



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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Biotechnology

CODEX: DISCUSSIONS HEAT UP ON ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY STANDARD

At a meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Working Group on Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Animals held on 30 May - 1 June in Brussels, delegates struggled to define the unique challenges posed by animal biotechnology and how, in particular, to take up non-food safety concerns such as environmental risks, animal welfare and ethical issues. Under a mandate from the Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology, Codex members have been developing draft guidelines for the conduct of food

safety assessments of foods derived from genetically modified (GM) animals (see Bridges BioRes, 30 September 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-09-30/inbrief.htm#4>). Although the draft guidelines are based on text adopted in 2003 for GM plants, there are particular differences in the animal case and non-food safety issues that some countries argue need to be taken into account in the new standards.

Consideration of "legitimate factors" for biotech regulation

Delegates split into two groups regarding how to take into account factors that could influence government decision-making on animal biotech that are outside of the Working Group's mandate. While the group is mandated to only address human health and food safety issues, the Intergovernmental Task Force was told over five years ago to explore how Codex should address "other legitimate factors" influencing biotechnology decision-making. Disagreement on what kinds of socio-economic and environmental issues could be included in this definition, and whether and how Codex should mention them, prevented any mention of these issues in the GM plant standards adopted in 2003. Now, however, the EU would like an explicit recognition of countries' rights to address some of these concerns in laws crafted to regulate animal biotechnology.

The language in question is in paragraph two of the "scope" section of the draft text and the five different versions proposed at the meeting would each say that the listed factors could be dealt with by "other bodies". As such, the different versions of the text do not include the factors as food safety

issues to varying extents. Such language could be used by governments, in the case of a WTO dispute, as proof that an international standards-setting body acknowledged that countries could incorporate measures to address those issues in their biotech regulations.

The US would like to include text that "recognises" that the factors "are being or may have to be" dealt with by other bodies, and includes in its list of factors animal welfare; safety of food derived from GM animals intended to be used for non-food purposes; environmental risks related to environmental release of GM animals; and the safety of animals fed from GM feed.

The EU, on the other hand, would like stronger language supporting the issues. Its favoured text would say that the issues play an important role and as such should be addressed in other bodies -- and includes the term "legitimate factors" as undecided language. In addition to the four factors listed by the US, it would also include ethical, moral and socio-economic effects of GM animals. They argued that given that GM animals have attracted even more public attention and concern than GM plants, governments should be given the explicit authorisation from Codex as an international standard-setting body to take into account moral, ethical and other public concerns regarding animal biotech. While acknowledging that the guidelines would not address these concerns, the EU text would allow countries to take into account non-food safety concerns in their biotech regulations.

For its part, Argentina put forward text that closely echoes that adopted in the GM plant guideline, referring only to "animals fed with GM feed or GM feed itself" and environmental risks. Another option would say simply that the guidelines address only food safety and nutrition, and do not address the four points listed by the US. A compromise text proposed by the US after intense negotiations with the EU and its supporters would have preambular language saying that the issues "raise concerns and without prejudice to their legitimacy or importance" they would be dealt with by other bodies.

Animal-plant differences taken up

Other issues discussed include antibiotic resistance marker genes (ABRMG), where talks built upon the first meeting of the group in February of this year. These genes are inserted in the modified organism

to identify genetically transformed plants; i.e. only plants with the marker gene will grow on material that contains antibiotics. Some fear that these genes may be transferred into bacteria in the stomach, thereby making potentially harmful bacteria resistant to antibiotics.

The draft text copies directly from the GM plant guideline, which sets out food safety factors to be considered in regulating ABRMGs. It also says that alternative technologies to ABRMGs should be used in the future development of GM animals when those technologies are safe. Most countries at the meeting lobbied for cutting the section on ABRMGs entirely, arguing it was not necessary because ABRMGs were rarely used in animal biotechnology. Others, including the EU and Consumers International, wanted the text dropped because they did not think ABRMGs were safe and as such did not want rules to be included that would support their usage. Following an impassioned plea from Canada regarding the need for international standards for ABRMGs for animals, though, delegates decided to hold an expert consultation on the issue. In addition to considering marker genes, the consultation will, based on a request from Kenya, look into the safety of food from animals that have been subject to GM treatments like vaccines for rinderpest, which have widespread use in Africa (known as "non-heritable constructs").

Delegates also agreed to re-open negotiations on an annex to the guideline which describes legitimate measures to address GM allergenicity concerns. Although the annex in the draft GM animal guidelines was taken from the GM plant guidelines, Argentina suggested that given new scientific information it was time to re-open talks and re-negotiate the language in both documents. Norway, Brazil and Argentina are expected to table draft text on allergenicity at the next meeting of the group in September 2007. At that time, delegates are also expected to discuss concerns from Norway that certain genetic modifications, such as "cry" sequences used in many GMOs, can over stimulate immune systems with human health impacts.

The next meeting of the Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology will be held in November 2006 in Chiba, Japan.

Background

While Codex standards are only voluntary, the

Codex Alimentarius Commission is recognised by the SPS Agreement 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 of health, and presumed to be consistent with the relevant provisions" of the SPS Agreement. The other two international standard-setting body 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.

ICTSD Reporting.

Fisheries

FISH UPDATE: WTO, EU, FISH STOCKS

Proponents elaborate on WTO fish liberalisation proposal

Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Thailand, Panama and Oman on 22 May presented a new version of their sectoral proposal on reductions in tariffs on fish products to the WTO Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) (TN/MA/W/63/Add.1). The new text, which includes for the first time, the explicit support of Panama and Oman, outlines specific details and numbers ("modalities") for liberalisation (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 February 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-02-17/inbrief.htm#1>). The proposal suggests specific product coverage as well as special and differential treatment for developing countries, whereby developed countries would be expected to drop their tariff value to 0 while developing countries would only be required to reduce to a yet-to-be-determined higher value of "X". A critical mass of Members will have to support the deal, however, before the voluntary reduction goes into effect. At the meeting, developing countries generally expressed support for the removal of tariff barriers and for greater liberalisation of trade in fish and fish products in developed countries, but several of them noted they would need more information on the "X" level to which they would have to reduce their tariffs before they would sign on to the deal.

Participation by countries representing 90 percent of world trade has been proposed as the goal. The proponents of the proposal have suggested that further details will be established by 31 May and a schedule of commitments by 31 July.

Europeans Clash on Fish Subsidies

A proposal to reform the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to provide new funds to upgrade or expand existing fishing fleets was blocked at the EU's Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 22 May when Britain, Germany and Belgium objected to the Euro 3.8 billion deal. Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Estonia, on the other hand, were demanding the right to upgrade their fleets and other subsidies. Controversy surrounds the proposed European Fisheries Fund (EFF) discussed at the meeting, which would provide financial support to the fisheries sector between 2007 and 2013. The EFF is scheduled to replace the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FGIF) currently being used by the CFP at the end of 2006, so agreement on the terms of the EFF is needed before the end of the year. The scheme, which had also been rejected in 2005, was tabled at the Council meeting but quickly met with criticism from northern European countries that alleged that the proposed reinstatement of EU aid to replace engines on small-scale vessels and to modernise boats would reverse the gains from the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. The CFP instituted a schedule to phase out capacity-enhancing subsidies for vessels to reduce over-fishing.

Northern EU members, fuelled by support from environmental groups including WWF, emphasised the negative effects of renovated and refurbished fishing fleets on dangerously low stocks of fish suffering from years of over-fishing. The EFF draft proposal, which was prepared by the European Commission and tabled by EU Commissioner Joe Borg, had targeted four areas: reducing fishing intensity and environment protection schemes, increasing fish farming and general marketing, supporting 'collective interest' projects such as modernising ports; and finding new markets and sustainable development of coastal areas. Sources raised questions regarding the impact on the proposed new EU subsidies for engine replacement and boat modernisation on the EU position in the WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies, where proposals have been tabled to restrict capacity-enhancing fisheries subsidies.

EU-Morocco fish agreement ratified

The European Parliament ratified a 144 million euro fisheries access agreement on 22 May, overcoming legal jurisdiction concerns over the territory of Western Sahara. The deal ran into controversy (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 14 April 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-04-14/inbrief.htm>) because EU members differed on their understanding of Western Sahara's legal status. The ratification of the agreement by the parliament recognises Morocco's de facto sovereignty over Western Sahara which some states argue is questionable under international law. The agreement between the EU and Morocco will last four years and will allow 119 vessels primarily from France, Spain and Portugal to fish in Moroccan waters beginning 30 June 2006.

UN fish stocks conference addresses implementation

The Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), held in New York from 22-26 May, focused on assessing how well the Agreement has been implemented and how it can be better implemented in the future. While recognising that implementation has been largely successful, the conference placed emphasis for future success on a two-pronged strategy to attain its goals. Increasing membership in the and working out concrete measures for implementation, it was argued, would allow more comprehensive and in-depth realisation of the objectives of the pact. Currently there are 57 member states to the Agreement and increasing the membership would help to universalise it and to ensure successful implementation in protecting highly migratory fish stocks. Developing countries showed interest by being receptive to offers of capacity building and assistance with a view to membership in the medium term.

Both parties and non-parties participated on an equal footing; however they differed on concrete measures of implementation such as boarding and inspection. Although principles of the Agreement such as precautionary approaches to management of fish stocks and ecosystems were accepted alike by parties and non-parties, the non-parties wanted to reduce the extent to which such approaches would be accompanied by binding enforcement measures like boarding to check compliance. Parties to the Agreement, though, insisted that the Agreement would be meaningless without specific

provisions directed at regulation of fishing fleets. Opposed to such measures were countries including Mexico and China who refused to become signatories unless it was rewritten.

Overall, the conference said that tougher regulatory measures should be implemented by individual states and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) to ensure compliance by treaty signatories, suggesting that many RFMOs' performance had not been impressive. Mitigation measures that were under consideration by various delegates at the conference consisted of placing limits on capacity in each fishery, tighter inspection rules at ports, better documentation concerning the origin of catches, placing independent observers on board some vessels, and requiring all fishing boats to carry satellite transponders disclosing their location to regulators. At the same time it was emphasised that the artisanal and small-scale fishing sector needs to be protected and promoted.

Daily Reporting from the UN Fish Stocks Agreement Review Conference is provided by Earth Negotiations Bulletin at <http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/sfsrc/>

Information on the proposed EU EFF is available at http://ec.europa.eu/comm/fisheries/news_corner/press/inf06_20_en.htm

"Preparation Agriculture/Fisheries Council of May 2006," EU, 19 May 2006; ENB Vol. 7 No. 61, 29 May 2006; "Good day for fishing as backward subsidies blocked," WWF, 23 May 2006; "Fisheries aid deal blocked in council," EURACTIV, 24 May 2006; "Green light for EU-Morocco fish deal," EUPOLITIX, 16 May 2006; "UN conference shies from rewriting fishing pact," REUTERS, 24 May 2006; "Greenpeace sees lax enforcement," REUTERS, 24 May 2006; "Artisanal, small-scale sector should be given preferential access to fisheries, ICSF tells UN conference," ICSF, 24 May 2006; "FAO launches new initiative to improve monitoring of world's fisheries," UN, 24 May 2006.

Agriculture

WTO AGRICULTURE CTTE TAKES UP GREEN BOX

A group of 21 developing countries presented an informal paper at the WTO on 16 May which tries to ensure that developing countries can subsidise farmers for legitimate developmental and environmental purposes. It also aims to make sure that developed countries do not disguise trade-distorting agricultural subsidies under an environmental guise to avoid WTO rules. The negotiations took place during an informal meeting of the Committee on Agriculture, and centred upon what types of subsidies should be excluded from

the general WTO requirement to reduce agricultural subsidies (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 10 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-10/inbrief.htm>).

Under Annex 2 of the AoA, some subsidies can be placed in a "green box" exempted from reduction commitments if they do not distort trade (or at the most cause minimal distortion), are government-funded, do not involve price support and are not targeted at particular products. Types of subsidies that have in the past been allowed by the green box include direct income supports for farmers, and environmental protection and regional development programmes. The developing country group (G20), Canada and Australia suspect that subsidies currently included in the green box subsidies do in fact cause trade and production distortions, and so have called for new rules on cuts, disciplines and strict notification requirements. The EU, US, Japan and other major agricultural subsidisers, on the other hand, emphasise the importance of the green box as a means to address various 'non-trade concerns' such as the protection of the environment, poverty alleviation and food safety, and have opposed calls for reform.

Making the green box "development-friendly"

In its paper, the G20 spelled out their ideas for reforming the green box to ensure that it remains minimally trade-distorting and becomes more useful for developing countries. Arguing that the complex rules under the current green box discriminate against developing countries, the group called for an expert discussion to propose ways to make green box provisions, including for safety nets and natural disasters, more development-friendly.

They also said that additional kinds of government policies should be included for exemption under the green box, such as payments associated with land reform; developing country government purchases of food from low-income or resource-poor farmers to establish public stockpiles for food security purposes; and the subsidised sale of food procured from such farmers "with the objective of fighting hunger and rural poverty". Although the first category received broad support, some Members were concerned about what the scope of the latter two categories could include. The G20 also indicated they could consider expanding the range of green box programmes to include payments to farms in the event of sanitary and phytosanitary

emergencies caused by natural disasters -- on condition that the production affected is destroyed.

Furthermore, the G20 argued that to qualify for inclusion in the green box, subsidies to farmers who have stopped agricultural production on their land should also not involve the agricultural use of land, labour or any other factor of production. They argued for the inclusion of the language on halting use of land, labour or machines to make sure that farmers receiving green box subsidies for stopping their agricultural production do not then use the land, labour or machines to earn income. However, in reaction to complaints from the EU and others that this could prevent their green box-subsidised farmers from performing minimal tasks to take care of the land, the G20 clarified at the meeting that their proposal would certainly allow for minimal usage of the factors of production necessary to avoid environmental degradation.

De-linking subsidies from production

Payments to farmers will be trade distorting, the G20 argued, so long as they are linked to the amount that is produced and the inputs to production. Although payments eligible for inclusion in the green box must be, by definition, not directly linked to how much a farmer is growing, the G20 argues that changes in the way farmers qualify for payments nonetheless encourages them to expand their production. Many governments make frequent updates for the criteria used to update eligibility, such as income and production level, which can raise farmers' hopes of receiving more government grants in the future, which would in turn influence their production decisions -- even though these payments are supposed not to be linked to production.

To remedy this problem, the G20 suggested that Members need to establish "fixed and unchanging" reference points for areas, yields and animal numbers required to qualify for government payments allowed under the green box. Reducing the number of times governments ask their subsidised producers how much they are producing would ensure that the government does not take into account these amounts when deciding how much to subsidise each year -- and instead just considers the public policy goals independently from production. However, Switzerland and other Members have said that fixing the base level of production forever, which would effectively happen

if countries could not ask their producers more than once, could in the long run prevent them from giving appropriate green box subsidies to appropriate types of agricultural enterprises. For example, if the Swiss said today that to qualify for subsidies to support rural culture they wanted to know if a farmer owned more than 20 cows, a WTO requirement to not ask farmers again how many cows they have would prevent the Swiss from stopping payments to the same farmer in thirty years, when as a result of reproduction and investment he owns 100 cows and has a major mechanised commercial operation.

The Chair of the discussions, Ambassador Crawford Falconer (New Zealand), said that he would make changes to his "reference paper" that summarises positions on the issue, but noted that more discussions were necessary.

The Chair's reference paper, G-20 reactions, the G-20 proposal from 2005 and other key resources are available at <http://www.agtradepolicy.org/page/resource/domestic.htm#green>

ICTSD Reporting.

In Brief

CHINESE BLOCK IMPORTS OF BURMESE TIMBER

A ban placed by Chinese officials on imports of timber from Burma has led to dramatic cuts in flows of illegal timber, the lobby group Global Witness said on 30 May. At the request of the Burmese government, the Provincial Government of Yunnan on 27 March had instructed Chinese border checkpoints to stop imports of "all sorts of timber and mineral products from Burma" (now known officially as Myanmar), which are presumed by both governments to be illegal when sent by land as opposed to better-regulated sea transactions. Chinese timber workers in Burma have also been told to return home and it has been made a criminal offence in China to import timber (by land) from or perform logging in Burma. Since the issuance of the order, land-based trade flows between the two countries have been cut significantly and most border crossings are enforcing the ban, though some timber is still entering via border back roads. At least 200 Chinese workers have been arrested by the Burmese government. Bilateral talks between

the Yunnan and Burma governments on timber and mineral trading cooperation are continuing. Following publicity from a report several months ago regarding European imports of processed forest products from China that used illegally logged timber from Burma (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 28 October 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-10-28/inbrief.htm#6>), EU officials have raised concerns a few times in high-level meetings with Chinese diplomats about Chinese sourcing from Burmese regions characterised by civil unrest and illegal activities. Although it is uncertain exactly why the Rangoon-based military junta in Burma would like to see the illegal exports stop, sources in the country suggest key factors include losses in government revenue from forgone taxes, the difficulty that legal Burmese exporters of forest products face in international markets to compete with Chinese exporters that use cheap illegally-harvested Burmese wood, and the financial support the illegal timber exports give to armed opposition groups in the country.

ICTSD Reporting; "China Blocks Timber Imports From Burma," GLOBAL WITNESS, 30 May 2006; "China Blocks Timber Imports from Burma," 31 May 2006; "China cracking down on illegal timber from Myanmar," REUTERS, 1 June 2006.

PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE TARIFFS ON TRADE IN CHEMICALS

A proposal to eliminate all tariffs on trade in chemicals at the WTO was put forward on 15 May by Canada, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan and the US (TN/MA/W/72) in the WTO Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA). Under the proposal, once enough WTO Members got on board ("critical mass"), developed country supporters of the plurilateral "sectoral" initiative would eliminate their tariffs immediately, while developing countries would be given longer periods to implement tariff reductions for certain highly sensitive products, but would nonetheless be expected to bring their tariffs to zero. The tariff reductions would apply to a wide range of chemicals, including fertilizers, pharmaceutical products, explosives, herbicides and organic and inorganic chemicals. These tariff reductions would be voluntary and go beyond the requirements of the formula to be agreed in the NAMA negotiations for products overall. Trade in

and production of chemicals is also governed by the Stockholm Convention, which regulates persistent organic pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention, which introduces prior informed consent procedures for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides, and the Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances (see <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/ictsd/news/chemicals.htm> for news coverage). The Conventions cover a number of chemicals that are listed as candidates for tariff cuts in the WTO proposal, including fertilizers, methyl bromide and carbon-based chemicals, but the relationship between these multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the proposal has not yet been discussed at the meeting.

ICTSD Reporting.

INDIA REVEALS BIOTECH LABEL LAW

The Indian Health Ministry on 22 May published draft rules on biotech labelling under which all food and food products containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or produced using modern biotechnology must be labelled before being placed on the market. Under the proposed amendments to the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules (PFA), 1955, any food that either is a GMO, has GM ingredients, or has been "derived from biotechnology" must be labelled as such, including on any relevant packaging, regardless of whether the product has been imported or domestically produced. Similarly, the rules say that imported GM food must also include a label indicating that the product has been cleared for marketing and use in the country of origin. The rules, which come on the heels of the publication of guidelines for approval of GM imports that were recently notified to the WTO (G/TBT/N/IND/17) (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 19 May 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-05-19/inbrief.htm#6>), confirm that imports of GM products without the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) are prohibited. Although the rules were promulgated with the goal of "providing correct information to consumers", civil society groups assailed the text as a "means for legalising contamination by employing a regulatory system that is deeply flawed", confirming their ongoing opposition to the approval of GM crops, and in particular Bt cotton, in light of continued uncertainty about the

environmental and food security impacts of the crops. Business groups expressed concerns regarding the implications of labelling on costs of production and segregation. Practical concerns have also been raised regarding the feasibility of labelling in a country where the vast majority of food is not packaged. Notwithstanding the broad scope of these rules which will go into effect at the end of June, GEAC at its 22 May meeting decided that the soy oil importing industry could file for a one-time GEAC approval of imports of GM soy bean oil derived from Round up Ready Soybean. The decision marks an exemption from overall GM approval framework under the PFA which the committee justified by the absence of GMOs in the final, processed soy oil. Some actors interpreted this as a decision that GEAC approval is only necessary where the final product itself includes GMOs, which the Ministry of Environment reportedly confirmed.

The labelling rules are available at <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=17941>

Information on GEAC is available at http://www.envfor.nic.in/divisions/csurv/geac/geac_home.html

"India to ease controls on gene-modified oils," REUTERS, 26 May 2006; "Draft rules for labelling of GM food in India," NEW KERALA, 23 May 2006; "CSA-India: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare re GM Labelling Rules," Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, 15 April 2006; "Decision taken in the 67th Meeting of the GEAC held on 22nd May, 2006," GEAC, 22 May 2006; "GEAC spares refined GM oils mandatory pre-import test," FINANCIAL EXPRESS, 31 May 2006.

MUTUAL SUPPORTIVENESS OF WTO, CBD A "SLIGHT PROBLEM": LAMY

At a speech during the 30 May opening ceremony of the annual EU "Green Week", WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy suggested that the WTO faces two environmental challenges, namely how to deal with unilateral transboundary actions to protect the environment and how the WTO should interface with MEA rules. Noting that the WTO dispute ruling on the shrimp-turtle case led to the creation of a new MEA on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, he suggested that the WTO could also employ MEAs to achieve its trade and sustainable development objectives, including as a legal framework to prevent one country from taking a unilateral trade-related action for environmental purposes. In reference to

the Convention on Biological Diversity, he noted that "we have a slight problem in that WTO and CBD rules and objectives" are not identical, and that Members are divided particularly on whether there is a need for an amendment to the WTO's Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to reflect better the CBD objective of ensuring fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from biodiversity. "It is incumbent on all countries to use intellectual property rights in a manner that fosters biodiversity," he argued. On 29 May, Lamy met with CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif to discuss how the two organisations can work together to fulfil their mandates, achieve sustainable development and be mutually supportive. The first-ever meeting of the WTO Director-General and CBD Executive Secretary opened up "new avenues of collaboration", Djoghlaif said.

The EU's Green Week conference, organised to celebrate international environment day (see related In Brief, this issue), was held 30 May - 2 June and examined, amongst other issues, the impact of trade on biodiversity. During a session on 1 June, participants discussed how biodiversity could be used as a means to facilitate economic development. For example, delegates examined how the "branding" of nature-based products and eco tourism may be advantageous to biodiversity and growth in developing countries.

For more information on Green Week, visit <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/poster.html>

"Lamy urges members to support multilateral environmental accords," WTO, 30 May 2006; "Biodiversity: Vaclav Havel questions economic growth obsession," EURACTIV, 30 May 2006.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ENVIRONMENT DAYS CELEBRATED

The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May, urged the global community to address threats to maintaining and protecting the planet's biological diversity. Ahmed Djoghlaif, in comments made to commemorate the occasion, noted that the theme selected for the event was protecting biodiversity in the drylands. He noted that most of the world's

drylands are found in eight of the world's ten poorest countries. Thus, "actions to conserve and maintain the health of drylands are intimately linked to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)". Celebrations and commemorations of the planet's biodiversity were held around the world, including seminars in Thailand, a photo exhibition in Brazil and a biodiversity communications workshop for journalists in Honduras. To draw attention to the role of trade in exacerbating land degradation, Greenpeace activists around the world mobilised on 22 May to draw attention to the role of European imports of soy feed for farm animals from land that has been converted from biodiversity-rich rainforests in the Amazon rainforest. World Environment Day, which also focused on deserts and desertification, will be celebrated on 5 June.

Information on World Environment Day is available at www.unep.org/wed/

Information on International Day for Biological Diversity is available at <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2006-ctrs.shtml>

"Message of the Executive Secretary of the CBD," CBD, 22 May 2006; "Greenpeace Slams US Commodities Giant for Amazon Crimes," GREENPEACE, 22 May 2006.

Events & Resources

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar.

Coming Up In the Next Two Weeks

5 June, Global: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY. Commemorated each year, the World Environment Day is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The theme for this year is Deserts and Desertification. For further information contact Elisabeth Guilbaud-Cox, tel: (+254 20) 623-401; fax: 62392; email: elisabeth.guilbaud-cox@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2006/english/>

5-9 June, Washington DC, USA: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY COUNCIL

MEETING. The main governing body of the GEF will meet for purposes of developing, adopting, and evaluating its programs. For further information contact the GEF Secretariat, tel: (+1 202) 473-0508; fax: 522-3240; email: gef@gefweb.org; Internet: http://www.gefweb.org/Documents/Council_Documents/council_documents.html

7 June, Brussels, Belgium: A SUSTAINABLE PATH FOR BIOFUELS IN THE EU. Organised by BirdLife International, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the European Federation for Transport and Environment. As the political momentum builds behind the biofuel industry across the EU and as the revision of the Biofuels Directive approaches, this event presents a timely opportunity to explore with a wide range of stakeholders - including industry, farmers, the European Commission, and civil society - the critical issue of how the EU can deliver on its commitment to ensure the sustainability of biofuels. For further information contact conference organizers, tel: (+32 (0)2) 502 9909; fax: 502 9908; email: seminar@eeb.org; Internet: <http://www.transportenvironment.org/Article186.html>

7-9 June, Bangalore, India: INTERNATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE. This conference will include a special agricultural biotechnology thrust, focusing on current challenges and future opportunities. Topics for discussion will include transgenic crops, functional foods and plant pharmaceuticals, biofuels, biofertilizers and biopesticides and intellectual property rights, safety, and regulatory issues. For further information contact Gwyneth Alphonso, tel: (+91 22) 55804475; fax: (+91 98) 20917169; e-mail: gwen@bangalorebio.in.

12-16 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO RULES WEEK. These negotiations will include talks on possible WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies, where the issues of special and differential treatment, artisanal fisheries and related topics are likely to arise. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org; Internet: <http://www.wto.org>

12-13 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COUNCIL ON TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (TRIPS) - Special Session. This meeting will discuss the relationship between WTO intellectual property rules and the Convention on Biological Diversity, including proposals for a disclosure requirement in patent applications. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org; Internet: <http://www.wto.org>

12-14 June, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT – SPECIAL SESSION. This technical discussion on environmental goods and services will discuss (i) Environmental

monitoring, analysis and assessment equipment; (ii) Remediation and clean up of soil and water; (iii) Cleaner technology and products; (iv) Environmentally preferable products based on end use or disposal characteristics; (v) High environmental performance or low environmental impacts; and (vi) Other issues. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org; Internet: <http://www.wto.org>

12-16 June, Madrid, Spain: FIRST SESSION OF THE ITPGRFA GOVERNING BODY. The first session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is organised by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and will examine the implementation and rules of the treaty to ensure access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources for covered crops. For further information contact José Esquinas-Alcázar, tel: (+39 6) 570 56347; fax: 57053057; e-mail: Jose.Esquinas@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/>

12-16 June, New York, US: SEVENTH MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA. This meeting, held under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, will discuss ecosystem approaches and oceans, including national experiences, related concepts and implications. For further information contact the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, tel: (+1 212) 963 3962; fax: 963-2811; email: doalos@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm#A/AC.259/L.7

14-16 June, Metro Manila, Philippines: 4TH MEETING OF THE ASEAN EXPERTS GROUP (AEG) ON THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES). This meeting, organised by the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA), will discuss the status of the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna 2005-2010. For further information contact Virgilio V. Vitug, tel: (632)925-8952; fax: 924-0109.

14 - 21 June, Mondsee, Austria: EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION - 24TH SESSION, including SYMPOSIUM ON HYDROPOWER, FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER ABSTRACTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR FISH AND FISHERIES. The European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission has served since 1957 as the only international forum for collaboration and information exchange among all European countries and for advice

to member Governments on the management of inland fisheries and aquaculture. It currently has 34 members and regularly works with scientists from North America, Russia, the Ukraine and Belorussia. For further information, contact Devin Bartley, e-mail: devin.bartley@fao.org

15-16 June, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: INSTITUTIONS FOR PROVIDING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS: MANAGING UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY AND CHANGE IN THE FIELD OF BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE. This meeting, organised by the Universities of Paris, Oldenburg and Louvain, will discuss topics including management under strong bounded rationality and institutions for changing beliefs and social preferences. The Consortium organising the conference currently has a call for papers on institutions for providing global environmental goods and managing uncertainty, complexity and change in the field of biodiversity and climate change. For further information contact Anne Liesse, tel: (+32 10) 47 20 81; email: anne.liesse@cpdr.ucl.ac.be.

Other upcoming events

20-21 June, Helsinki, Finland: OECD Workshop on Subsidy Reform and Sustainable Development. This workshop organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development will provide input to the analytical and policy dimensions of the OECD horizontal work programme on sustainable development. Through issues papers and case studies, it will examine how to use integrated analysis and decision-making – in the economic, environmental and social spheres – to enable reform of harmful subsidies and manage the reform process. For further information contact Candice Stevens, tel: (+33 1) 45.24.93.24; email: Candice.Stevens@oecd.org; Internet: www.oecd.org/sustainabledevelopment

5-6 September. Innogen ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2006: GENOMICS FOR DEVELOPMENT? THE LIFE SCIENCES AND POVERTY REDUCTION. This year's conference aims to address current questions around the role of science and technology in providing solutions to end hunger, disease and poverty. For more information contact Becky Hanlin, email: r.e.hanlin@sms.ed.ac.uk; internet: www.innogen.ac.uk/events/annual-conference

9-13 October, New Delhi, India. 2ND INTERNATIONAL RICE CONGRESS 2006. Organized jointly by the International Rice Research Institute and Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the theme of this congress is "Science, technology, and trade for peace and prosperity". It comprises four major events: the 26th International Rice Research Conference (including e.g. a session on 'genetics and genomics' and workshops on hybrid rice and on genetically modified

rice and biosafety issues); the 2nd International Rice Commerce Conference; the 2nd International Rice Technology and Cultural Exhibition; and the 2nd International Ministers' Round Table Meeting. For further information, contact Conference organisers, email: pramodag@vsnl.com; Internet: <http://www.icar.org.in/irc2006/>

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy or review by the BRIDGES staff to smohan@ictsd.ch.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED WTO NEGOTIATIONS - FISHERIES SECTOR STUDY. By U Kleih, P Greenhalgh, and A. Marter (Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK with Nigel Peacock, NAP Fisheries, UK, May 2006). The study aims to achieve a clear overview of the current trade situation, a definition of the options/scenarios to be considered and a clear analysis of the mechanisms through which the different options will affect social, economic and environmental areas, in the fisheries sector. The study proposes preventive as well as flanking measures or other adjustments that should prove effective in tackling any adverse impacts of liberalisation, and/or in promoting positive impacts, in the fisheries sector. To access this paper, visit http://www.sia-trade.org/wto/FinalPhase/FISHERIESFINAL_May2006.pdf

FOLLOW THE LEADER: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE AND BEST PRACTICE IN REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS. By A. Willock and M. Lack (WWF International and Traffic International, May 2006). Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) are the main mechanism developed by States to regulate fishing on the high seas - areas beyond national laws. However, many fish stocks have collapsed or are on the brink of commercial extinction despite efforts within some RFMOs. In the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, some dissatisfied members have ignored quotas and unilaterally set their own, while within the RFMO responsible for Southern Bluefin tuna, some countries regularly exceed their quotas. Alarming, several States are still not joining up to RFMOs and are undermining the efforts of responsible countries. The new report illustrates both effective and ineffective practices while also outlining how RFMOs can work smarter and better. To access this report visit http://www.traffic.org/news/RFMO_report_06.pdf

A GAP ANALYSIS OF CONFINED FIELD TRIAL APPLICATION FORMS FOR GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS IN EAST AFRICA: EVALUATING THE POTENTIAL FOR HARMONIZATION. By Nicholas A. Linacre and Joel

I. Cohen (International Food Policy Research Institute, April 2006). In this paper, a gap analysis is used to identify informational gaps and potential for harmonization of confined field trial application processes in three East African countries - Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. The basic principle behind gap analysis is a comparison of the status quo to an ideal with the identification of the differences or gaps and the difficulty involved in removing the gaps. The resulting similarity of the application forms provides a potential basis for harmonization of confined field trial application processes between countries leading to potential efficiency gains. To access this paper, visit <http://www.ifpri.org/divs/eptd/dp/papers/eptdp149.pdf>

WTO AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. By Mark Halle. This chapter analyses the relationship between trade and sustainable development. It argues that contrary to general opinion, the environment has made significant progress in the WTO. Although negotiations on trade and environment may not have progressed dramatically, the action of the WTO Dispute Settlement system, and in particular, the Appellate Body, has clarified the relationship between the rules governing trade and the those governing the environment in ways that will delight defenders of the environmental regime. To access this paper visit <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?id=779>

STATUS OF TROPICAL FOREST MANAGEMENT 2005. By the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO). This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the forest management situation in all 33 of ITTO's producer member countries. Using information submitted by the countries themselves and supplemented by data from a wide range of other sources, it addresses the policy and institutional settings in each country, the approaches taken to the allocation and management of resources, and the status of management of those resources. To access this report visit <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=270&id=1222>

DNA BANKS - PROVIDING NOVEL OPTIONS FOR GENE BANKS? Edited by M.C. de Vicente. (The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, 2006) This publication covers a wide range of topics related to DNA banks such as the current global status of plant genetic resources DNA banking activities; the importance of DNA storage for the conservation of species; best practices and experiences with preservation of DNA samples; the role of bioinformatics; the usefulness of DNA banks as a primary resource for conservation research; DNA banking of animal genetic resources; and the opportunities, limitations and needs for DNA banking from the perspective of developing countries. To access this publication visit <http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/publications/pdf/1110.pdf>

FARMERS' RIGHTS IN PERU - A CASE STUDY. By Manuel Ruiz Muller (The Farmers' Rights Project, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, May 2006). This study examines farmers' rights in Peru, the barriers and options to their further realization and an overview of stakeholder perceptions in the country on the issue of farmers' rights. As a member of the Andean Community, Peru has adopted extensive legislation affecting farmers' rights, which enables us to draw important lessons for the realization of these rights in Peru as well as in other countries with similar legislation. The study shows that the present legislation on access to genetic resources and the protection of traditional knowledge is not necessarily conducive to farmers' rights, but that it may pave the way for awareness of the importance of these rights and provide a good foundation for their specific realization. To access this study visit <http://www.fni.no/doc&pdf/FNI-R0506.pdf>

RECENT AND PROSPECTIVE ADOPTION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED COTTON: A GLOBAL COMPUTABLE GENERAL EQUILIBRIUM ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS. By Kym Anderson, Ernesto Valenzuela, and Lee Ann Jackson (World Bank, May 2006) The authors provide estimates of the economic impact of initial adoption of genetically modified (GM) cotton and of its potential impacts beyond the few countries where it is currently common. The results suggest that by following the lead of China and South Africa, adoption of GM cotton varieties by other developing countries- especially in Sub-Saharan Africa- could provide even larger proportionate gains to farmer and national welfare than in those first-adopting countries. Furthermore, the estimated gains are shown to exceed those from a successful campaign under the World Trade Organization's Doha Development Agenda to reduce and remove cotton subsidies and import tariffs globally. To access this paper visit http://wdsbeta.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2006/05/10/000016406_20060510092736/Rendered/PDF/wps3917.pdf

THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION'S DOHA COTTON INITIATIVE: A TALE OF TWO ISSUES. By K. Anderson and E. Valenzuela (The World Bank, May 2006) The authors provide estimates of the potential economic impacts of (1) complete or partial removal of cotton subsidies and import tariffs globally, and (2) cotton productivity growth through the adoption of genetically modified (GM) cotton varieties. Their results confirm that- unlike for other agricultural subsidies and tariffs- for cotton it is subsidy reductions rather than tariff cuts that would make by far the largest impact. To access this paper visit http://wdsbeta.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2006/05/05/000016406_20060505160536/Rendered/PDF/wps3918.pdf

PRICE PREMIUMS FOR VERIFIED LEGAL AND SUSTAINABLE TIMBER. By Rupert Oliver (UK Timber Trade Federation, February 2006). This study, commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the UK Timber Trade Federation, assessed market price premiums that may be available for "verified legal" and "verified legal and sustainable" timber in the UK market. It finds that the corporate social responsibility policies of the large importers, distributors, and builders merchants in the UK seems to be running well ahead of their customers' interest in certified forest products. To access this report, visit http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/FII_Price_Premiums_Feb06.pdf

DEMAND-SIDE OPTIONS: POLICIES AND MEASURES FOR REDUCING IMPORTS OF ILLEGAL TIMBER AND TIMBER PRODUCTS TO CONSUMER COUNTRIES. By Duncan Brack and Jade Saunders (Chatham House, May 2006). This report looks at the options available to governments of consumer countries to reduce their contribution to illegal logging. It considers EU member state procurement policies, border controls and licensing, legal mechanisms, working with industry on controlling supply chains, and using development assistance to improve governance in producer countries. To access this report visit

http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/CH_Demand_side_options.doc

Vacancies

SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is seeking qualified candidates for the position of senior program officer, innovation, technology and society in Montevideo, Uruguay. The successful incumbent will manage a portfolio of projects with a degree of independence and discretion within the policies of the centre and the plans set out in the program initiative's prospectus, as well as demonstrate best practices and the ability to work effectively with other program staff. For further information see http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-97109-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html, or contact Human Resources, IDRC, email: competitions@idrc.ca.

PROJECT OFFICER - SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is seeking a Project Officer to carry out substantive research and project support related to natural resources management issues within Canada. For further information visit <http://www.iisd.org/about/employment.asp>

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