



# Bridges Trade BioRes

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

**Issue: 6 October 2006**

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US government officials and farm groups welcomed the panel's ruling. US Trade Representative Susan Schwab described it as favouring "science-based policy-making over the unjustified, anti-biotech policies adopted in the EU." Brussels appeared nonchalant about the ruling, suggesting that it would have little in the way of actual implications for its current rules and procedures.

Several civil society groups sharply criticised the decision for undermining international environmental law.

## **Panel requests EU to bring measures in line with WTO rules**

In the only significant departure from its interim report, the panel requested the EU to bring the moratoria in line with the provisions of the SPS Agreement "if, and to the extent that" these measures have "not already ceased to exist." The interim ruling had refrained from making any recommendations for future action, arguing that the moratoria -- as they existed in August 2003 when the panel was established -- had ended. The panel's earlier ruling had also specified that it had not attempted to assess whether any amended or new moratoria were now in place. The US insists that the moratoria continue to exist in the shape of "unjustified, politically-motivated delays" in the processing of applications.

The panel rejected the EU's defence of the national-level bans as precautionary measures, arguing that sufficient scientific evidence was in fact available to carry out an adequate risk assessment. Article 5.7 of the SPS Agreement permits WTO Members to provisionally adopt SPS measures in the absence of sufficient evidence. The report called on the EU to bring the measures in conformity with WTO rules. This would imply revoking the national-level bans or providing an SPS Agreement-compliant risk assessment justifying the measures.

## **Biotechnology**

### **BIOTECH PANEL CALLS ON EU TO CONFORM WITH WTO RULES**

A WTO dispute panel has confirmed its initial finding against the EU's application of its approval process for genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The panel's final report, made public on 29 September, largely reiterated its February interim ruling on the complaint brought by the US, Argentina and Canada against EU-wide and national moratoria on the approval of new biotech products (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 February, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-02-17/story1.htm>). The parties to the dispute have so far left it open whether they would appeal the ruling.

The report, which ran to over 2000 pages and had already been distributed to the parties in May, strongly rebuked the civil society groups that had leaked the interim report earlier in the year, deploring their behaviour as "unacceptable".



International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development



## Mutual criticism from the panel and civil society groups

In a strongly worded statement, the panel sharply criticised the civil society groups that had leaked the interim report, specifically naming Friends of the Earth Europe (FOEE) and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). It warned that these breaches of confidentiality threatened to "damage the integrity of the WTO dispute settlement system as a whole." The panel also noted that it had accepted the *amicus curiae* ('friends of the court') briefs that both organisations had submitted in the case. "In the light of this, it is surprising and disturbing that the same NGOs... found it appropriate to disclose, on their own website, interim findings and conclusions of the Panel which were clearly designated as confidential."

In response to the panel's criticism, FOEE noted the panel decision had in fact not taken any points raised by NGOs into consideration, highlighting again "how the WTO treats the general public with disdain." "If the WTO, as a bare minimum, made itself more transparent, democratic and open, then there would be no need for documents to be leaked and published unofficially," said Adrian Bebb, FOEE's GMO campaigner. "Friends of the Earth acted in the public interest and would not hesitate to do it again," he added.

Greenpeace, FOEE and IATP criticised the panel's ruling for undermining the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the precautionary approach. In particular, they attacked the panel's conclusion that it was not obliged to take into account the Protocol or the Convention on Biological Diversity since not all the parties to the dispute were also parties to these agreements. The panel had stressed, however, that it did have the option of taking other treaties into account -- as the Appellate Body did in the famous 'shrimp-turtle' case when it referred to international agreements that the US had not signed in support of Washington's own argument for restricting trade. In the present dispute, however, the panel concluded it was not "necessary or appropriate" to rely on other treaties to interpret the WTO agreements at issue.

"The WTO is the wrong forum to deal with environmental trade disputes and the international community must find an alternative before another case occurs," said Sonja Meister from FOEE. Greenpeace accused the panel of 'missing the point' after failing to consider relevant environmental

rules, accusing the WTO of taking "international environmental law backwards by failing to support the precautionary approach."

It remains unclear whether any of the parties to the dispute will challenge the ruling. The parties have 60 days to lodge an appeal.

### Additional resources

The final ruling and other documents related to the dispute are available at <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/theme/tewto/biotechcase.htm>.

ICTSD reporting; "US Trade Representative Susan Schwab and US Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announce favourable ruling in WTO case on agricultural biotechnology," US TRADE REPRESENTATIVE PRESS RELEASE, 29 September 2006; "WTO undermines right to act with precaution," GREENPEACE, 29 September 2006; "No winners, only losers in biotech trade war", FRIENDS OF THE EARTH EUROPE, 29 September 2006.

## Sustainable Energy

### DEBATE RAGES OVER BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF BIOFUELS

The role of biofuels in helping solve a range of problems -- including climate change and overproduction of agricultural products -- has been heating up. Biofuels were debated at the annual WTO Public Forum -- held on 25-26 September this year -- with UN Foundation chair and media mogul Ted Turner championing these fuels as a way out of the Doha round deadlock. However, several other commentators have urged caution and sought to shed light on the potential problems associated with biofuels.

Meanwhile, research providing scenarios for bioenergy production in the European context has been released by the European Environment Agency, and WWF has taken a position on biofuel use and development in the EU.

Turner moots biofuels as way out of Doha Round subsidy conundrum

Speaking at the opening of the WTO Public Forum on 25 September, Ted Turner said it would be a "disaster" if governments gave up on multilateral trade talks, as this would entail giving up on fighting poverty. Instead, he proposed a way out of the deadlock caused by differences over farm trade. Blaming rich countries' need for farm subsidies on excess production, Turner said that biofuels -- fuels made from agricultural products -- provided the

promise of vastly increased worldwide demand for agricultural products. This, in turn, he argued, would give "developed countries a chance to end the stalemate over agriculture subsidies by giving farmers incentives to grow biofuels." Meanwhile, biofuel production would offer developmental and environmental benefits to developing countries.

To illustrate this, Turner pointed to Brazil, which has saved US\$50 billion in oil imports by using ethanol made from sugar, as well as other examples of crops that have been used to make biofuels such as palm, soy, rapeseed and jatropha. He emphasised that biofuels were renewable, could "dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions", and could help poor countries generate jobs, reduce poverty, and diminish their reliance on expensive imported oil.

Therefore, Turner proposed that "developed countries should agree to phase out tariffs and reduce their subsidies for food and fibre crops and replace them with support for biofuels" over a 5-10 year transition period.

#### **Others sound note of caution**

Others, however, cautioned that even though biofuels have great potential, expectations for them should be kept realistic.

Unilever Chair Antony Burgmans, who addressed the session following Turner's speech, warned that a growing world population's demand for both biofuels and food would put extraordinary pressure on land and biodiversity, raising the spectre of deforestation in rainforests in Brazil and Borneo. He urged the audience to be wary of 'low-intensity' biofuels such as rapeseed oil that require several chemical inputs and have relatively low energy yields, although newer biofuels offered far greater possibilities.

Ronald Steenblik, Director of Research for the Geneva-based Global Subsidies Initiative, also cautioned against viewing biofuels as a "magic bullet" for the trade talks as well as for poverty and the environment. In an interview, he noted that the deadlocked agriculture negotiations dealt with much more than biofuel crops, and that some of the most politically contentious subsidies -- to rice, cotton, and dairy -- went to crops that were not even used to produce biofuels. He also questioned Turner's apparent assumption that biofuel crops would be produced (often with the help of subsidies) and consumed domestically, rather than freely produced

and traded. "Orienting subsidies towards biofuels ignores that biofuels themselves can be traded," he said, adding that there was little evidence that higher prices would obviate the need for subsidies.

Furthermore, Steenblik said, increased global demand for crops would inevitably affect land and water use. Enormous price increases for agricultural products would likely have a negative impact on net food-importing developing countries. Policymakers should keep specific local conditions in mind when discussing cost-effective ways of replacing greenhouse gas emissions, he emphasised.

In a viewpoint piece published on the BBC website on 22 September, Jeffrey A McNeely, Chief Scientist of IUCN-The World Conservation Union, stressed the need for better policies, better science and genetic modification in order for biofuels to become a real success. He warned against, among other, habitat destruction to produce huge amount of as-of-yet relatively inefficient biofuels. "Little wonder that many are calling biofuels 'deforestation diesel'", he noted. He said biotechnology could make a real contribution and called for further research, as well as public sector involvement to ensure that social and environmental benefits without a market value are realised.

#### **Biofuels in the European context**

Meanwhile, environment organisation WWF clarified its position on biofuels in the EU, stressing that biofuels must be part of a broader strategy for transport and renewable energy. In a position paper from September, WWF emphasises that a large number of complementary policies and measures are needed in order to drastically decrease greenhouse gas emissions, with the transport sector being key to success given its large and growing emissions. WWF supports the EU biofuels target of 5.75 percent of transport fuel by 2010. The organisation lays out certain criteria for social and environmental sustainability, however: biofuels must deliver greenhouse gas and carbon life-cycle benefits over conventional fuels, and biofuels must ensure positive natural resource use and careful land-use planning. As such, WWF promotes a mandatory greenhouse gas certification scheme for biofuels. In addition, consideration should be given to where and how biofuel feedstocks are produced, including an assessment of potential food, land and water displacements.

A recent study by the European Environment Agency (EEA) sheds some light on the

sustainability of bioenergy overall in the European context, of which biofuels are one component. While the report sees significant potential for the development of bioenergy from waste, forestry and agriculture, it stresses the need for environmental guidelines. "To further explore co-benefits with nature conservation" such guidelines need to become an integral part of planning processes at the local, national and European level. The study also stresses further development of better and more efficient bioenergy technology and options.

#### Additional resources

Commentary by Jeffrey McNeely for the BBC - "Biofuels: Green energy or grim reaper?" - is available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/5369284.stm>.

WWF position on biofuels in the EU is available at [http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wwf\\_position\\_eu\\_biofuels.pdf](http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_position_eu_biofuels.pdf).

The EEA report entitled "How much bioenergy can Europe produce without harming the environment?" is available for download at [http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea\\_report\\_2006\\_7](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea_report_2006_7).

ICTSD reporting.

#### In Brief

### EU AND MALAYSIA TO COMBAT ILLEGAL TIMBER TRADE

On 25 September, Malaysia and the EU launched formal negotiations to establish a voluntary partnership agreement (VPA) to combat illegal timber trade. The VPA is set to be the first agreement under the European Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) programme, which was established as a follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development to improve developing country capacity to control illegal logging and reduce trade in illegal timber. The development of VPAs with timber-producing countries is one of the measures set out by the 2003 FLEGT Action Plan (see Bridges Weekly, 23 May 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-05-28/inbrief.htm>).

The aim of the EU-Malaysia VPA is to contribute to sustainable forest management and prevent illegally produced timber from entering the EU market. A timber licensing scheme will be set up, which customs authorities will use to verify the legality of imported timber. The VPA will also provide for joint studies, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building.

EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel noted that "in taking this step, the EU and Malaysia aim to demonstrate that trade and good governance can reinforce each other as a positive force for development and sustainable resource management." Malaysian Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, said he believed the agreement would promote bilateral trade in timber products between the two countries.

Future VPAs are also in the works between the EU and Ghana and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with official negotiations set to start at the end of this year.

"Malaysia and EU Agree to Start Negotiations on FLEGT," EC PRESS RELEASE, 25 September 2006.

### CODEX: WHEN IS A SARDINE A SARDINE?

After ten years of discussions, the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) at its 18-22 September meeting in Beijing, China, finally agreed on amendments to the Standard for canned sardines and sardine-type products (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 8 July 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-07-08/story2.htm>). At the request of Chile, the Committee added the species *Clupea bentincki* to the Codex definition of sardines. The Committee also revised the labelling guidelines for sardines to allow for more detailed information on the species and its origin.

Countries have long been haggling at both the Codex Committee and the WTO over which sardines should be allowed to be called sardines in international trade. In 2002, Peru launched - and won - a dispute against the EU over the EU's refusal to allow the Pacific species *Sardinops sagax* to be labelled as sardines in the European market despite a Codex Standard 94 Article, which explicitly recognises the species as "sardines". The WTO case highlighted the importance of international standards, such as Codex, for ensuring compliance with WTO rules, given that the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade states that measures based on international standards are "rebuttably presumed" not to pose unnecessary obstacles to trade. The draft amendments have now been forwarded to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for final adoption. The next meeting of the CCFFP will take place in early 2008.

Documents of the meeting are available at [http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/666/fp28\\_01e.pdf](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/666/fp28_01e.pdf).

ICTSD reporting.

## **DEVELOPING COUNTRIES PRESS FOR SPEEDIER WIPO TALKS ON GR, TK**

During the annual General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) -- held from 25 September to 3 October in Geneva developing countries called for the process on on the protection of traditional knowledge (TK), folklore and genetic resources at the specialised Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) to be speeded up. They reemphasised the need for a legally binding instrument to this effect, in order to restrict the misappropriation of resources and biopiracy (the uncompensated and undisclosed use of genetic materials). Developed countries recognised the importance of the issue, but called for further discussions before looking at the possibility of a legally binding instrument.

Members also decided to postpone talks on a treaty on the harmonisation of countries' national patent systems. Negotiations have broken down because developing countries have been calling for a broader scope of the negotiations, which they say should include, among other issues, disclosure of origin of genetic resource and TK in patent applications, prior informed consent of the resource and TK holders, and benefit sharing for developing countries at the latest informal meeting of the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) in April this year (see Bridges Trade Weekly, 26 April 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-04-26/story6.htm>). Patent harmonisation and the potential treaty will be revisited at next year's General Assembly.

For a complete report on the WIPO General Assembly, see Bridges Weekly, 4 October 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-10-04/story1.htm>.

ICTSD reporting.

## **HOW TO INTEGRATE BIODIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS INTO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

Government and civil society participants gathered from 19 to 21 September at a conference on "Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation" in Paris -- organised by IUCN in

partnership with the European Commission -- to discuss how to better integrate biodiversity into EU development cooperation. At the close of the meeting, the 400 participants adopted a "message" on how this could be done, providing concrete recommendations on how the EU could turn its biodiversity commitments into action.

The EU provides half of the world's funding for development cooperation. Over the last decade, the bloc has sought to integrate biodiversity concern into its development cooperation, including through an initiative entitled "Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 - and Beyond" and a thematic programme on biodiversity. However, effective mainstreaming of biodiversity into development cooperation remains a challenge, partly due to limited implementation.

Meanwhile, the concept of aid for trade have gained momentum, with discussion taking place under the Doha trade negotiations in response to developing countries' call for mechanisms to help them overcome supply side constraints. While the links between the aid for trade mandate and biodiversity protection was not explicitly discussed at the conference, the need for coherence with trade policies and mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations in trade policy were highlighted.

The conference participants adopted the consensus-based "Message from Paris: Integrating biodiversity into European development cooperation". The text reflects their views on the key areas of intervention where the EU could make a meaningful contribution to achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity through its development cooperation. The message highlights four major challenges that the EU would need to act upon by: supporting mainstreaming in partner countries; improving governance; employing innovative instruments and enhancing policy coherence; and recognising biodiversity in Overseas Countries and Territories. In addition, participants stressed the need to incorporate the 2010 biodiversity target into the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) framework.

The further information, see <http://www.countdown2010.net/paris2006>. For a summary report, see IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/biodiv/paris2006/19sep.html>.

ICTSD reporting.

## CARIBBEAN MINISTERS CALL FOR DOHA REVIVAL, RAISE CLIMATE CONCERNS

Six Caribbean foreign ministers discussed the lack of progress in recent global trade negotiations, threats posed by climate change and the need for multilateral solutions at the UN General Assembly on 27 September. They called for more trade benefits and less greenhouse gas emissions.

While deploring the suspension of the Doha round in July this year, the ministers reminded UN members of the special situation of small island developing states, calling for special consideration in trade agreements and stressing the importance of trade preferences. "Fundamental to a viable and equitable trade regime is the need to take account of the wide disparity in structural characteristics and approaches to economic policy among the many members of the WTO, and the consequent need for flexibility," said Jamaica Foreign Minister Anthony Hylton. "The international community must come to grips with the fact that 'one size fits all' approach is inappropriate and impractical," Saint Lucia Minister Petrus Compton added.

Bahamas Foreign Minister Frederick Mitchell drew attention to the threat that climate change poses to the small and vulnerable economies of the Caribbean. "To a small-island developing state, there are few things more important than securing the necessary assistance in order to build resilience against the many hazards that afflict our country on a consistent basis, including the violent storms that pass through our region even more frequently as a result of global warming," he said.

Countries represented include Grenada, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Bahamas, Dominica, Belize, and Guyana.

"Small island States discuss trade, environment and collective action during UN debate," UN NEWS CENTRE, 27 September 2006.

## NEW SEED MONITORING CENTRE IN NAIROBI

The Alliance for a Green Revolution (AGRA) -- a Rockefeller and Bill Gates Foundation joint endeavour -- is setting up a seed centre in Nairobi, Kenya. The centre forms part of a US\$150 million programme to spur a "Green Revolution" on the African continent. The goal is to allow farmers to produce higher yielding crops to spur economics, curtail famine and improve health. The seed centre

will be a hub for monitoring and evaluation of the Programme for Africa's Seed Systems (PASS), supporting a variety of national-level and regional programmes.

Under AGRA, forty national crop breeding programmes have been set up to create improved seeds that can withstand local pests, diseases, rainfall patterns and soil properties, as well as carry traits demanded by local farmers. Eight to ten of Africa's major food crops, which greatly vary by region, will be the focus of research and development. Another aim is to improve 200 specific crop varieties in five years. This programme will focus on plants with built-in insect-and disease-resistance.

AGRA also intends to ensure that the improved crop varieties are distributed to smallholder farms by means of private and public resources, including approximately 60 seed companies, public community systems and public extension. Farmer management practices and access to markets and financing will also be addressed through development investments. In addition, AGRA will support graduate level training across the continent.

Nearly three-quarters of Africa's land area is being farmed without modern methods, such as fertilisers and advanced seeds, keeping much of the farming population in the shackles of extreme poverty.

"Kenya: Nairobi to Host Bill Gates Seed Research Centre," THE EAST AFRICAN, 26 September 2006; "Gates Foundation partners with Rockefeller in Africa agriculture investment," SEATTLE TIMES, 12 September 2006.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS OF HORTICULTURE TRADE IN AFRICA EXAMINED

A recent assessment of potential impacts of liberalising horticulture trade (green beans, peas and roses) between Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and the EU under the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently under negotiation cautions that expected expansion of production would put pressure on the environment due to an increased use of agrochemicals, water and energy. At the same time, the report notes that the agreement has the potential to contribute to investment in more environmentally-friendly technologies -- such as hydroponics and spot sprayings -- and codes of conduct that promote more environmentally responsible production.

Regarding economic and social impacts in the ESA region, the sustainability impact assessment (SIA) concludes that the EPA promises continued employment and possibly more jobs, as it builds on the ACP countries' cost savings advantages in energy and labour. Noting that the horticulture sector is "vital" for several ACP countries and "an important contributor to economic performance and employment", the report stresses that preserving duty-free market access to the EU is crucial for ESA countries.

The ESA region exports most of its horticulture products to the EU. In Kenya, horticulture is the primary source of foreign currency, constituting nearly 20 percent of total exports. Fresh vegetables and cut flowers make up almost 40 percent of total agricultural exports in Zambia.

To access the SIA on horticulture in the EU-ESA agreement, visit [http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/global/sia/studies\\_geo.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/global/sia/studies_geo.htm)

ICTSD reporting.

## NEW HOPE FOR RESPONSIBLE SOY PRODUCTION

Soy producers, processors and traders as well as financial institutions and civil society groups came together in early September in Asunción, Paraguay, at the second Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS), to give this multi-stakeholder initiative the formal status of a new international organisation. The organisation has the mandate to reduce the negative impacts of soy production, and is in part the result of growing consumer demand for environmentally and socially sustainable soy. Its goals include the protection of biodiversity from conversion of natural habitats to agriculture, the improvement of agricultural practices, and the soy industry's full compliance with labour laws.

The new organisation's immediate tasks are to create globally applicable principles, criteria and indicators for the responsible production, processing and trade of soy within the next 18 months.

"The private sector is beginning to understand that it needs to do its homework, and quickly, in order to avoid less desirable outcomes such as product boycotts or the establishment of non-tariff barriers to eradicate irresponsibly produced soy," commented Leonardo Lacerda of WWF's Global Forests Programme.

Soy is used in edible foodstuffs and oils, cosmetics, and feed for livestock, such as cattle, pigs, poultry and fish.

"Responsible soy on the way," WWF RELEASE, 4 September 2006.

## Events & Resources

### EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/calendar.htm>.

### ICTSD Event

12-13 October, Geneva, Switzerland: DELIVERING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS AND SERVICES NEGOTIATIONS: AN ICTSD INFORMAL ROUNDTABLE. The roundtable will address important and persistent knowledge gaps on issues of concern to EGS negotiators and to explore possibilities for reconciling divergent negotiating approaches. Building on knowledge generated through commissioned research and a series of regional dialogues held in Asia and Latin America through which issues in the negotiations and EGS sectors of key concern and interest to the various regions were articulated, this roundtable will seek to spell out options for a negotiating strategy on environmental goods and services. For further information, contact Mahesh Sugathan, tel: +41 22 9178 351, fax: +41 22 9178 093, email: [smahesh@ictsd.ch](mailto:smahesh@ictsd.ch), Internet: <http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2006-10-12/2006-10-12-desc.htm>

### Coming up in the next two weeks

5-6 October, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia: FIRST INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Put on by the Organisation of American States (OAS), this meeting will identify and advance concrete partnerships at the regional and hemispheric level to integrate environmental considerations into development, poverty alleviation, social and economic policies. The meeting will take into account progress in implementing sustainable development and identify specific opportunities for cooperation among OAS member states. For further information, see [http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm\\_eng\\_v1.htm](http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm_eng_v1.htm)

8-12 October, Gothenburg, Sweden: 40TH WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CONGRESS. This meeting is organised by the International Association for Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI). For further

information contact AIPPI, tel: (41-44) 280 58 80; e-mail: [mail@aippi.org](mailto:mail@aippi.org), Internet: <http://www.aippi.org/>

9-10 October, Warsaw, Poland: MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE (MCPFE), EXPERT LEVEL MEETING. The MCPFE is a high level political initiative that has developed as a dynamic process towards the protection and sustainable management of forests. This political commitment involves 44 European countries, European Community and cooperates with other countries, as well as international organisations that participate as observers. For more information, please contact Bozena Kornatowska, tel: (48 22) 331 790 331; e-mail: [b.kornatowska@lu-warsaw.pl](mailto:b.kornatowska@lu-warsaw.pl).

9-15 October, Urumqi, China: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WATER, ECOSYSTEMS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ARID AND SEMI-ARID ZONES. The conference is organised around four major themes: water and environment; agricultural practices; water and civilization; and issues and perspectives for the future. For more information, contact Zhihui Liu, Xingjian University; e-mail: [watarid@xju.edu.cn](mailto:watarid@xju.edu.cn); Internet: [http://www.ephe.sorbonne.fr/watarid/watarid\\_en.htm](http://www.ephe.sorbonne.fr/watarid/watarid_en.htm)

10-11 October, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO GENERAL COUNCIL. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739 5007; fax: (41-22) 739 5458; email: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org).

16-17 October, Amsterdam, the Netherlands: CONFERENCE ON HOW TO MAKE MARKETS WORK FOR CLIMATE. This conference, which will be hosted by the Dutch State Secretary for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, will focus on how to make markets work more effectively to combat climate change. This will include discussions how to create new grant and loan mechanisms at the international level, possibilities to blend public and private financial resources through carbon finance, and potential to make emission trading schemes compatible between parties that have quantified targets, and those that do not. For more information, see <http://www.makemarketswork.com/>

17-20 October, Rome, Italy: TECHNICAL CONSULTATION - DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES ON ECOLABELLING OF FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS FROM INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES. The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the FAO is the only global intergovernmental forum where major international fisheries and aquaculture problems are examined and recommendations are addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, fish workers, NGOs and the international community. It has also been used as a forum for the negotiation of global agreements and instruments, such as the Code of Conduct. For more information, contact Rolf Willmann; e-mail: [rolf.willmann@fao.org](mailto:rolf.willmann@fao.org).

18 October, Washington D.C., US: ETHICS AND ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY: HOW DO WE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE? This day-long symposium sponsored by Michigan State University and the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology is to provide an overview of the ethical implications of creating and using cloned or genetically modified (GM) animals in agriculture, and of utilising GM agricultural animals for biomedical or industrial purposes. Presentations at the event will cover relevant ethical frameworks and terminology, as well as providing an overview of animal biotechnology as a subject. For further information, contact the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, tel: (1 202) 347 9044; fax: (1 202) 347 9047; Internet: <http://pewagbiotech.org/events/1018/>

### Other Upcoming Events

24 October, Washington, D.C.: 2006 WORLD FOOD LAW SYMPOSIUM: CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SECURITY AND AFRICA. Co-sponsored by the World Food Law Institute at Howard University School of Law, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the American Society of International Law and others, this symposium will feature multidisciplinary discussions of climate change in Africa and possible positive responses linked to food security. For further information contact Professor Marsha Echols, tel: (1 202) 806 8039; email: [mechols@law.howard.edu](mailto:mechols@law.howard.edu) or [worldfoodlaw@law.howard.edu](mailto:worldfoodlaw@law.howard.edu).

13-15 November, Bangkok, Thailand: WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATED POLICIES FOR BIO-INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE AND HEALTH IN ASIA. The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) will organise this workshop, which aims bring together researchers, non-governmental and community-based organisations, as well as policy-makers from countries in South, Southeast, and East Asia. Participants will seek to: 1) critically examine existing policies on bio-innovations in the region; 2) identify existing research gaps; and 3) recommend a strategy for information sharing, learning across borders, and partnering in the region. For further information, see <http://www.bioinnovationpolicies.ait.ac.th/>

15-26 November, New York City, USA: INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY. To mark the end of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the UN Division of Social Policy, in collaboration with other UN agencies and civil society, is organising this International Forum at the UN headquarters. It seeks to provide an opportunity for forward-looking dialogue among stakeholders on the next steps over the next decade towards the realization of the universal goal of poverty eradication. For more information, contact the Poverty Forum 2006 Secretariat; tel: (1 212) 963 1371; fax: (1 212) 963 3062; e-mail: [unforum@un.org](mailto:unforum@un.org); Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/poverty/PovertyForum/>



18-20 June 2007, Västerås, Sweden: THIRD INTERNATIONAL GREEN ENERGY CONFERENCE. This multi-disciplinary international conference on the use of energy with no or reduced environmental impact will provide a forum for the exchange of latest technical information, for the dissemination of the high-quality research results, for the presentation of the new developments in the area of energy and environment and for the debate and shaping of future directions and priorities in sustainable development and energy security. For further information, see <http://www.igec.info>

11-15 November 2007, Rome, Italy: 20TH WORLD ENERGY CONGRESS. Organised by the World Energy Council, the main focus of the Congress will be "The Energy Future in an Interdependent World." In particular, the Congress will focus on social issues concerning the developing and the emerging countries that are facing the international energy market. The Congress will also focus on how to ensure the best sustainable progress for the industrialised countries to make certain not only an economic development but also to improve the energy quality for a better life and environment. Besides the World Energy Council Members, the Congress will welcome exhibitors from both energy producing and consuming countries, institutions, international organisations and energy industry representatives, researchers and experts from all over the world. The Congress is held every three years. For further information, see <http://www.rome2007.it/Congress/Congress.asp>

## 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 [msell@ictsd.ch](mailto:msell@ictsd.ch).

IMPACTS OF CHANGES IN KEY EU POLICIES ON TRADE AND PRODUCTION DISPLACEMENT OF SUGAR AND SOY. By Annie Dufey, David Baldock & Martin Farmer, WWF, September 2006. This study identifies the major foreseeable environmental impacts of prospective changes in some key EU policies on the global production and trade of agricultural products, particularly sugar and soy. It examines potential ways to influence the expected displaced production in order to reduce the anticipated accompanying environmental impacts, in particular those related to freshwater and forest conservation, taking an eco-region approach. The paper concentrates on the main probable changes in production and trade patterns in developing countries, with a special focus on Brazil. To access the report visit [http://www.ieep.org.uk/publications/pdfs/final\\_report\\_on\\_WWF.pdf](http://www.ieep.org.uk/publications/pdfs/final_report_on_WWF.pdf)

SKINNING THE CAT: CRIME AND POLITICS OF THE BIG CAT SKIN TRADE. By the Environmental

Investigation Agency (EIA) and the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), September 2006. This report notes that the illegal trade in poached skins between India, Nepal and China is the most significant immediate threat to the continued existence of the tiger in the wild. The report blames the governments for doing virtually nothing to halt the alarming decline, despite frequent promises of action and ample evidence the illegal trade has increased dramatically in recent years. The report can be viewed online at <http://www.eia-international.org/cgi/reports/reports.cgi?t=template&a=129>

THE ROLE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY IN EXPLORING AND PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL GENETIC RESOURCES. Edited by J. Ruane and A. Sonnino, (FAO), 2006. This book brings together papers from an international workshop held on 5-7 March 2005 in Turin, Italy, on the role of biotechnology for the characterisation and conservation of crop, forest, animal and fishery genetic resources as well as the background and summary documents from an e-mail conference on the same subject, focusing on developing countries. The book contains four chapters on the status of the world's livestock, fishery, crop and forest genetic resources respectively; two chapters on the use of cryopreservation and reproductive technologies for conservation of genetic resources; eight chapters dedicated to the use of molecular markers for characterisation and conservation of genetic resources; and two chapters from the e-mail conference. To access the report see <http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0399e/a0399e00.htm>

BT COTTON ADOPTION IN THE US AND CHINA: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND WELFARE EFFECTS. By George B. Frisvold, Jeanne M. Reeves and Russell Tronstad, (AgBioForum 9(2) 2006). This study by researchers at the University of Arizona and Cotton Incorporated examines the global economic impact of Bt cotton use in the US and China during 2001. It finds that the planting of Bt cotton in those two countries increased total world cotton production by 0.7 percent, and reduced the world cotton price by US\$0.14 per pound (US\$0.31 per kg). Net global economic benefits were found to be US\$838 million. However, the report finds that the rest of the world still received a net benefit of US\$69 million because farmers' losses were outweighed by the economic gains made by cotton purchasers. The 10-page report can be viewed online at <http://www.agbioforum.org/v9n2/v9n2a01-frisvold.htm>

SEEDS OF HOPE: AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA. By Karol Bordreaux, Mercatus Center, George Mason University, August 2006. According to this report, Monsanto's marketing of "Combi-Packs" containing small amounts of maize seed, herbicide, and fertilisers (enough to plant a one half acre) are having "positive, though limited" results at raising maize yields on South African small farms. It is based on interviews conducted with farmers during September

2005 and March 2006 in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces. Some of the Combi-Packs that were distributed contained conventional maize seed while others contained Bt maize or genetically modified (GM) herbicide resistant maize. When combined with "no-till" or "minimum-till" agriculture, the Combi-Packs were found to reduce soil erosion and conserve water used in irrigation. The report states that the Combi-Packs encourage farmers to move towards more profitable large-scale planting, and they also create opportunities for entrepreneurship by saving farmers time and money. Combi-Packs were introduced by Monsanto in the late 1990's. According to the report, they demonstrate that companies can profit from selling to the poor, so long as their products are developed and packaged to meet the needs of poor consumers. The report was funded by Monsanto. To access this report visit [http://www.enterpriseafrica.org/repository/docLib/20060907\\_seeds\\_of\\_hope.pdf](http://www.enterpriseafrica.org/repository/docLib/20060907_seeds_of_hope.pdf)

"Examining the Use of Subsidies For the Abatement of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Through Experimental Simulations" in *EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT* 16(4), 2006. By Lars E. Olsson, et al. This is the study of the potential effectiveness of a governmental subsidy system to reduce sales and therefore production of environmentally harmful products. The important issue of whether the subsidy system preserves competitiveness is also examined. It is suggested that subsidies may make the adjustment process toward sustainable production less costly for the regulated parties.

"Environmental Taxation In the Natural Resource Extraction Sector: Is It A Good Idea?" in *EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT* 16(4), 2006. By Patrik Soderholm. This paper analyses the economics of taxing virgin raw materials for environmental reasons. The focus is on the case of aggregate taxation in three European countries. The motives for environmental taxation of aggregates are mixed, and not all motives find strong support in the economics literature.

"Can Tuna Promote Sustainable Development In the Pacific?" in *THE JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT* 15(3) 2006. By Hannah Parris. This article reviews the importance of tuna fisheries in the western and central Pacific Ocean to Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and examines whether current and proposed institutional mechanisms for tuna management are sufficient to promote long-term tuna-led development.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL GREEN ENERGY CONFERENCE: CALL FOR PAPERS. This multi-disciplinary international conference will be held on June 18-20, 2007 in Västerås, Sweden. It will focus on the use of energy with no or reduced environmental impact and will provide a forum for the exchange of latest technical information, for the dissemination of the high-quality research results, for the presentation of the new developments in the area of energy and environment. It will seek to promote debate on future directions and priorities in sustainable development and energy security. For more information on the submission of papers for the conference, e-mail: [info@igec.info](mailto:info@igec.info); Internet: <http://www.igec.info>

FAO/WHO CALL FOR PAPERS/EXPERTS FOR CONSULTATION ON SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF FOOD DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY. The FAO and WHO are planning to convene a consultation in the first trimester of 2007 concerning the safety assessment of food derived from biotechnology. The consultation will aim to provide scientific advice and information on issues related to the conducting of food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA animals. For more information, contact Ezzeddine Boutrif, FAO; tel: +39 06 5705 6156; e-mail: [ezzeddine.boutrif@fao.org](mailto:ezzeddine.boutrif@fao.org).

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