



Bridges Trade BioRes

News, events and resources at the intersection of trade and biodiversity

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Environment at the WTO

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SPEAK OUT ON ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS

At a meeting of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Special (negotiating) Session (CTE-SS) held on 7-8 July in Geneva, developing countries said that development concerns need to be incorporated into negotiating proposals on environmental goods and services and, specifically, that the Committee's narrow focus thus far on a list of goods and services had not adequately addressed the interests of developing countries. New

submissions from India, Cuba and Brazil suggested that the negotiations must incorporate developmental concerns by providing special and differential (S&D) treatment, expanded national policy space and enhanced market access for products of interest to developing countries.

While Cuba and Brazil highlighted problems with the list approach and suggested the incorporation of environmentally preferable products (EPPs) into the negotiating modalities, India continued to promote its "environmental project approach" (EPA) as the best way to ensure that EGS agreed upon at the CTE-SS address environmental and developmental goals. In addition, several delegates expressed concerns regarding a submission from Switzerland that suggested principles for the governance of the relationship between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the WTO.

Project approach under scrutiny

Presenting its new paper (TN/TE/W/54, available online at <http://docsonline.wto.org/>), India clarified how the EPA would work and attempted to address concerns that had been raised at an informal meeting of the CTE-SS in June (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 26 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-24/story1.htm>). Under the EPA, each WTO Member would have a designated national authority that would select environmental projects based upon criteria agreed on by the CTE-SS (TN/TE/W/51). The goods and services used in the selected environmental projects would then qualify for tariff concessions for the duration of the project, which would in turn enable the project to better achieve its

environmental goal. The paper presented at the 7-8 July meeting reiterates that the EPA remains a rules-based system and that the criteria would be determined by the CTE-SS to ensure the transparency of the process. Yet, the approach would provide policy space to individual Member countries. The paper emphasises that the EPA would ensure that approved EGS were used for environmental purposes whereas under the list approach products receiving tariff concessions for a particular environmental use could instead be used for a different 'dual' non-environmental purpose.

Despite India's attempt to address the concerns raised at the June informal meeting, most developed countries continued to express scepticism regarding the approach. They suggested that the EPA is not 'clear', 'viable', nor practical enough, and would not provide sufficient predictability for their exporters. Concerns were expressed that the approach was too complicated, transfers authority to the national level, that the results would be less obvious than in the list approach and that it would take too long for the CTE-SS to develop criteria given the tight negotiating timeline. Most developing countries, on the other hand, rallied around the proposal.

List approach criticised

Cuba's paper (TN/TE/W/55) stressed that a successful outcome of the EGS negotiations was contingent on how "genuinely useful" the negotiations proved to be for developing countries. Cuba noted that the list approach has failed thus far because of uncertainty among developing countries regarding the actual benefits of negotiations for a number of reasons, including: the need to address dual end-use; inadequacy of proposed Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) lists; lack of S&D provisions; poor linkage between goods and services; and the problem of non-tariff barriers such as certification and eco-labelling requirements. As such, the paper supports China's and India's approaches, and noted Cuba's interest in renewable energy or energy efficient technology and natural products.

In their presentation, Brazil raised concerns that negotiations had thus far privileged a definition of EGS focused on "end-of-pipe" high-technology products of little interest to developing countries. In their submission (TN/TE/W/59), they called instead for the consideration of developing country interests through the principles of S&D and, in

particular, through improved market access for environmentally preferable products (EPPs) with low environmental impacts and/or derived from or incorporating cleaner technologies as advocated by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The submission noted that liberalisation of a number of these products, such as natural fibres and colourants and other non-timber forest products, as well as bio-fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel, would be in their interest. During negotiations, Members increasingly converged on the importance of such EPPs, which are based on end-use or disposal characteristics, given that papers from New Zealand (TN/TE/W/49/Suppl.1), the EC (TN/TE/W/56), Switzerland (TN/TE/W/57) and Brazil advocated for their inclusion into the definition of environmental goods and the US included seven UNCTAD-listed EPPs in its list of 158 possible products (TN/TE/W/52).

Updated lists from the US and EC and a new list from Switzerland largely made use of existing OECD and APEC lists of EGS. However, owing to criticisms at the June informal session that the products included in such lists were of export interest only to developed countries, the US and New Zealand defended their lists at the meeting and attempted to show through statistics that they import significant percentages -- 40 percent in the US case -- of the products on their lists from developing countries. Developing countries were not convinced, however.

Discussions to continue on MEA-WTO relationship

Under the Doha Declaration paragraph 31(i) mandate to negotiate on the relationship between existing WTO rules and specific trade obligations (STOs) set out in MEAs, the EC submitted a document (TN/TE/W/53) outlining the internal policy co-ordination, development and negotiating processes of the EC in this regard. A bolder paper submitted by Switzerland on the MEA-WTO relationship (TN/TE/W/58), however, not only outlined the internal criteria used by Switzerland, Canada and the US to evaluate the necessity of STOs in MEAs, but suggested that it was "useful and necessary" for the CTE-SS to consider three principles for the MEA-WTO relationship, namely: "no hierarchy" between the environmental and trade legal systems; "mutual supportiveness" of the two regimes; and "deference" of responsibility for issues to the framework that includes them within its primary area of competence. Sources suggested

that a number of countries, including several developing countries and the US, said they were concerned by the proposal's implications and that there was no contradiction between the two regimes. However, several developing countries did recognise that there was a clear tension in certain fields, such as the lack of disclosure of origin requirements in patent applications under the Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At this stage, Members decided to simply "continue discussions" on the relationship between MEAs and the WTO.

ICTSD Reporting.

Forests

ITTA: TIMBER NEGOTIATIONS HOLD ON TO COMMODITY FOCUS

Delegates meeting for the third round of negotiations on a successor pact to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 (ITTA-1994) in Geneva from 27 June to 1 July failed to agree on a new accord, although they converged increasingly around the idea that the revised ITTA should retain its focus on commodities and not become a conservation agreement. The question of the focus of the new ITTA along with concerns regarding national sovereignty over forest resources -- were central to debates on the extent to which environmental issues should be recognised in the successor agreement. The new ITTA would come into force after the current agreement expires at the end of 2006.

Producers defend narrow scope of agreement

Debate continued on whether the new agreement should broaden its focus from just tropical timber trade to other products and issues that address environmental and development concerns (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 4 March 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-03-04/inbrief.htm#4>). Many producers of tropical timber, which are predominantly developing countries such as Brazil, India and Indonesia, argued against references to "ecological services" (ES) and "non-timber forest products" (NTFPs) as part of the introduction or "chapeau" to the objectives of the new agreement. On behalf of the producer group, India argued that references to ES

and NTFPs should be limited to the sustainable forest management (SFM) context in the preamble of the draft agreement and should take into account poverty alleviation goals such as the Millennium Development Goals. According to Malaysia, this position was driven by the need to ensure that the limited resources available for project funding are focused on the commodity-based aspects of the timber trade, while ES and NTFPs fall under the jurisdiction of other organisations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Brazil argued against the use of the term "ecological services" because it has not been used extensively in international agreements, and also noted that on the other hand environmental services were a very complicated issue that was already being dealt with at the WTO (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 24 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-24/story1.htm>), and as such should remain at the sidelines of the ITTA focus.

The US, on the other hand, advocated strongly for the inclusion of ES and NTFPs in the chapeau to the objectives, with support from Norway and Switzerland, and argued more generally for a new agreement with a wide scope to address environmental issues. For example, the US along with the Republic of Korea, Honduras and New Zealand wanted the name of the ITTO to be changed to the International Tropical Forest Organization. Sources suggested that the US advocacy for an expanded ITTA was driven by their hope that a substantial ITTA would dissuade efforts towards the creation of a binding international mechanism on forests, as currently discussed at the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF; see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 29 April 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-10/inbrief.htm#5>). The US has consistently opposed such a binding mechanism. Despite these divergences, delegates were able to agree to include coniferous wood in the definition of tropical timber, which had previously only included non-coniferous wood.

Negative versus positive ways to address illegal logging

Delegates also struggled with the best way to address increasing international concern regarding illegal logging and trade in illegally harvested timber. They were unable to agree on a clause that would make strengthening members' capacity to "address illegal logging and related trade in tropical timber" an objective of the new agreement. Many countries,

including Brazil, had objected to this provision, arguing that the issue of illegal harvesting and trade was a national problem in which international intervention was not welcome. Other developing countries said that they did not have a problem with the ITTA urging countries to combat illegal logging, but that it was fundamentally a national issue, which the international community could support through capacity building, technology transfer and financial support. As such, Brazil sought to take a "positive" approach to addressing illegal logging, proposing to include "legal harvesting and certification" in the list of "themes" that earmarked funding could address. One delegate suggested that illegal harvesting of timber existed because of the trade in illegal timber, and as such certification could be a useful tool.

Certification of sustainable forest management has emerged in recent years as a result of consumer-driven demand for environmentally sustainable forests, but is a sensitive issue because timber-producing countries do not want certification to become a barrier to market access for their forest products. A section asking the new ITTO to "promote the certification of tropical timber producing forests" and "encourage information sharing on the use of voluntary mechanisms to promote such trade" was opposed for these reasons by countries including Ecuador, India, Japan, Papua New Guinea and Venezuela. The US, Brazil and other countries argued that it was not appropriate for an international organisation to tell a national government to promote a certain type of private-sector activity. However, most countries agreed that ITTO work on the promotion of phased certification schemes (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 29 April 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-04-29/story1.htm>) should continue in one way or other, despite the fact that it might not be "politically correct" for the ITTA to tell countries to promote such schemes.

Genetic resources and NGOs on the sidelines

Members agreed that the ITTA should encourage countries to develop policies aimed at sustainable utilisation and conservation of timber-producing forests and maintaining ecological balance, although Mexico, supported by Venezuela and Papua New Guinea, opposed including "genetic resources". They felt that the CBD was already looking at this linkage and had expertise on it, and that including such an environmental focus would weaken the ITTA.

Civil society voices were notably missing in the negotiations, although a written statement was submitted to the meeting on 27 June. From a labour perspective, Agronomes et Forestiers Sans Frontiers, Hari Environment and Development Society, the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers and the Roman Forum called for the new ITTO to have a strong core mandate to promote and facilitate international trade in tropical timber products. They also felt that the ITTO should be given the mandate to identify appropriate international market prices to take into account the costs of sustainable forest management and to promote a phased approach to forest certification to ensure that certification does not act as a non-tariff barrier to trade and is instead supportive of sustainable forest management, conservation and development.

Additional Resources

Additional Information on the ITTO and ITTA-1994 is available at <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/index.jsp>

For daily reporting, see IISD Linkages at <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itto/itta3/>

ICTSD Reporting; ENB, Vol 24 No. 59-63; "Statement by NGOs and civil society groups attending the United Nations Conference of a Successor Agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement," NGO STATEMENT, 27 June 2005.

Climate Change

G-8 STRESSES URGENCY OF CLIMATE CHANGE WITHOUT AGREEING ON CONCRETE ACTION

On Friday 8 July, the Group of 8 (G-8) industrialised countries wrapped up their two-day summit at Gleneagles, adopting a communiqué on Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Development that recognised climate change as a "serious long-term challenge" that needs to be tackled with urgency and resolve. They did not, however, agree to binding targets and timetables for cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. UK Prime Minister Blair had included climate change and poverty in Africa as top items in the 2005 G8 agenda.

The discussions on climate change were far from smooth. In the lead-up to the G-8 summit at Gleneagles, US President Bush made a statement acknowledging that climate change is a serious

concern and that humans are at least partially responsible. However, he reiterated that the US would not agree to binding commitments of the kind mandated by the Kyoto Protocol, as these would hurt the US economy. He said instead that he preferred to focus on technological development, and wanted to get major developing countries on board. This stance closely mirrored Bush's statements in 2001 when he announced that the US was pulling out of the Kyoto Protocol. The rest of the G-8 countries have signed on to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012, and discussions of future climate change strategies are set to begin later this year under the framework of the UN climate change convention (UNFCCC).

The final G-8 communiqué acknowledges that increased demand for and consumption of fossil fuels, as well as other human activities, is contributing in large part to the build up of greenhouse gases tied to the warming of the Earth's surface. It promotes clean energy as a priority, recognises the UNFCCC as the appropriate forum for future multilateral negotiations to address climate change, and stresses the need for G-8 countries to work together and with emerging economies to set the world onto a more sustainable energy path.

The G-8 countries also agree to establish a Dialogue on "Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development" to consider issues such as the transformation of current energy systems into secure and sustainable ones, working in close cooperation with institutions such as the International Energy Agency and the World Bank, which will provide funding to developing countries in this area.

Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa, the so-called G-5 -- which also participated -- had called at the meeting for concrete action on climate change by developed countries, noting that developing countries in particular are being hurt by its effects.

NGOs disappointed with climate agreement

Environmental NGOs generally expressed disappointment with the G-8 climate deal. According to Friends of the Earth, "the agreement lacks a clear acknowledgement of the urgent need for action and fails to state any significant steps G8 leaders will take to tackle climate change." "The communiqué ... has no targets or timetables. There

is no concrete action, and that's what people will be disappointed about," Mark Kenber, policy director of the London-based Climate Group, added. While several NGOs blamed Bush for lack of progress, most acknowledged that the Blair campaign had done much to raise awareness of climate change. They called on the UK to take a continued leadership role in this area during the UK EU presidency, including at the next annual UNFCCC meeting in December, which is set to initiate discussions on action in the post-Kyoto era.

Following the meeting, French President Jacques Chirac said there had been some meeting of minds at Gleneagles, noting that "Even if [the agreement] does not go as far as we would have liked, it has one essential virtue in my eyes -- that is, to re-establish a dialogue and cooperation between the Kyoto seven and the United States on a subject of the highest importance."

Other key G-8 issues

The Gleneagles Summit, which took place against the backdrop of the London bombings, also reached other key agreements. The world leaders agreed to boost development aid by USD 50 billion and debt cancellation for nine developing countries as an extension of an earlier deal involving 18 least-developed countries.

To access the Gleneagles Communiqué visit http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/PostG8_Gleneagles_Communique.pdf

"G8 Moves Toward Climate Change Deal," EU OBSERVER, 8 July 2005; "G8 To Agree Need For Climate Action But No Targets," REUTERS, 8 July 2005; "Terrorist Attacks in London Fail to Stop G8 Climate Talks," ENS, 7 July 2005; "G8 Summit Delivers Nothing On Climate Change," FOE RELEASE, 7 July 2005.

In Brief

EU-ANGOLAN FISHERIES TALKS STALL

On 23 June, Angola announced that negotiations on a fisheries agreement between Angola and the EU had ended as a result of disagreements over Angola's new Biological and Aquatic Resources Act (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 21 October 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-10-21/inbrief.htm>). The Angolan Law, which was adopted in October 2004, stipulates that foreign

firms can fish in Angolan waters only as part of a joint venture with an Angolan company, which must own a majority stake in the partnership. All catches would be deemed Angolan property and subject to domestic export controls and fishing activities would be prohibited from targeting species in decline or species crucial for local food supply. According to the Angolan Ministry of Fisheries, the EU on 15 June had called off negotiations on a successor agreement to the 1989-2004 fisheries agreement because of dissatisfaction with the draft document the Angolans had presented. "This draft protocol is even more restrictive than any other presented up to now by Angola and cannot be considered as a basis for further negotiations," the European Commission Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs reportedly said in the letter. Victoria Christovao de Barros Neto, Angolan Deputy Fisheries Minister, defended the government's position, saying that "it is important for us to develop this fishing sector in Angola in a sustainable way which creates jobs, reduces poverty and feeds the people." Whereas Angola's fish stocks have long attracted foreign fishing vessels, new regulations "put Angolans first", she added. Environmental group WWF had criticised the last EU-Angola agreement owing to concerns the deal would threaten resource health and a food source in a nation grappling with a food crisis (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 10 October 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-10-10/story2.htm>).

"Discordant Points Hinder Angola And EU Fishing Accord," ANGOLAN NATIONAL PRIVATE INVESTMENT AGENCY, 24 January 2005; "Angola closes net on foreign fishing," BUSINESS REPORT, 30 June 2005; "Fisheries Minister On Accord With European Union," ANGOLAN PRESS AGENCY, 22 June 2005; "Angola, EU Terminate Agreement On Fisheries," ANGOLAN PRESS AGENCY, 23 June 2005; "Govt Clarifies Competence Of Fisheries Ministry," ANGOLA PRESS, 20 June 2005;

USED TYRES: TRASH OR TRADE?

In a short meeting of the regular session of the Committee on Trade and Environment in the morning of 6 June, Brazil made a lengthy intervention in reaction to the EC's 20 June request for WTO consultations on a Brazilian ban on imports of used and retreaded tyres (WT/DS332/1, G/L/741, available at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_status_e.htm#332). In a statement, supported by a document distributed to Members at the end of the meeting, Brazil defended the ban and other

accompanying measures by saying they were adopted to mitigate harmful environmental and health impacts that have been recognised to arise from used, retreaded and waste tyres. As EC legislation restricting tyre disposal has partly recognised, Brazil argued, waste management of used tyres is extremely difficult, trade in tyres is an important factor in the spread of viral diseases around the world, and air and soil contamination often results from huge fires that frequently occur where tyres are stockpiled. The Brazilian delegate defended the trade ban by citing GATT Article XX and by saying that it was "unfair that developed countries adopt waste management strategies that include, in practice, dumping of used tyres in developing countries."

ICTSD Reporting.

OZONE MEETING GRANTS METHYL BROMIDE EXEMPTIONS

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, held in Montreal, Canada, on 1 July, agreed to allow thirteen developed nations an exemption for 2006 to use 3,000 tons of ozone-depleting methyl bromide, which was to be banned as of 1 January 2005. The new agreement brought the total amount of allowed exemptions for 2006 to more than 14,300 tons for 16 countries. The meeting was held after parties had failed to agree on the exemption requests at the 16th Meeting of the Parties held in November 2004 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 3 December 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-12-03/inbrief.htm#2>). The biggest user of the pesticide is the US, followed by Italy, Spain, Israel, France, Japan, Australia, Britain, Canada, Poland, New Zealand, Switzerland and Belgium. UN Environment Programme Executive Director Klaus Toepfer said that the decision "maintains the downward trend in methyl bromide use by developed countries". However, Geeta Ohl of the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) criticised the ongoing use of the chemical by the US, saying that "continued abuse of the critical use exemption by the US makes a mockery" of efforts elsewhere to reduce use of the ozone-depleting chemical. "There are plenty of alternatives to methyl bromide but the US agricultural industry doesn't want to switch," she added.

At an Open-ended Working Group held on 27-30 June to prepare for the 17th Meeting of the Parties that will take place in Dakar, Senegal on 12-16 December 2005, delegates considered the results of an expert workshop held in April on addressing illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances (ODS). The EU put forward a proposal that would attempt to prevent illegal trade by setting up a tracking system for ODS. Although members expressed support for a feasibility study of a tracking system, Japan, New Zealand and others called for caution on the scheme given the administrative and informational burdens it might impose on members.

For daily reporting, see IISD Linkages at <http://www.iisd.ca/ozone/oewg25/>

"Nations Agree to Cuts in Ozone-Depleting Pesticide," AP, 3 July 2005; "Many Countries Cling to Ozone-Destroying Pesticide," ENS, 27 June 2005; ENB, Vol 19 No. 41.

BIOSAFETY REGULATIONS NECESSARY, ECOWAS HEARS

Following criticism from environmental groups after an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) resolution last year called for greater research and investment in biotechnology, participants in this year's ECOWAS Ministerial Conference on Biotechnology held in Bamako, Mali, on 21-28 June recognised that biosafety regulations that safeguard human health and the environment need to go hand in hand with investments in biotechnology. Christine Churcher, Ghana's Minister of Environment and Science, reminded the group that while facts suggested that biotechnology was based on "good science" and had the potential to enhance food security on the continent, socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors needed to play a role in decisions to adopt or reject genetically modified (GM) crops. At the end of the meeting, ministers adopted a resolution asking ECOWAS member countries to prepare their national biosafety frameworks by 1 July 2006 so as to facilitate the harmonisation of the region's biosafety framework by 2008. They also agreed to raise public awareness about biotechnology, create a regional biotechnology center of excellence and to organise a second ministerial meeting on biosafety systems. The ECOWAS Secretariat was tasked with the preparation and implementation of a regional plan on access to and benefit-sharing of biotechnology. Other recommendations were made to increase agricultural research to ten percent of national

budgets and give funding priority to scientists so that they can develop biotech tools appropriate for small-scale farmers. In addition, Nigerian Minister of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Bamidele Dada stressed the vital need for the management and dissemination of information on biotechnology, a concern that was partially addressed by a two-day intensive training session held prior to the conference for journalists from the region to learn more about biotech issues.

"Churcher Urges ECOWAS Ministers," ACCRA DAILY MAIL, 28 June 2005; "Ecowas Urged to Support Biotechnology," CONCORD TIMES, 24 June 2005; "ECOWAS biotechnology conference in Bamako," GHANA HOME PAGE, 27 June 2005; "Adopt Agri-Biotech, Ecowas Urged," ISAAA, 24 June 2005; "African Group Urges Ecowas to Reject Crops," THIS DAY, 25 June 2005; "Biosafety: a West African Regional Approach," ALL AFRICA, 6 July 2005.

EU ADOPTS SCHEME TO REWARD CONVENTION ADOPTERS

EU Member states on 23 June agreed to a new system of trade preferences to grant developing countries' products enhanced access to the European market. The new system, which is based on a European Commission proposal of 20 October 2004 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 5 November 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-11-05/story1.htm>), narrows the number of programmes to three from the former five. The general scheme will offer all developing countries reduced tariffs for some 7200 products, including 300 new ones in the agriculture and fisheries sector. A 'GSP Plus' component will provide poorly diversified and vulnerable economies duty-free access for 7200 products, so long as they ratify and apply 23 international conventions on human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and governance principles. For a country to be eligible for the GSP Plus program, its five largest GSP-covered export products to the EU must account for over 75 percent of its total GSP-covered exports. Such exports must also account for less than one percent of EU imports under the GSP. The third component is the 'Everything But Arms' (EBA) initiative, adopted in 2001, which grants duty-free market access to all exports from least-developed countries (LDCs) except for arms and ammunition. While development organisation Oxfam welcomed the new scheme, they said that the benefits of the new GSP would be limited because of the EU's failure to link them to reformed rules of origin (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 1 April 2005,

<http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-04-01/inbrief.htm>.
"The new scheme will be meaningless for the 50 poorest countries in the world if the rules of origin remain rigid," said Luis Morago, head of Oxfam's Brussels office. The GSP plus scheme came into force on 1 July and the rest of the package will take effect on 1 January 2006.

The EU Press Release, memo and Regulation can be accessed at
http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/issues/global/gsp/index_en.htm

"European Commission presents its new GSP scheme: EU trade measures could go much further, says Oxfam," OXFAM INTERNATIONAL, 22 June 2005.

NORWAY TO ESTABLISH AGRICULTURAL SEED BANK

On 23 June, Norway announced it will be establishing an agricultural seed bank on its remote Svalbard Islands in the Arctic to support global food security. The goal is to protect valuable food genetic resources against plant diseases and the effects of climate change, wars, natural disasters and other factors that impact on seed biodiversity. Genetic copies of seeds already stocked in depositories elsewhere in the world will be stored in the new depository, thereby providing an additional safety net for the world's food supply. While ownership of genetic plant material has long been a sensitive issue, the Norwegian government has said international agreements have been signed ensuring proper management of the Arctic seed depository. The Svalbard Islands, 300 miles north of the mainland, were selected for their remote location and permafrost - the cold climate will allow seeds to retain their ability to germinate for a long time. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food will co-operate to establish the depository in 2006.

"Arctic seed depository for world food security," NORWAY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 23 June 2005; "Norway Plans Seed Bank to Safeguard Food Biodiversity," ENS, 27 June 2005; "Norway to Establish Agricultural Seed Bank," BUSINESS WEEK ONLINE, 23 June 2005.

Events & Resources

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to

ICTSD's web calendar, <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/calendar.htm>.

Coming up in the next two weeks

10 July - 12 August, Berne, Switzerland: WORLD TRADE INSTITUTE (WTI) SUMMER PROGRAM. The WTI's 2005 Summer Program provides an opportunity for individuals to gain in-depth and up-to-date instruction from some of the world's leading academics and practitioners in the field of International Trade Law and Economics. The Summer Program provides a week-long simulated WTO dispute, followed by four weeks of classes including an introduction to the WTO; WTO Dispute Settlement; WTO Trade and Agriculture; and Trade Remedies. WTI is currently accepting applications for the Summer Program. For further information contact Meredith Anne Taylor; tel: (+41 31) 631 32 73; fax: 631 36 30; email: Meredith.Taylor@wti.org; Internet: <http://www.wti.org>.

11-12 July, Geneva, Switzerland: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES. For further information contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: (41-22) 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

11-15 July, Oxford, UK: 2005 FOREST AND CERTIFICATION SUMMER TRAINING PROGRAMME. This program organised by ProForest provides a range of courses for those involved in forest management, forest certification and sustainable natural resource management. The courses are based on up-to-date practical experience and are designed to bring together key players in a range of fields to provide a unique training opportunity. For further information contact Andry Rakotovololona, tel: (+44 1865) 243439; fax: 244820; email: info@proforest.net; Internet: <http://www.proforest.net/Our%20Services%20Updated/training.htm>

11-14 July, Montreal, Canada: ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON ARTICLE 8(j) AND RELATED PROVISIONS. This meeting organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity will look at trends, status and a plan of action to retain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local knowledge. Other issues to be discussed include development of elements of sui generis systems for the protection of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, an ethical code of conduct and indicators for assessing progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target. For further information contact Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary, tel:(1) 514 288 2220; fax: (1) 514 288 6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=ACPO W8J-01>

11-15 July, Montreal, Canada: AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON MARINE AND COASTAL

BIODIVERSITY. Organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity under the programme on marine and coastal biodiversity. For further information contact Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary, tel:(1) 514 288 2220; fax: (1) 514 288 6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=IMCA-M-01>

18-22 July, Hammamet, Tunisia: FIRST MEETING OF THE CONTACT GROUP FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE STANDARD MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT FOR THE ITPGRFA. This meeting will build upon the work of an earlier expert group to outline the contract that will set the minimum standards for access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) for the 64 crops covered by the FAO's International Treaty on PGRFA. For further information contact José Esquinas-Alcázar, tel: (+39 06) 570 54986; fax: 570 53057; email: Jose.Esquinas@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/cgmta1.htm>

25-28 July, Yokohama, Japan: INTERNATIONAL TUNA FISHERS CONFERENCE ON RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL FISHERS FORUM. The scope of this meeting, which is organised by the Organization for the Promotion of the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries, the US Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, the Japan Fisheries Association and others, has been broadened from that of the two previous Fishers Forums, which focused on abating seabird and sea turtle bycatch in longline fisheries, to include discussion of strategies for sustainable fisheries. In addition to sessions on seabird and sea turtle bycatch, there will be sessions on shark fisheries, fishing capacity, IUU fisheries, production, marketing and consumption, monitoring. For further information contact Yuichiro Harada, tel: (+03) 3568-6388; fax: 3568-6389; Internet: <http://www.fishersforum.org/>

Other Upcoming Events

13-16 September, Helsinki, Finland: AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE. Organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (tentative date). For further information contact CBD Secretariat, tel: (+1 514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=TEGCC-04>

19-23 September, Adelaide, Australia: 15TH IFOAM ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS. This conference is organised by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia. For further information contact Jan Denham, tel: (+61 8) 8339-7800; fax: 8339-7800; email:

ifoam2005@nasaa.com.au; Internet: <http://www.nasaa.com.au/ifoam/>

24-28 October, Niagara Falls, Canada: INTERNATIONAL PLANT HEALTH RISK ANALYSIS (PHRA) WORKSHOP. Organised by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), this workshop aims to address issues and find solutions to problems faced by people involved in PHRA around the world. The workshop will provide an opportunity to explore methods and procedures for applying the IPPC's PRA standards; share experiences on how to use PHRA as a decision making tool; present tools for completing PHRAs; strengthen international PHRA expertise and communication; build a collaborative international PHRA network. For further information contact Louise Dumouchel, tel: (+1 613) 228-6698 ex. 5981; fax: 228-6100; email: ldumouchel@inspection.gc.ca; Internet: <https://www.ippc.int/servlet/CDSServlet?status=ND01ODQ1NSY2PWVUjMzPSomMzc9a29z>

22-25 November, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation: EUROPE AND NORTH ASIA FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE MINISTERIAL MEETING. Organised by the World Bank, this meeting will contribute to the initiation of a Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) process for Europe and North Asia. An International Steering Committee (ISC) was established in February 2005 to guide the ENA FLEG process, and in June 2005 a Preparatory Conference was held in Moscow. At the meeting, governments are expected to sign a Ministerial Declaration committing to take action to address illegal logging and associated forest crimes. For further information contact Nalin Kishor, tel: (+1 202) 473-8672; fax: 522-1142; email: nkishor@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/ardext.nsf/14ByDocName/ForestGovernanceProgramEuropeandNorthAsiaForestLawEnforcementandGovernance>

30 November - 1 December, Montreal, Canada: 3RD NORTH AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM ON ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF TRADE. This symposium is organized by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and will focus on the impact of investment and economic growth on the environment. Ten selected papers will be presented on topics ranging from the maquiladora industry in Mexico to Chapter 11 arbitrations in NAFTA. Researchers from academia, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and members of the public are invited to participate in the discussions and to contribute to our understanding of the effects of liberalized trade on the North American environment. For further information contact the CEC, tel: (+1 514) 350-4300; fax: 350-4345; email: info@cec.org; Internet: <http://www.cec.org/symposium>

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy or review by the BRIDGES staff to smohan@ictsd.ch.

THE CONTINUED DESTRUCTION OF THE OZONE LAYER – US ABUSE OF METHYL BROMIDE EXEMPTIONS. By Environmental Investigation Agency, June 2005. This report, released to coincide with the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, describes the recent severe depletion of the ozone layer over the northern hemisphere and US demands to continue producing and consuming the potent ozone-destroying chemical, methyl bromide, which was to be phased out in the developed world on January 1, 2005. Available online at <http://www.eia-international.org/cgi/reports/report-files/media105-1.pdf>

NATURE: POOR PEOPLE'S WEALTH. By Friends of the Earth, June 2005. This report focuses on the causes of rural poverty and the significance of natural resources in sustaining people's livelihoods. It describes many examples of how communities around the world are able to lead rich and fulfilling lives when they are in charge of their natural resources. The report argues rural people, especially women and indigenous peoples, often have long-standing symbiotic relationships with their local environment that must be acknowledged and supported. Available online at <http://www.foei.org/publications/pdfs/poverty.pdf>.

ILLEGAL LOGGING. By Duncan Brack (Chatham House, June 2005). Illegal logging and the international trade in illegally logged timber is a major problem for many timber-producing countries in the developing world. It causes environmental damage, costs governments billions of dollars in lost revenue, promotes corruption, undermines the rule of law and good governance and funds armed conflict. It retards sustainable development in some of the poorest countries of the world. This briefing paper examines initiatives from timber-consuming countries and international action such as the G8 Action Programme on Forests. Available online at http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/SDP_BP_05_02_Revised.pdf.

THE EMERGING ARCHITECTURE OF A WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION FISHERIES SUBSIDIES AGREEMENT AND THE INTERESTS OF DEVELOPING COASTAL STATES. By Roman Grynberg and Natalie Rochester in *JOURNAL OF WORLD TRADE* 39 (3) 2005. This article considers the emerging architecture of new fisheries subsidies disciplines currently being negotiated at the World Trade Organization (WTO). It argues that a "traffic light" approach based on environmental conditionality which has been proposed by the US, supported by the EU, and advocated by the environmental NGOs will ultimately

result in a WTO panel extending its ambit well beyond its traditional competence and adjudicating on whether fisheries regimes are sustainable thereby risking environmentally based trade sanctions in the WTO. Meanwhile, the New Zealand approach to the architecture restricts the discussions to cost/revenue considerations and may create less institutional risk for the WTO. The article considers the interests of developing coastal states and the types of special and differential treatment needed to accommodate their interests.

TRENDS IN MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY: IMPLICATIONS ON TRADE FOR ASARECA AND COMESA COUNTRIES. By David K. Wafula and George M. Sikoyo (African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), 2005). This paper examines the implications of trends in biotechnology on the countries of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and explores the plausibility of a common biosafety regulatory standard in the COMESA region given the need for such regulations in order to engage with agricultural biotechnology yet the high costs of devising and implementing them. It is published as part of the "Regional Approach to Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy in Eastern and Southern Africa" (RABESA) Initiative. To access this paper visit <http://www.acts.or.ke/Comesa.pdf>

AFRICA: UP IN SMOKE? By the Working Group on Climate Change, June 2005. This is the second report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development. It draws attention to the fact that climate change is a particular challenge for Africa, where many of the world's poorest countries are located. The report says that global warming threatens to reverse human progress, and make the Millennium Development Goals target of halving global poverty by 2015 unattainable. Available online at <http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/uploads/4jgqh545jc4sk055soffcq4519062005184642.pdf>.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES IN OECD COUNTRIES: MONITORING AND EVALUATION 2005. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), June 2005. This book is a unique source of up-to-date estimates of support to agriculture. Separate chapters describe and evaluate agricultural policy developments in each OECD member, including important developments such as the single payment scheme in EU countries and the introduction of the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilisation programme. A special chapter examines the implications of the enlarged EU on agricultural production, trade, income, Common Agricultural Policy implementation, and support levels. This edition also includes a special section on agricultural support in four non-OECD EU countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia. Highlights are available at

http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,2340,en_2649_344_87_35015433_1_1_1,00.html.

A ROUND FOR FREE: HOW RICH COUNTRIES ARE GETTING A FREE RIDE ON AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES AT THE WTO. By Oxfam, June 2005. The Uruguay Round at the WTO was supposed to cut the subsidies that lead to dumping, but it failed to do so -- as did reforms of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy and US agricultural policy. This report argues history is set to repeat itself as the Doha Round of negotiations is again giving rich countries a 'free ride' to continue dumping subsidised produce on poor countries and that the WTO meeting at Hong Kong should put an end to this damaging practice. Available online at [http://www.oxfam.org/eng/pdfs/bn050615_dumping_rou](http://www.oxfam.org/eng/pdfs/bn050615_dumping_roundforfree.pdf)

GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE. Edited by Georgina Ayre and Rosalie Callway, 2005. As the process of globalisation continues, and power imbalances between decision-making institutions become increasingly apparent, the need for a critical assessment of the way in which we manage our interaction with the natural environment becomes ever more urgent. Good governance was identified at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a critical factor for ensuring successful sustainable development. This book builds on the briefing papers which were presented at the Summit, taking further the discussions of the WEHAB agenda (Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture, and Biodiversity). This is a unique offering on the role and reform of global governance institutions and processes, raising issues which have been previously neglected in international discussions. To access this book visit <http://www.stakeholderforum.org>.

IS THE WTO AFTER YOUR WATER? THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES (GATS) AND POOR PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO WATER. By Lyla Mehta and Birgit la Cour Madsen in NATURAL RESOURCES FORUM 29 (2), May 2005.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) seeks to expand international trade in a wide range of services ranging from tourism to telecommunications and education. In recent years, it has come under attack from civil society organisations in both the North and the South for having a detrimental impact on poor people's right to basic services. This article explores some of these controversies, using the example of water services. It focuses specifically on the impact of the GATS on poor people's right to water and national governments' ability to safeguard the interests of poor people through regulation.

A TINY PRIMER ON NANO-SCALE TECHNOLOGIES ...AND THE LITTLE BANG THEORY. By ETC Group, June 2005. This report describes nano-technology -- techniques used to manipulate matter at the scale of atoms and molecules. Further, the report discusses the technology's potential impact on the global economy, potential risks to human health, safety and the environment, and offers recommendations for future actions. Available online at http://www.etcgroup.org/documents/TinyPrimer_English.pdf

VACANCY

RESEARCH DIRECTOR, CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY. CIELAP is looking for an energetic individual with a graduate degree and professional experience in environmental public policy with a strong understanding of the environmental public policy arena to develop and manage the Institute's Research Program. Reporting to the Executive Director, the Research Director will work with staff and the Research Committee of the Board to identify potential research projects, write proposals, get them funded, and ensure that they meet CIELAP's high quality standards. For further information send a resume, covering letter and piece of professional research writing to cielap@cielap.org by 15 July 2005.

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