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TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE
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LEAD STORIES

EU PRESENTS REVISED SERVICES REQUESTS TO WTO MEMBERS

In an effort to give impetus to the ongoing WTO services negotiations, the EU has moved forward in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) request and offer process by presenting a revised compilation of requests for market-opening bilaterally to 103 WTO Members. The revised requests, presented on 25 January, contain a list of the new sectors in which the EU seeks the removal of barriers to the entry and operation of its service providers.

The EU aims to raise the level of ambition Members have shown so far in the services negotiations to match that for the talks on agriculture and industrial goods. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson had indicated that the wide differences between requests for market access and actual offers are unsustainable, saying that the overall quality of offers must be improved if the negotiations are to be successfully completed.

Wide sectoral coverage, repeated commitments to sustainable development

The revised EU requests cover various GATS sectors and sub-sectors including professional services, telecommunications, postal and courier services, distribution, construction and related engineering services, financial services, environmental services, tourism, news agency services, and energy services. EU officials describe most of the sectors covered as important for the improvement of the essential infrastructure needed to generate economic development. The EU explicitly indicates that its requests "do not seek commitments that would dismantle public services," nor do they aim to "privatise state owned enterprises." The EU has said that its inclusion of environmental services reflected its desire for liberalisation to be supportive of sustainable development. The EU emphasised that it did not make requests in sectors sensitive to the public interest such as health and audiovisuals; the US was the only country to receive a request on education (for privately-funded higher education services).

In its compilation of requests, the EU reaffirmed the right to regulate as well as the need for countries to develop transparent regulatory regimes in a manner that does not hinder trade.

The EU emphasised that it had consulted with civil society actors while preparing its new requests, was committed to continuing these consultations, and welcomed any input to define its negotiating positions.

Liberalisation in poor countries

The EU said that its requests took into account the national policy objectives and developmental levels of poor countries, and thus would help facilitate the increased participation of developing countries in global services trade. The EU contends that GATS liberalisation is relevant to development, arguing that it provides an opportunity for all countries to attract stable long-term investment to improve their development-related infrastructure.

A developing country delegate reacted cautiously to the EU requests, saying "we want to see... the components in their revised offer, as well as in other fields such as agriculture, to see how deep [the EU's] level of engagement [is]."

Some special treatment for LDCs

The EU has requested least-developed countries (LDCs) to only make offers in two of five pre-selected services sectors, including: telecommunications, financial, transport, construction or environmental services. While LDCs are not obliged to make offers, the EU believes that the sectors in which it has requested market access are vital for improving LDCs' trading capacities. Some WTO Members see in the optional approach presented by the EU a degree of flexibility in line with the modalities for LDCs approved in 2003 (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 10 July 2003).

Deadlines

Only about 50 countries have presented offers thus far. In December 2004, a senior WTO official said that a "huge number" of offers were still missing from the negotiations (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 8 December 2004). Some of the developing countries central to the success of the round are among those that are yet to make initial offers.

The current services negotiations were originally supposed to end by 1 January 2005 as part of the Doha Round single undertaking. The July Package specifies that Members should table revised offers by May 2005.

ICTSD reporting; "Services: EU submits revised Services Offer in WTO negotiations; Mandelson calls progress slow", WTO REPORTER, 27 January 2005; "Summary if the EC's Revised request to third countries in the services negotiations under the DDA", TRADEINFO EC, 27 January 2005; "EU puts forward revised WTO requests on services", EU BUSINESS 25 January 2005; "EU tables revised request in services negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda of the WTO", TRADE ISSUES EC, 25 January 2005.

KEY MEMBERS AGREE TO STEP UP PACE OF WTO NEGOTIATIONS

Trade ministers from influential WTO Member countries agreed at a 29 January 'mini-ministerial' to focus on five key negotiating areas in order to make "concrete progress" in the ongoing Doha Round trade liberalisation talks before the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference scheduled for December this year. However, Members appeared to differ on what exactly is necessary in order for this progress to happen.

WTO officials said that the purpose of the afternoon-long informal meeting -- held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and attended by representatives from around 25 Members, including the US, the EU, India, Brazil, Canada, and Australia -- was not to make specific decisions, but rather to demonstrate that Members have the political will to bring the round to conclusion.

The current talks have progressed in fits and starts since they were resurrected following the collapse of the September 2003 Cancun Ministerial Conference by the 'July Package' framework agreement in August 2004. Just before the 29 January meeting, WTO Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi had expressed his concern that Members had not made enough progress, failing to agree on the shape of a formula for reducing tariffs and subsidies. He said that whatever work had been completed thus far was not "enough to guarantee that Hong Kong will be the penultimate step to complete the round in 2006."

Mini-ministerial agrees to focus on five areas

According to a statement on the gathering prepared by host Joseph Deiss, Switzerland's minister for economic affairs, the countries present agreed to direct particular attention to: modalities for agriculture; a formula for reducing tariffs on industrial goods; market-opening offers in services trade talks; progress on trade facilitation and strengthening WTO rules (such as anti-dumping disciplines); and a "proper reflection of the development dimension" of the negotiations. The ministers also agreed on the need for greater ministerial

involvement throughout the year, and for the talks to "move from the clarification phase to real negotiations" on all issues.

Members agreed that Geneva-based negotiators should develop draft texts by the WTO's summer break in August 2005. Deiss said that negotiators would then "narrow down differences," leaving only a few "major political issues" to be dealt with at the December Ministerial Conference.

Members disagree on what is required for progress

Although ministers at Davos generally agreed that it was possible to step up the pace of the negotiations, their statements before and after the meeting suggested that they have very different views on what is necessary to move the talks forward.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson pointed to the EU's agreement to eliminate agricultural export subsidies, arguing that this constituted a major concession that put the ball firmly back in the court of the larger developing economies. He called on countries such as India and China to lower tariffs on industrial goods and to offer special market access to least-developed countries (LDCs), declaring "we need... more people to put things into the round, not just take out of it."

Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath rejected Mandelson's assessment, arguing that the promise to end agricultural export subsidies was merely one aspect of "reducing the artificiality" of agricultural prices. He said that India would require a proposed formula for reducing tariffs on industrial goods before negotiating liberalisation sector-by-sector. Furthermore, he warned that any attempts by Members such as the EU to create a category of 'advanced developing countries' could "delay the Hong Kong decision process."

Nath went on to emphasise that the services negotiations deserve as much attention as those on agriculture and industrial goods. As a result of its booming information technology sector and large numbers of trained professional workers, India stands to gain more from services liberalisation, especially through temporary permits for its workers to work in rich countries, than it does from improved access to developed-country agricultural markets. Many Members are disappointed with the depth of the market-opening offers to date.

LDCs, for their part, are concerned that reduced tariffs and agricultural subsidies will render insignificant their preferential access to rich-country markets.

Upcoming meetings; mini-ministerial, other gatherings planned

In spite of these differences, Members agreed that the mini-ministerial was a success. Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, coordinator of the G-20 bloc of major developing countries, spoke positively of the meeting, as did Supachai.

Several mini-ministerials will be held this year to discuss the issue areas singled out at Davos. Kenya will host one such meeting from 2-4 March. Another will be held during the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ministerial summit in Paris from 3-4 May. China and Korea have offered to hold mini-ministerials during the second half of the year.

The G-20 countries, which held a separate meeting in Davos ahead of the mini-ministerial, will meet in New Delhi on 18 March to outline a common strategy for the year's trade talks.

The WTO's Trade Negotiations Committee will meet in Geneva on 14 February to review progress in the talks.

ICTSD reporting; "Trade heads urged to seek deal," GUARDIAN, 29 January 2005; "India against new category of developed countries," PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, 31 January 2005; "G-20 meet in India to chalk out WTO strategy" WEBINDIA123.COM; 1 February 2005; "Ministers seek to bring new life to Doha trade liberalisation talks," FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 January 2005; "Davos meet recharges Doha Round of WTO talks," ASIA TIMES, 1 February 2005; "Key WTO members agree to accelerate global trade talks," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 29 January 2005; "Trade Ministers Issue Political Call For Doha Deal by '06 at Davos Meeting," WTO REPORTER, 1 February 2005; "WTO chief urges speed on trade pact," TAIPEI TIMES, 29 January 2005; "India presses for trade talks to keep Doha alive," INDIAN EXPRESS, 29 January 2005; "World Trade Organisation members try to spur talks on liberalisation treaty," CANADIAN PRESS, 31 January 2005; "Trade ministers commit more firepower to Doha," 29 January 2005.

OTHER STORIES

US PRESSURES GUATEMALA TO STRENGTHEN DATA PROTECTION RULES

The US government has threatened to delay congressional proceedings on the Dominican Republic-

Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) because of US concerns regarding a new intellectual property law overwhelmingly passed by the Guatemalan parliament in December 2004. The Bush administration claims that the new law eliminates the five-year protection period for clinical trial data, and has threatened to delay congressional consideration of the DR-CAFTA unless Guatemala changes it.

Data protection requirements criticised

Critics of such data protection requirements say that they make it harder for generic drugs to become commercially available, since they delay generic drug manufacturers' access to the clinical trial data that brand-name drug producers use to receive marketing approval for their drugs. Generic drug makers need this data to prove that their products are safe as well as biologically equivalent to the brand-name originals.

US trade officials say that the five-year data protection period is necessary to uphold Guatemala's obligations under DR-CAFTA. However, several legislators from the opposition Democratic party have argued that pushing for the five-year protection violated the United States Trade Representative's (USTR's) congressional mandate to uphold the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health. They contend that the obligation to protect data exclusivity could hinder Guatemala's ability to issue compulsory licenses during a health emergency.

Guatemala likely to follow in DR's footsteps

Guatemalan President Oscar Berger has moved to assuage the USTR's concerns, promising to "correct this problem... so that Guatemala will be in compliance" with its DR-CAFTA obligations. Such a move would give the green light to US congressional proceedings on the seven-country trade bloc.

In late 2004, the Bush administration had threatened to delay congressional consideration of its CAFTA-linked free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic because of another law it found objectionable. However, the issue became moot when the Caribbean island nation repealed the offending import duty on beverages made with high fructose corn sweeteners (see BRIDGES Weekly, 27 October 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-10-27/inbrief.htm>). The Dominican Senate voted on 21 December to repeal the contentious 25 percent tax; President Leonel Fernández signed the legislation into law in early January.

The US signed the CAFTA in May 2004 with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The Dominican Republic joined the pact in

August 2004 after a separate negotiation. US business lobby groups that support CAFTA have been urging Congress to move to ratify the agreement as soon as the disagreement with Guatemala is resolved.

ICTSD reporting; "Dominican Republic President Officially Repeals HFCS Tax," AGPROFESSIONAL, 13 January 2005.

IN BRIEF

FIRST PHASE OF CAN-MERCOSUR AGREEMENT ENTERS INTO FORCE

A free trade agreement between Colombia, Argentina and Uruguay came into effect on 1 February as the first step towards a wider trade agreement between the Andean Community (CAN) and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) signed at the end of 2004.

Regional news sources say that the agreement will be enforced among Colombia, Argentina and Uruguay since only these three countries have submitted the necessary notifications to the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). It is expected that the other two full members of MERCOSUR -- Brazil and Uruguay -- as well as the four remaining members of the CAN -- Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela -- will submit their notifications in the coming weeks, putting into place the broader agreement between the two South American trade blocs.

"Acuerdo CAN-Mercosur rige para Colombia desde mañana," CM&, 31 January 2005; "Arranca el acuerdo de CAN con MERCOSUR," PORTAFOLIO.COM.CO, 31 January 2005; "Acuerdo CAN-Mercosur rige para Colombia desde hoy," EL ESPECTADOR, 31 January 2005.

HONG KONG CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS PREPARE FOR DECEMBER WTO MINISTERIAL

Civil society organisations have started preparing for activities leading up to and surrounding the WTO's sixth Ministerial Conference, which will be held there from 13-18 December this year. Domestic non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, campaign groups, grassroots organisations and student associations will meet with their overseas counterparts on 26-27

February in Hong Kong. At the gathering, they will outline a strategy for the upcoming months and launch an 'International Coordination Network' that will coordinate local and international protests surrounding the December WTO summit.

International cooperation would be accompanied by local education efforts, said Suzanne Wu Sui Shan, an officer at the Hong Kong People's Alliance on the WTO. Civil society organisations will organise workshops and seminars throughout the year to inform people about the effects of WTO rules and bilateral trade agreements, particularly the one between mainland China and Hong Kong.

Shan expressed concern that the "sanctioned protest area" will be small and isolated. She also worried that the Hong Kong police's statement that they will try to prevent "troublemakers" from entering the former British colony during the Ministerial might mean that they will deny entry to members of partner groups. Her organisation has asked the Hong Kong authorities to facilitate their collaborators' entry. "Police cooperation," she added, "could help keep things like traffic smooth, and help organisations get their message across."

ICTSD reporting; "Protesters meet in HK ahead of WTO gathering," FINANCIAL TIMES, 1 February 2005

HELSINKI PROCESS ADVOCATES FAIR GLOBALISATION

On 27 January, the Helsinki Process released three reports on governing globalisation, mobilising resources for the Millennium Development Goals, and security issues in the 21st century. The reports were released simultaneously at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos and at the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre. Among the key recommendations in the report on governing globalisation was the establishment of an expanded G-8 -- a "G-20" including both developing and developed country members -- to help bridge the North-South gap and provide "coherent and legitimate global leadership" and global economic stewardship. Other recommendations flowing from the Helsinki Process included greater involvement of parliamentarians in supervising global economic management, as well as a joint accountability report by the heads of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO.

The Helsinki Process was created by the Finnish Government in co-operation with the government of Tanzania in 2002 to promote democracy and equality in international relations. It is governed by a 22-member Helsinki Group, which is co-chaired by the Finnish and Tanzanian Foreign Ministers and seeks to "crystallise ideas on how to improve the present governance of

globalisation." The Helsinki Process includes three "tracks": new approaches to global problem solving; the global economic agenda; and human security. These tracks are tasked with developing feasible, practical and strategic policy responses to the lack of fair and effective global governance, financing for the Millennium Development Goals, and addressing new and emerging human security concerns.

Access the report "Governing Globalization - Globalizing Governance: New Approaches to Global Problem Solving" [here](#).

ICTSD reporting.

FTAs LAMBASTED AT WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

The continuing proliferation of bilateral and regional free trade agreements (FTAs), especially those between rich countries and poor ones, came under heavy criticism at the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil from 26-31 January.

NGOs, union members, academics, farmers, and parliamentarians blasted the FTAs for making developing countries accept commitments far deeper than those required by WTO rules.

The Africa Trade Network (ATN), an umbrella organisation of African civil society groups, organised several panel meetings on the ongoing Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations between African, Pacific, and Caribbean countries and the EU. The ATN used these sessions to promote the "Stop EPA Campaign," which it runs along with organisations including Oxfam International, ActionAid, and Third World Network.

The Porto Alegre gathering confirmed that the next World Social Forum will be held in Africa in 2007.

ENDA-Tiers Monde; Flamme d'Afrique.

WTO IN BRIEF

SUGAR DISPUTE: BRAZIL, THAILAND, AUSTRALIA FILE COUNTER APPEALS

On 25 January, Brazil, Australia and Thailand, co-complainants in the dispute against the EU's subsidized

sugar export regime filed separate appeals at the WTO contesting the 15 October panel ruling on the case. The appeals focus on the panel's decision not to rule on their claims that the EU's subsidies for sugar exports were in violation of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Agreement). The panel had declined to rule on the matter because it found that its findings under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) rendered such a ruling unnecessary and because the parties had not sufficiently substantiated their subsidiary claims relating to the SCM Agreement (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 20 October 2004).

The SCM Agreement requires prohibited subsidies to be withdrawn 'without delay.' The co-complainants want to take advantage of this provision to shorten the time frame within which the EU has to comply with the ruling. The EU itself had already appealed the panel report -- which found that the EU was subsidising sugar exports beyond the level it had formally notified to the WTO -- on 13 January 2005.

Trade observers point out that if Brazil and the other complainants win this appeal, it would put pressure on the EU to expedite its sugar reform plan which is still under consideration (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 1 December 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-12-01/story5.htm>). This, they argue, could have implications for the adjustment mechanisms that the EU proposes to put in place for those African Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) whose economies are dependent on preferential access for sugar to the EU market (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 26 January 2005).

ICTSD reporting; "Seeking Action, Australia, Brazil, Thailand File Counter-Appeals in WTO Sugar Dispute," *WTO Reporter*, 28 January 2005; "EU sugar policy under fresh pressure at WTO" *Reuters*, 27 January 2005.

US-RUSSIA MEETING SEEKS TO EXPEDITE RUSSIA'S WTO ACCESSION

On 31 January, Russia's Trade Minister German Gref met with US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick in Zürich to discuss a bilateral deal on Russia's WTO accession. Before joining the WTO, Russia is required to clinch bilateral deals with any Members that request them. The meeting, which lasted for eight hours, covered all areas of the accession deal. Services continue to be a sticking point, with Russia unwilling to further open up its banking and insurance sectors, a key US demand. The US has also expressed concerns over Russia's dual energy pricing policy under which domestic prices amount to approximately one-fourth of export prices. Several WTO Members have charged that these prices constitute a de facto subsidy to

Russian industry, although the EU did not take a hard-line stance on the matter when signing its bilateral agreement with Russia in May 2004 (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 2 June 2004). On this point, Zoellick specified that US interests on the dual energy pricing issue differed from those of the EU -- a major importer of Russian gas -- as the US was "focused on the narrower issue of energy as an input, particularly for fertilizer."

Following the meeting, Gref and Zoellick said good progress had been made overall, and indicated that they might reach an agreement later in the year. Gref added that once a deal was reached with the US, "we will have a very good window of opportunity to get things done by December," expressing his hope that Russia could join the WTO by the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting. Russia began its drawn-out WTO accession process some 11 years ago.

"Russia, US reach agreement in talks on Russia's entry in WTO," *ITAR-TASS*, 1 February 2005; "8 Hours Not Enough to Ultimately Agree," *KOMMERSANT*, 1 February 2005; "Russia's Trading Partners Set Out 'Bottom Line' on WTO Accession Terms," *WTO REPORTER*, 31 January 2005; "U.S. Sees Possible WTO Deal with Moscow in 2005," *REUTERS*, 31 January 2005.

EC ANNOUNCES BANANA TARIFFS; LATIN AMERICAN EXPORTERS DISSATISFIED

On 31 January, the European Commission (EC) notified the WTO of its proposed new tariff for banana imports. The new tariff of 230 euros per tonne for most favoured nation (MFN) suppliers -- mostly in Latin America -- will replace the current tariff quota system from 1 January 2006, while maintaining a preference for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. In its press release, the EC stresses that "the notification of its intentions to the WTO is an unavoidable procedural step that does not preclude constructive engagement with the exporting countries."

Under WTO rules Latin American banana exporting countries have the right to enter into negotiations with the EC if they disagree with the new tariff rate. They may also request a WTO arbitration under their previous agreement with the EC -- a development that seems likely as these countries have expressed their dissatisfaction with any tariff rate above their current preferential level of 75 euros (see [Bridges Weekly](#), 6 October 2004). Media reports indicate that several Latin American countries are already considering the arbitration option and signed a declaration on 26 January rejecting the EU's proposal.

On the sidelines of the WTO Doha Ministerial Conference in November 2001, WTO Members granted a waiver to the EC allowing it to give preferential market access to banana exports from ACP countries -- with the additional proviso that third parties, such as Latin and Central American banana exporting countries, would have the right to request arbitration before future EC banana tariffs replacing the quota system went into effect on 1 January 2006 (see [Bridges Weekly](#), 15 November 2001).

The commission's press release, IP/05/118, is available [here](#).

ICTSD reporting; "Latin American Nations Reject EU Proposal For 230 Euro Banana Tariff Notified to WTO," WTO Reporter, 2 February 2005; "Latin American countries ready to bring bananas back to WTO" EU business, 1 February 2005.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to [ICTSD's](#) web calendar. If you would like to submit an event, please email events@ictsd.ch.

ICTSD Event

9 February, Geneva, Switzerland: THE KYOTO PROTOCOL AND THE FLEXIBLE MECHANISMS - WHAT'S THE TRADE CONNECTION? ICTSD is organising an informal "Café and Croissant" meeting which will address the emerging trade in carbon credits under the three Kyoto mechanisms (emissions trading, joint implementation and the clean development mechanism) and trade rules. The development of new schemes and markets for carbon credits is still in progress. While designed as stand-alone systems, there are, or can be, connections between carbon trading and the overall framework of WTO rules. These connections are as of yet not clearly defined or understood, but will become relevant as actual experience in emissions trading begins to accumulate, and the scale of trading increases. To mark the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in February, ICTSD is organising an event that will include a presentation on the overall framework and emerging issues in the interface between trade and climate change, as well as case studies on emissions trading and the clean

development mechanism. For further information see <http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2005-02-09/Kyoto9Feb.pdf>

Coming Up: 3 - 9 February

3-5 February, New Delhi, India: DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT. Organised by the Tata Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), this summit's objective is to foster hope and stimulate action towards respectable standards of living for the world's poorest people, and a responsible pattern of production and consumption among the richest. "Beyond Universal Goals: Steering Development towards Global Sustainability," is the theme that will be addressed throughout the forum. For further information contact the Summit Secretariat at TERI, tel: +91 11 2468 2100; fax: +91 11 2468 2144; email: dsds@teri.res.in; Internet: <http://www.teriin.org/dsds/2005/index.htm>

7-9 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY THEMATIC MEETING ON MEASURING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY. Organized by the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Development, this conference will bring together country representatives involved in the statistical measurement of the information society. The objectives of the meeting are to agree on a common list of ICT core indicators; to identify and address the needs of national statistical offices in developing countries with regards to technical assistance for the compilation of ICT indicators; to discuss mechanisms to quantify the relevance and contribution of ICT indicators towards promoting development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and, to present ongoing work on the creation and maintenance of an international database on ICT indicators. For further information, contact the United Nations Office at Geneva, fax: +41 (0)22 907 0052; email: emeasurement@unctad.org; Internet: http://measuring-ict.unctad.org/QuickPlace/measuring-ict/Main.nsf/h_Toc/30B3234BF0C98509C1256F5700692D89/?OpenDocument

7-11 February, Bangkok, Thailand: TENTH MEETING OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE. Organised by the United Nations Environmental Programme. This meeting will discuss island biodiversity; issues for evaluating progress in the implementation of the strategic plan, including the 2010 biodiversity target and contributions to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; global taxonomy initiative; and climate change. For further information contact the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, tel: +1 514 288-2220; fax: +1 514 288-6588; email:

secretariat@biodiv.org;
<http://www.biodiv.org/welcome.aspx>

Internet:

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

7 February: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON TRADE FACILITATION.

7 February: WORKING PARTY ON GATS RULES.

7-11 February: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON AGRICULTURE.

8 February: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT - SPECIAL SESSION.

8 February: WORKING PARTY ON DOMESTIC REGULATION.

9 February: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - SIERRA LEONE.

9 February: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES.

9 February: NEGOTIATION GROUP ON TRADE FACILITATION.

Other Upcoming Events

10-12 February, Hyderabad, India: BIOASIA GLOBAL BIO BUSINESS FORUM. This annual conference is hosted by Genome Valley, a Hyderabad-based biotech cluster that is home to over 100 biotech companies. The conference will a focus on Asia as a global destination and address opportunities in clinical trials, contract research and manufacturing, diagnostics, health care, and intellectual property rights, among other topics. For further information contact BioAsia, tel: +91 (0)40 5528 1583; fax: +91 (0)40 5568 5300; email: conference@bioasia2005.org; Internet: <http://www.bioasia2005.org/conference.htm>

16-18 February, Cape Town, South Africa: INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON CREATIVITY AND INVENTIONS. This international forum is organised by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of the

Republic of South Africa in order to explore and discuss how invention and innovation influence employment generation and wealth creation. The six main themes of the forum are the conditions for successful economic and social use of inventions and innovations; key elements in striving for competitive advantage in inventions and innovations; increasing awareness and understanding of intellectual property systems; intellectual property in a knowledge-based society; wealth creation through invention, innovation and creativity; and the intellectual capital of nations. For further information contact the Division for Infrastructure Services and Innovation Promotion, tel.: +41 (0)22 338 9485; fax: +41 (0)22 338 9764; email: innovpro.mail@wipo.int; Internet: http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=6964

14-18 March, Geneva, Switzerland: UNCTAD COMMISSION ON TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES AND COMMODITIES, 9TH SESSION. The main agenda includes discussions on market access, market entry and competitiveness; trade in services and development implications; trade, environment and development; and a progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission, including the post-Doha follow-up. For further information contact Mr. Mehmet Arda, tel: +41(0)22 917 5790; fax: +41(0)22 917 0509; email: mehmet.arda@unctad.org; Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=1942&lang=1&m=9478&year=2005&month=3>

RESOURCES

Call for Comments

MODEL INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT AGREEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Draft, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), January 2005. IISD has prepared a model international investment agreement in an effort to update the current model, developed almost 50 years ago, with its near-exclusive focus on the rights of foreign investors. IISD's draft model agreement starts from the premise that the purpose for such agreements is to foster foreign investment that is supportive of development aspirations for developing countries as well as sustainable development requirements in both the North and South. The draft text outlines a clear set of provisions that seek to balance the rights and obligations of investors, host states and home states and puts forward proposals to modify the highly problematic investor-state arbitration system. IISD is

now in the process of seeking public input on the draft it has produced. Comments should be sent to modelagreement@iisd.ca by 7 February 2005. The draft text and more information on the model agreement are available [here](#)

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION: AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE WORLD BANK'S APPROACH TO GLOBAL PROGRAMS. By Uma Lele. World Bank, January 2005. The World Bank is an important participant in global programs and activities because its global reach, its ability to mobilize resources, and its multisectoral expertise position it well to deal with the challenges of globalization. This book develops lessons for the Bank on program selectivity, design, implementation, governance, management, financing and evaluation. The book also identifies areas where further Bank action on its global-level strategy and programming is needed to improve the global program effectiveness. For more information and access to the report visit http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=4498463

THE RUSH TO REGIONALISM: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL/BILATERAL APPROACHES TO TRADE AND INVESTMENT LIBERALIZATION. By Aaron Cosbey, Simon Tay, Hank Lim. International Institute for Sustainable Development and International Development Research Centre, 2005. This paper aims to set out the issues of importance in addressing the links between sustainable development and the rush to sign regional trade agreements. It describes the trends in regional agreements, surveys current practice and asks how the agreements address a number of key issues of importance to sustainable development in the context of economic development and environment. It then sets out a number of key themes, asking what we know and do not know about each. The concluding section describes the state of current research as it relates these themes. For more information and access to the report visit http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2005/trade_rush_region.pdf

SETTING THE TRADE POLICY AGENDA: WHAT ROLES FOR ECONOMISTS? By Kym Anderson. International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium, December 2004. Economists have affected the agenda for domestic policy reform as well as influenced the trade policy agenda for establishing multilateral trade rules, disciplines and procedures and for negotiating MFN and preferential reductions in trade barriers and subsidies. The report aims to examine the contribution made by the economics profession to setting the agenda for trade policy formation and its reform at various levels. One might argue that the contribution has been ineffective -- the gains from free trade have been well-known for over 200 years, but every country

still imposes trade barriers. The paper quantifies these trade distortions, and looks at where trade economists' efforts in agenda-setting need to be focused in the years ahead. For more information and access to the report visit http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/cgi-bin/pdf_view.pl?paperid=15463&ftype=.pdf

CORRIGENDUM

The Esquel factory closure in Mauritius mentioned in the article entitled "Post-Quota Textile Trade Starts To Take Shape" in the 26 January 2005 issue of BRIDGES Weekly (Volume 9, Number 2) took place in 2003, and was unrelated to quota-related closures referred to elsewhere in the article. Although the Esquel Group closed its pants factory in Mauritius that year, its other factory on the island has remained open and continues to produce shirts.

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