



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

Issue: 3 November 2006

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Sustainable Energy

FLURRY OF ACTIVITY ON CLIMATE CHANGE PRECEDES LOW- EXPECTATION COP

With a major UN climate meeting around the corner, two new reports detail the global costs of inaction on climate change as well as the threat climate change poses to Africa specifically. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair responded by calling for immediate action, and was backed by his finance minister who proposed new emissions reduction targets for the EU.

Yet, expectations for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-12) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the second meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP-2) in Nairobi, Kenya from 6-17 November are low. Issues on the agenda include both discussions on commitments under the Kyoto Protocol after the first commitment period that expires in 2012, and dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change under the UNFCCC. Future action is a contentious topic, especially given that countries, such as the US and Australia, have rejected the Kyoto Protocol and are reluctant to agree to take on commitments. Major developing countries that have signed on to Kyoto are under pressure to take on some form of commitments in the future, but hesitate to bind themselves to anything as long as developed countries fail to show effective leadership. In fact, recent figures from the UNFCCC secretariat show that emissions from developed countries are on the rise.

COP-12 participants will also seek to set the rules for a fund for projects that help developing countries adapt to climate change, and to set in motion policy discussions on the topic.

Stern Review: Failure to act not an option

In a 700-page report on the effects of climate change delivered to the British government, Sir Nicholas Stern, former chief economist at the World Bank, warns that the world must take action now in order to avoid facing huge costs in the future. In fact, up to 20 percent of global GDP

might be lost due to the effects of climate change by 2050 if nothing is done, the report notes. On the other hand, investing one percent of global GDP into measures to mitigate climate change would be enough to set the globe on a sustainable path. Nicholas Stern called for international action, with developed countries taking the lead, noting that "Whilst there is much more we need to understand - both in science and economics - we know enough now to be clear about the magnitude of the risks, the timescale for action and how to act effectively."

Responding to the Stern Review, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said "We know now urgent action will prevent catastrophe, and investment in preventing it now will pay us back many times." He called on the EU to take on a leadership role, while also recognising the need for significant players -- including the US and major developing countries like China and India -- to get involved.

Prospects for Africa 'up in smoke'

"Up in Smoke 2", a report released on the eve of the climate meetings by the Working Group on Climate Change and Development -- an umbrella group of UK aid and green groups -- spells out how climate change already is affecting Africa, as well as future scenarios. According to the report, both droughts and floods have increased, seriously threatening food security. While greenhouse gas emissions from the continent are trivial, it is set to bear much of the burden of a changing climate.

The report calls for a climate-proofed development model for Africa, and says that developed countries should contribute US\$10-40 billion in order to help developing countries adapt to climate change. The adaptation fund is one of the issues on the table at the climate meeting in Nairobi. Developed countries have provided US\$43 million in funding for adaptation, which constitutes a tenth of the amount they have pledged. In addition, while the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism, which allows developed countries to offset emissions reductions by projects that do so in developing countries, has gotten off to a positive start, only a small subset of these investments are trickling into Africa.

Greenhouse gas emissions on the rise

The climate negotiations in Nairobi will take place against the backdrop of countries' rising greenhouse gas emissions. On 30 October the UNFCCC released figures for all developed country parties from 1990-2004. "There is a rather worrying increase in the period 2000-04," noted UNFCCC

Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. During that period, emissions rose in transition economies, following a downward trend in the 1990s due to economic slowdown after the collapse of the Soviet Union. US emissions were 15.8 percent higher in 2004 than in 1990; EU emissions were 0.6 percent below 1990 levels. The EU has, however, committed to cutting them by eight percent by 2012 under the Kyoto Protocol.

On the positive side, economic output has become almost 30 percent less carbon intensive since 1990, meaning 30 percent less carbon is released for every dollar worth of production.

Kyoto - and what next?

Key discussions at Nairobi will relate to the future commitments to deal with climate change -- although chances that parties will agree to a schedule or deadline for the process at this time are slim. At COP-11 last year, parties agreed to a "Montreal Action Plan" to discuss what happens after the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012, without setting specific dates for when this discussion should be completed.

Several environmental groups have suggested that negotiations should be completed "by the end of 2008 to ensure a seamless shift when the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012." Negotiators setting off for the meeting have questioned whether this is realistic, however. Some hope that the time after US President Bush -- a staunch opponent of the Kyoto Protocol -- steps down in January 2009 might be more conducive to agreement.

The private sector is looking anxiously for some indications of what comes after the first commitment period. Without a stable framework in place, investments in carbon reduction become risky.

In terms of emissions cuts, British Finance Minister Gordon Brown has made a concrete proposal for the EU to reduce emissions by 30 percent by 2020 - echoing a call by German Chancellor Angela Merkel -- and 60 percent by 2050, while also expanding its carbon trading scheme. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed emissions reductions of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 in California. These suggestions are unlikely to make it to the international negotiating table in Nairobi, however.

Additional resources

For further information on the climate meeting see http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_12/items/3754.php

For daily updates on the climate meetings, see IISD Linkages at <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop12/>

To access the Stern Review, visit http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Independent_Reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/sternreview_index.cfm

To access "Africa - Up In Smoke 2," produced by Oxfam and the New Economics Foundation, visit http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_PublicationDetail.aspx?pid=232

"Climate change fight 'can't wait'," BBC, 31 October 2006; "Publication of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate change," UK TREASURY RELEASE, 30 October 2006; "Time to Get Serious on 'Bold' Kyoto Successor - WWF," REUTERS, 24 October 2006; "Climate change 'hitting Africa,'" BBC, 28 October 2006; "Britain Calls for Urgent Action on Climate Change," REUTERS, 31 October 2006; "Greenhouse Gases Rise in 2004, Cuts Needed - UN," REUTERS, 31 October 2006; "2006 UNFCCC greenhouse gas data report points to rising emission trends," UNFCCC RELEASE, 30 October 2006.

ENERGY MAKING ITS WAY INTO EU TRADE POLICY

In its new trade policy strategy from early October, the EU has included securing energy supply and transit as an important objective. At a summit with India on 13 October, the two trading blocs agreed to work towards a "broad-based" bilateral trade and investment pact, with cooperation on energy and climate change being part of the package.

Meanwhile, at an EU-Russia summit in Finland on 20 October, Russian President Vladimir Putin resisted EU leaders' calls to ratify the international Energy Charter Treaty that would liberalise trade and investment in its oil and gas sector.

EU trade strategy to include energy

In its comprehensive trade strategy dated 4 October -- under which Brussels will pursue bilateral free trade agreements with major economies (see Bridges Weekly, 11 October 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-10-11/story4.htm>) -- the EU has identified diversifying sources of energy supply and transit as an important

objective. On this point, its strategy paper calls for efforts to improve "transparency, governance, and trade in the energy sector in third countries through non-discriminatory conditions of transit and third party access to export pipeline infrastructure". It also says that the links between trade policy and climate change need to be explored further.

Shortly following the release of its new trade policy, the EU and India at their 13 October summit agreed to step up efforts towards a bilateral trade and investment treaty, aiming to conclude a deal by 2009 (see Bridges Weekly, 18 October 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-10-18/story2.htm>). In the joint statement released at the conclusion of the summit, the EU and India said they "attach high priority to energy security as a key to stable and sustainable development". They agreed to continue dialogue and cooperation in this area, including to "develop the necessary knowledge and expertise for the use of clean coal technology and sustainable clean energy resources".

Furthermore, the EU and India agreed to extend cooperation in the area of climate change, which they said requires urgent action. Here they would jointly facilitate "the development, transfer, deployment and dissemination of sustainable and efficient energy systems", and agreed to "exploit the synergies between the promotion of energy security, sustainable energy supply, innovation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in order to move to a low-carbon future".

EU, Russia energy cooperation

At a high-level summit with Russia on 18 October, the EU was less successful in forging mutual agreement on further energy cooperation. At the meeting, EU leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on Russia to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty. The agreement, which Russia has signed but not ratified, sets out binding protections for trade and investment in the energy sector, as well as rules for energy transit. Russian ratification would open the sector for investment by EU companies, and allow them to export oil and gas produced there through Russian pipelines. The treaty would also ensure that Russia did not discriminate against EU companies. Merkel urged Russia to provide the same legal contract security and market access that it enjoyed in the EU.

The EU currently relies on Russia for between a quarter and a third of its oil and natural gas imports, figures which are rising steadily. EU member states are concerned about Russia's reliability as an energy supplier, particularly after Moscow briefly cut off

Ukraine's supply over a payment dispute earlier this year.

EU leaders expressed concern that the Russian government was taking firmer control of the sector, pointing to state-owned Gazprom's decision to develop the huge Shtokman gas field without foreign capital. They also drew attention to the Kremlin's recent threats to revoke Royal Dutch Shell's license to develop the Sakhalin gas field over alleged environmental breaches. Many Western governments believe the move was a politically motivated pretext to renegotiate the deal in favour of Russia.

Even before the summit, Russian officials had indicated that they were not prepared to let other companies use Gazprom's pipelines.

High energy prices have left Russian oil companies flush with money, as a result of which the country does not need foreign investment to develop the sector nearly as much as when the Charter was first negotiated between the EU and members of the former Soviet bloc in the early 1990s.

The Russian National Strategy Centre's Iosif Diskin said that Moscow's refusal to accede to the treaty was motivated by economic rather than geopolitical factors, since Russia stood to lose financially from ratification. He added that the Kremlin feared losing control over its natural resources.

Putin said that Russia is not against the principles included in the treaty, but "we believe that certain provisions of the charter should be defined better".

Although EU governments differed on how hard a line to take with Moscow, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said that they agreed that Russia and the EU needed a partnership based on the principles of "transparency, the rule of law, reciprocity, non-discrimination, market opening and market access".

Energy has also featured in Russia's longstanding WTO membership negotiations (see Bridges Weekly, 25 October 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-10-25/story3.htm>). In its earlier stages, countries pressured Russia to abandon its dual energy pricing policy of low domestic gas prices coupled with high export prices.

In order to join the WTO, applicants must clinch bilateral deals with Members that so request. The EU signed off on a bilateral WTO agreement with Russia in 2004, when Putin said he would speed up

Russia's process to ratify the Kyoto Protocol (see Bridges Weekly, 2 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-06-02/story5.htm>). In the final deal, Russia agreed to gradually increase gas prices -- without abolishing the dual energy pricing scheme -- and to open up its gas pipelines to private firms. The US has yet to finalise a bilateral agreement with Russia. While issues such as intellectual property have taken on higher priority in the bilateral negotiations, Members may still return to the energy issue.

ICTSD reporting; "Putin Firm on EU Energy Charter", BBC NEWS, 21 October 2006; "Putin Rejects EU Demands that Russia Ratify Energy Charter", INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 20 October 2006; "Russia, EU Clash over Energy Charter", NOVE IZVESTIA, 23 October 2006; "Russia Extends Shell Energy Probe," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 25 October 2006; "Putin pressed to honour oil contracts," FINANCIAL TIMES, 21-22 October 2006; "The Really Cold War," NEW YORK TIMES, 25 October 2006.

Intellectual Property

TRIPS COUNCIL: DEBATES ON GENETIC RESOURCES AND TK REMAIN DIVISIVE

WTO Members continue to disagree on whether (and how) to use the intellectual property system to prevent the misappropriation of genetic resources and traditional knowledge (TK). While the item again featured on the agenda of the Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) at its 25-26 October meeting -- the first since the collapse of the Doha round in July this year -- discussions did not make any headway.

The need for implementing effective international measures to prevent the 'theft' of genetic resources and associated TK -- often referred to as 'biopiracy' -- has been a matter of concern for many developing countries. To address this issue, the countries have proposed an amendment to the TRIPS Agreement. This would entail incorporating a requirement to disclose the origin of genetic resources and associated TK in patent applications along with evidence of prior informed consent and benefit sharing (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 16 June 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-06-16/story3.htm>). They argue that such a requirement would be necessary to ensure that the TRIPS Agreement did not undermine the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

At this session of the Council, Peru submitted a new paper to strengthen its case for the amendment by elaborating on its earlier submission on biopiracy cases (IP/C/W/458, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>). It also sought to answer some of the technical questions raised by the US on the proposed disclosure requirement (IP/C/W/469). Peru noted that the list of cases presented in the last paper only reflected potential cases that could be used as a basis for further analysis. Peru suggested that an effective assessment of actual biopiracy cases would require incorporating a universal obligation to disclose the origin/source/legal provenance of biological resources in patent applications.

Many developing countries, including Brazil, India, Ecuador, Venezuela, China, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, appreciated the paper, echoing Peru's call for a disclosure requirement in patent application. In contrast, developed countries, such as Australia, Canada, the EU, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the US and Switzerland, yet again opposed the amendment, stating that they did not see any conflict between the TRIPS Agreement and the CBD. These countries prefer to leave it for each country to establish domestic regimes for preventing misappropriation.

Many developed countries furthermore supported the creation of international traditional knowledge databases for use by patent examiners. Rather than conferring positive rights in the owner (such as copyrights), TK databases serve as a defensive mechanism for the protection of TK by safeguarding against the (illegitimate) procurement of IPRs over the knowledge by others. Such databases have attracted opposition from some quarters, notably some indigenous groups. Since the databases, if publicly accessible, place the knowledge in the public domain, these groups fear that they will encourage third party use without consent while preventing knowledge holders from acquiring the rights over the knowledge. Japan had previously submitted a proposal (IP/C/W/474) calling for the establishment of an international database on traditional knowledge. Peru, Panama, Costa Rica and India are some of the developing countries that have been using traditional knowledge databases to record their TK and to prevent granting of IPRs (both domestically and in third countries) on knowledge already in the public domain.

Other topics discussed at this session of the TRIPS Council included the issue of enforcement of IPRs and the implementation of the TRIPS amendment on public health (see Bridges Weekly, 1 November

2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-11-01/story1.htm> for further details).

ICTSD reporting.

Agriculture

AGRICULTURE AT THE WTO: MEMBERS DISCUSS SUBSIDY, TARIFF NOTIFICATIONS WHILE NEGOTIATIONS REMAIN AT A STANDSTILL

Extensive delays in Members' notifications of their farm subsidies and tariffs are undermining the WTO's ability to promote transparency and are creating obstacles to progress in the negotiations themselves, according to Christian Häberli (Switzerland), Chair of the WTO Committee on Agriculture (CoA).

While the Doha round negotiating meetings remain suspended due largely to Members' differences over agriculture (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 August 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-08-02/story2.htm>), regular committee meetings are continuing.

At a meeting on 31 October, a number of countries, including Australia and Brazil, voiced support for the views of the Chair, calling on Members to submit their notifications of agricultural subsidies and tariffs. Documents circulated by the WTO showed significant delays in notifications, with 70 Members (almost half of the WTO Membership) failing to provide some or all of the required information for the 1995-2000 period. Heavy subsidisers such as the EU and the US have not submitted domestic support notifications since 2001, and Japan has not done so since 2002. Other major players in the negotiations, such as Argentina, Canada, Korea, Norway and Switzerland, are just as far behind.

It was noted that the absence of accurate, comparable and up-to-date information exacerbated existing inequalities between Members, and presented particular problems for smaller developing country delegations in the negotiations. Brazil, which had managed to notify despite being a developing country, noted that developed countries should be in a position to do so as well. Chair Häberli also suggested that governments should use staff members that have been 'freed up' by the suspension of the negotiations to try to rectify the backlog in notifications.

The EU said that it would soon submit domestic support notifications for 2002 and 2003. The reason for the delay was that the addition of 10 new member states, which had meant that the calculations had had to be adjusted, the EU claimed.

No further meetings of the Agriculture Committee are planned until March 2007, although, if governments agree to restart the Doha round, special negotiating sessions could be held before then.

Background on domestic agricultural subsidies

Cutting domestic agricultural subsidies -- especially those that impact trade -- are among the key issues within the Doha negotiating agenda. These subsidies are grouped into three categories: Amber Box, Blue Box, and Green Box subsidies.

The Amber Box includes most domestic support measures that are considered to distort production and trade. These measures are slated for reduction, if not complete elimination.

Blue Box measures are an exemption from the general rule that all subsidies linked to production must be reduced or kept within defined minimal (de minimis) levels. The measures typically include production limiting programmes, i.e. payments made according to acreage -- for instance, compensation for leaving part of the land fallow -- or animal numbers on condition that milk/ meat production quotas are not exceeded. The only Members that have notified Blue Box measures to the WTO are the EU, Iceland, Norway, Japan and the US.

Green Box measures should not have distorting effects in agricultural markets; at the very worst, their effects must be minimally trade-distorting. They include funds for research, allow for the promotion of food security reserves, direct payments to producers that are decoupled from current prices or production levels, structural adjustment assistance, safety-net programmes, environmental programmes and regional assistance programmes. These measures, which tend not to be aimed at particular products, must be funded from government revenue, and must not involve price support. Overall, once negotiations progress, governments are likely to allocate an increasing proportion of their agricultural funding to Green Box programmes, and developing countries have raised concerns over the potential for "box shifting". Box shifting implies that the same money is simply renamed, without the introduction of fundamental changes to ensure that the subsidies

are not trade distorting. In addition, countries worry that if overall subsidies remain as high as at present, their share volume will lead to increased production and thus distorted global markets.

Support for environmental measures in the area of agriculture are thus categorised within the Green Box of permitted subsidies (green does not refer to environmentally-friendly in the trade context). In practice, however, they make up a limited component of Green Box subsidies, although this may change in the future. According to the latest reports, the US, EU and Japan are by far the largest providers of Green Box subsidies. The distribution of the subsidies varies significantly, however. While the US focuses heavily on domestic food aid (spending more than half of its Green Box support this way), the EU directs a significant proportion of its Green Box subsidies towards the 'general services' category, investment aids, environmental programmes and regional assistance -- and is expected to substantially increase spending on 'decoupled income support'. Japan also focuses heavily on the 'general services' category. This information is, however, not fully up to date, as noted in the recent Committee on Agriculture meeting.

ICTSD reporting.

In Brief

DISCUSSION SOUGHT ON TRADE RULES FOR BIOFUELS

According to a new study, the increasing use of biofuels -- alternative fuels based on agricultural feedstocks -- warrants careful study of how trade rules apply to them. The fact that the WTO rules applicable to biofuels were created before the advent of these products means that a "debate needs to occur on how the rules apply to this technology and how or whether the rules need to be clarified or even changed." For example, it is not yet clear whether biofuels can be considered industrial, agricultural or environmental goods at the WTO. Subsidy rules also need to be clarified, especially to avoid the cross-subsidisation of biofuel byproducts, according to the authors.

The study notes that the most efficient producers are located in the South, while the greatest demand can be found in the North. Therefore, there is scope for increased biofuels trade, but for the moment rules and standards governing their production, quality, and trade are "all over the map". In addition, sustainability concerns such as the impact of biofuels on food prices and the local

environment in potential exporting countries are coming to the fore (see Bridges BioRes, 6 October 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-10-06/story2.htm>).

Entitled "WTO Disciplines and Biofuels: Opportunities and Constraints in the Creation of a Global Marketplace," the study was jointly produced by the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) and Renewable Energy and International Law (REIL).

To access the report, visit http://www.agritrade.org/Publications/DiscussionPapers/WTO_Disciplines_Biofuels.pdf

ICTSD reporting; "WTO must set rules for future biofuel trade-report," REUTERS, 27 October 2006.

EU TAKES STEPS TO REDUCE GLOBAL MERCURY EXPOSURE

The European Commission has proposed a regulation to ban all EU mercury exports and to mandate the safe storage of surplus mercury. Pending joint approval by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, the legislation would take effect beginning in July 2011.

Both the ban and the storage measures are part of the EU's stated commitment to reduce levels of mercury in the global environment, as exposure to high levels of mercury in any form -- metallic, inorganic or organic -- can permanently damage the brain, kidneys, and developing foetus. The EU mercury strategy launched by the Commission in 2005 outlines 20 measures to reduce mercury emissions, cut supply and demand, and protect against mercury exposure.

Although many environmental and health groups applauded the EU's initiative in addressing the international mercury threat, some were still not satisfied as the proposed legislation will not cover mercury compounds or mercury-containing products. While some are concerned that the proposed implementation date of 2011 is too distant, others fear that there will not be enough time to allow for development of an environmentally-sound method of permanently storing mercury.

The EU is also attempting to kick-start international action on mercury regulation. The Commission organised an international conference on mercury on 26-27 October, at which the EU and more than

30 non-EU countries began to discuss means of reducing human and environmental exposure. Next February, the possible development of a legally binding international agreement will be discussed at a meeting of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) Governing Council. Delegates hope to find more common ground than at the last Council meeting, where the US, Australia, and Japan preferred voluntary agreements to binding instruments (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 4 March 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-03-04/inbrief.htm#3>).

"Environment: Commission proposes ban on EU mercury exports," EU PRESS RELEASE, 26 October 2006; "European Commission Proposes Ban on EU Mercury Exports," ENS, 30 October 2006.

SCIENTISTS SOUND ALARM BELLS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORLD FISHERIES

An international group of ecologists and economists sent a strong warning regarding the impending collapse of the world fisheries if no action is taken to halt the decline. Drawing on the findings of an extensive global study published in the journal *Science* on 3 November, the researchers concluded that virtually no fish stocks would be left in the seas by the middle of the century if current trends continued.

The four-year study found that about one third of open sea fisheries have already collapsed, a trend exacerbated by broader losses in marine biodiversity. The current rate of decline would not be sustainable in the long run, the authors warned. "Unless we fundamentally change the way we manage all the ocean species together, as working ecosystems, then this century is the last century of wild seafood," said Steve Palumbi from Stanford University, one of the scientists involved in the report.

While refraining from singling out specific causes of the decline, the researchers pointed to fishing, pollution, climate change, ocean acidification and destruction of marine habitats as some of the key factors.

On a more positive note, the authors stressed that the impending collapse could still be averted although "with each species that is lost that opportunity diminishes", according to the study's lead author Boris Worm of Dalhousie University. The study highlighted better use of marine

protected areas as one possible avenue to safeguard the stocks.

Environmental groups echoed the researchers' grave concerns. "For centuries people have regarded the ocean as an inexhaustible supply of food. But in recent years human actions have finally pushed oceans to their limit," said Dr Simon Cripps, Director of WWF's Global Marine Programme. He urged governments and industry to act quickly before reaching "the point of no return for fisheries and the marine environment".

Many fishing industry groups greeted the study with scepticism. "It is a doomsday prediction that ignores the reality of what the world is actually trying to do to remove the ills that it describes", said Bertie Armstrong of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation.

"Only 50 years left' for sea fish," BBC, 2 November 2006; "Fishing report 'ignores reality'," BBC, 3 November; "WWF urges governments and industry to act urgently on oceans' crisis," WWF PRESS RELEASE, 3 November 2006.

HUMANS OVERDRAWING ON EARTH'S RESOURCES, WWF REPORT CLAIMS

In 2003, humanity was using up natural resources 1.25 times faster than Earth could replenish them, while the biodiversity of vertebrate species populations has declined by 30 percent since 1970. These trends are detailed in the "Living Planet Report 2006", a biennial publication that assesses humanity's impact on natural resources and global biodiversity, released jointly by global conservation group WWF and the Global Footprint Network on 24 October.

The report uses two indicators to assess these trends: the ecological footprint, which measures human demand on various ecosystems; and the Living Planet Index, which measures the health of those ecosystems.

According to the report, the United Arab Emirates has the largest footprint per person, followed by the US, Finland, Canada and Kuwait. Regardless of size, however, the report finds that almost no country today meets the sustainable development ideals of having both a high quality of life and an average footprint that does not exceed the biological capacity available per person on the planet. The footprint of a country includes the cropland, grazing land, forest and fishing grounds it uses to

produce the food, fiber and timber it consumes, to absorb the wastes it produces, and to provide space for its infrastructure. "Humanity's footprint has more than tripled between 1961 and 2003," the report said. The fastest-growing part of the footprint is due to fossil fuel use and carbon dioxide emissions, which have increased more than nine fold from 1961 to 2003, and now comprise nearly half of the total global footprint.

The Living Planet Index tracked trends from 1970 to 2003 in over 3,600 populations of more than 1,300 vertebrate species from around the world, dividing them into terrestrial, marine or freshwater species, and further into temperate or tropical zones. The report found that while tropical species declined by 55 percent on average, temperate species have shown little change since 1970. While there has been a greater than 25 percent average decline in marine biodiversity around the globe, this decline is much more dramatic in the Indian/Southeast Asian and Southern Oceans.

WWF and the Global Footprint Network called on both developed and developing countries alike to make political decisions with ecological limits in mind, and to begin by generating and using energy in cleaner, more environmentally-friendly ways.

To access the report visit
http://www.panda.org/news_facts/publications/key_publications/living_planet_report/index.cfm

"Human Footprint Too Big for Nature," WORLD-WIRE, 24 October 2006; "Humans Living Far Beyond Planet's Means-WWF," REUTERS, 25 October 2006; "Living Planet Report: Humanity Overdrawn on Nature's Credit," ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 24 October 2006.

CIVIL SOCIETY QUERIES WTO D-G ON HOT TRADE TOPICS

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy phased tough questions during a one-hour public internet chat on 18 October with representatives of business, academia, NGOs, and media from around the world. While most questions focused on prospects for re-launching the Doha round negotiations and the growing trend towards bilateral and regional trade agreements, Lamy also was asked to comment on the WTO and global warming.

Out of 150 questions, only five addressed environmental and natural resources concerns.

On the WTO and global warming, Mr. Lamy reaffirmed that "the optimal use of world's resources in accordance with the objective of sustainable development" continues to be an "overarching principle for the interpretation of all WTO commitments". He further stated that "the WTO recognises that states have the (conditional) right to adopt measures relating to the conservation of natural resources even if such measures lead to some trade restriction".

When some remained unsatisfied that the WTO was not doing enough to urgently confront global warming, Lamy reiterated that the power to "take measures which are necessary to protect natural resources and to protect human, animal and plant life", although recognised and encouraged by WTO rules, is up to individual governments to initiate.

Others suggested that the WTO should ensure that poorer nations are compensated for their wealth in natural resources, especially in carbon storage services. Although Lamy expressed hope that environmental assets would be traded "with an eye to equity and the intrinsic value of the assets in question", he rejected the idea that the WTO should mandate this exchange, remarking "in the absence of complete markets, it is for governments [not the WTO] to decide how such issues as unpriced or badly priced environmental assets should be addressed".

The transcript of the chat can be found at http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news06_e/dgchat_18oct06_e.htm.

"Lamy Fields 150 Questions from Around the World in Online Chat," WTO NEWS RELEASE, 18 October 2006.

INTERNATIONAL MINING FORUM ADOPTS PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A global mining forum recently called for action against unjustified barriers to market access for mineral and metals.

Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 18-20 October, representatives from 36 countries and a number of international organisations gathered for the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum for Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development. The forum discussed the

implementation of recommendations made at its inaugural meeting in 2005. Members recognised the need for greater international support for geological mapping and for environmental impact assessment in developing countries; greater vigilance in order to react to unfair barriers to market access for minerals and metals; and support for policies that more effectively integrate mining into the economic and social objectives of countries.

Members agreed to establish an Investment Outlook Committee to track developments that might affect mining investments in member countries and to establish a separate Committee to prepare for the 2010-2011 UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) meetings. They also decided that the primary themes for the next Forum meeting -- to be held in Moscow in 2007 -- will include the examination of policies that can optimise the benefits from mining; the aspects of good governance critical to investment decisions; and unresolved issues pertaining to community benefits and development.

The forum was established at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) for the purpose of enhancing the contribution of mining to sustainable development by promoting good governance.

"Mining Forum Adopts Action Plan," UNCTAD RELEASE, 20 October 2006; "Media Advisory- Intergovernmental Forum on Sustainable Development for Mining, Minerals, and Metals," CNW GROUP, 12 October 2006.

Events & Resources

EVENTS

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

ICTSD Events

6 November, Nairobi, Kenya: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE BIOENERGY STRATEGY: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE. This event, organised by ICTSD as a side event at the UNFCCC COP-12, aims to generate innovative thinking and engage key stakeholders in addressing the vast range of opportunities and challenges associated with harnessing the potential of bioenergy in a sustainable manner. Participants will assess sustainability challenges and try to identify viable solutions for harnessing the potential of

bioenergy as a means of enhancing access to cleaner energy, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and contributing to income generation for improving rural livelihoods. For more information, contact Gueye Kamal, e-mail: gkamal@ictsd.ch; tel: +41 22 917 8754; fax: +41 22 917 8093.

15 November, Nairobi, Kenya: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRANSITION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE: STRENGTHENING THE POLICY AGENDA - BROADENING THE CONSTITUENCY. Organised by ICTSD and the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, as a side event at the UNFCCC COP-12. Participants will examine ways in which the international trade system could better support the implementation of domestic and international measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change as well as policies and initiatives towards a sustainable energy transition. Discussions will revolve around the following issues: The geopolitics of energy and trade - WTO rules and agreements and their relevance to energy; Energy efficiency standards - relevance to climate change and international trade implications; Liberalisation of environmental goods and services - significance for climate change mitigation; Potential implications of a reform of subsidies for non-renewable and renewable energies, including bioenergy. For more information, contact Gueye Kamal, e-mail: gkamal@ictsd.ch; tel: +41 22 917 8754; fax: +41 22 917 8093; internet: <http://www.ictsd.org/dlogue/2006-11-15/2006-11-15-desc.htm>.

Coming up in the next two weeks

6-8 November, Prague, Czech Republic: SYMPOSIUM ON ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND WASTE. The objective of the symposium is to share information and experience from different regions on the size of illegal international trade of hazardous chemicals and wastes, the adverse effects of this on human health and the environment and to take stock of and evaluate existing measures to address illegal traffic. For further information, see <http://www.chem.unep.ch/unepsaicm/default.html>

6-10 November, Mar del Plata, Argentina: CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS. For more information see internet: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/current.jsp>

6-17 November, Nairobi, Kenya: TWELFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL. UNFCCC COP 12 and Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 2 will also coincide with the 25th meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. For more information, contact UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: (+49) 228 815 1000; fax: (+49) 228 815 1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>.

7-10 November, Rome, Italy: FAO PANEL EXPERTS ON PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT. Issues on the agenda include collaboration on pesticide management with other UN agencies, development of international environmental indicators of pesticide use and the review of draft guidelines on, inter alia, pesticide labelling. For more information see internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpp/pesticid/Code/Download/Agenda06.pdf>.

9-10 October, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739 5007; fax: (41 22) 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

13-15 November, Bangkok, Thailand: INTEGRATED POLICIES FOR BIO-INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE AND HEALTH IN ASIA. The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) will host this workshop supported by the Rockefeller Foundation's Southeast Asia Regional Office and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Canadian public corporation. The workshop will bring together researchers, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and policy-makers from countries in South, Southeast, and East Asia 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 internet: <http://www.bioinnovationpolicies.ait.ac.th>

13-17 November, Rome, Italy: IPPC STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP. The Standards Committee (SC) was established by the Third Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM), in 2001. The SC manages the standard-setting process and assists in the development of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) which have been

identified by the ICPM as priority standards. For further information, contact the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat; tel: (39 06) 5705 4812; fax: (39 06) 5705 4819; e-mail: IPPC@fao.org; internet: <https://www.ippc.int/servlet/CDSServlet?status=ND0xMzM1NS40MzExMSY2PWVujjMzPWV2ZW50cyYzNz1pbmZv>

16-17 November, Terrassa, Spain: FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABILITY MEASUREMENT AND MODELING. This conference will be hosted by the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair in Sustainability. It will provide a forum for organisations, institutions and experts interested in sustainability measurement, modelling and evaluating issues to further integrate their knowledge and ideas. Dialogue will focus on the creation of measurements, models and evaluations for sustainable development. For more information, contact CIMNE; tel: (+34) 934 017 441; fax: (+34) 934 016 517; e-mail: icsmm@cimne.upc.edu; internet: <http://congress.cimne.upc.es/icsmm06/frontal/default.asp>

Other Upcoming Events

20 November, Seoul, Korea: FAO/WHO REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR ASIA ON FOOD SAFETY RISK COMMUNICATION. The purpose of this workshop is to provide information on the food safety risk communication within the framework of risk analysis, including information on definitions, food safety risk communication in the development of Codex standards, and application of risk analysis principles and guidelines. International and local case studies will be used to demonstrate their application in a national and regional context. For further information contact Masami Takeuchi, email: Masami.Takeuchi@fao.org.

20-22 November, Groningen, the Netherlands: CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY INTERACTIONS. This workshop, held during the second edition of Energy Convention Groningen, is intended to provide a synthesis of different approaches and methodologies of analysing interactions of energy and climate policy instruments. It will address research questions including how to combine different energy and climate policy instruments, define a proper design of combined policy instruments, and determine ex-ante the effects of combined policy instruments on the energy market as well as integrating top down and bottom up approaches of analyzing policy

interactions. Discussion will be among policymakers, academics, researchers, companies and other stakeholders. For further information, contact Vlasios Oikonomou; tel: (31 20) 6625340; e-mail: v.oikonomou@rug.nl; internet: <http://www.energyconvention.nl>

27 November to 1 December, Chiba, Japan. AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON FOOD DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY. The Codex Alimentarius Commission's Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived for Biotechnology will hold its sixth session, focusing on, inter alia: 1) a proposed draft guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from genetically modified (GM) animals; 2) a proposed draft annex to the guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from GM plants, which would deal specifically with food safety assessment of food derived from GM plants modified for nutritional or health benefits; and 3) a discussion paper on sanitary surveillance after placing on the market foods derived from biotechnology. For further information see http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/675/bt06_01e.pdf.

9 February-13 April 2007. ENVIRONMENTAL LAW PROGRAM: E-LEARNING COURSE ON ENVIRONMENTAL LAW. UNITAR is launching a Basic Course on International Environmental Law, which will comprise four modules and be offered free of charge to selected participants. To enroll, apply online before 5 January 2007. For more information, contact Ali Merzouk, tel: +41 (022) 917 88 79; Fax: +41 (022) 917 80 47; e-mail: ELPelearning@unitar.org; internet: http://www.unitar.org/elp/e-learning/the_course.htm.

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 Malena Sell at msell@ictsd.ch.

ICTSD Resource

LINKING TRADE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY. ICTSD, November 2006. This special collection of issue briefs begins with an introduction that summarises ICTSD's analysis of the key links between three broad areas that are too

frequently addressed in isolation from each other: trade, climate change and energy. The second section explains more specifically some of the most important issues facing policy-makers concerned with international policy on energy and trade, including the specific circumstances in Asia and especially China. The final section focuses on bioenergy, looking both at the global picture and at experiences in Africa, Asia and Brazil. To access the paper, visit http://www.trade-environment.org/output/ictsd/resource/Energy_is_suebriefs.pdf.

Other Resources

BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL NEWS. This newsletter is published by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). The inaugural issue, published on 16 October 2006, covers a vast array of biosafety and biodiversity issues. Among other topics, it includes a Biosafety calendar of events, an overview of COP-MOP 3 outcomes, and articles on the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol, the Living Modified Organisms Registry, and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The newsletter can be downloaded at <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/newsletters/default.asp#bpn>.

AT LOGGERHEADS? AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION, POVERTY REDUCTION, AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE TROPICAL FORESTS. By the World Bank, October 2006. This report concludes that financial incentives are necessary to strengthen national forest governance in order to preserve the world's rapidly shrinking tropical forests and improve the economic prospects of millions of poor people. For further information see <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTPRRS/EXTTROPICALFOREST/0,,menuPK:2463898~pagePK:64168092~piPK:64168088~theSitePK:2463874,00.html>.

BIOMASS ISSUE BRIEF: ENERGY AND CLIMATE. By the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, October 2006. This brief outlines the sustainability issues associated with biomass: its carbon neutrality, its use in heat and power generation, its use in biofuels, and its future. To access this document, visit <http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/QkcE9Vn4PrM0UbDl5rpS/biomass.pdf>.

POWERING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. By the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, October 2006. This report contains

an "agenda for concerted action" to secure future electricity generation, to bring more power to more people and to decrease the industry's greenhouse gas emissions. The report warns that unless there is a marked shift in the way electricity is generated and regulated worldwide, increased energy production will have serious environmental impacts. The report highlights the huge potential for end-use energy efficiency, which can provide more energy, more securely and sustainably, and at a lower price. Utilities need to work with governments and citizens' groups to find ways to make it a higher priority, and make sure it is understood and used as a resource option and investment alternative. To access this document, visit http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/0d6TANhJQ0ZhGXGHDeJ3/powering_sustainable_future.pdf.

"Specific Environmental Effects of Trade Liberalization: Sugar." By Jane Earley and Thomas Earley in **INTERNATIONAL POLICY COUNCIL Brief #20**, October 2006. This paper is the second in a series examining whether recent trade liberalisation might have adverse environmental effects that could be ameliorated if governments correctly anticipate them. The study finds that changes in the biofuels market will have a greater impact on world sugar production, and in turn, the environment, than policy changes in trade. Also among findings are country-specific recommendations for policymakers on how to mitigate negative impacts. The brief discusses the important roles of resource endowments, law enforcement, and technology in creating national policies to overcome the adverse environmental effects of increased sugar production on the world stage. To access this brief visit <http://www.agritrade.org/publ.htm>.

"Nanotechnology: Mapping the Wild Regulatory Frontier" in **FUTURES** (38, 9) 2006). By Diana M. Bowman and Graeme A. Hodge. This paper examines the phenomena of nanotechnology and takes some tentative steps towards defining new regulatory frontiers within which this technology may operate. While nanotechnology has attracted much attention with respect to its scientific and business potential, debate on associated ethical, policy, regulatory and legal aspects has been limited. This paper seeks to address the regulatory challenges posed by the novel properties and products emerging from nanotechnology. It considers the current regulatory frameworks that impact upon nanotechnology in Australia, and concludes that there is an emerging regulatory gap between the exciting commercial advances being made in this sector and the community's expectations for regulatory safeguards and

protections. The paper also concludes that, unlike earlier technologies, there is now a unique opportunity to carefully consider the benefits as well as the impacts of nanotechnology before it arrives. This will require clearer articulation of

policy, regulatory and legal frontiers crucial to the emerging nano-age.

BRIDGES Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org>, in collaboration with IUCN - World Conservation Union, <http://www.iucn.org>. This edition of *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* was edited by Malena Sell, msell@ictsd.ch. The Managing Editor is Heike Baumüller, hbaumuller@ictsd.ch. Contributors to this issue were Trineesh Biswas, Caitlin Patrick and Diane Raub. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 7, ch. de Ballexert, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from *BRIDGES Trade BioRes* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editors or the Director. ISSN 1682-0843

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