



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting

ENVIRONMENT @ HONG KONG

Environmental issues may crop up at the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference being held on 13-18 December in Hong Kong, China, but are likely to be overshadowed by developmental and other concerns (see related issue, this issue). The issues most likely to arise include environmental goods and services (EGS), fisheries subsidies and disclosure requirements for patents involving genetic resources.

Environmental issues have been the subject of discussions and negotiations in a number of different fora in the WTO mandated by different parts of the 2001 Doha Declaration that launched the current round of talks. For example, the mandate under paragraph 31 of the Declaration includes negotiations on the relationship between

existing WTO rules and specific trade obligations in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and on trade in environmental goods and services (EGS). Other environment-related mandates include negotiations to clarify and improve WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies which have been held in the Negotiating Group on Rules; and talks on the relationship between the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which have been taking place in the TRIPS Council (see related story, this issue).

Trade and environment talks likely to focus on environmental goods

Discussions in Hong Kong under the trade and environment mandate are likely to focus primarily on environmental goods and services. Negotiators will have to choose between two options on how to proceed on the liberalisation of EGS after WTO delegates in Geneva were unable to agree on which approach to adopt in the draft Ministerial Declaration. The draft text on the table in Hong Kong includes two bracketed options for how to move forward in the EGS negotiations after the Ministerial meeting.

Members remain broadly divided into two camps over the approach to take on the "reduction or, as appropriate, elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services". One group dominated by developed and newly industrialised countries supports the so-called 'list' approach, which consists of listing goods earmarked for accelerated liberalisation. The second group, which includes most developing country Members, remains sceptical of the list approach, arguing that the lists submitted so far only contain goods of export interest to rich nations. The only alternative to the list approach that is seriously being discussed at this stage is the 'environmental project approach'

put forward by India, according to which tariffs on environmental goods and services that are being used in specific projects would be reduced or eliminated for the duration of the project (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 28 October 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-10-28/story1.htm>).

Of the two bracketed options, supporters of the list approach prefer the option that would call on Members to "complete by ...2006 the work under Paragraph 31(iii) by identifying environmental goods". Developing countries would like to leave subsequent discussions more open by instructing Members to continue their work towards developing a "common understanding" on how to proceed (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 25 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-11-25/story3.htm>).

It is unlikely that other parts of the negotiating mandate under paragraph 31 will be addressed, such as clarifying the relationship between trade-related obligations contained in MEAs and WTO rules and the development of procedures for regular information exchanges between the WTO and MEA secretariats as well as MEA observer status to relevant WTO negotiations. The draft Ministerial text simply acknowledges work undertaken in these areas and encourages Members to intensify negotiations in all areas of negotiation under the trade and environment mandate.

Attempts to raise profile of fisheries subsidies at Hong Kong

The draft ministerial text on WTO Rules also includes a section on the fisheries subsidies negotiations that calls on Members to strengthen disciplines on subsidies in the sector, including by identifying and prohibiting subsidies that contribute to over-capacity and over-fishing. It makes a reference to special and differential treatment (S&DT) for developing countries and highlights the sector's importance to poverty reduction, livelihood and food security concerns.

WWF welcomed the text's explicit mention of over-capacity and over-fishing as an important step, as some countries had earlier been reluctant to address subsidies others than those that may directly distort trade patterns in the negotiations (see Bridges BioRes, 25 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-11-25/story1.htm>).

While the draft text had found broad support among most Members in the lead-up to the Hong Kong meeting, some trade sources suggest that Korea and Chinese Taipei feel that the fisheries text goes too far and there is some speculation that they may try to tone down its language in Hong Kong. The so-called "Friends of Fish"-- a loosely defined group of countries such as New Zealand, Chile, Peru and the US which support a broad ban on fisheries subsidies with exemptions -- will not take the initiative on reopening the text, although they would like a clearer mandate for subsequent negotiations.

While negotiations at the ministerial level are unlikely to focus on fisheries subsidies, delegates at lower-level meetings held in Hong Kong will likely continue to discuss the issue. Ahead of the Hong Kong meeting, some countries, including Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Iceland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru and the US, have attempted to raise the profile of the issue by submitting a joint report to the Negotiating Group on Rules on 22 November (TN/RL/W/196) that outlines the progress to date and calls for a quick move to text-based negotiations. In a similar vein, Brazil submitted a last-minute proposal (TN/RL/GEN/79) to the last pre-Hong Kong session of the Rules Group on 29 November. The document for the first time proposes draft legal text for comprehensive fisheries-specific subsidies disciplines which would be annexed to the existing WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (ASCM).

Move to text-based negotiations?

Brazil's proposed disciplines would cover all subsidies that are "given to or on behalf, directly or indirectly, of fishing interests", including payments made by one government to another in return for access to foreign waters. It would not apply to subsidies for inland fisheries and aquaculture. Brazil proposes to prohibit all subsidies that have a trade- or production-distorting effect, but exempts capacity-enhancing subsidies provided by developing countries under some specified circumstances. This so-called 'top-down' approach has faced objections from Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei and the EC who prefer to list prohibited subsidies on a case-by-case basis.

Brazil defines "production-distorting" subsidies as those having a negative effect on "the sustainability of fishing resources", going on to provide the first

attempt at putting this concept into practice in the negotiations. In the case of fisheries under the jurisdiction of a regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO), a negative effect refers to "any violation of the quotas or other rights established by those RFMOs". For all fisheries not covered by RFMOs, such effects are taken to refer to an annual increase of more than three percent of the most recent volume catch data published by a competent international organisation. Under this definition, a developing country subsidy to a fishery that was not covered by an RFMO would, if a competent international organization indicated that annual catch of a relevant species had increased by more than three percent, be ruled to be production distorting and WTO-illegal.

Several Members of the Friends of Fish group and some developing countries called the proposal a good starting point while many others, including Korea, Peru and the EC, questioned the role that Brazil's submission ascribes to RFMOs in the disciplines. Korea pointed out that RFMOs only cover a limited number of fish species and that many have a record of low performance. Other Members were concerned that Members that are not part of such organisations, especially from developing countries, may as a result be treated relatively less favourably.

The Brazilian proposal also outlines the broad range of information that subsidy notifications would have to provide. Any non-notified subsidy would be WTO illegal, a provision that China objected to strongly. The EU, on the other hand, criticised the notification requirements for being insufficient to provide for an effective enforcement of the new rules. The Brazilian proposal will likely be taken up in the aftermath of the Hong Kong meeting.

The 1 December version of the draft Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is available at
http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/docs/05-12-01_draft_ministerial_text_revised.pdf

ICTSD reporting.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS @ HONG KONG

Calls to start negotiations on requirements to disclose the origin of genetic resources in patent applications have figured high in intellectual property-related negotiations in the lead-up to the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. In addition to

discussions in the Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the need to introduce such requirements to prevent the misappropriation of biological material and associated traditional knowledge (TK) was emphasised in a paper entitled "Reclaiming Development in the WTO Doha Development Round", submitted by several developing countries to the Committee on Trade and Development on 28 November. Despite the fact that EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said on 30 November that the EU is open to this proposal, the reluctance of the US, Japan and Korea on the matter -- along with slow movement on agriculture, non-agricultural market access and services -- may make it unlikely that disclosure requirements will be taken up in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, two paragraphs in the draft Ministerial Declaration make reference to the ongoing negotiations on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the TRIPS Agreement and urge Members to continue discussions.

The relationship between the WTO's TRIPS Agreement and the CBD -- in the context of which the proposal on disclosure requirements has been made -- has been the subject of two separate tracks of talks at the WTO, each of which has inserted a reference to the relationship in the draft Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. Under negotiations mandated by paragraph 12 of the Doha Declaration, Members have been examining the relationship through attempts to better implement Article 27.3(b) of the TRIPS Agreement which deals with the biological matter that Members may exclude from patentability, while obliging them to protect microorganisms and certain biotechnological processes. The TRIPS-CBD relationship has also been subject to attention under the mandate of paragraph 19 of the Declaration, where Members have been focusing on the review of Article 27.3(b) and a particular mandate to examine the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the CBD, the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.

The proponents of negotiations on the TRIPS-CBD relationship are countries that hold many of the genetic resources and associated TK which have raised concerns over the misappropriation of genetic resources and knowledge, commonly referred to as 'biopiracy', for use in patented inventions. These countries -- which are also known as 'provider' countries and are led by India, Peru and Brazil and are overwhelmingly developing

country WTO Members -- point to high-profile cases such as the neem tree, basmati rice and maca as evidence that there needs to be an internationally binding, enforceable disclosure requirement that would oblige patent applicants to disclose the source and/or country of origin of the genetic materials and associated TK used in the invention claimed; evidence of prior informed consent with the original holders of the resource or knowledge; and evidence of a benefit sharing agreement with the original holders. On the other hand, the major users of genetic resources in patent inventions -- which are overwhelmingly developed countries with significant research and development interests -- have argued that a disclosure requirement could place unnecessary burdens on industry that could harm business.

Struggle for text for Hong Kong

Under the "implementation" track of talks on the TRIPS-CBD relationship in the WTO mandated by paragraph 12, India presented a proposal to include text on disclosure to be included in the draft Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration at an informal consultation held by WTO Deputy Director General Rufus Yerxa on 21 November. The proposal called for the Ministerial Conference to launch negotiations that would craft an amendment to the TRIPS Agreement to make disclosure requirements mandatory for patent applicants (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 28 October 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-10-28/story3.htm>).

Although the proposal had the support of many developing countries, the US, Japan and Korea said they were unable to support it. The US suggested that they did not believe that negotiations on disclosure were necessary, nor that there was a conflict between the CBD and the TRIPS Agreement that needed to be resolved. The US restated their earlier support for a "contract-based" approach that would recommend that WTO Members adopt laws that encourage private entities to sign contracts with the holders of genetic resources before applying for patents. As a result of the diverging opinions, the first draft of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration simply takes note of the work under the implementation track on the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the CBD, and instructs the group to continue talks under the auspices of the WTO Director-General.

While expressing disappointment with the failure to include a reference to disclosure or the need for new rules, developing countries felt that even the reference to the TRIPS-CBD relationship, and the positioning of the issue directly under the responsibility of the Director General, marked advances on the issue. The momentum built from the consultations, along with the clear reference to the issue as part of the "development" package by key actors, could lead to a political decision being taken in Hong Kong to move the issue forward and begin negotiations specifically on disclosure. Sources suggested that this outcome is not expected, but could take place if significant movement on the key issues in Hong Kong, namely agriculture, non-agricultural market access and services, could be achieved (see related story, this issue).

Meanwhile, in a 28 November meeting of the TRIPS Council, Members agreed to include a text that authorises continued negotiations on the CBD-TRIPS relationship mandated by paragraph 19 of the Doha Declaration. The reference keeps the mandate on CBD-TRIPS talks from the Doha Declaration in the TRIPS Council in the eye of negotiators. Discussions on the CBD-TRIPS relations in the Council have recently completed a technical process launched in March 2004 that aimed to clarify disclosure-related issues, but Members remain uncertain of how to move forward as the rifts between positions have remained largely the same.

Deal struck on TRIPS and public health

WTO Members agreed on 6 December 2005 to amend the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to allow countries with insufficient pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity to import generic versions of drugs still under patent (see Bridges Weekly, 7 December 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-12-07/story1.htm>). However, NGOs from all over the world have criticised the agreement as being too burdensome and the international humanitarian aid group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has warned that the amendment is "based on a mechanism that has failed to prove it can increase access to medicines." In addition, the 28 November TRIPS Council meeting agreed to grant least-developed countries (LDCs) an extension until July 2013 to apply rules protecting patents, copyrights, and other intellectual property under the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

(TRIPS) (see Bridges Weekly, 30 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-30/story3.htm>).

Disclosure obligations not included in US-Peru FTA

In related news, a draft free trade agreement (FTA) text was agreed to by the US and Peru on 7 December as part of wider negotiations between the US and Andean countries. Although the Andean negotiators had earlier proposed a provision that acknowledges the role of indigenous cultures in the preservation of plant life in exchange for their acceptance of test data protection for pharmaceuticals (5 years) and agrochemicals (10 years), the final agreement does not include IP related provisions on genetic resources and traditional knowledge. The Andean countries had been pressing, through the "role of indigenous cultures" clause and other measures, to include text in the agreement that would require prior informed consent from indigenous communities by researchers seeking to patent genetic processes. Despite the lack of biodiversity-related references in the final intellectual property chapter, a side letter signed by the parties to the agreement highlights the importance of 'biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge' but does not make any reference to IP.

The 1 December version of the draft Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is available at http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/docs/05-12-01_draft_ministerial_text_revised.pdf

ICTSD Reporting; "LDCs Agree To Shorter Extension For TRIPS Implementation," IP WATCH, 29 November 2005; "TRIPS Council To Resume Talks On 29 November," IP WATCH, 25 November 2005. "US, Andean Nations Narrow Differences On IP In Trade Talks," IP WATCH, 2 December 2005; "US, Peru reach free trade agreement," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7 December 2005.

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN HONG KONG?

Despite low expectations for movement on the major negotiating areas in the current round of trade talks, many WTO Members are hopeful that agreement on a 'development package' might be reached at the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong on 13-18 December. Since November, negotiators have recognised that deadlock in agriculture, non-agricultural market access and services talks will not be resolved in time for the Hong Kong Ministerial, and instead hope to reach consensus in early 2006. As Members and civil society from around the world converge on Hong Kong, their question is clear: what will be achieved?

The central issue in WTO talks is agricultural liberalisation, where developing countries have been calling for cuts to developed-country tariffs and subsidies. However, the EU's most recent proposal on 28 October on a formula to cut tariffs on agricultural tariffs (Bridges Weekly, 2 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-02/story1.htm>) has been widely criticised, including by developing countries that say it grants little new access for developing country agricultural exports to the EU but demands that developing countries heavily liberalise non-agricultural market access (NAMA) and services sectors. Developing countries have argued that to make the negotiations a true 'development' round, developed countries have to cut protection of their agricultural sectors and allow developing countries to maintain space to decide which and how many services sectors to liberalise and to limit their tariff reductions under NAMA.

In the weeks leading up to the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting, the EC, the US, the G-20 group of major developing countries and other key actors were locked in a waiting game on these issues, each hoping for someone else to make a new and better offer. This stalemate overshadowed other issues, such as environment and development-related questions. Some negotiators were contemplating instead pushing for the adoption of a decision on a development package while continuing discussions on the "big three" issues, on which decision is not imminent.

Agriculture

WTO Members have been trying to agree on a formula that would divide up developed and developing countries' tariffs in 'bands' based on how big the tariff is. The formula would then prescribe different tariff cuts for the different bands, with different sized bands and cuts for developed and developing countries. This market access formula is the biggest point of divergence in the WTO talks, with the G-10 group of net food-importing countries proposing a maximum tariff cut of 45 percent and the US proposing a 90 percent cut to tariffs and saying that a maximum tariff rate, or 'cap', should be imposed at 75 percent. The idea of a cap has been supported by developing countries that argue that their development prospects are damaged by particularly high or 'peak' tariffs along with higher tariffs on processed agricultural products ('tariff escalation') that are of export interest to them.

Developing countries have highlighted the need to reduce subsidies to domestic agricultural producers as one of their key interests in the current round of talks. In this context, the US has said it is willing to cut its trade-distorting domestic support by 60 percent over five years, the EC has offered to make 70 percent cuts and the G-20 group has outlined a formula that would reduce EU support by 80 percent and US support by 75 percent. Despite these differences, all Members have agreed that export subsidies and export credits need to be eliminated because they are particularly trade distorting, although they have yet to decide on a date for the elimination.

Several African countries have pointed out that movement on the elimination of cotton subsidies is their biggest priority in Hong Kong, while some Latin American producers have argued that the EU's new tariff on bananas -- which under a dispute settlement ruling had to be agreed upon by early 2006 -- may be a sticking point during the Ministerial meeting.

Non-Agricultural Market Access

Reducing barriers to exports of non-agricultural products has been discussed in the NAMA Negotiating Group, but has been held up by disagreements on the extent and type of special and differential treatment developing countries should have. Developed countries are the main supporters of high cuts in tariffs on industrial goods, but developing countries have argued that they will be more seriously affected by high cuts given that their industrial tariffs are significantly higher than those of developed countries, who reduced their tariffs in earlier rounds of negotiations. Developing countries have argued that high tariffs are necessary in some of their industrial sectors to protect their growing industries, and point out that developed countries also had high tariffs on industrial products while they themselves were developing. Controversy in the NAMA Group has centred on developing countries' need for flexibility in choosing by how much to reduce their tariffs, and in particular whether developing countries could have both a high coefficient on their tariff reduction formula (allowing for lower tariff cuts) AND be exempt or make lower tariff cuts on some products.

Services

The most significant -- and controversial -- recent development in the services negotiations has been

the strong push by some WTO Members to establish mandatory minimum access commitments or "benchmarks". Led by Australia, the US and the EU, this group has argued that the current voluntary process, which allows countries to decide which sectors to "offer" for liberalisation based on bilateral consultations, has not resulted in sufficient depth and scope of liberalisation commitments. However, the overwhelming majority of developing countries are fiercely opposed to any kind of benchmarks, and have reacted strongly against the EC's conditioning of its agricultural market access offer on a minimum 'benchmark' opening of 93 service sectors in all WTO Members. Developing countries have said that this will compromise the spirit of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and their policy space to decide which sectors to liberalise or not -- for example, their ability to decide not to liberalise public services sectors such as water or health. The draft Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration does not include any reference to benchmarks or minimum obligations, owing largely to developing countries' insistence (see Bridges Weekly, 7 December 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-12-07/story2.htm>). In contrast, developing countries have been pointing to the need for better offers on the temporary movement (migration) of people that supply services under Mode 4 of the talks.

Moving development forward

WTO Members are considering continuing discussions on the blocked agriculture, NAMA and services talks at the Ministerial, but trying specifically to reach agreement on a so-called 'development package'. Such a package could include agreement on special and differential treatment at the WTO (where five proposals put forward by least-developed countries (LDCs) are being considered, including one which calls for duty-free and quota-free access for exports from LDCs); aid for trade (to help LDCs and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries adjust to potential reductions to their exports because of multilateral tariff decreases); and subsidy and tariff cuts to cotton. However, these decisions would need political will from developed countries. Talks in particular on duty-free and quota-free access have been gaining momentum, although the US reportedly has deep reservations about implications for increased textiles imports from LDCs.

Additional Resources

The draft Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is available at http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/docs/05-12-07_draft_ministerial_text_final.pdf

See <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/index.htm> for more information on the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, including the Hong Kong Trade and Development Symposium that ICTSD is co-hosting.

ICTSD Reporting.

Biodiversity**CBD CONSIDERS INCENTIVES TO SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY**

At the eleventh meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-11) held from 28 November to 2 December in Montreal, Canada, Parties to the CBD considered what measures the group could take to ensure the conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources. How the CBD can support positive incentives and access and benefit-sharing measures that are supportive of biodiversity was the focus of the meeting, and the CBD-WTO relationship arose on both topics. While Parties to the Convention agreed that international trade in biodiversity-related goods and services could be an important measure for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, a highly politicised debate ensued on whether the CBD should tread into the domain of the WTO by encouraging them with their talks on environmental goods and services (EGS; see related story, this issue).

SBSTTA provides scientific advice to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD to help its Parties implement the objectives, namely the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. At its 11th meeting in Montreal, Parties discussed most notably positive incentive measures, the process the CBD has been using to talk about incentives along with access and benefit-sharing of biological resources.

WTO, CBD involvement in environmental goods and services questioned

The CBD has been talking about the role of positive and perverse monetary and non-monetary

incentive measures since 2000, but negotiations have become politicised in recent years, most notably at COP-7 in Malaysia on 9-20 February 2004 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 5 March 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-03-05/story2.htm>) and at the last SBSTTA meeting held in Thailand on 7-11 February 2005 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 18 February 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-02-18/story1.htm>). Discussions on incentives at these meetings focused on so-called 'perverse incentives' (e.g. land-use policies that encourage wetland 'reclamation'), a term that has increasingly been equated with 'agricultural subsidies'. However, the heavily politicised discussions that resulted -- and the questions about the CBD's jurisdiction over the matter vis-a-vis the WTO -- led Parties at SBSTTA-11 to call on the COP to change the process for decision-making on incentives, calling for a more structured and inclusive process that gave Parties more control over discussions.

Discussion on incentives at the SBSTTA meeting also looked at a report on positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity prepared by the CBD Secretariat. The report analyses existing and new instruments that provide positive incentives, including traditional laws and practices which generate positive incentives, and introduces proposals on the application of such measures. After drawing a link to the WTO negotiations on EGS, the original report recommended that SBSTTA send a recommendation to the CBD COP asking the Executive Director to continue to follow these negotiations and to "communicate to the WTO the importance of enhanced market access and international trade in biodiversity-related goods and

services that are produced in a sustainable manner as a practical measure to generate incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity". Owing to resistance from Parties, however, this phrase was cut, leaving only a reference asking the Executive Director to continue to 'follow' the WTO negotiations on EGS.

China led the way in supporting the deletion of the paragraph on the communication to the WTO, arguing with New Zealand, Argentina and Brazil that the CBD's work on monetary incentives should abide by the rules of WTO and take into account its ongoing negotiations, in particular in the case of trade of products derived from incentives. Brazil also expressed concern that non-monetary incentives to support biodiversity, such as

certification and labelling schemes, might involve non-tariff barriers to trade. The EU called for the paragraph to be included and said that market incentives are an important tool to promote the objectives of the CBD.

Environmental NGOs strongly criticised the decision to omit the statement directed to the WTO, and contrasted what they described as the CBD's 'deference' to the WTO with the pro-active approach to trade measures taken by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). In particular, Friends of the Earth International warned against moving these discussions to the WTO Committee on Trade and the Environment. Greenpeace called for the CBD to take the lead in developing an environmental taxation mechanism as a key incentive measure for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and also said that parties should ensure that rules to protect people and the environment take precedence over WTO rules. Greenpeace also argued that governments must make sure they do not mandate the WTO to set rules and criteria that might restrict countries' ability to implement environmental tax measures and trade measures agreed to in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

Access, not transfer, to biological resources

During an examination of the strategic plan of the CBD that was agreed upon by COP-7, the balance between access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use came under the spotlight once again. On behalf of Latin American and Caribbean Parties to the Convention, Colombia asked to change the wording of target 10, on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources, in order to make the target more in line with the objectives of the Convention. The modifications, which include changing language on "transfer" to "access" and inserting language to call on Parties to craft rules that encourage "fair and equitable" sharing that is in line with the CBD, reflect the importance Latin American countries put on an effective international regime on access and benefit sharing (see related story, this issue). Participants suggested that the heated discussions on the CBD's vision on access and benefit sharing foreshadows the upcoming 30 January meeting of the Convention's Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, at which discussions on an international regime on ABS are expected to

be difficult (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 4 March 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-03-04/story3.htm>).

Other issues discussed at the meeting included training of border control officials to prevent the transboundary movement of alien invasive species and a request for information from Parties on forest law enforcement and related trade and its effects on forest biodiversity.

Additional Resources

SBSTTA-11 documents are available at <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=sbstta-11>

For further information on the 30 January - 3 February Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing meeting, visit <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=ABSWG-04>

ICTSD Reporting; ENB Vol. 9 No. 333, 5 December 2005.

In Brief

'DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE' MISCONCEPTUALISES FISH TRADE, IUCN SAYS

The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization and IUCN-The World Conservation Organization on 8 December sent a letter to the creator of "Darwin's Nightmare" -- a documentary by Hubert Sauper that has won sixteen awards and is nominated for an Oscar award for its depiction of the trade in the Nile Perch fish from Lake Victoria -- saying that the film is based on a misconceptualised, sensationalist and inaccurate reading of the impact of fisheries exports on the communities around Lake Victoria, Tanzania. The letter suggests that the film is based on anecdotal, insufficiently researched information from people who are not directly involved with all the communities in the area, makes a direct connection between fish exports and poverty, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, homelessness and imports of weapons and fails to provide a balanced view of the impact of fish exports to the EU on local communities that is based on the analysis of Africans active in the area. "We come to no other conclusion," IUCN and the LVFO write, "than that you specifically selected advisors and subjects who allowed you to ignore the positive impacts of the Lake Victoria fisheries, and to lead audiences to believe the false conclusion that the export of fish creates poverty." The focus on the film, they argue, "closes the eyes of Europeans to the many benefits that the Lake Victoria fishery has brought to hundreds of thousands of people, and the progress

that has been made in fighting poverty in the region". In so doing, they note, the film perpetuates a stereotypical and sensationalist image that betrays the need to present a balanced view necessary to support the exports on which the people around the lake depend. "Darwin's Nightmare", a documentary film by Hubert Sauper, has won sixteen awards in the last year for its depiction of the trade in the Nile Perch fish from Lake Victoria.

Additional Resources

To access the letter, visit <http://www.iucn.org/en/news/archive/2005/12/Sauperletter.pdf>

The website of the film is <http://www.darwinsnightmare.com/>

ICTSD Reporting.

EU REQUESTS DISPUTE PANEL ON BRAZILIAN RETREADED TYRE BAN

During a meeting of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on 28 November 2005, the EU asked for the establishment of a WTO panel to determine whether a Brazilian import ban on retreaded tyres breaks WTO law. Brazil argues that the ban can be justified on environmental and human health grounds (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 8 July 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-07-08/inbrief.htm>). They point to the adverse affects of used tyres, including their slow decomposition rates, fire risks, contribution to the spread of viral diseases, contamination of air, water and soil when incinerated in tyre fires, high waste processing costs and their hazardous pollutant content. An investigation initiated by the EC on 7 January 2004 had found, after extensive examination of the Brazilian records, that the measures were not being applied equitably to all WTO Members -- for example, it says that the import ban does not extend to MERCOSUR countries -- and in some cases are applied to retreaded tyres that are not used and therefore are not linked to environmental and health risks. As a result, the EC on 20 June 2005 had requested consultations on the issue through the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism, arguing that the measure contravenes WTO rules on national treatment (under which a WTO Member must treat products produced in other WTO Members' territories the same as those produced domestically), most-favoured-nation treatment (where the products from all WTO Members must be treated similarly) and quantitative restrictions (under which quantitative restrictions are restricted

and cannot be applied differently to different Members) (WT/DS332/1). After consultations in July failed to resolve the issue, the EU decided to request that a dispute panel be created at the DSB meeting (WT/DS332/1), but Brazil blocked its establishment. According to Dispute Settlement Understanding procedures, Brazil can not block the establishment of a panel at the next meeting of the DSB, which is scheduled for 20 January 2006.

ICTSD reporting: "European Communities' request for the establishment of a WTO Panel against Brazilian measures affecting imports of retreaded tyres - Factsheet", BRAZILIAN PRESS RELEASE, 25 November 2005; "Brazil - Trade Barriers Complaint against Import Ban on Retreaded Tyres, Continuation of WTO Dispute" European Commission, 15 November 2005.

GABON AND COMOROS SIGN NEW FISHERIES AGREEMENTS WITH EU

Comoros and Gabon signed new fisheries partnership agreements with the EU on 1 and 3 December respectively that will last for six years and aim to promote sustainable fisheries and policy cooperation under the EU Common Fisheries Policy. While the Comoros deal decreases the number of foreign vessels allowed to fish by 12 percent, the Gabon accord reduces the number of licences to fish by 40 percent. The EU fishing industry's financial participation in the Gabon agreement also increased as license fees paid by EU vessel owners has increased by almost 50 percent since the last agreement, from EUR 25 to EUR 35 per tonne of tuna caught, whilst the European Union's contribution has decreased correspondingly from EUR 75 to EUR 65, reflecting decreasing subsidisation of access. Gabon, signatory of the Community's most important Atlantic tuna agreement in terms of catch volume, will thus receive EUR 860,000 per year from the EU instead of EUR 1,262,500 under the previous agreement. In both agreements, 60 percent of the financial contribution is earmarked for defining and implementing national fisheries policies that can include support for scientific research, surveillance of fisheries activities as well as food security and poverty reduction. Moreover, both pacts have requirements for EU vessels to comply with measures and recommendations by regional management organisations, such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), and the inclusion of concrete control and monitoring measures. They also allow for regional observers to be present on EU vessels.

Some observers have criticised the agreements for not setting total catch quotas. Thus, although the number of fishing licenses and boats has been reduced, the use of large-scale, modernised vessels might lead to the same amount of tuna being caught as before. Furthermore, some fear that the fact that the level of financial contribution is still directly linked to the allowable volume of fish catches continues to exert financial pressure on ACP countries to give EU boats unsustainable levels of access to their resources.

ICTSD Reporting; "Comoros, EU sign fisheries agreement", AFROL NEWS, 1 December; "EU, Gabon sign new fisheries agreement", EU PRESS RELEASE, 1 December 2005; "New EU-Comoros fisheries agreement signed", EU PRESS RELEASE, 29 November 2005; "Brussels: New fisheries partnership agreement and protocol between the EU and the Comoros", FISH UPDATE, 1 December 2005; "EU Comoros fisheries partnership agreement", AGRITRADE, June 2005.

EC APPROVES DANISH TAX ON GM CROPS FOR CO-EXISTENCE

The European Commission on 23 November authorised a Danish law that requires farmers growing GM crops to pay an annual tax of 13.4 Euros (US\$15.84) per hectare of land into a fund to compensate conventional and organic farmers whose crops are contaminated by genetically modified (GM) crops. The Commission's authorisation will allow Denmark to enforce its co-existence law, under which the funds will be used to pay compensation to conventional or organic farmers whose crops have more than 0.9 percent of GM material as a result of gene flow from neighbouring farmers' GM fields. The amount of the compensation will be limited to the price difference between a crop for which no labelling is required and the market price of the crop that will have to be labelled as containing GM material because its GM content exceeds the threshold for labelling established by the EU. In a statement released the same day, the Commission said that it "finds that such aid contributes to a successful co-existence of GM crops with conventional and organic crops" given that private insurance products for liability for cross-contamination or "admixture" of GM and non-GM crops is not on the market. However, the compensation will not free GM farmers from civil or criminal liability under Danish law.

The EU does not currently have a GM-specific co-existence and liability schemes, although they are currently working on such rules (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 10 March 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-03-10/story1.htm>). This has raised the ire of critics who say that responsibility for any financial

losses as a result of the transfer of GMOs to conventional and organic fields, as well as potential environmental or health damages, must be clarified. Similar questions have also arisen regarding transboundary transfers of GM crops, most notably in negotiations on liability and redress in the context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 27 May 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-05-27/story1.htm>). Negotiations have been held up by disagreements between the Europeans, who would with the support of Africa like a broad liability regime, and the US, who would prefer to focus on national liability regimes and analyse liability on a case-by case basis.

"Commission authorises Danish state aid to compensate for losses due to presence of GMOs in conventional and organic crops," EC PRESS RELEASE, 23 November 2005; "Denmark may compensate for GMO contamination -EU," REUTERS, 23 November 2005, "European Commission Rules Danish Tax On Genetically Modified Crops Permitted," WTO Reporter, 28 November 2005.

COUNTRIES STRIKE ELEVENTH HOUR DEAL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

At the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP-1) on 28 November to 9 December in Montreal, Canada, governments reached what environmental groups called "a historic agreement" on how to tackle climate change in the future. After working through Friday night, delegates adopted the "Montreal Action Plan" which commits industrialised countries to deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, to be agreed by 2012 when the current agreement expires. While the details remain to be hammered out, the agreement was seen as giving new credibility to the Kyoto process. "This is a clear signal that the Kyoto agreement is alive and well," said Friends of the Earth International Climate Change Campaigner Catherine Pearce.

Parties also approved a series of decisions aimed at simplifying the implementation of the global pact, which was adopted in 1997 but only came into force this year. These include the establishment of a Joint Implementation Supervisory Board, a mechanism that allows industrialised countries to earn carbon allowances by investing in low-emission projects in other developed countries they can count against their own reduction commitments. Delegates also finalised details of the Clean Development Mechanism, a system that similarly rewards them for investing in

sustainable development projects in developing countries.

ICTSD reporting: "Conference reaches climate deal," TORONTO STAR, 20 December 2005; "Kyoto Protocol extended," GLOBE AND MAIL, 10 December 2005; "Kyoto thrives in Montreal despite last minute game of Russian roulette," FOEI, 10 December 2005; "Developing countries: pay us to save rainforests," MONGABAY.COM, 27 November 2005; "Montreal climate conference adopts 'rule book' of the Kyoto Protocol," UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 30 November 2005; "U.N. talks adopt Kyoto rules on global warming," REUTERS, 30 November 2005; "Australia says 'son of Kyoto' deal not possible," REUTERS, 1 December 2005.

CHINA DELAYS GM RICE APPROVAL

China's Agricultural genetically modified organism (GMO) Biosafety Committee was unable to reach consensus on 24 November whether to commercialise Xa21, a rice strain genetically modified to be resistant to disease. The three-day bi-annual meeting of the national body decided to ask the scientists from the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, who developed the variety to provide more data to prove the safety of the GM rice, which includes a gene from an African wild rice. Chinese consumers and civil society have become increasingly vocal about environmental and health concerns related to GM crops after Greenpeace discovered GM rice on supermarket shelves in Hubei, a central province in China, in May of this year. In response to public comments, the Chinese government has added more food and environmental safety experts to the committee, which is likely to make a decision on the commercialisation of the crop more difficult and lengthen the approval and regulation process (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 20 December 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-12-20/story4.htm>). Nonetheless, in commentaries on the meeting, leading Chinese newspapers called on the government to introduce more transparency into the GM decision-making process. To date, only Iran has commercialised a GM rice variety modified to be resistant to the stem-borer pest.

"China committee not recommending GMO rice," REUTERS, 28 November 2005; "Public must have say in GM rice debate," CHINA DAILY, 23 November 2005; "Iran Releases World's First Bt Rice," MANILA BULLETIN, 26 November 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>.

ICTSD Environment-related Events at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference

13-17 December: HONG KONG TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM (HKTDS). The goal of this symposium, co-convened by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), is to encourage innovative thinking on issues related to trade and development that could subsequently be translated into constructive inputs for the ongoing Doha Round negotiations. The main topics for discussions will be drawn from key development-related issues in the trade policy and trade rules arena. For further information contact Patrick Lunt, email: plunt@ictsd.ch; Internet: <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/>

14 December 2005, HKTDS RM. 403, 10:15-12:45: ARTICULATING SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVES ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT. Organised by ICTSD; International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and RING partners. For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-14/session01.2_southern_agenda_te.htm

14 December, HKTDS Rm. 401, 16:45-19:00: DISCLOSURE OF ORIGIN - A DEAL MAKER IN THE DOHA ROUND? Organised by IUCN; Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales (IDDRI); Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL) and ICTSD. For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-14/session03.1_disclosure_origin.htm

15 December, HKTDS Rm. 402, 16:45-19:00: FISHERIES AND TRADE - EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Organisers: ICTSD; Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec); Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); and the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-15/session06.3_fisheries_and_trade.htm

16 December, HKTDS Rm. 403, 10:15-12:45: ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CAN WTO NEGOTIATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE? Organised by ICTSD and the United Nations University Institute for Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS). For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-16/session07.3_EGS.htm

16 December, HKTDS Rm. 404, 14:15-16:30: THE TRANSITION TO A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

FUTURE - ISSUES FOR THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM. Organised by ICTSD and partners. For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-16/session08.4_sustainable_energy_future.htm

Other Environment-related events at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference

13-18 December, Hong Kong, China: SIXTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. 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; Internet: http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min05_e/min05_e.htm

13 December, NGO Centre, Rm. 408, 11:00-13:00: ENVIRONMENT AND TRADE JURISPRUDENCE AT THE WTO: LINKAGES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. Discussion sponsored by Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) and Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests & Landscape on trade and environment cases and the linkages to the ongoing negotiations at the WTO. For further information, contact Nathalie Bernasconi-Osterwalder, email: nbernasconi@ciel.org

14 December 2005, HKTDS Rm. 401, 10:15-12:45: DEBATE: IS A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WTO AND MEAS POSSIBLE? Organised by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA); and the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD). For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-14/session01.1_wto_meas_debate.htm

14 December: Hotel InterContinental Grand Stanford RM. B1, 13:30-17:00, INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND TRADE LIBERALISATION. This event, organised by the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations of Japan and the All Japan Seafood Import Consultative Group, will discuss necessary considerations for forthcoming trade rules with regard to ensuring the sustainable development of fisheries and fishing communities. For further information, contact Jf Zengyoren, tel: (+81 3) 3294-9617; fax: 3294-9602; email: kokusai-sato@r6.dion.ne.jp

14 December, HKTDS Rm. 401, 14:00-16:15: FARM SUBSIDIES AND GLOBAL TRADE: ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS. Organised by the World Resource Institute (WRI); Environment Working Group (EWG) and the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-14/session02.1_farm_subsidies.htm

14 December, HKTDS Rm. 403, 14:00-16:15: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION, TRADE AND

THE ENVIRONMENT. Organised by the Hong Kong People's Council for Sustainable Development (HKPCSD). For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-14/session02.2_sustainable_consumption.htm

14 December, HKTDS Rm. 403, 16:45-19:00: FROM TRACEABILITY TO BIOTECHNOLOGY: TRADE AND FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS. Organised by Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS); Research and Information Services for Non Aligned Countries (RIS); and START Network. For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-14/session03.2_traceability_biotech.htm

14 December, Ritz Carlton Hotel, 17:00-19:00: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT IN THE WTO DOHA ROUND: AN INTERNATIONAL LAW EXPERTS PANEL EVENT. Organised by the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) in partnership with Foreign Affairs Canada. For further information contact Marie Bourdeau, Communications Officer, tel: (+1 514) 398-8918; fax: 398-8197; email: mbourdeau@cisdl.org; Internet: <http://www.cisdl.org/seminars004.html>

15 December, NGO Centre, Rm. A5, 11:00-13:00: THE TRIPS REVIEW PROCESS: ABS, PIC AND DISCLOSURE ISSUES. Organised by Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA), Bangladesh, CUTS Calcutta Resource Center, India, Law and Society Trust, Sri Lanka, Pro Public, Kathmandu and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan.

15 December, NGO Centre Rm. C, 10:00-13:00: FISHERIES SUBSIDIES DISCIPLINES IN THE WTO: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. Organised by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), will discuss the current state of play in the WTO negotiations focusing on some of the key challenges and opportunities WTO members face in developing effective and meaningful disciplines on fisheries subsidies. For further information contact Aimee Gonzales, tel: (+41) 22-364-9002; fax: (+41) 22-364-8219; e-mail: agonzales@wwfint.org

16 December, HKTDS Rm. 401, 10:15-12:45: THE RUSH TO REGIONALISM: TRADE INTEGRATION'S IMPACT ON PEACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT. Organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI); International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD); and the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL). For further information visit http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/agenda/05-12-16/session07.2_rush_to_regionalism.htm

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.

ICTSD Resources

TRADING IN GENES: DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES ON BIOTECHNOLOGY, TRADE AND SUSTAINABILITY. Edited by Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz and Vicente Sanchez (International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, November 2005). This unique book is a collection of leading-edge perspectives from the South on biotechnology, biosafety, sustainable development and trade. By providing knowledge and opinions from a range of experts, it enables readers to bridge the knowledge and communication gaps that separate these fields so as to gain a better understanding of the policy issues that face developing countries. Few scientific developments have given rise to as much controversy as biotechnology: numerous groups are united in their opposition, expressing concern over environmental and health risks, impacts on rural livelihoods, the economic dominance of multinational companies and the ethical implications of crossing species boundaries. Among the supporters of the technology are those that believe in its potential to enhance food security, further economic development, increase productivity and reduce environmental pressures. This book takes up the question of the potential opportunities for development offered by the use of biotechnology, attempts to help stakeholders understand international processes to manage risks and benefits and highlights the flexibilities offered by the multilateral trading system to support biosafety and biotechnology. To purchase this book, visit <http://shop.earthscan.co.uk/ProductDetails/mcs/productID/473>

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS: ENSURING MUTUAL SUPPORTIVENESS BETWEEN THE WTO TRIPS AGREEMENT AND THE CBD. Edited by IUCN, ICTSD, CIEL, IDDRI and QUNO, November 2005. This publication aims to provide useful insights with a particular focus on the mandate of the WTO TRIPS Council and its interaction with other global biodiversity and intellectual property regimes and fora. In addition, the papers included evaluate mechanisms and give practical examples on how to implement disclosure requirements at the national level in a manner that is supportive of the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Although with different emphases, legal approaches and expectations, the authors recognise that disclosure requirements could contribute to the process of finding mechanisms and tools for achieving the CBD objectives, and constitute the most visible linkage yet proposed between the CBD and the international intellectual property regime. To access this booklet, visit http://www.iprsonline.org/resources/docs/Disclosure_req_book.pdf

Other Resources

WHAT'S THE CATCH? By WWF, December 2005. This report gives an update on the latest state of play in the WTO negotiations and how new WTO rules that support healthy fisheries and sustainable trade are within reach. The question is will governments really come home with their nets full? After years of study and discussion, governments are finally moving towards the adoption of international rules to curtail the practice of subsidizing overfishing. At the WTO, where the negotiations are underway, significant progress has been made towards a positive outcome. But the hardest work, both technically and politically, remains ahead. To access this report, visit http://assets.panda.org/downloads/what_s_the_catch_lowres.pdf

THE DIGITAL DUMP: EXPORTING RE-USE AND ABUSE TO AFRICA. By Jim Puckett, Sarah Westervelt, Richard Gutierrez and Yuka Takamiya (Basel Action Network (BAN), October 2005). This report reveals that large quantities of obsolete computers, televisions, mobile phones, and other used electronic equipment exported from USA and Europe to Lagos, Nigeria for "re-use and repair" are ending up gathering dust in warehouses or being dumped and burned, thereby creating serious health and environmental contamination from the toxic leachate and smoke. The report urges consumers of electronics, especially major consumers such as banks, transnationals, government agencies, universities, school systems, etc. to conduct due diligence for their entire waste chain. To access this report, visit <http://www.ban.org/BANreports/10-24-05/documents/TheDigitalDump.pdf>

OVERFISHING IN INLAND WATERS. By J. David Allan, Dr. Kirk Winemiller, Robin Abell, Zeb Hogan, Carmen Revenga, Brad Taylor and Robin Welcomme in *BioScience* 55 (12), December 2005. This paper warns that overfishing of inland waters is a "neglected crisis" that could lead to the disappearance of many species and adversely impact livelihoods. Such overfishing also has the potential to severely impact human health, particularly in developing countries. For example, fish consume the vectors of important diseases such as schistosomiasis. The authors conclude that there is ample evidence of the global importance of overfishing as a threat to inland water biodiversity. They recommend that management of inland fisheries should be guided by sustainability of yields, maintenance of biodiversity, protection from habitat degradation and other anthropogenic stressors, and provision of socioeconomic benefits to a broad spectrum of consumers. To access this paper, visit http://www.aibs.org/bioscience/current_issue.html

THE DERAILER'S GUIDE TO THE WTO. By Focus on the Global South, 2005. This book argues that the Doha Round negotiations are heading in a direction that will have disastrous impacts on food security and

sovereignty, industry, employment, the environment, livelihoods and the access of millions of people to essential services, technology and health-care. In this context, the book provides basic information about the WTO agreements and the issues on the negotiating table for the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. The authors assert that in order to protect our ability to shape development to meet the priorities of our communities and societies, it is imperative that a new trade deal is not reached in Hong Kong or in subsequent negotiations. To access this paper, visit <http://www.world-psi.org>

WORLD IN TRANSITION - FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY. By the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU), 2005. The recommendations for action set out in this report are based on an analysis of the systemic links between poverty (income poverty, disease, malnutrition, and lack of education, social stability and social capital) and environmental changes (climate change, lack of water resources, water pollution, soil degradation, loss of biological diversity and resources, and air pollution). This type of integrated analysis is nothing new; what is new, however, is the consistent linking of a holistic approach with the following key questions: which institutional arrangements offer ways of coping with these problems, and where must gaps be closed? To this end, this paper evaluates major international political processes and developed recommendations on policy coherence. To access this paper, visit http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2004_engl.pdf

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY FOR GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION. By Steven Were Omamo and Anwar Naseem (International Service for National Agricultural Research, November 2005). This paper argues that the largely unrealised potential of agricultural science and technology (S&T) in promoting growth and poverty reduction in developing countries results from deeply rooted incompatibility among policy environments, institutional arrangements, and micro conditions and behavior in agricultural research and development. Achieving growth and poverty reduction based

on greater agricultural productivity therefore means achieving greater compatibility among these three dimensions of agricultural innovation systems. Agricultural S&T policy analysis as presented here extends beyond the current boundaries of agricultural economics into such disciplines as public finance, public administration, political science, history, sociology, and psychology. To access this paper, visit <http://www.ifpri.org/divs/isnar/dp/papers/isnardp03.pdf>

THE DIGITAL DUMP: EXPORTING RE-USE AND ABUSE TO AFRICA. By Jim Puckett, Sarah Westervelt, Richard Gutierrez and Yuka Takamiya (Basel Action Network (BAN), October 2005). This report reveals that large quantities of obsolete computers, televisions, mobile phones, and other used electronic equipment exported from USA and Europe to Lagos, Nigeria for "re-use and repair" are ending up gathering dust in warehouses or being dumped and burned, thereby creating serious health and environmental contamination from the toxic leachate and smoke. The report urges consumers of electronics, especially major consumers such as banks, transnationals, government agencies, universities, school systems, etc. to conduct due diligence for their entire waste chain. To access this report, visit <http://www.ban.org/BANreports/10-24-05/documents/TheDigitalDump.pdf>

CAPITALISM AS IF THE WORLD MATTERS. By Jonathon Porritt, November 2005. As our great economic machine grinds relentlessly forward into a future of declining fossil fuel supplies, climate change and ecosystem failure, humanity, by necessity, is beginning to question the very structure of the economy that has provided so much wealth, and inequity, across the world. Can capitalism, as the only real economic game in town, be retooled to deliver a sustainable future? Porritt argues that indeed it can and it must as he lays out the framework for a new 'sustainable capitalism' that cuts across the political divide and promises a prosperous future of wealth, equity and ecosystem integrity. To purchase this book, visit <http://shop.earthscan.co.uk/ProductDetails/mcs/productID/640/groupID/2/categoryID/5/>

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