



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

Issue: 22 July 2005

Note to Subscribers.....	
Fisheries.....	1
Will Fish Be On The Hong Kong Menu?.....	
Standards	2
Codex Stalls On Parmesan, Adopts Standards For Public Health.....	
Biotechnology	4
GMO Update: Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Africa.....	
In Brief.....	6
Events & Resources	8

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NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

BRIDGES Trade BioRes will not be published during the summer break. The next issue will be published on 2 September. The BRIDGES Trade BioRes team would like to thank our readers for their interest and feedback and our funders for their assistance.

Fisheries

WILL FISH BE ON THE HONG KONG MENU?

Concerns regarding the lack of progress in the fisheries subsidies debate were heard in WTO corridors during the 11-15 July meeting of the

Negotiating Group on Rules. Doubts were raised whether fisheries subsidies would make it onto the table at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, since strong forces within the WTO's Membership - notably Korea, Japan and Chinese Taipei -- would like to see the issue dropped. Nonetheless, the meeting tried to address disagreement when looking at specific topics including special and differential (S&D) treatment, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) and aquaculture.

Old divisions persist

The debate following Brazil's presentation demonstrated that divisions persist between the 'Friends of Fish', a loosely defined group of countries including Australia, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, New Zealand, Philippines, Peru, Norway, Iceland and the US, which support a broad ban on fisheries subsidies with certain exemptions (a so called 'top-down approach'), and Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei, which prefer rules crafted around a list of prohibited subsidies (referred to as a 'bottom-up approach') (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 10 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-10/story2.htm>). Chinese Taipei expressed strong reservations about the Brazilian submission's proposed prohibition of all subsidies not falling into the green box, arguing that this indirectly implied a blanket ban. Australia welcomed Brazil's submission but expressed concern that including too many subsidies in the green box, thereby exempting them from disciplines, might undermine the effects of the new rules.

Brazil responded that it was willing to discuss the proposal further, and urged Members to produce specific text in submissions if they wanted to see concrete results on fisheries subsidies by the Hong Kong Ministerial in December. However, sources

suggest that members of the Friends of Fish -- the original demandeurs of the negotiations on fisheries subsidies -- feel that it may be too early for such submissions given that a common understanding of key concepts has not been established.

Different solutions proposed for IUU fishing

Specifically addressing Japan's concern about illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities, Brazil proposed that all of a Member country's green box subsidies should become challengeable under WTO rules if a single vessel registered in that country was found to be engaged in such activities by a RFMO. However, Japan contended that such an approach would penalise innocent fishermen who have not been involved in IUU fishing. Several delegations shared Japan's concerns on the IUU issue and pointed out that Brazil's paper would adversely affect developing countries, since they are generally less able to enforce efficient management.

Addressing the link between IUU fishing and fisheries subsidies, Japan presented a paper (TN/RL/GEN/47) arguing that subsidies for overseas transfers of fishing vessels may lead to IUU fishing. In response, members of the Friends of Fish group noted it would be better for negotiations to tackle fisheries subsidies in general rather than try to establish the ones that might directly or indirectly lead to IUU fishing. In addition, while delegates acknowledged the importance of IUU fishing, some questioned whether the WTO was the appropriate forum for handling the issue.

Aquaculture subsidies introduced into debate

Members also discussed a submission from Australia, Ecuador and New Zealand (TN/RL/GEN/54) that raised general questions on subsidies to aquaculture. Many Members expressed doubt whether such subsidies would fall under the mandate of the negotiations but were willing to discuss the extent to which aquaculture affects wild capture fisheries through the use of juveniles and fish feed. Members, however, seemed less open to discuss trade-distorting aspects of aquaculture under the fisheries subsidies mandate and stressed the importance of the sector for developing countries. China reiterated its view that any new rules decided by the group should not apply to inland fisheries and aquaculture (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 15 May 2003,

<http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-05-15/story3.htm>).

As the group ran out of time during discussions, the Chair said the submission would be the first item on the agenda at the upcoming meeting. The next meeting will also debate a late proposal by Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (TN/RL/GEN/56 available online at <http://docsonline.wto.org/DDFDocuments/t/tn/rl/Gen56.doc>). Recalling the importance of access fees and artisanal fishing for small vulnerable coastal states identified in a previous submission (see Bridges Weekly 28 July 2003 <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-07-28/story6.htm>) the paper states that these, as well as development assistance to developing coastal states, "should not be subject to subsidies disciplines". It also raises the question on whether the WTO is the appropriate forum for handling subsidies that are solely production and not trade distorting.

The next meeting of the Negotiating Group on Rules is scheduled for 26 September 2005.

ICTSD reporting.

Standards

CODEX STALLS ON PARMESAN, ADOPTS STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

At its 28th session on 4-9 July in Rome, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) once again failed to agree on whether to develop a new standard for Parmesan cheese because of divisions among members over the cheese's status as a "geographical indication". With regard to country of origin labelling, the CAC endorsed the Codex Committee on Food Labelling's decision against developing a new standard, thereby ending a divisive debate that had split the Committee for the past few years. Overall, the CAC adopted over twenty new standards, including some that address broader public health issues, such as guidelines on vitamin and mineral food supplements and a standard to address antimicrobial resistance in humans.

Parmesan decision put on hold

A request by the US, Australia and several Latin American countries to develop a new international standard to define Parmesan cheese was discussed but, in a repeat performance of last year's debate

(see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 8 July 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-07-08/story2.htm>), countries were unable to reach consensus whether the standard was needed. At last year's meeting, the European Commission (EC) argued that a global standard was unnecessary since Parmesan is a Protected Designation of Origin in the EU and given that the EC is trying to secure international recognition for Parmesan as a protected global geographical indication (GI) in the WTO Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The US, on the other hand, said that Parmesan is a generic name that should not be protected. Since the last meeting, no new arguments had been put forward. Nonetheless, during informal negotiations and "fairly heated" discussions on the night of 6 July, delegates came close to reaching a compromise. However, the EU successfully stopped negotiations on the issue, saying that "a Parmesan standard could have a damaging effect on the intellectual property rights of producers and traders inside the EU. It would also set an unfortunate precedent, not just for GIs, but also for trademarks." As such, the EU Commission said it only wanted to debate the protected status of Parmesan in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It said Codex's 1978 standard on 'Extra Hard Grating Cheese' was more than adequate to protect consumers.

Given that the EC also said that it would oppose any work on Parmesan "at every stage of procedure", the meeting agreed to put the issue on hold and allow interested countries to continue consultations among themselves to seek a resolution of the issue. No date was set for the Commission to re-examine the issue. The world's biggest Parmesan producers, the US and Argentina, were said to be dissatisfied with the Codex outcome, having argued the name is now widely used and therefore warrants a global production standard.

Tree Nuts, pesticides and electronic standards hope to enhance trade

The CAC approved the recent decision of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) that no further work is needed to clarify country of origin labelling standards (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 13 May 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-05-13/story1.htm>). The CAC thereby sided with those countries that had suggested that existing Codex practice on the matter was adequate. Under the

Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, country of origin labelling for food is only thought necessary if "its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer". The rules also say that food processed in a second country "which changes its nature", should be considered the product of the second country, which is then the country of origin.

The meeting also approved a number of documents that aim to standardise safety requirements and thereby facilitate trade. These included new safety standards for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxin contamination in tree nuts, an issue that the EC has raised in the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Committee a number of times. Furthermore, a standard setting out principles for food certification by electronic means could ease red tape in international food trade and thereby support the goals of current WTO trade facilitation negotiations. In addition, a new draft safety code on the processing and handling of quick frozen foods could enable standardisation of international transport in these products.

Moreover, the CAC considered CCFL's proposal to move forward standards on quantitative labelling of ingredients (QUID) but decided to allow more negotiations given ongoing divisions on the issue.

Codex addresses public health issues

Among the more than twenty food standards adopted at the meeting, two public health-focused decisions to adopt guidelines on vitamin and mineral food supplements and a standard to address antimicrobial resistance echoed the sentiment of a discussion paper presented to Codex by the its parent originations, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). That paper, sources suggested, called on Codex to change direction and make a stronger contribution to global public health by participating actively in the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

The guidelines adopted for Vitamin and Mineral Food Supplements recommend labelling that contains information to help consumers use vitamins and supplements in a safe and effective way to ensure that manufacturers do not mislead consumers about the health effects of a product. Specifically, the guidelines say that there should be labelling telling consumers the maximum amount they can safely take per day and informing them

how much the supplement contains of the required daily amount of relevant vitamins or minerals. In fact, the standard says that the minimum level of vitamin or mineral content in each daily recommended dose should be fifteen percent of the recommended daily intake as determined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization.

Based upon a standard adopted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) at their May meeting (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 10 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-10/story3.htm>), Codex also adopted a Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Antimicrobial Resistance. The Code describes prudent use of antimicrobials in treatment of human illnesses and animal production. Resistance to antimicrobial drugs such as antibiotics is an emerging public health problem -- caused by inappropriate use of antibiotics in humans, animals and pesticides -- whereby human resistance to the drugs limits the effective treatment of human infections, which in some cases can be lethal. Recognising the scope of the problem, countries tentatively agreed to create a task force to enforce the Code of Practice and promote further Codex work in this area. A final decision on the task force will be made next year.

For the first time in its forty-two year history, the Commission elected a CAC Chairman from an African country. Dr Claude Mosha of Tanzania will hold the post for a one-year term and is eligible to stand for a second one-year term.

Additional Resources

The Codex Guidelines on Vitamin and Mineral Food Supplements are available at http://www.ahpa.org/04_1101-04_VMS_Guidelines_Step8.pdf

Documents from the meeting are available at http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/index_en.jsp

ICTSD Reporting; "Codex adopts more than 20 food standards," FAO PRESS RELEASE, 11 July 2005; "EU scuppers Codex Parmesan standard," DAIRY REPORTER, 11 July 2005; "Codex Supplement Guidelines Approved," AMERICAN HEALTH PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION, 5 July 2005; "The Codex Alimentarius Commission meets," FOOD INGREDIENTS FIRST, 5 July 2005; "Parmesan puzzle heads Codex labelling debate," FOOD AND DRINK EUROPE, 4 July 2005; "World Health Organization tells CODEX ALIMENTARIUS to Change Direction: Make Contribution to World Health by Focusing on Nutrition," NAMC, 15 July 2005.

Biotechnology

GMO UPDATE: BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, JAPAN, AFRICA

New Brazilian biosafety law challenged

On 21 June, Brazilian Attorney-General Claudio Fonteles asked the Brazilian Supreme Court to consider whether the country's new biosafety law is unconstitutional. In particular, he challenged a section of the Biosafety Law 11.105, which was signed into law on 24 June by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio "Lula" de Silva (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 1 April 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-04-01/story2.htm>), which gives the Brazilian National Biosafety Committee (CTNBio), rather than federal and local governments, the sole power to decide whether a prior risk assessment of a genetically modified organism (GMO) release is necessary. The new law states that "in regards to the biosafety aspects of GMOs and their by-products, CTNBio's technical opinion binds the other administration agencies and entities", but leaves the term "biosafety" undefined. Although the new National Biosafety Council (CNBS), which was created by the law, is supposed to be responsible for creating and putting in practice a national biosafety policy -- only participating in the commercial approvals decision process when requested by CTNBio, or by the majority of its members or its chairperson -- it was drawn into the approvals debate in May when the environment and health ministries approached it with a challenge to a decision of CTNBio that would have authorised imports of GM corn from Argentina. On 27 June, the CNBS approved CTNBio's decision, but said that not all companies could import from Argentina -- rather, they asked CTNBio to prove that there is a shortage of domestic corn that makes imports necessary. In addition, CNBS prohibited imports of Monsanto's Roundup Ready corn, or NK603 corn, until environmental and health impact studies were performed. The controversy and confusion regarding the jurisdictions of the two bodies stems partly from the fact that a decree implementing regulations for the law has yet to be issued, despite the fact that the law is in force.

Civil society groups have criticised the powers that the new law grants to CTNBio, with AS-PTA

(Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa) arguing that the law confers to CTNBio higher powers than the Ministries, gives CTNBio the right to decide if a GMO have to undergo risk assessment before commercial releases or not and centralises decision-making power at the federal level thereby taking away the competence of states and municipalities.

Argentina suspends talks with Monsanto

Argentinean Agriculture Secretary Miguel Campos told reporters on 1 July that the government was suspending talks with US-based biotechnology company Monsanto over a payment system that would allow the company to collect royalties from farmers who are using Monsanto's Roundup Ready (RR) soybeans (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 20 December 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-12-20/story3.htm>). The decision comes partly as a result of Monsanto's 28 June announcement that it had filed a patent infringement suit in Denmark against two importers of Argentinean soybeans after samples from a vessel showed the beans contained Monsanto's RR gene, which is patented in Denmark. The suit infuriated the Argentinean Agriculture Department, which had in March described Monsanto's threats to sue Argentinean exporters in Europe as an example of the company's "hoodlum-like attitude". Monsanto is "confronting the government" and "gratuitously attacking Argentine producers", a statement issued at the time said. "Monsanto has shown that it continues to be a national embarrassment," Campos said in his 1 July statement, adding that the government will fight the suit as a third party.

The controversy originates from the manner in which the Roundup Ready gene was originally transferred to Argentina. Initial access to the Roundup Ready gene was achieved through negotiations between Asgrow and Monsanto in the US, whereby Asgrow, including its Argentinean branch, was granted the use of the gene. Argentinean biotech firm Nidera soon after acquired Asgrow Argentina and thereby gained access to the gene, which it widely disseminated in Argentina but did not patent because it was not the creator. When Monsanto tried to subsequently patent the gene in Argentina, it was unable to do so because the gene had already been released in Argentina and so did not meet the novelty requirement. Nonetheless, Monsanto signed private settlements with other, smaller firms in Argentina to commercialise the Roundup Ready gene that

explicitly identify Monsanto's 'patent' ownership over the gene and agree that the firms will pay Monsanto royalties for each seed sold. While the firms did not necessarily have to sign the agreement with Monsanto given the fact that the Roundup Ready gene was freely available in Argentina, they did so voluntarily to try and stay on good terms with the company so as to gain access to future innovations. However, because Nidera does not do so, and because it does not have a patent, Monsanto has not been able to charge a per-use technology fee every season nor has it been able to restrict the use of the seed by Argentinean farmers, who use Roundup Ready soybeans for approximately 95 percent of their crop.

For further information on the Argentinean Roundup Ready story, visit <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0169-5150.2005.00006.x?cookieSet=1>

Japan finds sixth Bt-10 shipment, Syngenta to pay

On 13 July the Japanese government found a sixth import shipment of US grain feed that was contaminated with unapproved GM corn strain Bt-10. Japan has a zero-tolerance policy for unapproved GM imports and any shipments found with Bt-10 must either be destroyed or shipped back to the US. Japan has been testing imports of US grain feed since 23 May as a result of the discovery in March that US exports of approved GM corn strain Bt-11, created by biotech company Syngenta, had been unintentionally contaminated by the company's unapproved Bt-10 strain (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 29 April 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-04-29/inbrief.htm>). The same day, Syngenta agreed to pay additional costs incurred by US grain exporters and Japanese importers to test cargoes for Bt-10.

New panel and report look at African biotech

The African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) announced on 14 July that they have established a panel of eminent scholars, businesspeople and policy-makers to design an African policy and strategy on biotechnology and provide comprehensive and independent science advice to the AU. The new "African Panel on Biotechnology" (APB) will identify and recommend specific ways of building Africa's capacity to apply and safely handle modern biotechnology. The panel will be co-chaired by

Calestous Juma of Kenya, former executive secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Ismail Serageldin of Egypt, former vice president of the World Bank. The panel will also include Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, Africa's chief negotiator for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and a prominent advocate of a "precautionary" approach to GM crops.

In related news, the International Food Policy Research Institute said on 13 July that despite extensive public-sector research in Africa on GM crops that aim to address African needs, GM seeds are not finding their way to the field due to cumbersome government regulatory processes. "The reality is that a few African countries, despite their limited resources, have vibrant public biotechnology research programmes," said institute researcher and study co-author Joel Cohen. Varieties of maize, potato, sugar cane and tomato that have been modified so they resist drought and pests and deliver more nutrition. "These changes could benefit the environment, improve health, reduce the cost of food, and increase the incomes of poor smallholder farmers throughout Africa," said Idah Sithole-Niang, the study's lead author and a professor at the University of Zimbabwe. However, she noted that "unfortunately, most African countries lack the expertise, capacity, and funding to develop and comply with biosafety regulatory requirements, and these deficiencies have become more pronounced". The report, entitled "Putting GM Technologies to Work: Public Research Pipelines in Selected African Countries", calls for more funds to bolster the expertise of African regulatory agencies to create a more effective regulatory process.

The IFPRI report is available at <http://www.ifpri.org/media/20050707Afbiotech.asp>

"Brazil's biosecurity law faces legal challenge," NATURE, 7 July 2005; "Brazil Council slaps controls on corn imports," DOW JONES, 1 June 2005; "Brazil ministries fight genetically modified corn imports," DOW JONES, 12 May 2005; "Argentina suspends talks with biotech giant over GM soya," TAIPEI TIMES, 4 July 2005; "Monsanto sues in soy royalty spat with Argentina," REUTERS, 29 June 2005; "Argentina slams Monsanto for 'attitude' on GMO royalties," DOW JONES, 18 March 2005; "Japan finds 4th U.S. corn cargo tainted with Bt-10," REUTERS, 7 July 2005; "Syngenta agrees to pay for Bt-10 corn testing," REUTERS, 14 July 2005; "New African Panel on Biotechnology," AGBIOVIEW, 14 July 2005; "Africa 'losing out in GM divide'," BBC, 14 July 2005; "Research on engineered crops booms," RESEARCH DAY, 15 July 2005; "Lack of Regulatory Pipeline Stalling GM Crops in Africa," ONEWORLD, July 14 2005.

In Brief

CBD CONSIDERS WAYS TO SUPPORT TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

At the first-ever meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Advisory ("Steering") Committee for the Programme of Work on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, held in Montreal, Canada on 11-14 July, representatives from all of the sixteen UN regions gave their advice on issues pertaining to traditional knowledge (TK). Article 8(j) of the CBD calls on signatories to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Among other issues, the participants, most of whom were from indigenous communities, considered a draft document on elements of sui generis systems for the protection of TK that had been prepared by the CBD Secretariat on the basis of domestic legislation. Several participants argued that intellectual property rights, as enforced for example in the WTO Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), are not appropriate and should either be entirely or partly replaced by a sui generis system. However, participants struggled to describe elements that would be capable of addressing the wide diversity of cultural, social and economic conditions faced by TK holders, with some suggesting that customary practices used by traditional and indigenous communities are enough and that these groups should be left alone. Other issues raised included who should claim knowledge of TK, the issue of prior informed consent, the rights that should be conferred by a sui generis system and other issues that connect to CBD negotiations on access and benefit sharing (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 4 March 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-03-04/story3.htm>) as well as discussions in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on the same issue (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 24 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-24/story2.htm>). The revised list of elements, along with a draft ethnical code on the cultural and intellectual heritage of indigenous communities, indicators for assessing progress towards 2010 biodiversity targets and a revised composite report assessing trends, status and a plan of action to retain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local knowledge in each of the UN regions,

have been forwarded to the upcoming working group for the programme of work on Article 8(j) which will be held in Grenada, Spain on 23-27 January 2006.

For further information, see <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=ACPOW8J-01>.

ICTSD Reporting.

EUROPEAN COURT FINES FRANCE OVER FISHING

After nearly fifteen years of legal confrontation, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on 12 July imposed a record fine on France for its failure to comply with EU fish stock protection rules, suggesting that the EU is clamping down on member states who violate strict rules that aim to prevent overfishing as a result of stakeholder complaints that more effective and uniform enforcement of the Common European Fisheries Policy (CEFP) is necessary. In addition to paying a lump sum fine of EUR20 million because of past offences, France will have to pay an additional penalty of EUR57.8 million every six months until it fulfils its obligations under the CEFP. The dispute dates back to 1991, when the ECJ ruled that France's inadequate control systems allowed undersized fish to be caught and sold on the market. Then, in 2001, after more than a decade of inspections of French ports, the European Commission complained once again to the ECJ saying that, contrary to EU rules, French fishermen were not using correct net sizes and were on occasion catching or selling undersized fish. The 12 July ruling marks the conclusion of the 2001 case. In a press release sent out after the ruling, the European Commission welcomed the decision and said it sent "a strong signal to Member States that may be tempted to persistently ignore Community law". The Commission is currently considering 81 violations of the Common Fisheries Policy, of which 61 relate to overfishing which, in most cases, results from mismanagement by member states of quota use by their vessels.

"EU Court Fines France for Flouting Fishing Laws," REUTERS, 13 July 2005; "Judgment Of The Court Of Justice In Case C-304/02 Commission Of The European Communities v French Republic," ECJ PRESS RELEASE, 12 July 2005; "Commission Welcomes Court Ruling On Continued Failure By France To Comply With Fisheries Obligations," EC PRESS RELEASE, 12 July 2005; "Commission takes legal action against Germany and Spain," EC PRESS RELEASE, 15 July 2005.

ASEAN MINISTERS PLEDGE TO PROMOTE RENEWABLES, ENERGY EFFICIENCY

On 13 July, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) energy ministers met to discuss energy stability, security and sustainability in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The meeting took place against the backdrop of high energy prices and a cooling effect they are beginning to have on economic growth in the region. Among other measures, ministers called for enhancement of energy efficiency in the transportation and industrial sectors, as this constituted "one of the most economical and effective ways of mitigating the adverse impacts of higher oil prices". Several countries also have implemented policies to promote biofuels, and ministers agreed to support public-private partnerships related to all types of renewables. However, there was little discussion on scrapping perverse subsidies currently in place in many countries, which lead to false price signals and overly high demand for fossil fuels. "Some members are now under a lot of pressure to reduce subsidies, but we do not see an immediate solution because citizens are so used to them," commented ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong.

ASEAN includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam.

The 23rd ASEAN energy ministers' joint statement, entitled "Promoting Greater Energy Stability, Security and Sustainability: Pathway to ASEAN Community 2020" is available at <http://www.aseansec.org/17538.htm>.

CHINA AND US SIGN FOOD SAFETY AGREEMENT

At a meeting of the US-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade on 11 July, the two countries agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to improve bilateral cooperation on animal and plant health and food safety. US Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and Chinese Minister of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine Li Changjiang signed the MOU, which according to Johanns "will establish a forum to seek resolution of bilateral technical food safety issues and promote scientific exchange to resolve technical barriers to trade in products such as meat, poultry and eggs". The agreement provides for the exchanges of information on laws; regulations and standards; inspection and quarantine procedures; methodology

and technology; pests and disease; toxic and harmful residues; food certification and establishment registration. Johanns also commended Chinese officials for China's recent approval of GM genetically modified maize variety NK603, and noted US willingness to work to promote a Chinese regulatory system to expedite further approvals. In addition, the Chinese government agreed to send a technical team to the US in October 2005 to examine the possibility of lifting its ban on imports of US beef that had been put in place owing to fears of mad cow disease. These agreements, Johanns noted, "will help to further expand trade opportunities with one of American agriculture's top trading partners to build on our current trade success". US agricultural exports to China amounted to more than US\$6 billion in 2004.

"U.S., China Sign Food Safety Cooperation Agreement," ENS, 12 July 2005; "Johanns Announces Agreements For Greater Market Access For U.S. Agriculture In China," USDA PRESS RELEASE, 11 July 2005.

G8 FAILS TO DELIVER ON ILLEGAL LOGGING

The G8 Summit held in Gleneagles on 6-8 July failed to make substantive progress to tackle illegal logging, and instead included in the final communique a reaffirmation of non-binding commitments made by G8 environment and development ministers in Derbyshire, England in March (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 1 April 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-04-01/story1.htm>). G8 ministers "recognized the impacts that illegal logging has on the livelihoods of many in the poorest countries in Africa and elsewhere, on environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and deforestation and hence global sustainable development". The communique also includes a new reference to the "importance" of the role that forests play as global carbon sinks, including in the Congo Basin and the Amazon, urges both timber producing and consuming countries to take "action" to "tackle" illegal logging in order to achieve sustainable management of forests, but does not include new measures that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was reportedly going to present at the meeting (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 24 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-24/inbrief.htm#2>). The lack of new commitments

came as a disappointment to non-governmental organisations such as WWF, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, FERN (Forests and the European Union Resource Network) and the Rainforest Action Network which had issued a statement prior to the Derbyshire meeting calling for G8 members to enact legislation to prohibit the import and sale of illegal timber and timber products.

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

"The G8 in 2005: priorities for action on illegal logging," NGO STATEMENT, March 2005; "Japan Prime Minister to bring up illegal logging at G-8 summit," YOMIURI SHIMBUN, 16 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

25-26 July, Bristol, UK: QUEST WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND CLIMATE MITIGATION. Organised by QUEST, a scientific project aimed at "quantifying and understanding the earth system" and funded by the UK Natural Environment Research Council, this workshop will bring together leading experts in sustainable forestry with the aim of defining a set of key questions and suggested methodologies for a research agenda that would eventually lead to concrete policy recommendations for the promotion of positive synergies between carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and other ecosystem services, as well as local development. For further information contact Wolfgang Knorr, tel: (+44 117) 331-5133; fax: 925-3385; email: wolfgang.knorr@Bristol.ac.uk; Internet: <http://quest.bris.ac.uk>

25-28 July, Villa Real, Portugal: FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT AND THIRD WORLD CONGRESS ON COMPUTERS IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES. This EFITA/WCCA 2005 Joint Conference is intended as an international forum for agriculture related professionals to exchange information on applications and developments in the use of information technologies. For further information contact Andy Offer, fax: (+351) 259-350480; email:

efita.wcca2005@utad.pt; Internet:
http://www.agriculturadigital.org/efitaandwcca2005

25-29 July, Bonn, Germany: AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON FOREST BIODIVERSITY. This meeting is organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and will look at the scientific and technical information, measures and input required to implement the group's work plan. For further information contact the Secretariat, tel: +1 514 288 2220; fax: 288 6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=TEGF-OR-03>

27-28 July, London, UK: ILLEGAL LOGGING UPDATE AND STAKEHOLDER MEETING. Organised by Chatham House, this meeting will include a presentation from UK Minister of State for Climate Change and the Environment Elliot Morley. He will focus on the UK's priorities and achievements for its presidencies of the EU and G8, and will take questions. Other sessions at the meeting will cover latest news on the EU FLEGT initiative and the exploratory talks on voluntary partnership agreements, public procurement policies, private sector initiatives, latest research and more. For further information contact Gemma Green, tel: (+44 (0)20) 7957 5700; fax: 7957 5710; email: ggreen@chathamhouse.org.uk; Internet: http://www.illegal-logging.info/events/july05_Update_Meeting_Agenda.doc

8-13 August, Brisbane, Australia: XXII IUFRO WORLD CONGRESS. This meeting is organised by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) with the theme of "Forests in the Balance: Linking Tradition and Technology". It aims to create an interest amongst all stakeholders with an interest in forests and process technology; reflect the importance of tradition and technology, including the increasing importance of indigenous knowledge; and recognize the role of indigenous peoples, not only as residents but also increasingly as future land managers. For further information contact Gary Bacon, tel: (+61 (0) 7) 3854 1611; fax: 3854 1507; email: iufro2005@ozacomm.com.au; Internet: <http://www.iufro2005.com>

22-27 August, St. Catharines, Canada: THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD, ENERGY AND INDUSTRY. Organised by the International Council for Sustainable Agriculture, Brock University, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Niagara College Canada, this conference will convene under the theme of "Food, Feed, Fiber, Water, Energy: Science, Technologies, and Global Strategies". It will focus on issues of Security, Safety, Frugality, and Conservation. For further

information contact I. Glass, fax: (+1 905) 688-0748; email: conference@icsagr-fei.org; Internet: <http://www.icsagr-fei.org/conference/>

22-25 August, Abuja, Nigeria; NEPAD-FISH FOR ALL SUMMIT. This event is organised by The New Partnership for Africa's Development and will bring together participants from government, academia, NGOs, private sector, and the international development community in order to highlight how investments in fisheries and aquaculture can contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals in Africa. For further information contact the WorldFish Center; tel: +60 4 626 1606; fax: +60 4 626 5530 email: nepad@worldfish-eg.org; internet: <http://www.fishforall.org/ffa-summit/africasummit.asp>

22 August - 2 September, Tromsø, Norway: THIRD ANNUAL COURSE ON HOLISTIC FOUNDATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT AND REGULATION OF GENETIC ENGINEERING AND GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS. Organised by the Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology, this course is designed to provide developing country high-level policy makers, regulators, scientists and NGOs with knowledge and training on GM issues through lectures, laboratory demonstrations, group work on case studies, and discussions. The course aims to build biosafety capacity within a holistic and multidisciplinary framework. For further information contact Katrine Jaklin; tel: (+47 77) 64 55 46; fax: 64 61 00; email: biosafety@genok.org; Internet: <http://www.genok.org/english/default.asp>

23-25 August, Galway, Ireland: COHAB 2005: THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BIODIVERSITY TO HUMAN HEALTH. This event seeks to link human health and biodiversity and raise awareness on the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem health to the Millennium Development Goals. In addition to the main conference, a workshop will be held on 25 August entitled "CBD Indicators for Health and Biodiversity", which will focus on the development of indicators for measuring the status of species and ecosystems of particular importance to the production and security of food and medical resources, as included in CBD COP-7 Decision vii/30. For further information contact Elizabeth Dippie, tel: (+353) 9176-5640; fax: 9176-5641; email: info@cohab2005.com; Internet: <http://www.cohab2005.com/summary.htm>

Other Upcoming Events

5-9 September, Montreal, Canada: AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION. This meeting is organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and will review progress towards implementation of the CBD and the Strategic Plan along with the impacts and effectiveness of existing

processes under the Convention. For further information contact the Secretariat, tel: +1 514 288 2220; fax: 288 6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=WGRI-01>

24-28 September 2005, Rome, Italy. THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE PLANT PRODUCTION UNDER DROUGHT STRESS (INTERDROUGHT-II). The main mission of this conference, organized with technical contributions from FAO, among others, is to explore the possibilities of science and technology applications to crop improvement and crop management under drought-prone farming by linking progress made at the molecular level to that at the whole plant and crop levels in the field. This conference will provide recommendations on the most effective approaches to achieve better crop productivity under drought conditions as well as the research needed to move forward in this direction. For further information contact Dr. Abraham Blum, tel: (+39 051) 6564311; fax: 6564350; email: congressi@avenuemedia.it; Internet: <http://www.plantstress.com/id2/>

10-11 October, Geneva, Switzerland: SEMINAR ON ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND FINANCING FOR THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF ECOSYSTEMS. Organised by the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Secretariat of the Water Convention, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and IUCN- The World Conservation Union, this meeting will review methods for valuing ecosystems services, existing legal and contractual arrangements for the payment of ecosystems services and challenges in their practical implementation. It will also consider experiences in the UNECE region and elsewhere. For further information contact Olga Zacharia, tel: (+41 22) 917 28 29; fax: 917 01 07; email: olga.zacharia@unece.org; Internet: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/>

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.

MEASURING POLICY COHERENCE AMONG THE MEAS. By Anantha Kumar Duraiappah and Asmita Bhardwaj (International Institute for Sustainable Development, June 2005). This paper provides a brief review of the policy coherence literature and highlights some of the key criteria that emerge to help decision-makers check for policy coherence. It also presents a brief overview of a two-step methodology to carry out quantitative measurement of policy coherence, as well as an evaluation of five prominent MEAs. Finally, the paper

uses a similar analysis on the Millennium Development Goals. To access this paper visit http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2005/economics_measuring_policy_coherence.pdf.

ECOSYSTEMS AND HUMAN WELL-BEING: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, July 2005. This report summarises key trends in ecosystems and their services, particularly ecosystem trends of importance to business. The report also reviews how the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment findings affect businesses' bottom line. The report argues that companies using natural resources more wisely are likely to see larger profits and enjoy greater long-term stability. To visit this paper visit <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>.

REFORMING THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER AGREEMENT. By Lauren Flejzor in Review Of European Community And International Environmental Law 14 (1), 2005. This article explains the historical development of the international tropical timber regime, examines why new issues are being proposed for inclusion under the successor agreement to the ITTA 1994, and analyses the constraints of operationalising the ITTA using the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The author concludes that Member States will need to take concrete actions to decide how specific emerging issues in the timber market can help promote sustainable livelihoods and build capacity at the national level, while harnessing the required financial resources to effectively implement a successor agreement to the ITTA 1994. To access this paper visit http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/ITTO_and_illegal_logging.pdf

SEED LAWS: BIASES AND BOTTLENECKS. By Niels Louwaars (GRAIN, July 2005). Most countries of the world have some kind of seed law or seed regulatory system in place. In the South, they are largely patterned after the US or European models. This article gives some background on how these systems work in developing countries and highlights a few key issues related to diversity and small farmers' needs. Available online at <http://www.grain.org/seedling/?id=339>.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS NEGOTIATIONS. By Sandeep Singh (IISD, June 2005). This paper analyses possible approaches for ensuring a balance in trade gains in the ongoing WTO negotiation on environmental goods. It begins with a realistic assessment of the negotiations under Para 31(iii) of the Doha Ministerial Declaration and touches upon the progress made in the negotiations so far vis-à-vis different Members' positions. It suggests that a combination of Special and Differential Treatment provisions and bringing environmentally preferable products of export interest to developing countries in the ambit of environmental goods, could offer a balanced deal to the developing countries. To access this report visit

http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2005/trade_environmental_goods.pdf

RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES IN THE BIOTECH AGE: WHY WE NEED A GENETIC BILL OF RIGHTS. Edited by Sheldon Krinsky and Peter Shorett, March 2005. Science is rapidly transforming our communities, our economies, and the natural environment. Corporations have rushed untested and unlabeled genetically modified food into the global marketplace. We are experimenting with species-altering changes to the human genome that may redesign what it means to be human. This book argues for a set of principles to protect our individual liberties and communitarian interests against both the misuse and neglectful use of genetic technology. Building on the notion of a Genetic Bill of Rights, two dozen leading scientists, scholars, and public interest advocates examine the challenges we face in governing the future of genetics. To access this book visit <http://www.gene-watch.org/pages/bookstore.html>.

HOW ATTRACTIVE ARE FOREST CARBON SINKS? ECONOMIC INSIGHTS INTO SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF CERTIFIED EMISSION REDUCTIONS. By R. Olschewski, P.C. Benítez, G.H.J. de Koning and T. Schlichter in the *Journal of Forest Economics* (In Press). The Clean Development Mechanism includes afforestation projects as possible instruments to reduce global atmospheric CO₂. These projects have also the potential to combat regional environmental problems like land degradation and desertification. This article analyzes forestry projects in north-western Patagonia from an economic viewpoint based on the latest Kyoto Protocol developments. It considers temporary and long-term Certified Emission Reductions (CER) and determines the conditions on which forest plantations are attractive to potential CER suppliers and demanders. The article concludes that for most of the recent carbon price projections, carbon sink projects would be economically viable for CER suppliers and at the same time attractive to CER demanders looking for cost-efficient emission abatement opportunities.

ANALYSIS OF NON-TARIFF BARRIERS OF CONCERN TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By

Barbara Fliess and Iza Lejarraga (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), June 2005). This paper identifies non-tariff barriers, which may involve standards or environmental measures, faced by developing countries in their trade with developed countries and in South-South trade. The goal is to raise awareness of barriers that interfere with the ability of developing countries to build up trade. The paper also identifies the categories and types of measures that are most reported and the products affected by the reported measures. Overall, the chapter highlights similarities and differences in barriers reported in the data reviewed and compares barriers reported for trade with developed countries and for trade among developing countries. This paper can be accessed at [http://www.ois.oecd.org/olis/2004doc.nsf/43bb6130e5e86e5fc12569fa005d004c/3f6065538ae61034c125701500549301/\\$FILE/JT00185671.PDF](http://www.ois.oecd.org/olis/2004doc.nsf/43bb6130e5e86e5fc12569fa005d004c/3f6065538ae61034c125701500549301/$FILE/JT00185671.PDF)

Electronic Resource

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS: ROOM FOR SPECIALITY PRODUCTS IN WORLD TRADE? The Directorate External General Trade of the European Commission has opened an Internet online forum to discuss whether appellations of origin or geographical indications (GIs) may bring new opportunities to people living in specific territories. The forum's founders argue that extending protection currently available for GIs on wines and spirits to all products on a multilateral basis should be a priority for European Union within the current WTO negotiations. They also argue the establishment of a meaningful multilateral GI register, with legal effects in all WTO Members, would also address the needs of developing countries. To access this resource visit http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/forum_ao/list.cfm.

TRADE CORNER by IUCN Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia. With the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting taking place in December, this website is a collection of documents highlighting the linkages between trade, biodiversity and environment. View <http://www.biodiversityasia.org/wto.htm> at

BRIDGES Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org>, in collaboration with IUCN - World Conservation Union, <http://www.iucn.org>, and IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, CEESP, <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/index.html>. This edition of BRIDGES Trade BioRes was edited by Sarah Mohan, smohan@ictsd.ch. The Managing Editor is Heike Baumüller, hbaumuller@ictsd.ch. Contributors to this issue were Hilde Ludt, Sarah Mohan, Paul Quinlan and Malena Sell. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 7, ch. de Balexert, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from BRIDGES Trade BioRes may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editors or the Director. BRIDGES Trade BioRes is made possible in 2004 through the generous support of the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL) and the State Secretary for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of The Netherlands (VROM). It also benefits from ICTSD's core funders: the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK), the Rockefeller Foundation, MISEREOR, NOVIB (NL), Oxfam (UK) and the Swiss Coalition of Development Organisations (Switzerland). ISSN 1682-0843

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