



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

Issue: 13 May 2005

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Biotechnology

CODEX SEES CLASH ON BIOTECH LABELLING

Participants at the 9-13 May meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, clashed on the need to label biotech foods that differed from their conventional counterparts. Some countries, including the major biotech producers, said that labelling should only be required for biotech foods that are substantially different, arguing that any additional labelling requirements for foods that are composed of, contain, or are derived from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) were unnecessary. The majority of Codex member, however, spoke out in favour of broader provisions that included process-based GM labelling, which they saw as necessary to enable consumer choice.

The debate, which echoed discussions at the last CCFL meeting (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 28 May 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-05-28/story2.htm>), revolved around the "Proposed Draft Guidelines for the Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering". The US, Mexico, Argentina, Paraguay, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines spoke out strongly against the guidelines as they currently stand, which allow for labelling of biotech foods that are (1) substantially different in terms of composition, nutritional value, or allergenic content, (2) composed of or containing GMOs, or (3) produced from but no longer containing GMOs. They would like to see the Guidelines' coverage restricted to the first category of GM foods. The US had argued in the past that process-based labelling would be misleading for consumers and imply that the food was unsafe. Mexico and Argentina, in particular, made extensive interventions in which they argued against the use of process-based labels, saying that the process of genetic modification in itself did not change the final product. Consumer groups questioned in particular the position of Australia and Thailand, given that these countries have set up extensive domestic GM labelling requirements for all foods where GM material can be detected.

However, approximately 30 countries supported the inclusion of process-based GM labelling, including the EU, Japan, Brazil, Malaysia, India, Kenya, Indonesia, Switzerland, Norway, New Zealand, Tunisia, Senegal, Swaziland, Panama, Turkey and Ghana. Patrick Deboyser, EC Minister-Counsellor, argued that there was a fundamental difference between GM and non-modified food. He noted that labelling GM food would not immediately raise

consumer concerns, and gave as examples the labelling of irradiated food and food additives. He also countered arguments that labelling would increase the cost of food, citing China as an example where labelled GM soy oil is still the cheapest. Several developing countries including Swaziland, Ghana, Kenya and a number of other African countries spoke up in support of labelling of all GM foods, noting that such labelling was essential for consumer information and choice. Labelling also facilitates the tracing of GMOs from the field to the final product, a process that environmentalists argue could be essential in recognising and mitigating damage that could result from GMOs.

The Chair of the session, Anne Mackenzie of Canada, acknowledged the "overwhelming support" for proceeding with discussions on GM labelling guidelines and, along with the EU, attempted to reach a compromise between the two positions. Canada proposed to split the guidelines between mandatory and optional labelling provisions. 'Mandatory' labels would apply to substantially different GM foods, while the guidelines would include as 'optional' labelling of GM foods that are different because they have been produced through genetic modification. While the majority of participants were in favour of including the process-based labelling provisions on the same level as the others, most participants agreed that such a split could move the twelve-year old debate forward. Mackenzie proposed, and the meeting agreed, to create a Working Group chaired by Canada to "reconstitute" the current guidelines, which will report back to the Committee next year. However, confusion remains on what 'reconstitute' will mean in practice, namely, whether the current guidelines will be used solely as a skeleton to be completely reworked, as per the hopes of the US and Argentina, or whether the Working Group will revert back to the current guidelines if no consensus can be found on a way to change them.

Other discussions at the CCFL meeting included new talks on quantitative labelling of ingredients (QUID) where Codex was considering standards on advertising and claims to nutritional and health benefits. While Consumers International argued, as it had in the case of GM labelling, that such labels would enhance the availability of information for consumer choice, the US and a number of industry associations said that decisions on advertising norms and standards should be made at the national

level to reflect legal and social influences in the different countries.

The Committee also decided against further work by Codex to clarify country of origin labelling standards. The current provisions state that such labelling is only necessary if "it would be confusing not to". Some Members felt that additional work on this issue was needed, including clarification of the process to determine the country of origin, particularly when a product is produced in several different countries in different stages. Questions were also raised about which situations would be sufficiently "confusing" to require labelling. Many countries suggested, however, that current Codex practice on the matter was adequate. The decision will now go to the Codex Commission in July for approval or revision.

Background

While the Codex guidelines, if passed, would not oblige all Codex members to comply with the labelling provisions, they would put countries choosing to label GM food in a stronger position if their regulations were ever challenged at the WTO. While Codex standards are only voluntary, the Codex Alimentarius Commission is recognised by the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) as the international organisation responsible for standard-setting related to food safety. WTO Members "shall base" their measures related to human and plant health on Codex's standards, guidelines or recommendations. Such measures "shall be deemed to be necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, and presumed to be consistent with the relevant provisions" of the SPS Agreement. The other two international standard-setting bodies recognised in the SPS Agreement are the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for plant health and the Office International de Epizooties (OIE) for animal health.

Additional Resources

CCFL meeting agenda:
http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/642/fl33_01e.pdf

Draft labelling guidelines:
ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/alnorm03/al03_22e.pdf

ICTSD Reporting; "United States tries to derail discussion on labelling of GM food," CI PRESS RELEASE, 12 May 2005; "CCFL Daily Bulletins," CI, 8-12 May 2005.

Chemicals

FIRST STOCKHOLM COP MOVES TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

In what was generally described as constructive meeting, the first Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 2-6 May, made substantial progress towards setting up the process for implementing the Convention. Parties, however, continued to struggle with the challenges developing countries face in put in practice the goals of the Convention.

The cost of environmentally-friendly production processes, and their feasibility in developing countries, featured in discussions on dioxins and furans -- POPs that are generated unintentionally from industrial processes. In an effort to minimise and eliminate releases of such POPs, a number of OECD countries prior to the meeting drew up a new set of Guidelines on Best Available Techniques and Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP). During discussions of the guidelines, however, developing countries noted that they did not have the resources for immediate implementation, and emphasised the need for the guidelines to take into account economic feasibility and to address the specific circumstances of developing countries, including social and economic concerns. However, the Secretariat to the Convention clarified that the Guidelines were not meant to be a standard for compliance, but rather describe the "highest point" that Parties to the Convention could strive towards.

The COP decision on this issue encourages Parties to the Convention to take the draft guidelines "into account", but stopped short of adopting them. Instead, the COP decided to set up an expert group, including both the experts who drafted the Guidelines and representatives from all regions, tasked with making the guidelines more user-friendly and ensuring that they do not require Parties to adopt the most expensive and innovative technologies and processes.

In a process that was expected to be difficult, participants agreed relatively quickly on the terms of reference for a new Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC) charged with deciding which new chemicals are added to list of Stockholm Convention POPs. To avoid discussions replicating

the heated debate seen last year on the composition of the Rotterdam Convention's Chemical Review Committee (CRC), delegates at the COP decided to adopt the CRC model in terms of size, geographic distribution, rotation of experts, and a number of details for the POPRC. Clifton Curtis, Director of WWF's Global Toxics Program, described the Committee as a "key element" of the Convention. "If it takes 5-10 years to get substances added we're going to be losing the battle," Clifton noted, suggesting that an efficient and transparent process was necessary to deal with the increasing number of new dangerous chemicals.

The POPRC already has four new chemicals to consider, namely, flame retardant pentabromodiphenyl ether nominated by Norway, a group of chemicals known as hexachlorocyclohexanes which include a pesticide called lindane from Mexico, and from the EU a pesticide named chlordecone and flame retardant hexabromobiphenyl. WWF has proposed a list of twenty chemicals for addition to the Convention, many of which are used in everyday products. Perfluorinated compounds, for example, are employed in the production of textiles, food packaging and non-stick coatings.

Parties also considered the best way to phase out DDT, one of the Stockholm POPs. They agreed to establish a DDT registrar, an exemptions application form for DDT, and asked the Convention Secretariat to continue work on reporting and evaluation of efforts to reduce DDT use. While DDT has been shown to lead to chronic ailments in humans and has other adverse environmental and health impacts, it is still widely used as an effective and low-cost weapon against the mosquitoes that transmit malaria, which kills over a million people around the world every year. The COP attempted to strike a balance between the harm that results from exposure to DDT and the damage caused by malaria, extending exception to the DDT ban for 25 countries that said that they needed to use it to control malaria.

Although the US has not yet ratified the Convention, the US deputy assistant secretary for environment said on the sidelines of the COP that the country hopes to be party to the treaty within a year.

Background

The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment through the reduction and elimination of the production and use of a list of highly hazardous chemicals called POPs. POPs share four characteristics: they are toxic; they are persistent, resisting normal processes that break down contaminants; they accumulate in the body fat of people and animals and are passed from mother to foetus; and they can travel great distances on wind and water currents. There are currently twelve chemicals on the Stockholm Convention list: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, toxaphene, PCBs, dioxins and furans.

Under paragraph 31(i) of the Doha Declarations, WTO Members in the Committee on Trade and Development Special Session have been negotiating on the "relationship between existing WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)". There appears to be widespread agreement among WTO Members to include the Stockholm Convention among the MEAs to be covered by the negotiated outcome.

Additional Resources

COP-1 documents:

http://www.pops.int/documents/meetings/cop_1/meeting_info.htm

Daily coverage provided by IISD Linkages:
<http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pops/cop1/>

Analysis and Description of the Convention by the WTO Secretariat:
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/stockholm_e.doc

Editorial by ENEP Director General Klaus Toepfer
<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=430&ArticleID=4786&cl=en>

ICTSD Reporting; ENB, Vol. 15 No. 117; "WWF Lists 20 Chemicals to be Added to POPs Treaty," WWF PRESS RELEASE, 28 April 2005; "Governments Meet to Eliminate 12 Persistent Organic Pollutants," ENS, 2 May 2005; "US Looking Next Year to Join Global Treaty Banning World's Most Toxic Chemicals," AP, 6 May 2005; "Despite Int'l Agreement, DDT Will Not Disappear Overnight," IPS, 5 May 2005.

In Brief

AG TRADE MAY WORSEN DESERTIFICATION, EXPERTS SAY

Joint efforts by national agricultural and environmental departments are necessary to address the impacts of agricultural trade on desertification

and poverty, according to a report released by Unisfera on 6 May. The report, entitled "From Boom To Dust? Agricultural Trade Liberalisation, Poverty, And Desertification In Rural Drylands: The Role Of UNCCD", analyses the impact of the Doha Round of trade negotiations on agriculture, land degradation and poverty in the context of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The report argues that although liberalisation may increase rural income and thereby enhance food security, it can also lead to increased vulnerability of small-scale developing country farmers. Agricultural trade affects desertification, the report says, through the intensification of production that often goes hand in hand with increased international trade. It argues that such intensification can also lead to the replacement of small-scale agriculture by intensive industrial monocultures with adverse effects on rural livelihoods. Whereas the change from subsistence to cash crops can increase incomes, it also enhances the competition for land and water and may force small-scale farmers either off their land or to employ unsustainable practices such as logging which in turn may lead to desertification. In order to counter these possible harmful effects, the report calls for targeted joint programmes involving environmental and agricultural expertise. National action programmes should be adapted to include concrete measures reflecting the challenges and opportunities generated by liberalisation of the agricultural sector. The report was presented at a side event of the third session of the UNCCD's Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-3).

To access the report visit

http://www.unisfera.org/?id_article=216&pu=1&ln=0

WIPO SEMINAR LOOKS AT BIODIVERSITY AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The relationship between intellectual property rights (IPRs), biodiversity and traditional knowledge (TK) -- and the role of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in enhancing this relationship -- were discussed by representatives from governments, civil society and the private sector at a session on biodiversity and TK, co-organised by WIPO as part of the International Seminar on Intellectual Property and Development from 2-3 May. The need to fully involve holders of TK in the process of shaping IP regimes, for WIPO to assume a more development-oriented strategy, and for greater cooperation between WIPO and other UN

agencies were suggested as ways for WIPO to support traditional knowledge. Graham Dutfield of the University of London suggested that WIPO's concern with financial incentives as a means to encourage innovation was less applicable to TK holders because their knowledge was not translatable into market values. He stressed that "any legal system of protection of traditional knowledge must accommodate the 'holistic nature' of traditional knowledge", alluding to traditional systems of IP protection that need to be recognised by the international community. Participants focused largely on traditional knowledge while recognising that its protection would aid in the conservation of biodiversity. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), said there should be better integration amongst the international organisations working on intellectual property and development, pointing to repeated rejection of requests from the CBD for observer status at the Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) as indicative of the resistance of international organisations to incorporate biodiversity concerns as a core value.

The session was one of six topics discussed at the International Seminar, co-organised by WIPO, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the WTO. The Seminar was part of a set of initiatives to move forward the discussions on a 'development agenda' in WIPO, initiated by the last WIPO General Assembly in response to a September 2004 proposal by fourteen developing countries for the 'Establishment of a Development Agenda for WIPO' (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 8 October 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-10-08/story1.htm>).

For further information on the Seminar, see <http://www.wipo.int/meetings/2005/isipd/en/>.

ICTSD reporting.

WTO FOOD AID DISCIPLINES COULD INCREASE HUNGER, WARNS UN

In a speech to developing country WTO delegates, UN World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director James Morris on 9 May warned that improperly drafted rules on food aid could contribute to hunger in the world's poorest

countries. The WFP was "absolutely opposed" to limiting food aid to cash, he said, a proposal that had been put forward during WTO agricultural liberalisation negotiations on 13-18 April by the ECU, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and Thailand. In negotiations mandated by the WTO July Package on food aid that causes "commercial displacement", these countries argued that food aid should be largely restricted to cash grants to prevent it from being used as a channel for disposing of agricultural surpluses generated from subsidised production. Instead, new disciplines would require purchases to be made locally or in the region where the aid is to be given in order to avoid hurting local production. While the EC says that these disciplines would halt US exports of surplus subsidised products in the guise of bilateral aid programmes, the US counters that EU agricultural subsidies are the real problem. The cash grant proposal is supported by some recipient countries such as Uganda, which have seen poor farmers displaced from local markets by subsidised agricultural surpluses that entered the country as food aid. Morris, however, said that judgements on the legitimacy of food aid should be based on what it is used for, such as for emergencies or for vulnerable groups, and not the source of the aid. "The simple truth is that food aid commitments and deliveries are nose-diving while WTO is discussing their disciplines", he noted.

"WFP Chief Urges WTO To Support Food Aid In Doha Round," WFP PRESS RELEASE, 9 May 2005; "Move by WTO 'is threat to food aid,'" FT, 9 May 2005; "UN Comments On WTO Food Aid Controls," AP, 9 May 2005; "UN raises eyebrows as WTO farm talks," ECONOMIC TIMES, 10 May 2005.

PARIS MINI-MINISTERIAL REVIVES OPTIMISM ABOUT WTO NEGOTIATIONS

Shortly after WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi warned WTO Members attending a 'mini-ministerial' gathering in Paris on 4 May that negotiations to liberalise trade were behind schedule, a breakthrough compromise was reached on agricultural talks at the Paris meeting. The WTO negotiations had been held up for several weeks due to divisions over 'ad valorem equivalent' (AVE) conversion, which had stalled agricultural liberalisation talks. AVE conversion sets out a process to change agricultural tariffs charged on a per-unit quantitative basis into tariffs applied as a percentage of the price of the product. The G-10 countries together with the EU had disagreed with agriculture exporters such as the US on how to

determine prices for such products, but were able to reach a compromise using two different import price databases. Despite the agriculture breakthrough, participants at the Paris gathering agreed that a great deal remained to be done before July, when Members had hoped to have some draft wording available as 'first approximations' of a trade liberalisation deal that Members may then flesh out and adopt at the WTO's Sixth Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December. Increased work, they suggested, was needed in agriculture as well as other areas such as non-agricultural market access for industrial tariff reduction, and services.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO ministers reach agreement on tariffs issue," AFP, 4 May 2005; "Key WTO Members Clinch Deal on Ag Tariff Conversions, Avoiding Setback to Doha Talks," WTO REPORTER, 5 May 2005; "Progress at last," THE ECONOMIST, 5 May 2005.

FAO STUDY SURVEYS BIOTECH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

A new study released on 6 May by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the status of research and application of crop biotechnologies in developing countries shows that while several developing countries have well-developed biotech research and development programs, there are several gaps that prevent developing countries from using the technology to its full advantage. The study on "Status of Research and Application of Crop Biotechnologies in Developing Countries: A preliminary Assessment", which is based on the FAO's extensive database of biotechnology research in developing countries (the FAO-BioDec), finds that while non-agricultural biotechnology is used widely in developing countries in the form of biopesticides, biofertilizers, fermentation, tissue culture and crop disease diagnostic techniques. Genetically modified (GMO) crops, however, are unevenly distributed geographically and are less popular in Africa, Eastern Europe and the Near East.

Many of the GM crops that have been field-tested and/or commercialised in developing countries are from developed countries and focus on just a few traits (such as herbicide tolerance or insect pest resistance) and a few crops (such as maize, cotton and soybean). The study argues that biotech products that meet the needs of developing countries, such as through addressing the problem of drought or post-harvest losses of crops, are essential. It points to research in developing

countries on other crops, such as banana, cassava, cowpea, plantain, rice and sorghum, and on traits relevant for food security, such as food quality and ability to resist non-living threats called "abiotic stresses" such as droughts and low soil fertility. The presence of national legal frameworks on biosafety and appropriate models for intellectual property rights for access to GM technology are seen as essential to ensure that developing countries reap the benefits of biotechnology.

The FAO study is available at <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/008/y5800e/y5800e00.pdf>

The FAO-BioDec (FAO Biotechnology in Developing Countries) Database is available at http://www.fao.org/biotech/inventory_admin/dep/default.asp

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

16-27 May, New York, USA: FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS. For further information contact Ms. Luz Aragon; tel (1) 212 963 1393; fax: (1) 212 963 4260; e-mail: aragonm@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

16-27 May, Bonn, Germany: 22ND SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC). Following an agreement at the tenth Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2004, SB-22 will be preceded by a "Seminar of Government Experts," which will seek to promote an informal exchange of information on actions concerning mitigation and adaptation, and on policies and measures adopted by governments supporting implementation of existing commitments under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol. For further information contact the UNFCCC Secretariat, tel: 49-228-815-1000; fax: 49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

17-19 May, New Delhi, India: MEETING OF THE CITES TIGER ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE. This meeting is organised by the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). For further information contact the Secretariat, tel: (+41 22) 917-8139; fax: (+41 22) 797-3417; email: cites@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

17-25 May, Geneva, Switzerland: 15TH MEETING OF THE CITES PLANTS COMMITTEE AND 21ST MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE. The Animals Committee and Plants Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will address the resolutions and decisions directed to them by the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties of CITES in Bangkok, Thailand, in October. As well they will undertake periodic reviews of species, in order to ensure appropriate categorization in the CITES Appendices; advise when certain species are subject to unsustainable trade and recommending remedial action; and draft new resolutions on animal and plant matters for consideration by the Parties at the next COP, to be held in the Netherlands in 2007. For further information contact the CITES Secretariat, tel: +41-22-917-8139; fax: 797-3417; email: cites@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.cites.org>

24-27 May, Seremban, Malaysia: REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON FOOD SAFETY FOR THE ASIA AND PACIFIC, PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO PROMOTE FOOD SAFETY. This Conference is part of a series of regional meetings that FAO and WHO are convening to meet the needs of member countries for policy guidance and capacity building in food safety. This Asian and Pacific Conference will work to: address and facilitate discussion on issues important to all countries of the Asian and Pacific region and identify practical actions and capacity building recommendations in support of food safety; identify opportunities for regional cooperation related to agriculture, agribusiness, post-harvest production, food processing, food trade, public health, and consumer protection; provide a platform for broad co-operation and mutual understanding; promote increased exchange of information at all levels to improve transparency and capacity building and to more effectively communicate with consumers, producers, and industries to improve food safety. For further information contact the FAO, fax: +39 06 57054593; email: Asian-Pacific-Food-Safety@fao.org; Internet: http://www.foodsafetyforum.org/asian/contacts_en.asp

25-27 May, Montreal, Canada: FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON LIABILITY AND REDRESS UNDER THE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL. This meeting is organised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat. For further information contact the CBD Secretariat, tel: 1-514-288-2220; fax: 1-514-288-6588; email: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/default.aspx>

25-27 May, Almaty, Kazakhstan SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AARHUS CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS This meeting is organised by the UN

Economic Commission for Europe. It is expected to adopt a decision aimed at further developing the application of the Convention with respect to genetically modified organisms. For further information contact the Aarhus Convention Secretariat; tel: 41-22-917-4226; fax: 41-22-907-0107; e-mail: public.participation@unece.org; Internet: <http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2005/pp/wg.1/ece.mp.pp.wg.1.2005.3.e.pdf>

25 May - 4 June, Paris, France: THIRD SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF EXPERTS ON THE NEGOTIATION ON THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT CONVENTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL CONTENTS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS. The session, organised by UNESCO, is a follow-up to the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (31 January - 11 February 2005), during which the experts recommended that the third session be convened with a view to completing the remaining work on the negotiation of the draft. For further information contact Moe Chiba, tel: (+33 1) 4568-4316; fax: 4568-5597; email: m.chiba@unesco.org; Internet: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=26852&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Other Upcoming Events

20-24 June, Ulsan, Republic of Korea: 57TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION. Delegates to the annual meeting of the IWC will continue to discuss the moratorium on commercial whaling, whale sanctuaries, the Revised Management Scheme, whale killing methods and other welfare issues, as well as financial and administrative issues. For further information contact the IWC Secretariat, tel: (+44 1223) 233-971; fax: 232-971; email: secretariat@iwcoffice.org; Internet: <http://www.iwcoffice.org/meetings/meeting2005.htm>

27 June - 1 July, Montreal, Canada: EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL/TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP. This meeting is organised by the Secretariat to the Ozone conference and will seek to resolve disagreements over exemptions allowing methyl bromide use in 2006. For further information contact the Secretariat, tel: (+1 254) 262-3850; fax: 262-3601; email: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone>

27 June - 1 July, Geneva, Switzerland: THIRD PART OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON THE NEGOTIATION OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER AGREEMENT, 1994. This meeting will continue negotiations on the new Tropical Timber Agreement which is set to expire at the end of 2006. For further information contact the UNCTAD Secretariat,

Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Service, tel: (+41 22) 917-5809; fax: 917-0056; email: correspondence@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=3323&lang=1>

6-10 July, Ravello, Italy: MEETING ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY: TEN YEARS AFTER. This meeting is being organised by the International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research. The event will focus on, inter alia, the impact of agricultural biotechnology on international trade, public acceptance of biotechnology, the impact of science, intellectual property rights, biotechnology and developing countries, and regulation of biotechnology. For further information contact Vittorio Santaniello, fax: (+39 06) 72-595-721; email: icabr@economia.uniroma2.it; Internet: <http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr2005/Default.asp>

16-24 June, New York, US: MEETINGS OF STATES PARTIES TO THE 1982 UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA. For further information, contact the Secretary of the Meeting of States Parties, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, tel: (+1 212) 963-3972; fax: 963-5847; email: doalos@un.org.

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 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 hbaumuller@ictsd.ch.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TRADE IN INDIA. By Kakali Mukhopadhyay and Debesh Chakraborty in the International Trade Journal 19 (2), Summer 2005. This article aims at contributing to the environment and trade debate by evaluating the impacts of international trade on emissions of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides for the Indian

economy during 90s using input-output techniques. The authors have constructed an index of pollution terms of trade. Results show that the indices are below 100, indicating that India produces goods that are more environmentally friendly than goods it imports, thus challenging the pollution haven hypothesis for India. The article also offers explanations for these results.

REGULATING BIOPROSPECTING: INSTITUTIONS FOR DRUG RESEARCH, ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING. By Padmashree Gehl Sampath (May 2005). Bioprospecting, or the search for useful biochemical compounds and genes in nature, has been the focus of international negotiations for more than a decade, yet the debate on the terms for access to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and benefit-sharing is far from settled. This book examines the optimal property rights structures and institutional mechanisms for regulating bioprospecting for drug research. Focusing on the economics of contracts, it shows that the rights exchanged are complementary at each stage of drug discovery and the development of genetic resources. To purchase this book visit <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/2005/regulatingbioprospecting.html>

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GMOS AND GM PRODUCTS: NATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS. By Simonetta Zarrilli (UNCTAD, May 2005). The proliferation of domestic biosafety schemes and the related authorization, labeling, traceability and documentation obligations are likely to further complicate international trade in genetically modified agricultural products. Agro-biotechnology is a particularly challenging phenomenon, particularly for developing countries as they attempt to establish biosafety frameworks while reconciling the expectations of their main trade partners. This paper looks at the WTO-compatibility of the Cartagena Protocol, national biosafety frameworks, and the importance of reconciling trade interests with the need to improve production of food and maintain a commitment to environmental preservation. To access this paper visit <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=5831&intItemID=2068&lang=1>

GLOBAL TRACEABILITY AND LABELING REQUIREMENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY-DERIVED PRODUCTS: IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES. By the USDA Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture (United States Department of Agriculture, May 2005). This report examines the implications of the current different mandatory biotechnology labeling and traceability requirements in other countries on the US agricultural food and feed supply chain, and how elements of that supply chain are responding to these requirements. After a global review of the different labeling requirements of countries, the report focuses on the trade and supply chain impacts and implications of the varying labeling

and/or traceability frameworks in place. To access this report visit http://www.usda.gov/event_15.xml

AGRICULTURAL TRADE POLICY MADE EASY: MAKING SENSE OF TRADE POLICY FOR FARMERS, POLICYMAKERS AND THE PUBLIC. By Andrew Stoeckel and George Reeves (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2005). This article analyses the barriers to international trade in agricultural products in order to enhance understanding of issues related to agricultural trade policy at a multilateral level.

To access this report please visit: http://www.intecon.com.au/publications/CIE-Agricultural_trade_policy_made_easy.pdf

DEPENDENCY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON NON-AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES: CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES. By the South Centre (April 2005). The purpose of this paper is to identify the extent of the dependency of developing countries on non-agricultural commodities, to identify the main characteristics of this dependency, and to point to the challenges faced by these dependent developing countries, both in the trade arena and in connection with issues that are not trade-related. To access the paper visit http://www.southcentre.org/tadp_webpage/research_papers/commodities_project/devg_cntries_nonag_comm_apr05.doc

CLIMATE CHANGE, REGULATORY POLICY AND THE WTO: HOW CONSTRAINING ARE TRADE RULES? By Andrew Green in the Journal of International Economic Law 8 (1, 2005), pp. 143-189. Climate change has come to be seen as a major global environmental challenge. This paper examines the extent to which WTO rules constrain countries' ability to address climate change through domestic regulatory policies such as standards, labels, voluntary agreements and domestic emissions trading programs. The paper argues that existing WTO rules provide members with some scope to take action on climate change. However, they do constrain domestic regulatory policy, and the debate about future institutional changes will be central to how effectively global environmental issues such as climate change will be addressed.

To access this report visit: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=702444

FOOD AID OR HIDDEN DUMPING? SEPARATING WHEAT FROM CHAFF. Oxfam International (April 2005). In a world prone to natural and human disasters, where 850 million people still suffer from hunger, food aid can sometimes be a crucial lifeline. However, food aid has also been used for less noble aims, including to dump surplus production and promote donor country exports. This type of food aid hurts poor farmers and distorts international trade. Strong disciplines against abuse of food aid must be agreed as part of the Doha Round negotiations at the WTO. To

access the report visit http://oxfam.org/eng/pdfs/bp71_food_aid_240305.pdf

HARD RED SPRING WHEAT AT A GENETIC CROSSROAD: RURAL PROSPERITY OR CORPORATE HEGEMONY? By R. Dennis Olson in Controversies In Science And Technology: Volume 1: From Maize To Menopause. Edited by Daniel Lee Kleinman, Abby J. Kinchy and Jo Handelsman (January 2005). Shortly after biotech company Monsanto submitted applications in 2002 to release its genetically modified Roundup Ready wheat, the company publicly pledged that it would not commercially release the world's first GM wheat until it was accepted on the market and approved by regulatory bodies in both the US and Canada. After strong resistance from the wheat industry, Monsanto decided in June 2004 to withdraw its application for regulatory approval for GM wheat. This turn-around has strong implications for consumers and industry interested in the biotechnology debate. To access the report visit <http://www.agobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=70055>

MONSANTO V SCHMEISER: A LANDMARK DECISION CONCERNING FARMER LIABILITY AND TRANSGENIC CONTAMINATION. By Philippe Cullet in Journal of Environmental Law (2005) Vol. 17 Number1. This case comment analyses the landmark decision of the Canadian Supreme Court in Monsanto v Schmeiser. The first part of the article reproduces some of the most significant sections of the Supreme Court judgment. This is followed by an analysis of the judgement from the point of view of farmers' rights, intellectual property rights and biosafety. To access this article please visit: http://www.ielrc.org/publications_E_ref.php?publicationCode=a0503

THE CONSEQUENCES OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE LIBERALIZATION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN GENUINE BENEFITS AND FALSE HOPES. By Jean-Christophe Bureau, Sébastien Jean and Alan Matthews (IIIS Discussion paper, April 2005). This discussion paper analyses the impact of agricultural trade liberalisation on developing countries and looks at the scope for special and differential treatment in future multilateral trade negotiations in the area of agriculture. To access this report please visit: <http://www.tcd.ie/iiis/Discussion%20Paper%20series%20html/IIISDP73.htm>

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

EDUCATING RURAL PEOPLE IS ESSENTIAL FOR ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM GOALS. FAO has launched a new online education tool kit on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, aimed at people whose work consists in training the rural poor in the fields of food and nutrition, local knowledge systems, agrobiodiversity, food quality and safety, rural finance, marketing, forestry,

fisheries, communication and other related issues. To use this toolkit please visit

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL (FoEI). Based in Amsterdam, Netherlands. FoEI, a global network of 71 member organisations campaigning for environmentally and socially sustainable societies, is currently seeking an http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPtktoolkit_en.htm

International Coordinator who will also function as the director of the international secretariat (IS). The person will be responsible for membership development, campaign coordination, networking and financing as well as internal and external communication. Applicants are requested to send a letter and resume before the 23rd of May to: FoEI, Personnel Manager, PO Box 19199, 1000 GD Amsterdam, or by email to finance@foei.org.

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, Andrew Stevenson and Trineesh Biswas. 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 2005 through the support of the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (BUWAL). ISSN 1682-0843

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