



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

Bridges

Weekly Trade News Digest

28 January 2004

Volume 8 Number 3

LEAD STORIES

DOHA ROUND DISCUSSED AT DAVOS	1
TRADE DEBATED AT MUMBAI WORLD SOCIAL FORUM	2

OTHER NEWS

INDIA SUBMITS CAUTIOUS SERVICES OFFER	4
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IN BRIEF

COSTA RICA INTEGRATES INTO CAFTA	5
EUROPE TAKES FIRST STEP TOWARDS REMOVING DE FACTO BIOTECH BAN	5
BRAZIL AND INDIA TO BOOST SOUTH-SOUTH TRADE	5
FAO ATTEMPTS TO ALLEVIATE NICARAGUAN COFFEE CRISIS	6
PRIVATE SECTOR CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES ON THE RISE	6

WTO IN BRIEF

DSU REVIEW OFF TO SLOW START	7
GOODS COUNCIL: BRAZIL, INDIA ADVOCATE FLEXIBILITY IN USE OF INVESTMENT POLICY	7

EVENTS & RESOURCES

EVENTS	7
RESOURCES	9

LEAD STORIES

DOHA ROUND DISCUSSED AT DAVOS

The 21-25 January World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland brought together over 2000 world leaders, politicians, scientists and businesspeople from over 90 nations around the theme "partnering for security and prosperity". Alongside security topics such as the reconstruction in Iraq, delegates also focused on transatlantic tensions, corporate governance, global warming and world trade. On the sidelines, President of the Swiss Confederation and Federal Councillor of the Economy Joseph Deiss held a meeting with trade ministers in attendance to seek ways to revive the stalled Doha round.

Running parallel to the main Forum were events open to the public, the "Open Forum" and the "Public Eye on Davos," which sought to encourage dialogue between civil society members, the public and world leaders. Specific outcomes of the meeting included the creation of a watershed-specific task force under the Africa Economic Forum, the inauguration of a Global Greenhouse Gas Register for companies (see In Brief, this issue) and the ratification by the Arab Business Council of a new blueprint for economic reform across 22 nations in the Arab world.

Trade meeting on the sidelines

Cross border investment, competition, high tariffs on exports and agricultural farm subsidies were among the sticky issues discussed at an informal meeting among 20 trade leaders on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum. Ministers from Brazil, India, Canada, Switzerland and other countries met despite the absence of their US and EU counterparts, who were represented instead by their WTO negotiators. The meeting followed a speech by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who gave an impassioned plea to end harmful farm subsidies.

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According to Uruguayan diplomat and chair of the WTO General Council, Carlos Pérez del Castillo, the mini meeting was a "useful exchange of ideas...once again we had the reaffirmation of commitments by everyone in regard to getting this round back on track". WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi recommended that Members focus on multilateral negotiations, as discussions for bilateral and regional agreements could exhaust the negotiating capacity of governments. Brazilian representative Luiz Felipe de Seixas Correa told reporters that "real" negotiations would begin on 12-13 February, when the EC and G-20 have scheduled talks in Geneva, which will begin with a focus on agriculture.

The Public Eye on Davos

Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, gave the keynote speech at the "Public Eye on Davos," emphasising the main theme of the conference: "accountability, accountability, accountability" of all actors in the world economic community. In its fifth consecutive year, this alternative conference to the Forum's annual meeting -- organised by the Berne Declaration and Pro Natura-Friends of the Earth Switzerland -- brought together representatives from the UN and various non-governmental organisations to analyse "corporate driven globalisation" and suggest alternatives towards sustainable world economic policies. Sessions included topics on: the UN Global Compact; the impact of water privatisation on women; labour conditions in the sporting goods industry; and the Equator Principles for social responsibility in the banking sector. In the session on labour conditions, Neil Kearney, Secretary General of the International Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation, suggested restricting the right to market access for companies who violate international labour standards. This suggestion sparked a debate regarding the mandate of the WTO, as it would be one of the few bodies capable of enforcing international labour rules.

Open Forum

Co-organised by the World Economic Forum and civil society organisations, the Open Forum sessions focused on labour issues, trade, peace, and environmental concerns. In a session entitled "Trade Round: Where There Is a Will, There Must Be a Way," Switzerland's Joseph Deiss and the Egyptian and Brazilian Ministers of Foreign Trade, Youssuf Boutros-Ghali and Fernando Furland, were among the panellists. On the current trade round, Boutros-Ghali stressed that before discussing an issue, leaders must establish the subject of debate, and said there is still lack of consensus in the current round. He also questioned whether there was a will to get trade

negotiations back on track. On agricultural trade, he said that in order to develop, countries such as Egypt must be given a chance to expand their trade, as "25,000 farmers in country X are blocking 10 million farmers in a group of countries in Africa".

During discussion, suggestions made on how to improve sustainability included making UN Global Compact measures mandatory to increase corporate accountability, encouraging fair trade processes, decreasing protectionism and using green box payments (subsidies to encourage environmental or social contributions to society) as alternatives to production-oriented subsidies. However, not all agreed on all accounts. On fair trade, Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Chief Executive Officer of Nestlé, questioned the concept as a solution to improving the situation of coffee farmers due to its low market share and high administrative costs. Instead, he proposed measures to increase coffee consumption worldwide as a response to the coffee crisis.

ICTSD reporting; "Year-end deadline can be met, says WTO chief," THE STAR ONLINE, 25 January 2004; "Pressure rises for WTO negotiators," INTERPRESS SERVICE NEWS AGENCY, 23 January 2004..

TRADE DEBATED AT MUMBAI WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

The World Social Forum (WSF) -- held in Mumbai, India from 16-21 January this year -- drew up to 100,000 participants from 132 countries, who attended numerous seminars, workshops, exhibitions and cultural displays to voice concerns and hopes for a better world. Key topics included issues as diverse as arms control, tourism, rights of women and indigenous peoples, and international trade. The common thread linking the sessions was social impacts, particularly on weaker and under-privileged groups. The forum ended on 21 January with a street march drawing tens of thousands of anti-globalisation protestors.

Stiglitz comments on "excessive narrowness" of trade agenda

Debate at the WSF touched on the impacts of globalisation as promoted by international trade and finance. Speaking at a panel on 'Globalisation, Economic and Social Security,' former World Bank economist and Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz stressed that the path of economic globalisation must be altered to avoid undermining social security -- which would continue to exacerbate poverty and therefore violence. Stiglitz called for new leaders at the helm of global lending institutions, commenting that one of the reasons for the excessive narrowness of the trade

agenda is the excessive narrowness of the participants. He went on to assert the need for a new ruling body in charge of the institutions, ideally the UN. Stiglitz said the economies of developing nations were made vulnerable and volatile under the current system based on "market fundamentalism" and "unreal assumptions of the economy". He proposed that the WTO include on its agenda plans to strengthen social security and fight poverty.

Labour, environment and development

Other participants added their voices to Stiglitz's. Tujan, of the IBON Foundation, a non-governmental Filipino think tank, argued that the adoption of flexible labour policies as a means to attract investment "institutionalises unemployment". Citing an example, he remarked that in the Philippines an employee could only join a union after working for a company for six months. As a result, many firms hired workers only to fire them before they reached the six-month mark. Mexican unionist Bendicto Martinez enumerated the negative effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on Mexico's social security system. According to Martinez, the past 15 years of economic and trade liberalisation in Mexico had seen the pace of work accelerating drastically while wages had been reduced and obstacles erected to prevent union activities.

In a session discussing the impacts of globalisation and multi-national companies (MNCs), Austin Mu Bnau of Zambia highlighted some of the findings from a study on the impact of Shopright supermarket chain in Zambia: a weakening of unions and negative local impacts since Shopright procured from its subsidiaries elsewhere rather than from the local market. Another case study discussed was the environmental impacts of Unilever. Indian professor Sharat Bhoomik said Unilever India had outsourced 60-70 percent of its work to small-scale industries. Labour laws did not apply to such small units, there was no union, no Factories Act and consequently no environmental regulations -- a trend detected by Bhoomik in most MNCs.

Sessions on the WTO

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung organised two sessions on the WTO. The first discussed whether the G-20 grouping of developing countries that emerged at the Cancun Ministerial Conference was a passing phenomenon or whether it would endure, including as a basis for South-South cooperation. Participants also discussed how civil society should relate to the G-20. At the second session, entitled "Cancun: whose victory?" participants explored demands and strategies of peasants, workers and trade union movements at Cancun, seeking common ground and differences,

lessons learnt and a common strategy to defend rights of workers and peasants.

An 'Inter-continental Dialogue on Tourism,' touching on issues related to trade in services, was organised by the WSF Tourism Interventions Group. Activists from Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia took the stage to highlight experiences related to tourism development, especially impacts on the environment, indigenous communities and women.

Another World Is Possible

Created as a response to neo-liberal economic policies and a globalisation driven by capitalism, the World Social Forum is built around the slogan 'Another World is Possible'. According to the WSF Charter of Principles, the Forum is not an organisation, not a united front platform, but "...an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and inter-linking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a society centred on the human person". The first WSF, held in January 2001 in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil was timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, as the annual WEF was perceived as being an 'exclusive club' for elites to chart out a global economic agenda to the exclusion of innumerable social groups around the world.

This year's WSF in Mumbai was the first one outside Brazil. A large number of Indian grassroots organisations participated in the Forum, ranging from church and tribal groups to marginalised dalit (scheduled caste) groups. The WSF is set to return to Porto Alegre next year. Commenting on the Mumbai WSF, some participants said that staging the event in India has made the Forum truly global. The challenge for the coming years of the WSF would be to prove in practical terms that another world is possible.

ICTSD reporting; "Path of Globalisation Will Lead to Violence Warns Nobel Laureate", INTER-PRESS SERVICE, 19 January 2004; "March Caps End to the World Social Forum", AP, 21 January 2004; "Ex-World Bank Chief Economist Slams Trade Rules, U.S", UNWIRE, 20 January 2004; "Reporting Globalisation," CSE REPORT, 19 January 2004; "WSF Meeting Outgrows Davos Forum, Say Activists," TERRAVIVA, 21 January 2004; "Multi-faceted Meeting Is At A Cross-roads," TERRAVIVA, 22 January 2004.

OTHER NEWS

INDIA SUBMITS CAUTIOUS SERVICES OFFER

India circulated its initial offer in ongoing services negotiations under the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) on 12 January. The offer (TN/S/I/IND, available at http://www.ictsd.org/issarea/stsd/resources/docs/India_offer.pdf) indicated India's commitment to liberalising its economy in certain modes of supply in sectors such as professional businesses, engineering, tourism and transport. Nevertheless, the offer maintained some spaces for public policies and for the use of a range of economic instruments. Preliminary reactions from WTO Members ranged from welcoming remarks by certain developing countries to disappointment over the low level of commitments by key developed country Members such as the EC.

The services negotiations are currently in their request-offer phase. In this phase, countries present other WTO Members with their commercial demands, and commitments they would be willing to make in this round of negotiations. India's services offer comes as global players such as the US and the EC are displaying an effort to move the Doha round forward. This offer, like the offers from other WTO Members, is conditional on the overall outcome of negotiations underway, and also to the sensitive issue of developing general disciplines for domestic regulation.

Moderate market access improvements

India's services liberalisation offer focuses primarily on modes one (cross-border supply), two (consumption abroad) and four (movement of natural persons). The offer contains various horizontal limitations on mode three (commercial presence). The offer improves market access and national treatment commitments in the following sectors and sub-sectors: accounting and book-keeping services; engineering services; computer services; medical and dental services; services provided by midwives nurses, physiotherapists and para-medical personnel; construction and engineering services; financial services; tourism services; and maritime transport services. Market access limitations under mode three are retained in these sectors, including limits on the ownership of Indian firms. Moreover, in many cases national treatment in mode three is kept unbound (not committed).

With regard to mode four, there are almost no limitations for certain professions including business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, managers,

executives, specialists and employees of foreign companies for short periods of stay (less than one year).

Emphasis on policy objectives

By leaving horizontal market access and national treatment in modes three and four largely unbound, India incorporated various treatment limitations in its initial offer. According to a trade source these limitations are apparently designed to safeguard constitutionally designated territorial areas and certain policy instruments that India considers necessary to pursue public policy objectives. As this scheduling would not result in new tangible commitments, some sources speculate that the limitations were included for reasons of transparency and clarity.

The main market access limitation relates to "Scheduled areas and Tribal areas," which the Indian president can designate under the Indian Constitution. While market access is not prohibited per se in these scheduled areas, it can be denied. The main reason these areas have been specifically designated is because of their special character and culture due to a predominantly tribal population.

The national treatment limitations take the form of policy instruments that India can use in a potentially discriminatory manner (favouring nationals over foreigners). These instruments include the following: performance requirements regarding technology transfer; approval of foreign investments in certain cases; taxation; subsidies; and special treatment to scheduled castes, tribes and weaker sections of society.

Mixed preliminary reactions

The Indian offer has been sent to the WTO Secretariat and will be formally presented to the Services Council Special Session in March 2004. In a preliminary reaction to the offer, one trade source considered it "a good first step, the fact that it is being presented gives impetus to the current GATS offer and request process". Most developing countries have yet to submit their offers in this request-offer phase of the services negotiations. Among the around twelve developing countries that have presented their offers at this stage, India's offer is considered key due to the country's leadership in WTO negotiations.

Some Members reacted by commending the efforts by India in making new openings in the areas of computer and related services, and in the financial and maritime sectors. However, not all responded warmly. The EC indicated its "disappointment with India's offers on trade in services and hopes this country would improve it".

According to Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, "India's offers fails to redress the current low level of Indian GATS commitments, and in some areas does not even reflect the current level of openness in the Indian market". The areas the EC would have liked to see more movement in included the telecom, distribution, or environmental services sectors.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

COSTA RICA INTEGRATES INTO CAFTA

On the 25 January, Costa Rica announced it was joining the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) concluded last year between the US and four other Central American countries -- El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Costa Rica had postponed its talks late in the process due to disagreements with the US in some sensitive sectors (see BRIDGES Weekly, 17 December 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-12-17/story3.htm>).

According to US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, "Costa Rica's full participation in CAFTA will streamline trade, promote investment, slash tariffs on goods, open trade in services, protect advanced intellectual property, and strengthen labour and environmental conditions". To reach an agreement, Costa Rica had to abandon its requests on tariff preference levels for wool and cotton, while US had to yield to demands of slower liberalisation of Costa Rica's state monopoly on insurance. Most of the country's insurance market will be opened by 1 January 2008, with the remainder to open by 1 January 2011. Costa Rica also agreed to gradually open its telecommunications market to US companies. Private network services and Internet services will be opened after a regulatory framework is created in Costa Rica by 2006, and wireless services will be liberalised the following year. In agriculture, US exports of potatoes and onions will be excluded from tariff elimination. Costa Rica was unable to strike a similar deal for rice, a product considered very sensitive. Tariffs on US rice exports will be eliminated over a 20-year period. Costa Rica will also be given 2000 tons of access for organic sugar and receive 11000 tons of market access for raw sugar, in addition to the 15 796 tons allotted to the country under the Uruguay Round tariff rate quota. The text of the CAFTA will be made public shortly.

ICTSD reporting; "U.S., Costa Rica reach free trade agreement," REUTERS, 25 January 2004.

EUROPE TAKES FIRST STEP TOWARDS REMOVING DE FACTO BIOTECH BAN

The European Commission at its 28 January meeting approved a proposal to authorise Syngenta's genetically modified Bt-11 corn for food use. The Commission's approval will now be forwarded to EU member states for a decision within 90 days. If they fail to reach an agreement, the Commission would be able to authorise the transgenic maize under its own initiative. A decision to authorise the maize would put an end to the ongoing de facto moratorium on the approval of new genetically modified organisms (GMO) -- at least for biotech foods -- which is currently being challenged in the WTO by the US, Canada and Argentina (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 25 August 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-08-25/story2.htm>). The Commission further agreed to submit a draft authorisation for Monsanto's GM maize NK603 to the Regulatory Committee for a decision in February. Also at the meeting, the Commission stressed that a blanket ban of all GMOs that have been authorised in the EU would not be justified as necessary to protect human health or the environment, but conceded that GM-free zones were possible if farmers decided to produce without GMOs on a voluntary basis. It has thereby provided tentative backing for the decision of various European regions to remain GM-free (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-11-14/story1.htm>).

For regular in-depth updates on biotechnology-related issues, see BRIDGES Trade BioRes at <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/index.htm>

"GMOs: Commission takes stock of progress," EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 28 January 2004.

BRAZIL AND INDIA TO BOOST SOUTH-SOUTH TRADE

India and Mercosur members Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, as well as associate members Chile and Bolivia, signed a "Preferential Trade Agreement" on 25 January to establish closer trade ties aimed in part at reducing their dependence on trade with the rich countries. This preferential customs duty accord aims to reduce duties on 600 to 800 items traded, taking effect mid-2004. According to Brazilian officials, this agreement aims for eventual free trade between the trading partners. Although the details have yet to be worked out, an official of the Indian Commerce Ministry noted, "the trade pact will be a framework agreement setting out the parameters and road map for free trade between India and these countries." The framework accord of this agreement was signed in

Paraguay's capital Asuncion last year. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, on a four-day state visit to India, remarked that, "India and Brazil can build a strong political force that is capable of giving a contribution...and meet the interests of the poorest people of the planet". Economic relations between India and Brazil have been growing steadily in recent years, and in 2002 bilateral trade between the countries reached a record USD 1.2 billion. Indian exports to Brazil include pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and textiles. Its imports from Brazil include crude oil, soy oil and auto parts. The two countries also signed five other agreements, including exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official/service passports and cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space, tourism and culture. Both are also considered leaders of the G-20 group of developing countries that joined forces at the 2003 WTO Cancun Ministerial Conference against developed country agricultural subsidies.

"India, Brazil combined can change global trading: President Lula," CHANNELASIA, 25 January 2004, "Brazil, India can change world trade: President Lula," HINDUSTAN TIMES, 25 January 2004; "India, South American bloc to ink trade pact," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 25 January 2004; "India signs preferential trade agreement with Mercosur," INDIAEXPRESS.COM, 25 January 2004; "Mercosur, India to sign accord," COUNTRYWATCH, 23 January 2004.

FAO ATTEMPTS TO ALLEVIATE NICARAGUAN COFFEE CRISIS

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has pledged to help the Nicaraguan government provide aid to over 3,000 of Nicaragua's struggling small-scale coffee producers. The farmers have experienced a financial crisis as world coffee prices have dropped well below production costs, leading to reduced income, unemployment, and food security concerns for thousands of families in the agricultural sector. Small-scale farmers such as those in Nicaragua have been particularly affected by the coffee crises as production rigidities and price volatility make it difficult for them to arrive at optimal production strategies. The FAO's Permanent Representative to Nicaragua, Loy Van Crowder, commented on 20 January when the announcement of the FAO programme was made that as "coffee cultivation in Nicaragua accounts for almost a third of agricultural employment, the consequences of this crisis are devastating for a country where external debt is ten times larger than the total value of export earnings".

The crisis has led the FAO and the Nicaraguan government to highlight the need for agricultural diversification and to re-evaluate the dependency of the

country on coffee exports. Part of the FAO's assistance will involve cooperation with Nicaraguan authorities in the design of an income-generating programme that encourages production of more competitive coffee varieties. Immediate assistance is designed to prevent food shortages with the distribution of 110,000 kilos of black bean seeds. Some of the beans may also be cultivated for sale locally, a step towards desired agricultural diversification.

ICTSD reporting; "Coffee crisis: FAO helps Nicaragua's small-scale growers," FAO RELEASE, 20 January 2004.

PRIVATE SECTOR CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES ON THE RISE

Ten multinational corporations recently committed to disclose their worldwide greenhouse gases emissions on a publicly available website launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland (see related article, this issue). This Global Greenhouse Gas Register intends to encourage corporate environmental responsibility and transparency by creating a global standard for emissions inventories and reduction targets. It is the product of the collaboration between environmental, conservation, and corporate entities. Accounting for an estimated 800 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, the companies committed to using the register include aluminium company Alcoa, the mining and natural resource company Anglo American, three cement and aggregates companies, the computer company Hewlett Packard, the Russian Joint Stock Company Unified Energy System of Russia, the German utility RWE, ScottishPower, and the European energy company Vattenfall. The initial data will be posted as early as February.

In related news, Citigroup has decided to adopt a corporate policy that would evaluate requests for project financing that could impact the environment negatively. Committing Citigroup "to invest in sustainable forestry and renewable energy," this policy bans funding for commercial logging in primary, tropical forests and illegal logging operations, and follows two years of anti-Citibank demonstrations by the Rainforest Action Network. Citigroup will also develop a program to invest in sustainable forestry and renewable energy, including financing for solar panels, residential wind turbines, and fuel cells. Pam Flaherty, head of Citigroup environmental affairs, notes that this new policy builds on voluntary guidelines, the so-called Equator Principles, which were signed last June by 18 global financial institutions. To ensure cooperation within its operations in 100 countries, the policy has already been discussed with clients and company wide.

To access the Global Greenhouse Gas Register, see: <http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/GI+obal+Greenhouse+Gas+Register>

"Ten Companies Kick Off Global Greenhouse Gas Register," ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 26 January 2004; "Citigroup adopts corporate policy to protect environment," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 23 January 2004.

WTO IN BRIEF

DSU REVIEW OFF TO SLOW START

The WTO special (negotiating) session of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) met on 26 January to continue the review of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU). Discussions at the meeting, which had originally been scheduled for two days but lasted for only one, remained at a conceptual level rather than moving on to a detailed textual review. Members focused on issues related to implementation and compliance (Articles 21 and 22 of the DSU), to a large extent reiterating long-held positions. During the meeting, Malaysia submitted a proposal on provisional measures, which has yet to be circulated. The proposal related to cases in which the domestic industry in a responding party is irreversibly hurt during the time that a panel is investigating the claims. Questions raised included what, if any, provisional protective measures could be allowed in such situations.

Discussions related to the DSU review have been held at a general level since the Cancun ministerial, but are set to return to a more specific level. The review of the DSU is scheduled to conclude by the end of May this year. The next DSB special session will be held from 24-25 February, and will focus on provisional measures. Chair Péter Balás (Hungary) invited specific proposals from Members to bridge positions and inject momentum into the negotiations, to be submitted a week in advance of the meeting.

ICTSD reporting.

GOODS COUNCIL: BRAZIL, INDIA ADVOCATE FLEXIBILITY IN USE OF INVESTMENT POLICY

The WTO Council for Trade in Goods met on 26 January to, among other things, continue reviewing the

Agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs). During discussion, Brazil stressed that small and medium-scale industries are of key importance for development -- especially in terms of job creation, technology transfer and poverty reduction -- and said linkages between SMEs and multinational corporations should be encouraged. He argued, supported by India, Colombia and Pakistan, that governments should be allowed the flexibility under the TRIMs Agreement to intervene and boost such linkages. The US disagreed, saying Brazil's suggestion amounted to a reopening of the TRIMs Agreement. The EC called for more of a concrete discussion focusing on specific developing country cases, and Chair Hovorka concluded that Members remained entrenched on their old positions on the TRIMs review.

Also at the meeting, Pakistan asked for an extension to its current transition period for phasing out its TRIMs for the car industry. Pakistani Ambassador Ahmad stressed the importance of the auto sector to the country -- a rapidly growing sector employing more than 115,000 people -- and asked Members to be flexible and allow the current policy to be extended. He also noted that Pakistan already has made significant progress in phasing out the TRIMs. Brazil and India supported Pakistan, while the EC and Japan said they needed more time to consider the request. The Chair will conduct informal consultations on the issue, which will be discussed at the next meeting of the Goods Council, scheduled for 15 April.

ICTSD reporting.

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: 29 January to 4 February

26-30 January, Nassau, Bahamas: INTER-REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 10-YEAR REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION. The meeting at Ministerial Level will provide representatives of SIDS Member States and Territories the opportunity to consolidate their national and regional review processes, and to

determine their common priorities to advance SIDS efforts towards sustainable development, with the support of the international community. The meeting will also approve a draft proposal from for a Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. For further information, contact the UN Division on Sustainable Development, SIDS Unit, tel: +1 212 963-2803; fax: +1 212 963-4260; email: dsd@un.org; Internet: http://www.sidsnet.org/Mauritius2004/Regional_Meeting/s/Bahamas.html

28-30 January 2004, Geneva, Switzerland: SEMINARS ON INVESTMENT AND COMPETITION. CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment and Economic Regulation (C-CIER), Jaipur, India will organise a luncheon Panel Discussion on Civil Society Perceptions of FDI as part of the Final Meeting of the 'Investment for Development' (IFD) project on 28 January; a conference of the INCSOC entitled 'Engaging Civil Society in Promoting a Healthy Competition Culture' on 29 January; and an international seminar as part of the final meeting of the IFD project entitled 'FDI Policies and Regulation - How to Foster Economic Development?' on 30 January. For further information contact IFD, email: ifd@cuts.org or incsoc@incsoc.net

29-30 January, Washington, DC, United States: NCSE'S FOURTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE, POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: WATER FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND SECURE FUTURE. Organised by the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), this conference aims to develop science-based strategies for achieving water sustainability. The event will address: Sustainable Water Management and Institutions, Water Technologies, Quality of Water and Sanitation; and Estuaries and Coastal Resources Management. For further information, contact: Craig Schiffries, Conference Chair, NCSE, tel: +1 202 530-5810; email: conference@NCSEonline.org; Internet: <http://www.ncseonline.org/NCSEconference/2004conference/>

2-5 February, Rome, Italy: MEETING OF THE FAO IGWG ON RIGHT TO FOOD. Items on the agenda include: presentation of views, comments and proposals for the further development of the draft Voluntary Guidelines, review of the future organisation of work and the Chairpersons Report of the open-ended Working Group Meeting. For further information, contact: Right to Food, email: Righttofood-IGWG@fao.org; Internet: http://www.fao.org/righttofood/en/highlight_35668en.html

4 February, Washington, DC: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION - TOPICS IN AGRICULTURAL TRADE:

THE AMERICAS. Organised by the International Food & Trade Policy Council (IPC), the seminar will feature IPC member Marcelo Regunaga, Former Secretary of Agriculture, and Former Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Mining, Argentina. Topics will include agricultural trade negotiations in the WTO, and FTAA, biotechnology in developing countries, and Western Hemisphere relations. For further information, contact: IPC Secretariat, email: agritrade@agritrade.org; tel: +1 202-328-5056, Internet: <http://www.agritrade.org>

4-6 February, Geneva, Switzerland: UNCTAD-COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT WORKSHOP TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. This workshop will focus on "Elements of National Sui Generis Systems for the Preservation, Protection and Promotion of Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices and Options for an International Framework". The objective is to draft a menu of actions and policies which could be included in holistic national systems for the preservation, protection and promotion of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. For further information contact Sophia Twarog, UNCTAD, tel: +41 22 907 5082; email: sophia.twarog@unctad.org; Internet: http://www.unctad.org/trade_env

4-7 February, New Delhi, India: FOURTH DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2004. This summit, organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), will focus on the theme of Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Addressing the WEHAB Agenda. For further information contact the Summit Secretariat, TERI at tel: +91-11-2468-2138; fax: +91-11-2468-2144; email: dsds@teri.res.in; Internet: <http://www.teriin.org/dsds>

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.

30 January, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS.

4 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - GAMBIA.

30 January, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS.

Other Forthcoming Events

10-14 February, Bremen, Germany: 9TH SESSION OF THE UN AGENCY'S SUB-COMMITTEE ON FISH TRADE. Established in 1985 by FAO's Committee on Fisheries -- the body responsible for setting FAO's work agenda related to fisheries and aquaculture -- the Sub-Committee functions as a multilateral forum for discussion of policy issues related to the global trade in fishery products. Topics to be discussed by the Sub-Committee at Bremen include: trade in fisheries products as a means of alleviating food insecurity and hunger and the safety and quality of globally traded fisheries products, including farmed fish, and options for developing science-based, fair and transparent safety-monitoring and labelling systems for seafood products. For further information contact: George Kourous, FAO Information Officer; email: george.kourous@fao.org; tel: +39 06 570 53168; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/cofi/cofitr.asp>

29 February, Johannesburg, South Africa: ACHIEVING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AGRICULTURAL TRADE - A CAPACITY AND COMMUNICATION BUILDING SEMINAR. Organised by the International Food & Trade Policy Council (IPC), the seminar will bring together government officials, farmers, and other agricultural stakeholders in the region to discuss the role that agricultural trade can play in economic development and to relate that role to trade negotiations at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels. For further information, or to indicate interest for limited fellowships that are available contact IPC Communications Director, Kari Heerman at heerman@agritrade.org; Internet: <http://www.agritrade.org>.

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

14-16 April, New York, US: CSD ACTING AS PREPCOM FOR THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION. For further information contact: Diane Quarless, UN SIDS Unit; tel: +1-212-963-4135; fax: +1-917-367-3391; email: mauritius2004@sidsnet.org; Internet: <http://www.sidsnet.org>

2-6 May, Vancouver, BC, Canada: FOURTH WORLD FISHERIES CONGRESS. The Congress will explore issues related to the challenge of managing aquatic ecosystems in particular the reconciliation of fisheries with conservation through the promotion of scientific advice, cooperation and partnership among the world's fisheries scientists, managers, the fishing industry, and conservationists. For further information contact: Congress Secretariat; tel: +1 604 688-9655; fax: 685-3521; email: fish2004@advance-group.com; Internet: http://www.worldfisheries2004.org/program/congress_eme.htm

RESOURCES

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM: CHALLENGING EMPIRES. By Jai Sen, Anita Anand, Arturo Escobar, Peter Waterman et al. (Viveka, New Delhi, January 2004). This book comprises a committed but critical anthology of essays on the theory and practice of the Forum, with essays by wo/men from many parts of the world, with many different points of view on the World Social Forum. For further information see http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/1557.html

WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS 2004 (WESP 2004). By the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. According to this UN report, global economic growth is likely to accelerate in 2004 due largely to economic conditions in the US and China. It forecasts a 3.5 percent growth rate for this year, continuing an upward trend that started in 2001. The estimated growth in 2003 was 2.5 percent, according to the report. "The global economic recovery is being driven mainly by the US," according to the report, but also by China's "rapidly rising weight ... in the world economy," Japan's "stronger than anticipated" turnaround and the "diminished" number of economic problems in Latin America. On the other hand, Western Europe's weaknesses "began to dissipate only in late 2003," the study says. For further information see <http://www.un.org/esa/analysis/wess/>

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AND PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS: NEW EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES. By UNCTAD (January 2004). The continuous globalisation of the world economy poses new challenges for the

governance of economic activities. This is particularly the case in the area of foreign direct investment. Investment and trade liberalisation have provided greater freedom to transnational corporations to organise their production activities across borders in accordance with their own corporate strategies and the competitive advantages of host-countries. Countries today view inward foreign direct investment as an important means of integrating their economies with international markets and expect it to contribute to their economic development. For further information see <http://www.uncad.org/Templates/Webflyer.asp?intltemlD=1397&docID=4378>

THE FTAA CHAPTER ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: A NORTH/SOUTH STRUGGLE OVER GENETIC MATERIAL. By Jean-Frédéric Morin (Unisfera International Centre, November 2003). When analysing the FTAA chapter devoted to intellectual property rights (IPR), one can easily observe a polarisation between provisions that would raise intellectual property norms beyond the standards of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS-plus provisions) and those that would link IPR to the Convention on Biological Diversity regime (CBD-plus provisions). To access the publication see http://www.unisfera.org/IMG/pdf/Morin_-_IPR_FTAA_-_Nov_2003.pdf

RETURN TO SENDER: THE IMPACT OF GATS "PRO-COMPETITIVE REGULATION" ON POSTAL AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES. By Jim Grieshaber-Otto and Scott Sinclair (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives). This is the first critical analysis of the impacts on public services and public interest regulation of the GATS Telecommunications Reference Paper approach. The book focuses on the impact that the application of "pro-competitive" regulation would have on postal services (esp. Canada's public postal system, and the international regulation of postal services by the United Nation's Universal Postal Union). But it is also written for a broader international audience. It examines the recent experience with "pro-competitive" rules in the US telecommunications sector, and considers the potential impacts of applying similar rules in other service sectors. A French translation will be available on-line shortly. To access the study see <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>

THE DOHA ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS AND ITS OUTLOOK POST-CANCUN. By TERI (January 2004). The discussion paper summarises the debate during the Policy Discussion Forum (PDF) organised on 20th November 2003, in New Delhi by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The Policy Discussion Forum was essentially aimed at putting the Cancun Ministerial in perspective and stimulating a debate between Indian stakeholders and subject experts on

possible future developments within the WTO regime vis-à-vis India's position. For further information, contact: Sandeep Singh, email: ssingh@teri.res.in; tel: +91-11-24682100; Internet: <http://www.teriin.org/discussion/envIRON/doha.pdf>

"Non-discrimination and its dimensions in a possible WTO framework agreement on investment: reflections on the scope and policy space for the development of poor economies". By Victor Mosoti in *JOURNAL OF WORLD INVESTMENT* 4 (6, 2003) pp. 1011-1046. The creation of a favourable environment for the free flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) is an increasingly recognised and critical development strategy for the developing world. Whereas no multilateral agreement exists to discipline FDI flows at the moment, it is only a matter of time before one is created. When that happens, it is perhaps inevitable that the capital-exporting countries will insist on the inclusion in any agreement of provisions on "non-discrimination" such as are found in existing agreements on trade in goods and services and on intellectual property rights. This article examines the nature of such non-discrimination provisions, the tension that exists between their implications and traditional notions of State sovereignty, and their potential for limiting the policy-making space available to poor economies to control and direct their economic development. While arguing that the extension of non-discrimination provisions to a multilateral investment framework should be largely a good thing, the author also urges that care be taken to ensure that it not unduly restrain governments from putting into place policies that permit channelling of FDI in ways that can produce the maximum benefits for development.

"The trade regime and the climate regime: institutional evolution and adaptation". By Thomas L. Brewer in *CLIMATE POLICY* 3 (4, 2003) pp. 329-341. This article addresses concerns that the multilateral trade regime and the emerging climate regime may conflict in ways that could be damaging to either or both. The article discusses the institutional and diplomatic context of these concerns, and it identifies the kinds of issues that are in question. The analysis suggests that there are opportunities for win-win outcomes in the interactions of the two regimes, for instance in the possibility of reducing fossil fuel subsidies. However, there are also problematic areas where they intersect. A core issue -- and as yet an unresolved one -- is whether and how emission credit trading and other activities envisioned by the Kyoto Protocol would be subject to WTO rules.

"Economic globalisation and institutions of global governance". By Keith Griffin in *DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE* 34 (5, 2003) pp. 789-807. Economic globalisation is reducing the significance of state boundaries. We have a global economy but lack the

institutions necessary for a global polity. Unilateral action by a would-be hegemon is untenable in the long term and hence there is a need to discuss our institutions of global governance. The benefits and costs of globalisation have been distributed asymmetrically, placing poor people in poor countries at a disadvantage, especially as regards the free movement of low-skilled labour and the creation of intellectual property rights. The World Trade Organisation, a target of the critics of globalisation, should be seen as a welcome extension of the rule of law to the international arena and a counterweight to unilateralism. More generally, global economic liberalism should be balanced by institutions which provide global public goods and international mechanisms to finance them. All of this implies a further weakening of state sovereignty and a need to ensure that global institutions are democratic and can be held accountable to people worldwide for their performance.

"Global institutional clashes: economic versus environmental regimes". By Arthur P. J. Mol in *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WORLD ECONOMY* 10 (4, 2003) pp. 303-318. Most globalisation scholars identify negative consequences for the environment in neo-liberal orientation in current economic globalisation processes. But at the same time, we can witness constant efforts at the supra-national level to institutionalise environmental interests and considerations in new arrangements and regimes. Many of the multilateral environmental arrangements give evidence of such developments. This paper aims to analyse that nature, substance and place of institutional clashes that take place between these emerging environmental institutions and the more established economic institutions linked to liberalisation of trade and investment.

"Implications for the GATS of negotiations on a multilateral investment framework: potential synergies and pitfalls". By Martin Roy in *JOURNAL OF WORLD INVESTMENT* 4 (6, 2003) pp. 963-986. This article investigates how possible investment disciplines in the World Trade Organisation could interact with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which already contains substantive disciplines with respect to some forms of foreign investment in services sectors. Should a multilateral investment framework (MIF) cover investments in both goods and services at the expense of the GATS? Should services sectors be excluded completely from the scope of an MIF? Looking at disciplines on services and investment included in some regional and bilateral trade agreements, the article highlights key implications of various approaches to the interaction between two such sets of rules. It argues that some avenues could avoid creating discrepancies in the treatment of investments

in goods and in services under WTO rules, while leaving untouched the basic structure of the GATS.

"Transnational corporate interests and global environmental governance: negotiating rules for agricultural biotechnology and chemicals". By Jennifer Clapp in *ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS* 12 (4, 2003) pp. 1-23. This author examines the role of the agricultural input industry in the negotiation of two environmental treaties: the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. It seeks to explain why industry players were willing to accept a phase-out of POPs chemicals but were reluctant to accept strict regulation of the trade in genetically modified organisms. This comparison is an important one to consider, as the line that once divided the agricultural chemicals and agricultural biotechnology industries has become more blurred, such that many of the same firms now are involved in both pesticide production and agricultural biotechnology. The article argues that in order to fully understand industry positions on these two treaties, economic factors facing these industries must be examined. The shifting profitability of the pesticides and seeds industries over the past two decades goes a long way to explaining not only the positions industry players took in these two environmental treaty negotiations, but also the merger of the two sectors in recent years.

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BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest is made possible in 2001 - 2003 through the generous support of the Government of the United Kingdom (DFID). Additional support is provided by ICTSD's core donors: the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK), MISEREOR, NOVIB (NL), Oxfam (UK) and the Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations (Switzerland). The **Weekly** also benefits from support for the **BRIDGES** series of publications including: the Rockefeller Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and Swiss Development Cooperation. ISSN 1563-003X