policies.

The ID manual is available at <http://www.projectseahorse.org/>

"International Protection Kicks in for Seahorses," ENS, 14 May 2004; "Consuming exotic animals," AP, 25 April 2004; "Seahorses Gain International Protection on May 15," US NEWSWIRE, 14 May 2004.

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**AFRICAN NGOS VOICE CONCERN OVER GM FOOD TO DONORS**

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On 4 May, over 60 NGOs from 15 African countries sent a letter to the World Food Programme (WFP) and USAID, expressing concerns that Angola and Sudan were denied the right to choose whether or not to accept GM food aid. According to the NGOs, inappropriate pressure had been placed on governments to lift restrictions on GM food aid. Following recommendations by the Southern African Development Community's advisory committee on biotechnology and biosafety, Angola had made the import of GM food aid conditional on the grain being milled prior to arrival (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 2 April 2004). The NGOs allege that the WFP had warned Angola of decreases in food aid if such insistence continued. The WFP, responding to the letter, denied this. "We informed the government of Angola that if they insist all GM food must be milled it would delay the delivery process because Angola does not have the capacity to mill large quantities of grain... Milling would have to be done overseas and we would have to find someone to pay for it," commented Michael Huggins, Southern Africa regional spokesperson for the WFP. Moreover, the NGOs claim that USAID has entirely cut off food aid to Sudan in response to demands by the African country for food aid to be certified as GM-free. Huggins rejected these allegations, noting that "the US government has just donated 33,000 metric tonnes of food to the country". In a 4 May report, Earthlife Africa, ERA, GRAIN and SafeAge point to non-GM alternatives at national, regional and international levels, which donors should make available to Sudan and Angola.

To see the NGO letter, visit  
<http://www.grain.org/nfg/?id=167>

To access the report by Earthlife Africa, ERA, GRAIN and SafeAge visit  
<http://www.grain.org/research/contamination.cfm?id=102>

"Africa GM Food Aid Claims are 'Rubbish'," AGBIOVIEW NEWSLETTER, 10 May 2004; "NGOs accuse donors over UN food aid," BUSINESS DAY, 5 May 2004.

## WTO IN BRIEF

### NAMA TALKS ADDRESS NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

In the latest round of negotiations on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) took place from 10-12 May, and while they yielded little in terms of concrete results, the atmosphere at the meetings was reportedly more positive than at the previous round of talks (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 April 2004). According to the Chair, Ambassador Stefan Johannesson of Iceland, the negotiations were productive and useful and Members took the process "one step forward to the final phase of pre-July negotiations". New for this round was a focus on non-tariff barriers, which had been neglected thus far. In the previous meetings, Members have been bogged down in disagreements over what kind of a formula to use to lower tariffs. Reportedly, the Members arrived at a better understanding of each other's concerns following intensive bilateral and small group negotiations.

The next meeting of the NAMA group is scheduled for 9-11 June. In July, the group is expected to agree on a framework, within an overall package deal in the trade talks, including concepts and formulas for tariff reductions, allowing future talks to progress to detailed numbers and percentages.

"Officials Cite Better Tone in WTO Talks, But Consensus Still Far on Sectoral Issues," WTO REPORTER, 13 May 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](mailto:events@ictsd.ch).

#### ICTSD Events

25 May, Geneva, Switzerland, 14h00 - 18h00: WHAT IS AFRICA'S ROLE IN THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM? The objective of this meeting at the WTO Public Symposium is to examine the functionality of the multilateral trading system for African countries, to assess the success of integration efforts, and to explore suitable options and strategies to enhance Africa's participation in the global economy. There will be three sessions. The first session will address the issue of multilateralism and bilateralism, the second will look more specifically at flexibility mechanisms in various WTO disciplines and the final session will take the form of a panel discussion on the effectiveness of technical assistance for Africa. Simultaneous translation between French and English will be provided. For further information see <http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2004-05-25/symposiumomc2004french.pdf>

26 May, Geneva, Switzerland, 15h00 - 18h00: ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SERVICES: TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL OUTCOME FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This roundtable at the annual WTO Public Symposium will explore whether or not WTO negotiations on environmental goods and services (EGS) could deliver a meaningful outcome for sustainable development. The dialogue will first explore the implications of the EGS negotiating mandate and the current negotiating modalities for sustainable development concerns and how it relates to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the UN Millennium Development Goals and Targets. The second session will focus on the ways in which tools and processes - such as technology transfer - may help ensure that the EGS negotiations will yield benefits for sustainable development. For further information see <http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2005-05-26/WTO%20symposium%20concept%20paper%20AGENDA%20FINAL.pdf>

26 May, Geneva, Switzerland, 15h00 - 18h00: TRADE AND BIODIVERSITY - THE NEED TO FIND COMMON GROUND. During the annual WTO Public Symposium,

a joint workshop organised by ICTSD, IUCN, the Precautionary Principle Project, the Royal Institute for International Affairs and UNEP, will highlight the importance of addressing the relationship between trade and biodiversity. The workshop thereby aims to offer a forum for dialogue and exchange of ideas among the various stakeholders on ways to enhance the mutual supportiveness between the multilateral trading system and the environmental regime. For further information contact Johanna von Braun, tel: +41 22 999 2011, email: [johanna.vonbraun@iucn.org](mailto:johanna.vonbraun@iucn.org); Internet: [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/symp\\_devag\\_enda\\_04\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/symp_devag_enda_04_e.htm)

### Coming Up: 20 May - 2 June

20-22 May, Bonn, Germany: WIDE ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS: CONFRONTING UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN THE UN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK AND THE WTO TRADE AGREEMENTS. This three-day conference will start with capacity building to provides information and training on topical concepts, political instruments and policy frameworks that are relevant for the globalisation of women's rights. For further information contact Sabine Guertner, tel: +49-228-389-2978; fax: +49-228-389-2979; email: [wide-2004-Bonn@woment.de](mailto:wide-2004-Bonn@woment.de).

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](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org); Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2004.asp>

25-27 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO SYMPOSIUM: MULTILATERALISM AT A CROSSROADS. The annual WTO public symposium is intended for participants from governments, parliaments, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media, who are invited to debate the stakes and challenges ahead in the most crucial and final phase of the Doha Round of negotiations. For further information contact Bernie Kuiten, tel: + 41 22 739 56 76; email: [symposium2004@wto.org](mailto:symposium2004@wto.org); Internet: [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/symp\\_devag\\_enda\\_04\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/symp_devag_enda_04_e.htm)

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>

27 May, Geneva, Switzerland: MEETING ON THE WTO GMO DISPUTE - CIVIL SOCIETY INTERVENTIONS. A global coalition of civil society groups and groups of expert academics will discuss their amicus submissions to the WTO. The US, Canada and Argentina are challenging Europe's six year moratorium on approvals of GM crops at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). At a time when GM food continues to cause controversy world wide, and the legitimacy of the WTO itself has come under question, the dispute looks set to be one of the most challenging in the WTO's history. Presentations will be made by Alice Palmer, FIELD, UK; Devinder Sharma, Forum for Biotechnology and Food Security, India; Professor Robin Grove-White, Lancaster University; Professor Sheila Jasanoff, Harvard University. For further information and to register interest please contact GeneWatch UK, at email: [mail@genewatch.org](mailto:mail@genewatch.org).

28-29 May, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico: III SUMMIT OF LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN AND THE EU. The summit seeks to strengthen the LAC-EU partnership. For further information see [http://www.alcuelc.org/alcuelc/web/home\\_EN.php](http://www.alcuelc.org/alcuelc/web/home_EN.php)

29 May to 4 June, Washington, D.C., US: 36TH WORLD FARMERS CONGRESS. This Congress, organised by IFAP -- the world body gathering national farmers organisations -- will be the occasion to challenge world leaders on global issues, such as the WTO trade negotiations, water, food security and industrial concentration. For over 50 years, inter-governmental organisations have been mandated to eliminate hunger and poverty, and place the world on a sustainable path for global economic development. For further information contact IFAP-FIPA, tel: +33-1-4526-0553; fax: +33-1-4874-7212; e-mail: [ifap@ifap.org](mailto:ifap@ifap.org); Internet: <http://www.ifap.org/wfc04/index.html>

1-4 June 2004, Bonn, Germany: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002 that Germany would host this Conference. Themes to be considered include financing (instruments) and market development, formation of enabling political framework conditions, and capacity

building (education, research, networks, cooperation, etc.). The Conference is expected to add to the momentum generated by the coalition of like-minded countries for promotion of renewable energy (known as the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition, JREC). For further information contact: Secretariat of the International Conference for Renewable Energies; tel: +49-6196- 794404; fax: +49-6196-794405; e-mail: [info@renewables2004.de](mailto:info@renewables2004.de); Internet: <http://www.renewables2004.de/>

### WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/meets.pdf](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.

24,25 & 28 May: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY - SPECIAL SESSION.

25-27 May: WTO PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM 2004.

1 June: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY.

2-4 June: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE - SPECIAL SESSION.

### Other Forthcoming Events

20-23 June, Manila, Philippines: SOUTH EAST ASIA REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM. The aim of the regional biodiversity forum workshops is to gather and review regional experiences and perspectives on the precautionary approach in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, review and discuss early drafts of case studies, and contribute to the development of best-practice guidance on implementation of the precautionary principle. The meeting will be composed of four workshop streams: Divided, yet United - Development Planning at Regional and National Levels; The Precautionary Principle in Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation; Developing Work Programmes on Synergies between MEAs and Trade; and Development vs. Poverty. Interested individuals from all sectors of society are invited to submit 1-2 page abstracts of contributions by 5 June 2004 for possible presentation at one of the workshops of GBF-Southeast Asia. For further information contact Rosie Cooney, Coordinator, Precautionary Principle Project, tel: +44-12-2357-9020; fax: +44-12-2346-1481; email: [rosie.cooney@fauna-](mailto:rosie.cooney@fauna-)

[flora.org](http://flora.org) or [pprinciple@iucn.org](mailto:pprinciple@iucn.org);  
[http://www.gbif.ch/present\\_session.asp?no=38&lg=EN](http://www.gbif.ch/present_session.asp?no=38&lg=EN)

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## RESOURCES

STITCHED UP: HOW RICH-COUNTRY PROTECTIONISM IN TEXTILES AND CLOTHING TRADE PREVENTS POVERTY ALLEVIATION. (Oxfam Briefing Paper No. 60, April 2004). Exports of textiles and clothing are a vital source of employment and income for developing countries. Under the Multifibre Arrangement, rich countries used quotas to restrict entry of these goods to their markets. Quotas are now being lifted, but protectionist barriers remain, and more may be erected. The abrupt lifting of quotas has also left several poor and vulnerable countries facing a harsh transition period, and in urgent need of assistance. To access the report visit [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/issues/trade/bp60\\_textiles.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/trade/bp60_textiles.htm)

PLOUGHING UP THE FARM: NEOLIBERALISM, MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FARMERS. By Jerry Buckland (Zed Books 2004). Around the world, farmers' livelihoods and food security have eroded in the past 20 years. Trade liberalisation is often biased against Southern and small farmers, while the power of trans-national corporations in agricultural trade and farm technology has grown by leaps and bounds. The corporate-driven GM-food revolution has had little positive effect on farm livelihoods or food security. The book calls for farm policies founded on farmer-led food security and a democratisation of the global institutions that have had such detrimental effects. For further information visit <http://zedweb.cybergecko.net/cgi-bin/a.cgi?1%2084277%20366%206>

BIOTECH AND WORLD HUNGER. Prepared by Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology (March 2004). This paper gives an overview of the debate on GM crops and their potential to improve food security in developing countries. The paper argues that poverty and the uneven distribution of food are not the fundamental sources of global hunger. It says that distribution is only one piece of a much more complex solution, which would have to address the broad systemic problems that exist in many developing countries, such as weak government institutions and civil strife. The paper says that agricultural biotechnology does not offer a solution to such problems, but it may provide the means to develop crop varieties that are tailored to particular regions and that could play an important role in addressing hunger. To access the paper, see <http://pewagbiotech.org/resources/issuebriefs/feedtheworld.pdf>



**AGRIBUSINESS AND SOCIETY: CORPORATE RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTALISM, MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND PUBLIC REGULATION.** Edited by Kees Jansen and Sietze Vellema (Zed Books 2004). Agribusiness and Society examines in detail how agribusiness corporations are responding to emerging environmental awareness. The book investigates particular biotech and other agribusiness companies - including Monsanto, Ciba Geigy, Dole, and Chiquita - and their behaviour around the world. Each study explores how institutional, cultural, economic, political and technological contexts shape the strategies of big business. Topics include 'green bananas', genetically modified tomatoes and soy, the new markets in organic produce, health and pesticides, and access to justice. For further information visit <http://zedweb.cybergecko.net/cgi-bin/a.cgi?1%2084277%20412%203>

**STUDY OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) MEASURES ON ACP COUNTRIES.** By the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), 2003. This study examines the EU's SPS legislation in order to identify what measures related to consumer health and safety in the area of foodstuffs act as barriers to imports from ACP countries. The paper also attempts to identify the channels through which these effects are transmitted, and assesses the impact on ACP country exports and infrastructure and on individual exporters/growers/processors. To access the study visit [http://agritrade.cta.int/CTA\\_SPS%20Study\\_EN.pdf](http://agritrade.cta.int/CTA_SPS%20Study_EN.pdf)

**THE COTONOU AGREEMENT: A USER'S GUIDE FOR NON-STATE ACTORS.** Published by the African Caribbean Pacific Secretariat and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ACP and ECDPM 2003). This guide informs civil society organisations, economic and social partners and the private sector in ACP countries of the most important features of the Cotonou Agreement, and provides practical guidance on how all of these non-state actors can participate in ACP-EU cooperation. To access the report, see <http://www.ecdpm.org/nsaguide>

**MAPPING VULNERABILITY: DISASTERS, DEVELOPMENT AND PEOPLE.** Edited by Dorothea Hilhorst, Greg Bankoff and Georg Frerks (Earthscan, December 2003). This book analyses 'vulnerability' as a concept central to the way we understand disasters and their magnitude and impact. Through the notion of vulnerability, the authors stress the importance of social processes and human-environmental interactions as causal agents in the making of disasters. They critically examine what renders communities unsafe - a condition, they argue, that depends primarily on the relative position of advantage or disadvantage that a

particular group occupies within a society's social order. To access the book, see <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/asp/bookdetails.asp?key=4051>

## Electronic Resources

**3D TRADE - HUMAN RIGHTS - EQUITABLE ECONOMY WEBSITE.** 3D promotes collaboration amongst trade, development and human rights professionals, to ensure that trade rules are developed and applied in ways that promote an equitable economy. This website contains many publications including country briefings on how trade-related intellectual property rights affect human rights, the reasons why US and EU cotton production and export policies are a human rights issue for West and Central African farmers, and much more. Most of these publications are available in at least two languages. To access the website, visit <http://www.3dthree.org>

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