



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT

# Bridges

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### LEAD STORIES

#### AGRICULTURE NEGOTIATIONS: PARIS MEET YIELDS NO CONCRETE RESULTS

Three days of high-level meetings in Paris between ministers and senior trade officials from key WTO Members did not unblock the Doha Round agriculture talks, which are holding up the negotiations as a whole. Nevertheless, participants said they felt the talks had been useful and clarified the stances of the major players.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel met with their US counterparts Robert Portman and Mike Johanns on 22 September. They picked up from discussions on reducing tariffs and subsidies they had held in Washington the week before (see BRIDGES Weekly, 21 September 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-09-21/story4.htm>).

They were joined the following day by Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim and Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath. Representatives from the 'new Quad' met with Australia, as well as with China, Switzerland, Japan, Argentina, and Malaysia on 24 September.

#### EU tables market access scenarios with built-in flexibilities

Different scenarios for market access topped the agenda, with the EU tabling four options based on a G-20 proposal for tariff reduction. Each scenario would divide countries' tariffs into four bands, and allow developing countries to make cuts two-thirds the size of those made by developed countries. The four varied in ambition: the average reductions ranged from 24.5 to 36.4 percent, with tariffs in the highest bands to be cut most steeply.

In addition, the EU proposed building flexibility directly into the formula in the form of "pivots." According to this approach, a 10 percent pivot in a band with a 50 percent reduction requirement would leave Members the option of cutting tariffs on some products by 40 percent, so long as other tariffs were cut more deeply to keep the average cut for the band at the target level.

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The EU said that building greater flexibility into the formula through the pivots would lower their need to resort to 'sensitive products,' which fall outside the formula and are slated for milder tariff reduction.

The US and Brazil expressed skepticism about the pivot concept. They noted that sensitive products would have to undergo some tariff cuts as well as tariff rate quota (TRQ) expansion, and thus might expand market access more than a formula with pivots.

The US made a market access counter proposal with significantly steeper cuts, ranging between 55 and 85 percent, depending on the level of the current tariff. Cuts within each band would be progressively higher. The US further suggested capping tariffs at below 100 percent (the G-20 proposal called a 100 percent cap for developed countries and 150 percent for developing countries). The US scenario did not suggest particular flexibilities for developing countries.

Speaking to journalists at the close of meetings on 23 September, US Trade Representative Portman said "The major accomplishment and achievement is that we're now speaking off the same sheet, literally," referring to the G-20 proposal on market access. "I am more optimistic with the talks today that we will be able to bridge our differences," he added.

A number of trade officials were less upbeat. They noted that although the participants had discussed different scenarios and tabled numbers, they had nothing concrete to show for the talks, and the differences among them remained wide. "Both sides now have a clearer idea of the other's bottom line and how difficult it will be to bring their political constituencies along," noted one trade observer.

### **US inertia on domestic support**

Less progress was made than expected on domestic support, where the US is under pressure from its trading partners to make some concessions. Although lower in real terms than those provided by the EU, US subsidies have been growing over the last year, and its so-called 'counter-cyclical' payments that compensate farmers when world market prices are low have come under fire from other WTO Members. The US plans to move them into the 'Blue Box' (partially de-coupled payments), where they would not be subject to the steeper cuts foreseen for Amber Box (trade distorting) support. Participants at the Paris meeting were disappointed that Washington did not table scenarios for reduction of domestic support at the meeting.

The EU informally said it would be able to cut domestic somewhat more than the 60 percent it had indicated in earlier talks, as long as others move in parallel.

In a speech in Washington after the meetings, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said "The final result cannot be a result that leaves everything as it is, just taking out some of what people at the WTO call 'water,'" referring to the term given to the gap between Members' maximum permissible level of domestic support and the subsidies that they actually provide. Cuts to US agricultural subsidies "must be real, otherwise there'll be no breakthrough," he added.

### **Difficulties on the home front**

Both the EU and US are facing internal constraints on their ability to move on agriculture. At a meeting on 19 September, EU agriculture ministers called on the European Commission to hold back on market access, especially given that the US is not moving with regard to internal support. Likewise, US lawmakers are actively following the talks, and demanding a good deal on market access before the US does anything on domestic support. The current Farm Bill, which introduced the controversial counter-cyclical payments, is set to expire in 2007 when Congress will replace it with a new one. Portman has stressed that "we will not be writing the farm bill in the WTO."

### **Next steps**

In Geneva, the chair of the Special (negotiating) Session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, Ambassador Crawford Falconer of New Zealand, has scheduled an informal stock-taking session for 29 September. He also invited Members to an informal consultation for transparency purposes on 30 September, where he will discuss recent developments in the farm trade talks. The next official "agriculture week" will begin on 17 October.

While recognising the need for political leadership from key Members, some delegates from smaller developing countries have expressed concerns about being excluded from the process.

Geneva delegates are permanently 'on call' during the short period left before the December Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, and continue to hold discussions among each other in different configurations. Portman has called an informal mini-ministerial in Zurich on 10 October to follow up on the Paris meeting.

ICTSD reporting; "Key WTO players to meet in Switzerland next month," XFN-ASIA, 28 September 2005; "U.S. farm subsidy cuts needed for WTO deal - Brazil," REUTERS, 27 September 2005; "EU Signals Movement on Domestic Support, Seeks Significant Cuts From United States," WTO REPORTER, 27 September; "Doha talks go slow on farm issues,"

FINANCIAL TIMES, 25 September; "U.S., EU, Brazil, India Claim Progress in WTO Negotiations," BLOOMBERG, 23 September 2005; "Despite positive spin, trade talks still stuck," REUTERS, 23 September 2005.

## **NAMA: MEMBERS STILL DIVIDED ON FORMULA, FLEXIBILITIES**

Several WTO Members appear to be waiting to see progress in the contentious farm trade negotiations before committing themselves to any particular method for cutting tariffs on industrial goods, say trade negotiators.

Formal and informal meetings of the Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) on 21-22 September indicated that Members remained broadly divided on the structure of the tariff reduction formula and the flexibilities in its application to be accorded to developed countries.

### **Trade-off between formula, flexibilities disputed**

Specifically, they differed significantly on whether developing countries should have to give up flexibilities when applying the tariff reduction formula in exchange for a formula structure that would allow them to make relatively lower cuts than rich countries through the use of different coefficients.

According to Paragraph 4 of the NAMA mandate set out in Annex B of the 2004 July Package (WT/L/579, available online at [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/draft\\_text\\_gc\\_dg\\_31july04\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/draft_text_gc_dg_31july04_e.htm)), Members are to develop a tariff reduction formula that accounts for the needs of developing and least-developed countries, "including through less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments." Paragraph 8 provides for flexibilities that would allow developing and least-developed countries to retain some unbound tariffs and apply tariff cuts smaller than those required by the formula to a to-be-determined percentage of items, in addition to longer implementation periods. The relationship between these two forms of favourable treatment for developing countries was the focus of much discussion during the recent NAMA meeting.

Pakistan formally presented its July proposal (TN/MA/W/60, available online at <http://docsonline.wto.org>), which would have countries use the simple 'Swiss' formula structure espoused by several Members associated with coefficients of 6 and 30 for developed and developing countries, respectively (see BRIDGES Weekly, 20 July 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-07-20/wtoinbrief.htm#4>).

Several delegations including Canada, New Zealand, and the US complained that 30 was too high, and would not cut developing countries' tariffs as steeply as they would like. Canada and Norway did, however, say that it provided a realistic basis for negotiations. The US has said that differentiated coefficients should replace Paragraph 8 flexibilities, a position rejected by Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and several other developing countries.

One negotiator told Bridges that the discussions highlighted the need to address the formula and the 'Paragraph 8 flexibilities' in an "integrated fashion," since the tariff cuts resulting from a particular coefficient would vary significantly with flexibilities associated with the formula -- and thus be impossible to evaluate.

Mexico elaborated on its February proposal (TN/MA/W/50, with Chile and Colombia) to allow developing countries to choose a balance among the extent of tariff reduction required by the formula (through the use of different coefficients), leaving tariff lines unbound, the ability to exempt some products from the tariff reduction formula, and the implementation period for tariff cuts (see BRIDGES Weekly, 16 March 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-03-16/story5.htm>).

Several developing countries charged that the Mexican proposal, by requiring tradeoffs between the formula and flexibilities, essentially rendered the Paragraph 8 mandate meaningless. Mexico countered that it merely sought to reward countries that opted not to exercise those flexibilities.

It is difficult to assess the relationship between the formula and the flexibilities without specific numbers to plug into both. However, Members are generally wary of putting forward numbers even as part of a number-crunching exercise, lest they turn into starting points for negotiation.

### **Four new sectoral liberalisation proposals tabled**

Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan together called for the complete removal of tariffs on 20 products in the sports equipment sector, pointing to persisting high tariffs and the recent rapid increase in their worldwide trade. The three were joined by Thailand in another proposal, which called for eliminating tariffs on bicycles and related parts.

A third sectoral proposal brought together Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and the US to call for sectoral tariff elimination on gems and jewelry. The growing trade in the sector accounted for USD 261 billion in 2003.

The 21 members of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) put forward a proposal for the elimination of tariffs on multi-chip integrated circuits, digital multifunctional machines, and modems, three products not covered by the WTO's existing plurilateral agreement on most information technology products.

### **Members broadly agree on AVE conversion**

In spite of the divisions over the formula, NAMA Chair Ambassador Stefan Johannesson of Iceland said that Members have broadly agreed to follow the model from the agriculture talks for the conversion of 'specific' tariffs based on quantities imported into price-based 'ad valorem' equivalents (AVEs) -- a mathematical exercise necessary in order to apply the reduction formula to such tariffs.

Members are said to be determining their tariffs in percentage terms by using their import volumes and the notified import values they submit to the WTO Integrated Database (IDB). Most WTO Members have fairly few non-ad valorem tariff lines for industrial goods -- fewer than 7 percent -- and have already started making the calculations. Switzerland is one exception to this, and has asked for time beyond the end-September target in order to convert all of its tariffs.

Although non-tariff barriers (NTBs) received more attention than in the past during the two-day session, Members are still unclear on the specific issues they want to address in the talks. The EU and Japan spoke out against taxes and quantitative restrictions placed by countries on their own exports, generally of mineral resources. Argentina, Kenya, and the US argued that such measures were not always unjustified.

A week of intensive NAMA negotiations is scheduled to start from 10 October.

ICTSD reporting.

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## **WORLD BANK, IMF STRIKE DEBT DEAL, SHIFT SIGHTS TO WTO**

After striking an agreement to cancel USD 55 billion in debt owed to them by some of the world's poorest countries, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have turned their focus to the WTO's stalled Doha Round negotiations. World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz exhorted WTO Members to match this consensus on debt with consensus on trade, saying that the debt relief package would be incomplete without what he termed a "true development round on trade."

The debt deal was approved by ministers and senior officials from the 184 members of the World Bank and IMF at the 24-25 September annual meetings of the two international financial institutions. IMF debts will start to be cancelled at the end of 2005; World Bank debt forgiveness will likely come into effect in July 2006. Once the plan is implemented, eighteen countries stand to have their debts cancelled immediately. Press reports suggest that an additional twenty may be eligible. The agreement will not, however, free these countries from debts owed to private creditors.

The accord gives more concrete form to the debt forgiveness promise made by the Group of Eight industrialised countries (G8) in July at Gleneagles, Scotland (see BRIDGES Weekly, 13 July 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-07-13/story3.htm>).

Concerns prior to the recent meeting that the World Bank would be unable to afford to write off that much debt were allayed by a 23 September letter from G8 governments promising to underwrite debt relief with "dollar for dollar" compensation to support the Bank's other loans and grants to developing countries.

Countries slated for debt forgiveness will have to demonstrate good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption measures in order to receive disbursements.

### **Developing country ministers complain about Doha progress**

Finance ministers from developing countries used the meetings to air their grievances about the ongoing WTO talks. Describing progress thus far as "disappointing," Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram warned that rising protectionism in rich countries was a threat to global trade, and urged them to slash subsidies and open their markets in order to help get the negotiations "back on track" for the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December. Calling on industrialised countries to cut tariffs on agricultural products, Brazilian Finance Minister Antonio Palocci said that trade and market access were "more important than external aid." Trevor Manuel, their South African counterpart, also called on countries to step up their efforts in the Doha Round negotiations.

### **Lamy reiterates call for 'aid for trade' mechanism**

In a speech to the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy called for an 'aid for trade' initiative for developing countries. Developing countries will need assistance to build the capacity necessary for them to realise actual benefits from improvements in market access and trade rules, he said. "This is where the [World] Bank, the [International Monetary] Fund and other donors come in."



He expressed the hope that WTO Members would, as a first step, agree by Hong Kong to enhance the Integrated Framework, the existing WTO-World Bank-IMF-UN programme for trade-related technical assistance to least-developed countries. "Looking to the conclusion of the Round, I believe we should arrive at a more ambitious package of commitments for technical and financial assistance by the end of 2006."

### **Campaign groups welcome deal, sound a note of caution**

Advocacy groups had worried that the promises made by G8 countries at Gleneagles would not actually result in additional money being allotted for debt forgiveness. Thus, many were gratified to see their commitment to give the World Bank extra funding for debt relief, which would in turn free up money for beneficiary countries to spend on health and education. Some have cautioned that the conditionalities attached to the debt forgiveness could turn out to be trade liberalisation and privatisation requirements, which they contend could leave countries even worse off.

Bernice Romero, campaigns director for international charity group Oxfam International, hailed the agreement as a "huge step forward," albeit for a small number of countries. She called on the World Bank and the IMF to "apply this new standard [for debt cancellation] to all the countries that need debt cancellation to fight poverty."

Some governments have also called for expanding the list of countries eligible for debt relief. Kenya -- which will not benefit from the new agreement because the IMF deems its debt sustainable -- has complained that it is effectively being punished for not having mismanaged its finances as much as the countries whose debt has been designated for elimination.

The eighteen countries that will have their debts to the World Bank and the IMF cancelled immediately are: Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

ICTSD reporting; "World Bank, IMF Agree on Debt Relief, Turn Attention to Trade," BLOOMBERG, 26 September 2005; "Debt deal hailed but details beckon," BBC NEWS, 26 September 2005; "Chidambaram hits out at advanced nations for trade barriers," PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, 26 September 2005; "Finance Chiefs Act on Debt Forgiveness," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 26 September 2005; "Oxfam reacts to World Bank and IMF debt relief announcement," OXFAM PRESS RELEASE, 25 September 2005; "Hong Kong Ministerial is last and best chance to conclude the

Round by next year -- Lamy," WTO NEWS, 24 September 2005.

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## **TRADE FACILITATION: MEMBERS CLARIFY PROPOSALS, LOOK TOWARDS AGREED TEXT**

The 19-20 September meeting of the Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation saw four new proposals on issues including anti-corruption, technical assistance, and trade embargoes.

Members also discussed a Secretariat document (TN/TF/W43/Rev.2) that consolidates into a single text existing proposals on the broad mandate of the trade facilitation negotiations: the clarification and improvement of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 Articles dealing with freedom of transit for goods (Article V), trade-related fees and formalities (Article VIII), and transparency in the regulation and administration of trade regulations (Article X).

Trade facilitation is one of the few areas in the Doha Round negotiations in which talks have been progressing smoothly. However one trade source admitted that disagreements could arise as the discussions get more technical, since several proposals target 'behind-the-border' measures that many Members may feel should be determined domestically. Indeed, the recent session saw some delegations, notably India, voice grievances about some of the ideas on the table.

### **Dominican Republic: Corruption a barrier to international trade**

Contending that inappropriate governance and corruption constituted a barrier and "additional invisible charge" to goods trade in addition to undermining respect for the law in general, the Dominican Republic submission (TN/TF/W/60) proposed several anti-corruption measures. These included improving ethics policies such as a code of conduct in the customs services; introducing computerised systems to give officials less leeway in making basic customs decisions; considering offences by customs officials to be criminal acts; and technical assistance to improve governments' capacity to prevent customs offences coupled with support for additional costs that such efforts might incur.

### **Proposals call for long-term TACB Mechanism**

Taiwan's submission (TN/TF/W/62) called for the creation of a long-term mechanism to deal with

technical assistance and capacity-building (TACB) issues, and the use of international standards. Pakistan and Switzerland (TN/TF/W/63) echoed the call for a specific, transparent, and predictable TACB mechanism to support the implementation of any future obligations, emphasising that developing and least-developed countries' commitments should be appropriately sequenced and must not exceed their capacity to implement them. They also asked the Secretariat to prepare an inventory of trade facilitation measures on the basis of existing proposals, suggesting that it would help Members assess their needs and priorities in order to determine which measures they can implement and when.

Thailand's submission (TN/TF/W/61) summarised its achievements in simplifying and computerising its customs clearance system. The country has instituted a 'gold card' scheme that exempts reliable exporters and importers from inspection and the duty drawback approval at the time that they submit a claim. Its customs department also consults with the private sector in order to better appreciate their problems, and inform them of new rules and regulations.

#### **In nod to US embargo, Cuba moots ban on transit discrimination**

In what appeared to be an implicit criticism of the US' trade embargo, Cuba (TN/TF/W/64) proposed adding new language to GATT Article V that would prohibit commercially-unmotivated discriminatory measures with respect to transit. The proposal argued that the article's non-discrimination requirement was being "systematically breached by some WTO Members" that "...apply, unilaterally and for non-commercial reasons, laws and measures of extraterritorial scope that ignore the legitimate interest of other Members' right to free transit... as well as the commercial interests of third parties affected." The Cuban government has protested in the UN that the US slaps a six-month entry ban on any ship that touches a Cuban port.

WTO Members also discussed the Secretariat's compilation, which classified existing trade facilitation proposals into 13 broad issue areas: trade regulations; a period between publishing laws and regulations and implementing them; a consultation process on new and amended rules; advance rulings; appeal procedures; measures to enhance non-discrimination; fees and charges connected with trade; formalities associated with importation and exportation; consularisation, i.e. consular fees levied in connection to goods imports; border agency cooperation; expedited and simplified clearance of goods; objective criteria for tariff classification; and matters related to goods in transit.

India expressed reservations about a number of the proposals, citing in particular resource and bureaucratic burdens associated with implementation, potential conflict with other WTO rules, interference with the laws and judicial and administrative procedures of Members, and unnecessary or non-mandated binding commitments.

One trade delegate reported a "sense of urgency" on the part of Chair Ambassador Muhammad Yacob Noor of Malaysia to come up with a draft document that could serve as the basis for discussions at the WTO's Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December. Trade sources suggest that the Negotiating Group would do well to specify in initial draft texts the areas on which there was consensus and those on which Members have reservations, and leave proposals lacking consensus out of the text that it sends to Hong Kong.

#### **Need for dynamic approach to technical assistance**

A developing country negotiator noted a serious concern among some Members that technical assistance would be 'one-off' and would exclude issues not initially identified by them in WTO discussions. This might make developing countries reluctant to identify their priority areas for fear of missing out on future grants on other issues. The delegate observed that developed countries needed to reassure them that there would be no 'time-limit,' and that the identification of areas in need of technical assistance would be a continuous, dynamic process. Noting that the simple provision of technical assistance did not necessarily mean countries had the capability to implement obligations, he questioned who would determine when exactly a developing country was able to do so. While the Swiss-Pakistani proposal had called for the establishment of an independent body to oversee technical assistance, the idea of having such a body judge countries' ability to implement trade facilitation obligations might not be palatable to many WTO Members.

ICTSD reporting.

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### **IN BRIEF**

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#### **DISAGREEMENT OVER DATA PROTECTION HOLDING UP ANDEAN-US FTA**

Ecuador's opposition to US demands on access to test data for clinical drug trials has emerged as a primary obstacle in the ongoing free trade agreement (FTA) talks between the US and a group of three Andean

countries. Trade officials from the US, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru met in Cartagena, Colombia from 19-23 September for the twelfth round of Andean-US FTA negotiations (Bolivia participates as an observer). The talks are being held up primarily due to persisting differences among the parties on intellectual property rights and agriculture.

As part of the intellectual property rights obligations in the FTA, the US wants a five-year protection period for the clinical test data that pharmaceutical companies submit to government sanitary authorities when seeking the right to put a new drug on the market. Colombia and Peru have accepted this. Ecuador, however, insists that the data protection period should be no longer than three years.

The agriculture negotiations are isolated from the broader talks, and have been continuing on three separate bilateral tracks between the US and each of the Andean countries. Little of substance is expected to emerge from those discussions. This would disappoint the Andean countries, which have been seeking increased access to the US market for their farm products (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 14 September 2005).

The Colombian and Peruvian governments maintain that they would like to wrap up the talks by October. Ecuador, in contrast, has said that it is in no rush to conclude the talks, as a result of the data protection issue.

PUNTES Quincenal, 21 September 2005.

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### **CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL: PROTECT ESSENTIAL SERVICES FROM GATS**

Global consumer advocate federation Consumers International (CI) has said that water, electricity, telecommunications and other essential services should be outside the remit of the WTO General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). This was part of a broader agenda for placing consumers "at the heart" of the global trading system outlined by representatives of the organisation during a 20-21 September workshop in Geneva. A CI report calls for a General Agreement on Public Services (GAPS) to establish rights-based principles for the provision of essential services, whether by government or private bodies. These would include universal access safety, information availability, equity, accountability and sustainability.

CI, which counts over 250 affiliate groups around the world, stressed that liberalising and privatising such services does not always benefit consumers,

particularly when countries do not have sufficient regulatory capacity. The organisation claims that its research demonstrates "no clear link" between GATS commitments and improved "pro-consumer" provision of public services. GATS, it warns, may lead to 'false liberalisation' in basic services, i.e., underregulated, private companies, often foreign-owned, would take monopoly control of provision.

Presenters urged WTO negotiators to ensure that countries are not pressured to open their water, electricity and telecom sectors as part of the ongoing services negotiations. They also urged them to expand the GATS exemption for "services supplied in the exercise of government authority" to cover all services that have public good characteristics. CI also urged participants to consider reforms to make the WTO more transparent and accountable, and end 'passive' consensus decision-making.

CI's "Bridging the gaps: the case for a general agreement on public services" is available at <http://www.consumersinternational.org/Templates/International.asp?NodeID=94123&int1stParentNodeID=89645&int2ndParentNodeID=89645>.

Expanded coverage of the workshop will be provided in the upcoming issue of BRIDGES Trade BioRes.

ICTSD reporting; "Consumer group seeks global utilities pact," FINANCIAL TIMES, 22 September 2005.

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### **WTO IN BRIEF**

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#### **US, INDIA TO CO-CHAIR NEW SPECIAL GROUP ON SERVICES**

Trade ministers from Brazil, India, the EU, and the US agreed during their 22-23 September summit in Paris to the creation of a 15-country special group on the WTO services negotiations. The group will be jointly chaired by India and the US, both of which pushed for its creation, and will look for ways to advance progress in the services talks in the months before the WTO's December Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong. It will also evaluate the controversial proposals to establish 'benchmarks' -- multilateral requirements for countries to liberalise their services sectors -- a concept that is strongly opposed by some WTO Members (see [BRIDGES Weekly](#), 21 September 2005).

Press reports suggest that the group will be comprised of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China,

Egypt, the EU, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea, and the US. Some trade diplomats have noted that the group's membership tilts heavily in favour of countries that support services benchmarks. They add that it is also geographically unbalanced, as it fails to include any sub-Saharan, Caribbean, or least-developed countries.

Sources say that the group will be holding its first meeting in Geneva on 30 September to take advantage of the presence of senior officials attending the week-long Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services.

ICTSD reporting; "India, US to co-chair WTO group on services," PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, 23 September 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 us](#).

#### Coming Up: 29 September - 5 October

29 September, Geneva, Switzerland: FORUM ON FOREST CERTIFICATION - DO GOVERNMENTS HAVE A ROLE? The UN Economic Commission for Europe and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) will host this policy forum, which will focus on whether governments should use forest certification to promote sustainable forest management and, if so, how and whether forest certification is an obstacle to international trade. For further information contact Cynthia De Castro, tel: (+41 22) 917-3254; fax: 917-0041; e-mail: [cynthia.de.castro@unece.org](mailto:cynthia.de.castro@unece.org); Internet: [http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/tc-sessions/tc-63/english/2005TC\\_Forum.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/docs/tc-sessions/tc-63/english/2005TC_Forum.pdf).

3-7 October, Nairobi, Kenya: THIRD WORLD CONGRESS ON CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE. Organised by the African Conservation Tillage Network, this conference aims to share experiences and lessons learned worldwide on the role of conservation agriculture in enhancing rural livelihoods in diverse environments. This is expected to contribute to enhancing the promotion and adoption of conservation agriculture as a means to concurrently ensure food security, economic benefits and global environmental benefits such as biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and cleaner international waters. For further information

contact Martin Bwalya, tel: (+263) 4-882107; fax: (+263) 4-885596; email: [actnetwork@africaonline.co.zw](mailto:actnetwork@africaonline.co.zw).

3-14 October, Geneva, Switzerland: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD, FIFTY-SECOND SESSION. Organised by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The provisional agenda includes an examination of interdependence and global economic issues from a trade and development perspective, a review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and a review of developments and issues in the WTO's post-Doha work programme that are of particular concern to developing countries. For further information contact the UNCTAD secretariat, Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Service at tel: +41-22-917-5809; fax: +41-22-917-00-56; email: [correspondence@unctad.org](mailto:correspondence@unctad.org); Internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intItemID=2068&lang=1&m=9940>.

5 October, Geneva, Switzerland: TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL REGIME FOR ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND BENEFIT SHARING. This roundtable, organized by the Geneva Environment Network, will explore how to achieve a workable balance between equity and traditional knowledge on one hand, and intellectual property rights and commercial partnerships on the other. It will also discuss how the issue of access and benefit sharing is linked to international trade. Registration is required. For further information contact Fatma Gordon, tel: (+41) 22-917-8326; fax: (+41) 22-797-3464; email [fatma.gordon@unep.ch](mailto:fatma.gordon@unep.ch).

### WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/meets.pdf](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.

29 September: COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

29 September: SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

29-30 September: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES - SPECIAL SESSION

3 October: COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS



3-4 October: WORKING GROUP ON TRADE, DEBT AND FINANCE

3 October: WORKING PARTY ON THE ACCESSION OF YEMEN

4 October: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES - REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

5 October: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - TUNISIA

5-6 October COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Other Upcoming Events

31 October, Hanoi, Vietnam. INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL TRADE POLICY COUNCIL SEMINAR. The seminar will be split into two main themes: issues in agricultural trade and the progression of multilateral negotiations, with specific attention to Vietnam's accession to the WTO; and domestic issues including rural development, building local competitiveness into global value chains, and environmental concerns. The meeting will also highlight projects on sustainable agricultural production. There is a fee to attend this event. For further information contact Kyle Chapman, tel: (+1) 202-328-5117; fax: (+1) 202-328-5133; e-mail: [agritrade@agritrade.org](mailto:agritrade@agritrade.org); Internet: <http://www.agritrade.org/Plenary/Hanoi/Hanoi05.htm>.

28 October, Paris, France. TRADE FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE FUTURE OF SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. This international conference is jointly organised by the trade policy unit of the Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI) and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). The conference will focus on two key topics: the future of non-reciprocal trade preferences and differentiation among developing countries under Special and Differential Treatment rules. Discussions will be in both English and French and are expected to contribute to public debate on the Doha Agenda in the months before the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. For further information contact Anne-Sophie Novel, tel: (+33) (0)1-40-61-72-88; fax: (+33) (0)1-40-61-60-60; e-mail: [novel@ifri.org](mailto:novel@ifri.org); Internet: [http://www.ifri.org/frontDispatcher/ifri/manifestations/interventions\\_ext\\_rueur\\_1031842993962/publi\\_P\\_manifestation\\_eco\\_trade\\_and\\_dev\\_1127477193712?language=us](http://www.ifri.org/frontDispatcher/ifri/manifestations/interventions_ext_rueur_1031842993962/publi_P_manifestation_eco_trade_and_dev_1127477193712?language=us).

16-18 November, Tunis, Tunisia. THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY - PHASE TWO. This event is the second phase of a two-part summit endorsed by the UN General Assembly in

December 2001 to create a global discussion on the digital revolution and the ever-widening digital divide and related development gap between rich and poor. Phase Two in Tunis will allow working groups to build upon the achievements of the Phase One in Geneva, Switzerland (December 2003) and take measures to bridge the digital divide and hasten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For further information contact the World Summit on the Information Society Executive Secretariat, tel: (+41) 22-730-6317; fax: (+41) 22-730-6393; email: [wsis@itu.int](mailto:wsis@itu.int); Internet: [www.itu.int/wsiss](http://www.itu.int/wsiss).

18 November, Bern, Switzerland: ACCESS TO PHARMACEUTICALS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: SOCIAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS. This conference is jointly organised by the World Trade Institute, the Institute of European and International Economic Law of the University of Berne and the Institute of Health Law of the University of Neuchâtel. The focus of the conference will be the economic and regulatory framework of international trade (WTO/WHO) and the challenges for the future in meeting global demands. Registration is requested. For further information contact Rachel Liechti, tel: (+41) 31-631-3487; fax: (+41) 31-631-3630; email: [rachel.liechti@iew.unibe.ch](mailto:rachel.liechti@iew.unibe.ch); Internet: <http://wti.org/gomenu.html?http://wti.org/conf/wticonferences.html>.

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## RESOURCES

TRADE FLOWS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TEXTILES AND CLOTHING IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: TRACKING REPORT. By the United Nations Development Programme Regional Centre in Colombo (UNDP RCC), September 2005. This publication is part of a UNDP RCC initiative to assess the human development impact of the elimination of textiles and clothing trade quotas in twelve Asian countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The report includes a discussion of general trends in US and EU textile and clothing imports from Asia, an examination of national trade statistics and analysis of its findings.

THE GREAT MAZE: REGIONAL AND BILATERAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS IN ASIA - TRENDS, CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. By the United Nations Development Programme Regional Centre in Colombo (UNDP RCC), September 2005. This paper first examines the phenomenon of free trade agreement (FTA) proliferation and the underlying forces and motivations of key players at work. Following this, the discussion paper builds on the established analysis to

address the impact of FTA explosion on policy choices from a human development perspective in Asia.

**CORPORATE CONQUEST, GLOBAL GEOPOLITICS: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATIES.** By Aziz Choudry. Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), January 2005. This paper examines how bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and free trade agreements (FTAs) that contain specific investment provisions reflect geopolitical concerns as well as economic ones. It also looks at how these agreements help redefine the rights and privileges of transnational corporations with respect to commercial control over biodiversity through intellectual property rights (IPRs). Available online at [http://www.grain.org/seedling\\_files/seed-05-01-2.pdf](http://www.grain.org/seedling_files/seed-05-01-2.pdf).

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE: LINKAGES AND METHODOLOGIES.** By Aaron Cosbey, Luke Eric Peterson, László Pintér. International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), March 2005. This paper aims to flesh out the various linkages that exist between trade policy (broadly defined to cover investment, intellectual property rights, goods, services, etc.) and environmental health. It analyses potential impact pathways by which trade policy might affect environmental health, based on a review of the literature and on the authors' knowledge of trade-environment and assessment issues. The paper serves as a first step in a journey of exploration, trying to gauge the feasibility and desirability of incorporating environmental health aspects in Canada's environmental assessments of trade liberalisation agreements. It also briefly considers the implications of the surveyed linkages for an environmental health impact assessment of trade policy. Available online at <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?id=713>.

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, COMPETITION AND DEVELOPMENT.** By Martin Khor. Third World Network, June 2005. This paper examines the relation of intellectual property (IP) with monopoly and competition, in the development context. It considers the effects of IP in the special situation of developing countries. The paper was presented at a seminar organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in May 2005. Available online at <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/par/mk002.doc>.

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