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LEAD STORIES

WTO: NEGOTIATORS GEAR UP FOR END-JULY DEADLINE

WTO delegates in Geneva are involved in intense negotiations on all trade issues on the table, with a particular focus on agriculture, the centrepiece of the Doha Round. The trade delegates are meeting regularly in small groups, bilateral and heads of delegation (HOD) sessions, and convened in the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) on 30 June in advance of a self-imposed deadline for developing frameworks for negotiations by the end of July. As a next step in the process, WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi and General Council Chair Shotaro Oshima (Japan) are expected to circulate a draft of the July framework next week.

Two ministerial-level gatherings coming up in the next week are expected to help provide political momentum to the process: trade ministers from the 'Five Interested Parties' (FIPs) group -- the US, EC, Australia, Brazil and India -- are meeting from 10-11 July in Paris; and the G-90, comprising African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the African Union and least developed countries is meeting from 13-14 July in Mauritius. With the end-July deadline rapidly approaching, Members are sending mixed signals on the state of affairs, indicating a divide between progress at the political level and concrete work on the details of a deal in Geneva.

TNC takes stock of progress in Geneva

In his opening speech to the TNC on 30 June (see http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news04_e/tnc_30jun04_e.htm), Director-General Supachai -- who also serves as TNC Chair -- urged delegates to translate the political willingness signalled by ministers at previous high-level gatherings into concrete progress in Geneva. He said "the onus is now fairly and squarely on negotiators in Geneva to do the deals that our political leaders clearly want us to achieve". He stressed that the end-July deadline for frameworks was approaching rapidly and cautioned that delegates seemed to be underestimating the very real time constraints they were facing. Calling on delegations to be substantive

but succinct in their negotiations, he said he and GC Chair Oshima would circulate a draft framework agreement for consideration within the next two weeks. He noted, however, that the draft could not offer "a magic solution to existing problems," but would reflect the current state of affairs.

At the TNC the Chairs of the TNC negotiating bodies summed up the status of talks within their respective groups. Tim Groser, Chair of the agriculture negotiations, gave a detailed and lengthy speech summarising the outcome of the latest set of negotiations, which had wrapped up on 25 June (see BRIDGES Weekly, 30 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-06-30/story1.htm>). He identified emerging convergence among Members on certain issues, such as the need to end export subsidies and other export support, make overall cuts in trade-distorting domestic subsidy levels, and elaborate stronger rules on "green box" support (subsidies with minimal trade-distorting effects, including categories such as environmental and landscape protection). Further, he said Members were closer to agreement on the need to include measures for developing countries, including giving them the right to exempt "special products" of development interest from tariff reductions, and the creation of a "special safeguard mechanism" serving to protect countries in the case of sudden import surges. However, Groser also singled out two possible "deal breakers": how to address the trade-distorting element of export support in parallel with the phase-out of direct export subsidies; and how to provide developed countries flexibility to protect their sensitive products (the latter being a key demand of the G-10 group of food-importing countries, see related story, this issue). The summary, not yet derestricted, is available at <http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=3618>

Chair Stefan Johannesson reported on the industrial market access talks, noting that Members closely linked progress to advances in agriculture. As such, he did not have textual proposals, and referred back to the draft negotiated, but never adopted, in Cancun -- the so-called Derbez text.

Chair Faizel Ismail of the trade and development group presented progress so far (TN/CTD/10, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>). He noted that Members, during informal consultations, had considered options for taking on board broader underlying development issues as well as moving forward on a number of more narrow issues previously identified. He suggested that Members agree, at the end of July, to a "rededication and commitment to the development dimension of the WTO" and the need to ensure that the Doha Round is a genuine development round. He also proposed that a

decision be taken on 28 specific issues on special and differential treatment (S&D) for developing countries, and the elaboration of the process "that would unlock the current impasse and take the work on remaining issues forward".

Chair Manzoor Ahmad reported on intellectual property rights negotiations (TN/IP/10), noting that consultations on a multilateral system of notification and registration of geographical indications for wines and spirits would continue.

On the negotiations on revising trade rules, Chair Eduardo Pérez Motta noted that the work was intense, highly technical and time consuming, and encouraged expert participation (TN/RL/9). Toufiq Ali, who is chairing talks on trade and environment (TN/TE/9), proposed that Members decide in July to continue pursuing their mandate, on which not much progress had been made so far. Chair David Spencer, who is heading up parallel negotiations by the dispute settlement body, highlighted the group's need for more time to work on amending the dispute settlement understanding (TN/DS/10). On services, Chair Alejandro Jara said Members' offers in this area had trickled in slowly and that the quality of offers was low (see related story, this issue).

Reactions and the way forward

Reacting to the presentations, a number of developing countries stressed their disappointment with the lack of progress on S&D, and disagreed on the best way forward. Nigeria, on behalf of the Africa group, said a number of countries did not feel comfortable working on the basis of the Derbez text alone in the area of industrial market access. Members also commented on disagreements related to the fate of the Singapore issues (investment, competition, government procurement and trade facilitation), both on whether to launch negotiations on trade facilitation at the end of July, and whether to drop the remaining issues altogether from the WTO or from the Doha Round.

Members are set to continue working on all aspects of the draft July framework text over the coming days. Once the first draft is out, outlining the full package deal -- in which agriculture is the main sticking point -- negotiations will continue, with Supachai and Oshima likely playing a greater role in facilitating the overall bargain. The next set of official negotiations on agriculture is also scheduled for next week. The end-July session of the WTO General Council is scheduled for 27-29 July.

ICTSD reporting.

AGRICULTURE: CRITICS VOICE CONCERN OVER NEGOTIATING PROCESS

Meeting in Geneva on 5 July, the G-10 -- comprising net food-importing, mainly developed countries, including Switzerland and Japan -- released a position paper expressing dismay at being excluded from consultations among the Five Interested Parties (FIPs: Australia, Brazil, the EC, India and the US). In related developments, civil society groups called for a stronger pro-poor focus in the agriculture negotiations.

G-10 criticises secretive FIPs meetings

Following a one-day ministerial in Geneva on 5 July, the G-10 released a new position paper that called for a more inclusive and transparent negotiating process. The paper was a reaction to the G-10's exclusion from high-level FIPs negotiations on the sidelines of recent agricultural talks as well as upcoming FIPs meetings. Many negotiators, including from the G-10 group of countries, criticised the secrecy of the FIPs meetings (see BRIDGES Weekly, 30 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-06-30/story1.htm>). The G-10, which accounts for 13 percent of the world's agriculture imports, took issue with not being included, as the FIPs represents countries from all major negotiating alliances with the exception of the G-10 and G-33 (a group of developing countries that advocates the concepts of 'special products' and a 'special safeguard mechanism' for developing countries).

The G-10 paper restated many of the group's previous views, including the need for flexibility and balance, the rejection of a "one-size-fits-all" approach to agriculture reform and the safeguarding of non-trade concerns. On the domestic support, the G-10 paper supported a substantial reduction of trade distorting subsidies. On Green box support -- which is minimally trade distorting and includes subsidies in areas such as environmental and landscape protection -- the G-10 said it was ready to discuss monitoring transparency but opposed to any quantitative restrictions. Finally, under the export competition pillar, the G-10 agreed to phase out all forms of export subsidies. However, this offer was amde contingent on certain concessions in the other two pillars, and in securing full parallelism on all forms of export support.

Under market access the G-10 demonstrated new flexibility, saying it was prepared to consider the so-called tiered formula, which was discussed heavily during the most recent 'agriculture week' held in Geneva from 23-25 June. The G-10 also showed new flexibility on tariff rate quota commitments, saying it would consider them on a "case-by-case" basis.

Civil society sends open letter to negotiators

The Centre of Concern, composed of several civil society organisations including CAFOD, Oxfam International, Focus on the Global South and the WWF, recently released an open letter to WTO negotiators on agriculture. The letter cautioned that the way agriculture negotiations were progressing, they might bring results that harm developing countries, especially poor and vulnerable farmers in them. The groups expressed concern that developing countries would be asked to agree to further liberalise their agricultural markets "without any assurance that export dumping will end". The letter called for the end of all forms of support that contribute to the dumping of agricultural products. It also called for effective and transparent measures to support non-trade concerns, emphasising the need for developing countries to preserve policy space to pursue development policies. According to this letter, the policy space needs to go beyond "the limited 'special products' and 'special safeguards' concepts".

ICTSD reporting: "Agriculture: Farm-Protective G-10 Ministers Cite Give In Agriculture Talks, Seek Place at Table," WTO REPORTER, 7 July 2004.

OTHER NEWS

SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS STRUGGLE TO KEEP UP PACE

On 2 July, the special (negotiating) session of the WTO Council for Trade in Services approved recommendations charting a road map to pursue further services negotiations. The recommendations, already presented by Chair Alejandro Jara at the 30 June Trade Negotiations Committee, are set to be part of a framework deal on the overall Doha Round negotiations (see related story, this issue). In other recent developments, Brazil submitted its long-awaited services offer, Colombia initiated a debate on visa procedures that represent an obstacle to services trade, and Taiwan highlighted some examples of subsidies in the area of services.

Recommendations for the July framework package

The recommendations (JOB(04)/86/Rev.1, dated 30 June 2004), to be incorporated in a framework package deal on the Doha Round by an end-July deadline, were agreed following a long debate. They call on Members that have not yet presented their offers to do so as soon as possible. While no clear deadline was set, the likely

timeframe, according to trade sources, would be from three to four months. The recommendations also indicated that a date for submitting revised offers should be agreed as soon as feasible. Agreement on a date would bring the services negotiations to the point where the "core" market access commitments would be negotiated and transformed into revised offers.

Most offers made so far by Members have reflected a low level of ambition and only a few include new liberalisation commitments (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-04-08/story3.htm>). The recommendations addressed this lack of ambition by requiring Members to ensure a high level of quality in all offers, particularly in sectors and modes of supply of export interest to developing countries and with special attention to least developing countries. The recommendation also indicated that in achieving higher levels of liberalisation, Members may not a priori exclude any service sector or mode of supply of export interest of developing countries. In this regard, Members took note of the particular interest of developing countries with regard to Mode 4 (movement of natural persons). Finally, the recommendations called on Members to intensify their efforts to conclude the negotiations on rulemaking under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

Brazil makes strategic services offer

The Brazilian Ambassador to the WTO, Luiz Felipe Seixas Correa, announced the submission of the Brazilian initial offer in last weeks' Services Council. According to observers, the long-awaited Brazilian offer responds to two strategic lines of action that surpass the services context. The first indicates that even if agricultural negotiations have not yet moved along as Brazil had hoped, the country is doing its best to continue moving the services negotiations and taking a constructive stance. Secondly, the actual offer does not include new commitments in services sectors of strong interest to certain developed countries, such as the financial sector, telecoms, energy and transport. Brazil also excluded sensitive areas from a public policy point of view such as health education and social welfare services. In presenting the offer, the Brazilian Ambassador also made a link between progress on market access for services and negotiations on GATS rules-related issues, including domestic regulation, safeguards and subsidies.

The new initial offer includes commitments in 14 services sub-sectors in areas not covered by the current Brazilian list of commitments. The new sub-sectors covered include veterinary, technical testing, fishing, personnel placement and supply, investigation and security, equipment maintenance, packaging, convention services, travel agencies, tour operators

and building services, among others. While most WTO members welcomed the Brazilian offer, some expressed caution by indicating that a closer look at the Brazilian offer was in order before making any assessment on the quality and trade value of the offered commitments.

Colombia takes the initiative on visa procedures

In a recent meeting of the Working Party on Domestic Regulation, Colombia presented an informal document (JOB(04)/84, dated 28 June 2004), which included, for the first time, a typology of administrative measures relating to procedures for obtaining and renewing visas or entry permits that represent potential or actual obstacles to trade. The typology developed by Colombia is based in a survey conducted by the public and private sectors in areas where mode 4 is a relevant trade activity. The survey led to the conclusion that most visa procedures make it difficult and in many cases impossible for Colombian enterprises/nationals to compete in international services markets and therefore hindered trade in services supplied through Mode 4.

The type of administrative measures required by the immigration authorities for the issuance of a visas or entry permit that could create obstacles to trade include lengthy visa processing times, high processing costs, burdensome documentation requirements, complex and excessive conditions for visa application and renewal, a lack of transparency and legal certainty about qualifying criteria, and a lack of pre-established administrative procedures.

In its document, Colombia recognises the right of Members to regulate and to introduce new regulations on the supply of services within their territories in order to meet national policy objectives. Nevertheless, there are specific cases in which regulations, while they may be legitimately intentioned, could be applied in such a way as to undermine the commitments that have been negotiated. The GATS addresses the trade-restrictiveness and burdensome nature of measures to ensure that they do not become unnecessary barriers to trade in services and undermine the liberalisation of trade in services undertaken by Members. Colombia also recalled that the Annex on Movement of Natural Persons Supplying Services under the Agreement establishes one fundamental element relevant to visa procedures: it limits the regulatory capacity of governments to the application of measures of a temporary nature, ensuring that such measures are not applied in such a manner as to nullify or impair the benefits accruing to any Member.

The Colombian informal paper generated mixed reactions and a great deal of curiosity among WTO Members. Most developed countries reaffirmed that they have full sovereign right to establish visa procedures and that that right should not be limited by the GATS. Developing countries indicated that while visa issuing is closely linked to the right to regulate, the type of examples identified by Colombia clearly show that many procedures could become de jure and de facto an obstacle to trade and even a situation of nullification and impairment.

Taiwan uses case studies to find a definition of services subsidies

Some WTO Members are starting to bring issues to the "ground" when developing new disciplines for services subsidies in the Working Party on GATS rules. Taiwan recently presented, in an informal note (JOB(04)78), a list of hypothetical cases of governmental subsidies programmes. This list of hypothetical cases is designed to serve as a basis for identifying some of the elements that could be part of a working definition of a services subsidy. The main elements identified by Taiwan included the existence of a financial contribution, the benefit to the supplier of a service, the distortiveness of the programme, and the existence of a particular recipient (specificity). While most of the elements identified match those of the current definition of "subsidies" in the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, Taiwan said that new elements identified should not preclude discussions on whether new disciplines should or should not have a definition of services subsidies. The hypothetical cases included export performance subsidies, subsidies to innovation and technology upgrading, tourism incentives and subsidies in infrastructure building.

ICTSD reporting; "Brazil submits market access offer for Doha Round Trade Services Talk," WTO REPORTER, 24 June 2004.

EC CHEMICALS REGULATION DRAWS RENEWED CRITICISM AT WTO

At a 1 July meeting of the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the US, Japan and other EC trading partners reiterated their criticism against the proposed European chemicals policy REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restrictions of Chemicals), saying the legislation would be too costly and burdensome and would disrupt global trade. Meanwhile, civil society groups renewed their calls for strengthening the chemicals policy, calling on the EC to resist the "US government's efforts to weaken" the legislation.

In a 51-point document submitted to the TBT Council, the US elaborated on its concerns, already expressed at previous TBT meetings (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 July 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-07-11/story2.htm>). Specifically, the US noted that the EC's latest proposal, released in October 2003 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 31 October 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-10-31/story1.htm>), "still appears to adopt a particularly costly, burdensome and complex approach" that could "prove unworkable in its implementation, disrupt global trade, and adversely impact innovation". The US feared that the current proposal might affect the majority of US goods exported to EC -- worth over US\$150 billion in 2003 -- given that chemicals are used in the production of most manufactured goods. The US added that the impact likely would be even greater following the recent accession of the 25 new EC member states, and called on the EC to improve the regulations' cost-effectiveness so as to minimise negative trade impacts.

Several Asian countries, including, China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Thailand and Singapore on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) also voiced concerns. The countries pointed to the expected economic impact on developing countries, in particular on small and medium sized enterprises, which they said would be unable to cope with the complex, burdensome and costly system. Moreover, they criticised the scope of obligations under the new policy as going beyond other countries' chemical management regulations. China complained that the EC had not carried out an adequate assessment of impacts on the chemicals industry in poor countries. The EC said it would respond to the comments in writing. Japan warned that the policy might be inconsistent with WTO rules, as it may end up restricting Japanese exports to EC countries.

Civil society groups, on the other hand, renewed their calls on the US to cease its "campaign to weaken the EU chemicals policy". "Rather than attacking the REACH policy, the administration should emulate it to safeguard US consumers from the tens of thousands of unregulated, potentially dangerous chemicals on the market," said Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. The TransAtlantic Consumer Dialogue -- a coalition of more than 60 consumer groups in Europe and the US -- urged the EC to strengthen the proposed policy. Among their recommendations, they demanded that hazardous chemicals not be subject to volume thresholds for registration and authorisation; that the authorisation procedure for chemicals of high concern should be strengthened, including through a strong substitution test; and that all consumer articles containing chemicals -- domestic and imported -- should be assessed,

whether the chemicals were intended to be released or not.

Certain members of the US Senate also brought forth concerns. In a letter to US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Jim Jeffords (I-VT) raised questions with regard to the US government's position on the potential trade implications of the EC's proposal. "We are troubled by reports that the position of this administration on REACH may reflect the interests of a narrow segment of US industry without consideration of the broader ramifications for the US economy, national interest, public health and the environment," they noted. The senators requested Zoellick to specify which provisions of REACH he considered to be in conflict with which WTO provisions. They also called on Zoellick to explain how he had arrived at his position on REACH and who he had consulted in the process.

Background

The REACH legislation is set to replace 40 different pieces of current legislation in the EC. Among the most fundamental changes is a proposed shift of the burden of proof for the safety of chemicals from public authorities to companies that produce, import and use chemicals. A new European Chemicals Agency would administer the legislation. Registration and approval procedures would vary depending on the amount of chemicals manufactured or imported, and on the level of risk. While the vast majority of chemicals would only need to be registered, authorisation would be required for substances of "very high concern," such as carcinogens, mutagens and reproductive toxicants, subject to a risk assessment. To obtain authorisation for a specific use, the applicant would have to show that the risk from the use was adequately controlled or that socio-economic benefits outweighed the risks.

To view the proposed EC policy visit <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2003/act0644en03/1.pdf>

For additional resources see <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/theme/chemicals.htm>

To access the TACD Briefing paper on REACH see <http://www.tacd.org/docs/?id=253>

To access the US Senators' letter see <http://jeffords.senate.gov/REACHltr.pdf>

ICTSD reporting; "Washington works to weaken European chemicals policy at WTO," ENS, 24 June 2004; "Consumer groups call on US to cease campaign to weaken EU chemicals policy," TACD, 23 June 2004;

"U.S., Japan voice concern on EU draft rules on chemicals," KYODO NEWS, 5 July 2004.

IN BRIEF

CODEx DEFERS DECISION ON ORIGIN LABELLING

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at its 27th session from 28 June - 3 July in Geneva, Switzerland, failed to reach a decision on revising the Codex standard on country of origin labelling. Instead, the Commission instructed the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) to forward a letter to member states asking for their views on whether current Codex regulations adequately addressed the concerns raised by some governments. The comments will be considered at the next CCFL meeting in May 2005. The CCFL had requested guidance on this issue at its last meeting, following member states' failure to agree on whether to begin work on revising the "General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods" (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 May 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-05-28/story2.htm>). The UK -- along with other European countries and several non-governmental groups -- believes such a revision to be necessary, arguing that the current standard, which bases its criteria for labelling of country of origin on the place of processing, is not enough to prevent misleading labelling. The US, many developing countries and food industry groups continue to oppose the revision of the origin labelling standard, which they regard as sufficient to address consumer concerns. They fear that ingredient origin labelling in particular would be impracticable, complicated, confusing and entail huge cost to food producers and industries and that this could be a source of trade barriers, especially for developing countries.

For a more in-depth report on the CAC meeting, see the forthcoming issue of BRIDGES Trade BioRes, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores>

"Codex Commission postpones decisions on country origin labelling," WTO REPORTER, 6 July 2004.

TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD COMES INTO FORCE

On 29 June, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture came into force. The treaty aims to guarantee food security through the conservation, exchange and sustainable use of the world's plant genetic resources. It is based on the principles of fair use and equitable benefit sharing, and is in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The treaty took seven years to negotiate and has been ratified by 55 countries (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 22 November 2001, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/01-11-22/story4.htm>).

Central to the treaty is the Multilateral System for Access and Benefit Sharing. The system allows plant breeders, farmers and research institutions to access 64 important crops and forages from around the world more freely. The treaty also requires that a portion of the profits from the commercialisation of plants bred with material from the protected crops be paid to a trust fund to support developing countries' efforts in this area. Farmers' rights also play a central role in the treaty -- they are specifically recognised and protected.

Some civil society groups raised concern with regard to the treaty's effectiveness. For example, the UK Food Group noted ambiguities in the text surrounding whether, and to what extent, countries would be able to impose intellectual property rights (IPR) on genetic resources obtained from the Multilateral System that were subsequently modified. Questions about the consistency of this treaty and existing national IPR regimes and international agreements, including the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights, were also raised. The erosion of plant biodiversity is a growing concern -- three-quarters of the genetic diversity found in agricultural crops is estimated to have been lost over the last century, and currently 80 percent of plant energy comes from only 12 crops.

A copy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is available at <ftp://ext-ftp.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/it/ITPGRe.pdf>

"The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture," Commission on Genetic Plant Resources for Food and Agriculture; "International Seed Treaty Becomes Law," UK FOOD GROUP RELEASE, 29 June 2004.

SERVICES COALITION CALLS FOR PROGRESS IN AG SECTOR TALKS

A services coalition from Australia, Canada, Chile, the EC, India and the US delivered a letter to WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi on 25 June in support of progress in the Doha Round and a framework deal at the end of July. While services negotiations until recently were considered the engine of the Doha Round, the process has been stalling and the services groups noted links to other, stalled areas in the round. They pinpointed agriculture in particular as holding back advances in the area of services. So far, only 44 of 148 WTO Members have submitted their initial services offers. Furthermore, the offers that have been submitted generally reflect a low level of ambition (see related story, this issue). The services coalitions stressed that the welfare benefits potentially flowing from the liberalisation of trade in services could actually be more significant than those flowing from agriculture. The groups added that the services sector is the most important economic sector in all countries, developed and developing, and services amount to up to 50 percent of developing country GDP. Therefore, the services groups stressed that it was absolutely essential to resolve agricultural differences for the end-July WTO General Council meeting, or the window of opportunity for making substantives advances in the current round of negotiations in the WTO in 2004 would be lost.

To access the open letter to the Director General, visit <http://www.esf.be/pdfs/Services%20Coalition%20letter%20to%20WTO%20DG%20Supachai%20final.pdf>

ICTSD reporting; "Global Services Organisations issue open letter to WTO Director-General," GLOBAL SERVICES ALERT, 25 June 2004; "Services Groups cite need for July WTO framework deal," WTO REPORTER, 30 June 2004.

WTO IN BRIEF

WTO PANEL DELAYS PROCEEDINGS IN BIOTECH DISPUTE

The WTO panel examining the US-Argentina-Canada complaint against the EC's de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 May 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-05-28/story3.htm>) has delayed the next step in the proceedings by about a

month, pushing the second panel session to the middle of September. The delay could be even longer (mid-October or early November) if the panel grants the EC's request to set up an expert panel to examine technical issues related to the case. Parties now have until 19 July to submit rebuttals in the case and until 22 July to comment on the need for an expert group. The US has already told the panel that it does not consider the establishment of an expert group necessary. The timing of the interim and the final rulings remain unclear in view of the revised schedule. The delay in the GM case follows the announcement last week that the panel examining the EC-sugar case will need more time to provide a ruling (see BRIDGES Weekly, 30 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-06-30/wtoinbrief.htm>).

ICTSD reporting.

WTO MEMBERS URGE BENIN, BURKINA FASO, MALI TO CONTINUE TRADE REFORM EFFORTS

On 30 June, WTO Members completed peer review assessments -- so called Trade Policy Reviews (TPR) - of trade and related policies in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali. The TPRs underlined that the three West African Cotton producing countries' commitment to structural reforms within the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) framework has helped enhance their economic growth. Members urged the countries to continue their efforts in this direction. The WTO reports, which together with policy statements from the governments in question form the basis of the TPR, also highlighted challenges the countries face as least developed countries (LDCs). One report noted, for instance, that Benin's reforms have not yet enabled it to reduce its dependence on cotton exports. While Mali enjoyed accelerated economic growth due to a boom in gold production, its competitiveness was affected by its landlocked situation. Furthermore, the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has affected trade in both Mali and Burkina Faso by raising transport costs due to the establishment of alternative routes to the Abidjan port.

Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali are the pioneers of the cotton initiative submitted to the WTO before the Cancun Ministerial in September 2003 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 June 2003: <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-06-04/story3.htm>).

For further information and to access the relevant TPR reports, visit
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp230_e.htm,
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp231_e.htm
 and
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp232_e.htm

ICTSD reporting; "Members encourage Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali to move ahead with reforms," WTORELEASE, 30 June 2004.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email events@ictsd.ch.

Coming Up: 8-14 July

6-8 July, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT 2004. The third Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly. For further information contact the African Union Secretariat, tel: +215-1-517-700; fax: +215-1-517-844; e-mail: webmaster@africa-union.org; Internet: <http://www.africa-union.org>

10-11 July, Paris, France: GROUP OF FIVE INTERESTED PARTIES (FIPS) MINISTERIAL MEETING. Ministers from the US, EU, Brazil, India and Australia are meeting to work on an agricultural deal. WTO Director General Supachai Panitchpakdi and Tim Groser, Chair of the WTO agriculture talks are also set to participate. The FIPS ministerial-level meeting will be preceded by meetings among officials from the five countries in Geneva.

10-12 July, Beijing, China: INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE: CURRENT AND FUTURE. This symposium will convene under the theme of "Innovation and Development in Agricultural Science and Technology". Its purpose is to promote the academic exchange and cooperation among the agricultural communities in China and other countries. For further information contact the World Food Prize Foundation, tel: +1-515-245-3783; fax: +1-515-245-3785; e-mail: wfp@worldfoodprize.org; Internet: <http://www.worldfoodprize.org/chinaconference.htm>

13-14 July, Mauritius: G-90 MINISTERIAL MEETING. The G-90, comprised of the least developed countries (LDCs), African, Caribbean, Pacific states (ACP) and African Union will meet to consolidate positions in preparation for the WTO end-July deadline for negotiating frameworks. Trade ministers from other key countries in the negotiations are also scheduled to

attend. For further information see
http://www.cnm.org/ca_july.htm

13-16 July, Geneva, Switzerland: 24TH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL. The Open-Ended Working Group to the Montreal Protocol, convening for its annual mid-year meeting, is expected to review progress in the various committees and prepare for MOP-16 in November 2004. For further information contact the Ozone Secretariat, UNEP, tel: +254-2-62-3850; fax: +254-2-62-3601; e-mail: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/>

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.

8 July: WTO TEXTILES MONITORING BODY.

8-9 July: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON.

12 & 14 July: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - BELIZE/SURINAME.

12-13 July: WTO INFORMAL OPEN-ENDED NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES.

Other Forthcoming Events

22 July, Washington D.C., USA: CLOTHING OPTIONAL? WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT TEXTILES IN 2005? Organised by the Washington International Trade Association (WITA), this event will feature presentations by Erik Autor, International Trade Counsel of National Retail Federation and Auggie Tantillo, American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition. For more information see <http://www.wita.org/content.cfm?L1=4&QA=245>

6 August, Washington D.C., USA: BRUCE WILSON REVIEWS THE WTO'S DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UNDERSTANDING. Organised by the Washington International Trade Association (WITA), this event will feature Bruce Wilson, Director, WTO Legal Affairs

Division. For more information see
<http://www.wita.org/content.cfm?L1=4&QA=246>

20-24 October, Udine, Italy: MEETING ON THE ROLE OF MULTI PURPOSE AGRICULTURE IN SUSTAINING THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT. The theme of the fourth Agro Environ symposium is "The role of multi-purpose agriculture in sustaining the global environment". It will address key environmental and agricultural issues and consider new technologies that aim at sustaining agricultural systems, monitoring the environment and conserving natural resources. For further information contact Giuseppe Zerbi, University of Udine, tel: +39-43-255-8670; fax: +39-43-255-8603; e-mail: zerbi@dpvta.uniud.it; Internet: <http://www.dpvta.uniud.it/~agroenv/docs/brochure.pdf%20>

25-29 October, Mexico City, Mexico: CGIAR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004. The annual general meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research will bring together over 1000 international and Mexican policy makers, agricultural research experts, scientists, and development specialists. For further information contact the CGIAR Secretariat, tel: +1-202-473-8951; fax: +1-202-473-8110; e-mail: cgiaar@cgiar.org; Internet: <http://www.cgiar.org/meetings/agm04.html>

RESOURCES

AGRICULTURE AND THE WTO: CREATING A TRADING SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPMENT. Edited by John Nash and Merlinda Ingco (World Bank, March 2004). This book explores the key issues and options in agricultural trade liberalisation from the perspective of developing countries. Experts in trade and agriculture from both developed and developing countries provide key research findings and policy analyses on a range of issues that includes market access, domestic support, export competition, quota administration methods, food security, biotechnology, intellectual property rights, and agricultural trade under the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture. For further information visit http://publications.worldbank.org/e-commerce/catalog/product-detail?product_id=2297276&

FOOD REGULATION AND TRADE: TOWARD A SAFE AND OPEN GLOBAL SYSTEM. By Tim Josling, Donna Roberts and David Orden (Institute for International Economics, Washington D.C., March 2004). With the increased complexity of the global food system, technical regulations addressing food safety and quality are critical factors affecting production and markets. This book assesses food regulation and highlights reforms to achieve more open trade with sustained or enhanced food safety and quality. The authors

document positive effects from adoption of the multilateral WTO agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and other technical barrier to trade. Selected cases of newly-emerging or longstanding trade-frictions over food regulation are examined, and the limits to what the existing WTO disciplines can accomplish in resolving these frictions are analysed. For further information see <http://bookstore.iie.com/>

MOVEMENT AND PRESENCE OF NATURAL PRESENCE AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: ISSUES AND PROPOSALS FOR THE GATS NEGOTIATIONS. South Centre T.R.A.D.E. Working Paper 19 (May 2004). This working paper discusses the interests of developing countries and least developed countries in the movement of natural presence or mode 4 within the GATS agreement. Building on proposals and ongoing discussions on mechanisms to facilitate further movement in negotiations on mode 4, this paper takes these ideas forward to assess their feasibility, prioritise among them and provide a set of feasible and practical ways to achieve progress in the mode 4 discussions. Its larger aim is to inform developing and least developed countries' negotiating strategies on mode 4. To download a copy visit <http://www.southcentre.org/publications/workingpapers/paper19/wp19.pdf>

FROM CANCÚN TO HONG KONG: LESSONS FROM THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION. South Centre T.R.A.D.E. Working Paper 20 (May 2004). This working paper is the product of collaboration between the South Centre and the World Resources Institute (WRI). It is the third in a series intended to provide readers with an analytical overview of the on-going negotiations at the WTO from the perspective of the potential impact of WTO decisions on local communities and the natural resources upon which they depend. This paper, the last of the series, looks at the outcomes of the Cancun Ministerial Conference of the WTO in September 2003, with a particular focus on the processes and dynamics of Cancun to identify lessons that could be learned. To download a copy visit <http://www.southcentre.org/publications/workingpapers/paper20/wp20.pdf>

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM: CANCÚN AND BEYOND. South Centre T.R.A.D.E. Working Paper 21 (May 2004). This working paper attempts to look at how developing countries cooperate and work with each other in the context of the multilateral trading system, especially in relation to the WTO. It contains information and an overview of events of the WTO's Cancun Ministerial Conference. The information and analysis contained in this paper seeks to provide greater clarity and understanding -- especially in connection with

South-South dynamics in the run-up to and at Cancun - with respect to the continued and strengthened cooperation and interaction among developing countries in the WTO. To download a copy visit <http://www.southcentre.org/publications/workingpapers/paper21/wp21.pdf>

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