



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

Issue: 14 April 2006

Environment @ The WTO	1
Renewable Energy, Air Pollution Environmental Goods Considered At WTO	
Biodiversity	2
Commentary On The Convention On Biological Diversity COP-8	
Forests.....	4
Forests Update: US-Indonesia, Japan And Philippines	
In Brief.....	5
Events & Resources.....	8

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Environment @ The WTO

RENEWABLE ENERGY, AIR POLLUTION ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS CONSIDERED AT WTO

At an informal meeting of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session (CTE-SS) on 4-5 April, WTO Members evaluated proposals seeking expedited liberalisation for certain renewable energy and air pollution control products. The technical discussions -- held under a mandate from Paragraph 31(iii) of the Doha Declaration to negotiate on "the reduction or, as appropriate, elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services" -- centred on proposed lists of products in the two categories submitted by the EU, Canada, Japan and Chinese Taipei. The lists, which were based on the

Members' earlier submissions of lists of products in all categories of use, were examined on a product-by-product basis to evaluate which products have a single, clearly environmental end use.

The move to limit discussions to the application of one criterion (single environmental end-use) and two categories had been proposed by a group of developing countries at the last meeting of the CTE-SS (see *Bridges Trade BioRes*, 3 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-03-03/story3.htm>). During the discussions many of the proposed products were criticised by developing countries as not having a clear, single environmental purpose. Brazil, China, Malaysia, Thailand and others suggested that the listed products had been included less for their environmental end-use, and more because they were major export products of the proponents. They noted that since most of the products are advanced industrial technologies not produced by most developing countries, the reduction of tariffs on these products would benefit primarily developed countries, and could even hurt developing countries because they would have to reduce their tariffs on these products. While some developing country governments would prefer not to spend valuable foreign exchange on imports of foreign technology, and would prefer to develop domestic capacity to produce these products, others suggest that lowered prices of environmental technologies would enable them to buy and use them more cheaply, thereby reducing costs and making environmental goals more feasible.

Still others suggested that the normal practice in WTO negotiations of using six-digit codes from the World Customs Organization's harmonised system of tariff lines would identify products too broadly, because one six-digit product code could cover thousands of different kinds of products, some with and some without environmental end-uses. Instead,

they suggested using eight-digit codes as a possible solution to make it easier for customs officials to apply reduced tariffs to specific environmental goods. The Members submitting the lists said that they would try to address these concerns in subsequent submissions.

While the technical discussions were held without prejudice to the approach to be taken in the negotiations, some developing country delegates expressed disappointment after the talks, saying that the list approach does not seem to offer the solution to developing country environmental problems that they are seeking from the talks. Many developing country delegates support India's proposed "environmental project approach" to temporarily reduce tariffs for certain goods and services used in approved "environmental projects" (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 23 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-06-24/story1.htm>). However, delegates recognised a lack of capacity on environmental goods as a reason why most developing countries have not submitted lists, proposed changes to existing approaches, or put forth a new approach to talks under Paragraph 31(iii) that would enable them to achieve their sustainable development goals.

Another technical discussion on products in the categories of wastewater management and hazardous waste management will be held on 10-12 May. Sources suggested that the US, Brazil, India and China may present papers on approaches to the negotiations at the next formal meeting of the committee, scheduled for 14-15 June.

ICTSD Reporting.

Biodiversity

COMMENTARY ON THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY COP-8

By Jeffrey A. McNeely, Chief Scientist, IUCN-The World Conservation Union*

Curitiba, Brazil, was the host of a gruelling three weeks of fierce negotiations among the Parties to the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Parties to the CBD itself (COP-8). The bleary-eyed negotiators ended the ordeal with numerous decisions, but few

real breakthroughs and precious little progress toward actually achieving the objectives of the Convention: the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and the equitable distribution of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The negotiations took place against a background of unprecedented involvement of civil society, with over 250 side events convened by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, community groups, governments, and international organisations, working together in various combinations and permutations and covering an amazing array of issues.

Access and benefit sharing (ABS) remains one of the most complex and important issues on the CBD agenda; the COP addresses it exclusively in international terms, thereby linking it directly to trade issues. Many developing countries express great outrage about "biopiracy" -- the perceived misappropriation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge by large northern corporations -- with none of the profits going back to the local communities who conserved or developed the genetic resources and traditional knowledge. The megadiverse countries would certainly have greater credibility in their international negotiations on this issue if they had domestic policies that truly addressed the concerns of indigenous and local communities. Ironically, the activity that is most likely to generate financial benefits from genetic resources is the development of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), linking the ABS issue closely to the Cartagena Protocol (though without ever making the point explicit). While little progress was made on the real international trade issues of ABS, the Parties at least made some progress toward defining a process to carry out further negotiations on the topic and agreed to a timetable to complete this process by COP-10. Agreeing to continue to negotiate counts as an achievement at the CBD COP.

Another matter that dominated the discussions was the perilous state of the Convention's financial mechanism, the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Not only has replenishment of the GEF made insufficient progress, but the donor countries have imposed a new Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) that was roundly criticised by developing country Parties as unsuited to the needs of the Convention. But since the GEF is

functionally independent, all the COP could do is call for a review of the mechanism at the next COP. In other words, keep talking.

Constantly in the background, and occasionally reaching the voices of delegates speaking from the floor, was the so-called 'implementation gap'. The COP now has some 1500 pages of carefully negotiated decisions covering everything from tourism to protected areas to agriculture and capacity building. Governments, and especially civil society, are asking how these decisions are actually contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biological resources. COP-6 agreed a target to reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by the year 2010, as a means of addressing poverty alleviation. While many scientists look at this goal with some scepticism, it still provides a rallying call for many who are pushing this target with considerable vigour. The adoption of a new programme of work on island biodiversity called for action, but was not accompanied by adequate funding and the RAF may leave small island developing states with yet another unfunded mandate.

Many delegates expressed in private their continued frustration at the lack of formal collaboration between the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) and the Secretariat of the CBD, as the latter has yet to be granted formal observer status to the CTE. It is clear that trade negotiations trump biodiversity negotiations, with many delegations ensuring that biodiversity issues that may impinge on trade -- such as invasive alien species -- are very carefully circumscribed, and decisions are adopted that contain phrases such as "so long as international trade is not thereby affected".

With nearly 4000 participants the entire event felt like a biodiversity trade fair, held in a cavernous building designed to hold such a celebration. Dozens of booths, some of extraordinary size and complexity, others very modest, drew thousands of visitors including hoards of school children collecting as many publications as they could carry.

On the other hand, indigenous peoples again increased their participation in the event, and the CBD arguably offers them the greatest window of opportunity to have their views heard on subjects of great concern to them, especially the impacts of trade on their cultures, access and benefit-sharing, and potential impacts of new trade-related

technologies, notably "genetic use restriction technologies" (GURT's), which they consider an ominous threat to their cultures. With regard to the latter, they were joined by civil society groups in their outrage against GURT's, which they call "terminator technology", which helped contribute to a COP decision to continue the de facto moratorium on the use of such technologies agreed at COP-5 to the CBD. And while a few national delegations included indigenous representatives in their delegations, so that they could participate actively in Working Group meetings, the indigenous voice remains muted in the official proceedings even as their participation in side events increases.

Indigenous peoples generally are extremely uneasy about the expansion of global trade, at least partly because they have no cultural history of engaging in such activities and therefore feel at a considerable disadvantage, and partly because they are being left behind when the benefits are distributed. This latter concern is underlined by the activities of mining companies, oil companies, and logging companies on their ancestral lands, exploiting resources for the global market without the prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples who have long lived on the land, while the companies pay substantial royalties to central governments. While indigenous peoples use the COP as a forum to express their concerns, many of the issues are more appropriately considered problems of national policies in regard to nationalisation of resources and national distribution of benefits.

Many CBD veterans are frustrated with the lack of progress of the Convention, as delegates seem to spend longer and longer negotiating less and less relevant points, particularly through implementation at the national level. But this frustration should be measured against the unquestioned reality that governments are taking the issues much more seriously, or at least sending stronger and better-briefed delegations to the COP meetings. Biodiversity is well and truly ensconced on the international negotiations calendar, and many multinational companies are beginning to address biodiversity issues in their operations. While actual conservation and sustainability remain elusive (see the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment), the issue of biodiversity is one that governments can no longer comfortably ignore. In a complex and polarised world driven by increasing demands to consume more, this represents at least some progress.

* The views expressed in this commentary are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any organisation.

Forests

FORESTS UPDATE: US-INDONESIA, JAPAN AND PHILIPPINES

US, Indonesia Launch Landmark Talks On Illegal Logging

The US government announced on 4 April that it was launching the first-ever agreement to facilitate bilateral cooperation to combat illegal logging under President George Bush's global initiative to address illegal logging set up in 2003. Meeting on 4 April, US Trade Representative Rob Portman and Indonesia's Minister of Trade Mari Pangestu agreed to build on the US-Indonesia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), a bilateral trade deal, to "broaden" the economic relationship established by the TIFA's tariff reductions on trade by creating a scheme to support more sustainable timber trade through measures to combat illegal logging. "This is a unique opportunity to strengthen our cooperation with Indonesia to better protect Indonesia's parks, forests and sensitive habitats from illegal logging," Portman said. The launching of talks represents the first time that the US has engaged in a bilateral deal on illegal logging, while the EU has for some time now been holding talks with several of its trading partners under its forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) programme. While the details of the eventual US-Indonesia agreement remain murky, including how US imports of forest products from Indonesia would be used to discourage illegal logging, negotiators said they were interested in concluding talks as soon as possible. The US noted that it was focusing its preliminary efforts to combat illegal logging on Indonesia because its "forests and their biodiversity present a significant conservation opportunity". Nearly 80 percent of Indonesian timber harvesting is illegal with devastating biodiversity and developmental impacts. In its press release, the US said the pact would "build on existing Indonesian efforts to combat illegal logging in the forest sector" and help ensure continued access of legally produced Indonesian forest products to the US market.

Japanese Public Procurement Policy Enters Into Force

A government procurement policy requiring all forest goods and services purchased by the state to be harvested in a legal and sustainable manner came into effect in Japan on 1 April. The policy, adopted under the "Law Concerning the Promotion of the Procurement of Eco-Friendly Goods and Services by the State and Other Entities", requires that all timber bought should have been harvested in a legal manner consistent with procedures in the forest laws of timber producing countries and harvested from forests under sustainable management. The guidelines issued to accompany the policy notification include indicative ways in which importers can verify that products are legal and sustainably produced, namely proof of forest certification and chain of custody; industry verification; or a company-determined method of verification. Public procurement policies designed to block imports of illegally harvested timber have been adopted in the UK, Norway and Sweden, while Germany is in the process of developing its own. While environmental critics suggest these laws do not go far enough in preventing trans-shipment of illegally harvested timber through third countries that do processing, some forest producers in developing countries have criticised the proliferation of different import requirements and the costs that are involved as non-tariff barriers to their exports. Japan is a member of the plurilateral WTO Government Procurement Agreement, according to which it must treat all foreign companies the same as one another and the same as domestic companies when making public purchases.

Filipino Region Imposes Logging Ban: NGO Caution WTO Implications

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in the Philippines imposed a ban on all logging activities at the end of March to protect the region's remaining forests and prevent floods that have been attributed to illegal logging activities. ARMM Governor Datu Zaldy Ampatuan told the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to revoke logging permits in the region after the army seized a large cargo of illegally logged timber being smuggled out of the region. The order, which was justified by Article 10(5) of the Republic Act 9054, imposes a total logging ban including cancelling, nullifying and voiding all forest concessions, licenses contracts and agreements, and allows the export of forest products from the region only if the exporting company can prove it is using logs from Malaysia or Indonesia.

In a recent interview, Third World Network's Chee Yoke Ling suggested that current negotiations at the WTO on non-tariff barriers to trade must take into account that some barriers, including timber logging and export bans, might have positive sustainable development impacts. Taking the example of Malaysia, she noted that as a result of debates about unsustainable logging and its relation to the loss of the countries' "very rich biodiversity", some countries "come to a point when they may want to ban the exports of logs and control the amount they want to exploit in the forest" and as a result "put trade restrictions in terms of exports of raw logs". Many developing countries use logging and export bans to conserve their forest resources or promote value-added processing, including Tanzania (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 February 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-02-17/inbrief.htm#3>) and Kenya, which has had a logging ban in place since 1999. Under the WTO's Non-Agricultural Market Access Negotiations, Japan in July 2005 suggested that export bans, restrictions, taxes and levies on forest products were WTO-incompliant barriers to trade (TN/MA/W/46/Add.7/Rev.1), but negotiations continue on how the negotiations should deal with the subject.

For more information on US work on illegal logging, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/illegal-logging/>

For the notification and guidelines for the Japanese public procurement policy, visit <http://www.illegal-logging.info/documents.php#321>

ICTSD Reporting; "USTR Portman and Indonesia Trade Minister Pangestu Launch Negotiations on Landmark Illegal Logging Initiative," USTR, 4 April 2006; "US, Indonesia Launch Talks to Curb Illegal Logging," REUTERS, 5 April 2006; "Opening up to worries," SUN2SURF, 13 April 2006; "Mindanao imposes total logging ban," ITO TROPICAL TIMBER MARKET REPORT, 1 April 2006.

In Brief

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES PROPOSE DISCLOSURE AT WIPO PATENT MEETING

A group of developing countries proposed at a 10-12 April informal meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) that the SCP should take into account disclosure of origin of genetic resources and other biodiversity-related issues when considering harmonising global patent laws. The SCP was meeting to prepare its work programme, which would include a Substantive

Patent Law Treaty (SPLT) that aims to standardize and harmonise the patent rules used around the world. In perhaps the most new and interesting part of the discussions, on 10 April India proposed that the SCP hold joint meetings with the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC), a committee whose work on genetic resources is supported by developing countries. Similarly, the "Friends of Development" on 11 April said they would like the SCP harmonisation to include disclosure of origin, prior informed consent (PIC) and benefit-sharing, exclusions from patentability (eg. for life forms like plants and animals) and effective mechanisms to challenge the validity of patents. Disclosure, PIC, benefit-sharing and patent challenges have been discussed in the context of the relationship between the WTO Agreement on Trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the TRIPS Council (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-03-17/story4.htm>), and in the context of an international regime on access and benefit sharing at the CBD (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-03-17/story2.htm>). Provisions in the SPLT that clarified what types of living organisms are excluded from patentability could have substantial effects on biotechnology research and crops, along with the intellectual property protection required for plant varieties. However, the US and Japan disagreed that these issues should be on the SCP agenda, saying that instead the focus should be on definition of prior art, grace period, novelty and inventive step. The SCP was unable to agree on its work meeting, leading to the cancellation of the committee's meeting scheduled for later this year.

ICTSD Reporting; "India Proposes Combined WIPO Meetings On Biodiversity, Patent Harmonisation," IP WATCH, 10 April 2006; "Disclosure Of Origin A Hot Topic In WIPO Patent Harmonisation Debate," IP WATCH, 11 April 2006.

DESERTIFICATION CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS TRADE IMPACTS

Trade liberalisation can adversely impact on the ability of communities dependent on drylands to practice sustainable land management, participants heard at a 11-12 April international conference entitled "Desertification, hunger and poverty". The conference was organised by the Graduate Institute of Development Studies and the Swiss Agency for

Development and Cooperation (SDC) and included over a hundred participants, many of which were from developing countries and especially Africa. In a session on risks and potentials of agricultural development in the drylands, Marc Paquin of Unisfera suggested that unless mitigating measures are adopted, agricultural liberalisation can provide an incentive for the expansion of unsustainable monocropping through large-scale, privately owned agriculture (see also Bridges Trade BioRes, 13 May 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-05-13/inbrief.htm>). Such practices, he said, degrade the land, marginalise dryland-dependent people and prevent them from safeguarding the soil diversity on which their future food security depends. However, Barry Shapiro from the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) suggested that when joined up with scientific expertise, technical assistance and sustained efforts, exports of foods from drylands can increase the incomes of communities affected by drought and desertification and restore the diversity and extent of plant cover.

Participants in the sessions noted that there is a need for political will and funding to promote sustainable land management and the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Focusing largely on Africa and the Sahel region, one participant suggested that "trade goes hand-in-hand with debt" insofar as lower prices for exports of commodities has limited governments' ability to shake off their debt burdens and, as a result, their ability to allocate adequate resources to addressing land degradation. Such degradation, participants said, is "the environmental concern of the poor" because it hinders peoples' abilities to feed themselves in some of the least developed areas of the world. Approximately two thirds of the 900 million people that live in extreme poverty in rural areas live in drylands at risk of desertification, they noted, and global markets for the handicrafts, ropes and other products from these areas should be enhanced. Negotiations on lowering barriers to trade in goods and services that are environment-friendly are currently underway at the WTO (see related story, this issue), but no one has yet proposed to include goods produced in drylands.

ICTSD Reporting.

EU BIOTECH DEBATE BREAKS OUT INTO THE OPEN

The EU procedures for risk assessment and approval of biotech products were the subject of intense scrutiny at a meeting of the EU Executive Council in Brussels on 12 April. An internal paper tabled by EU Environment Minister Stavros Dimas and Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou contained specific recommendations on changes to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that aimed to restore the confidence of EU-25 governments on approvals of biotech products. Under the changes proposed by the Commission, the EFSA is asked to consider the long-term, and not just the short-term, effects of genetically modified organisms (GMOs); fully co-operate with member states' national scientific bodies; and to provide them with a detailed justification if it decides to reject scientific objections raised by the national authorities. In the document, the Commission also gives itself the right to suspend the authorisation procedure and refer the assessment back to EFSA if a member state raises "important new scientific questions" which are not fully addressed by the EFSA opinion. Commission spokesperson Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen stressed that while the new procedures did not mark a major shift in the EU approval process, the Commission wanted to avoid "undue delays" in GMO approvals, a possible reference to the recent WTO ruling on the application of EU biotech rules (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 February 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-02-17/story1.htm>). In related developments, Austria imposed a two-year ban on imports of Monsanto's GT73 oilseed rape the day after the EU decision, notwithstanding the fact that the GMO had been approved by the European Commission on 31 August 2005 and that criticisms were made of other Austrian GMO bans in the WTO preliminary biotech ruling. Concerns raised by the Austrian Council of environment ministers included the lack of long-term toxicity and allergenicity tests and the potential for the unintentional spread of the variety as a result of cross-breeding with conventional crops if imported in large quantities along transport routes.

The EU press release outlining changes to the scientific evaluation and decision-making processes used in the trading

block, entitled "Commission proposes practical improvements to the way the European GMO legislative framework is implemented," can be viewed at http://europa.eu.int/press_room/index_en.htm

For additional information on Austria's decision on GT73, visit <http://www.bmgf.gv.at/cms/site/detail.htm?thema=CH0255&doc=CMS1144914646396>

"Cracks start to show in EU GMO policy," EURACTIV, 6 April 2006; "EU Commissioners Split on Genetically-Modified Food," REUTERS, 6 April 2006; "Safety Checks on GMOs Flawed - EU Environment Chief," REUTERS, 6 April 2006; "Biotech industry accuses GM conference of lacking balance," NEUTRAINGREDIENTS, 5 April 2006; "Stage set for EU food safety overhaul over GMOs," INDIAN EXPRESS, 7 April 2006; "Biotech companies lobby EU to keep current GM crop rules," AP, 7 April 2006; "EU Vows Clarity on GMOs, Eyes End to Deadlock," REUTERS, 13 April 2006; "Commission for more transparency on GMO decisions," EURACTIV, 13 April 2006.

BASEL CONVENTION POINTS TO IMO NEGOTIATIONS ON NEW SHIP TREATY

The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes met for its fifth session in Geneva on 3-7 April. Executive Secretary Kuwabara-Yamamoto identified ship dismantling as a major issue which recently attracted international attention because of the controversial proposed dismantling of French ship *Clemenceau* in Indian waters (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 February 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-02-17/story3.htm>). The *Clemenceau* case highlighted the current uncertainty regarding the international jurisdiction over ship dismantling; the Basel Convention currently has jurisdiction over transboundary shipments of Hazardous Wastes, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) over ships and the International Labour Organisations over labour in shipbreaking yards. While negotiations are currently underway at the IMO on a legally binding instrument on ship recycling, delegates at the meeting decided to keep the issue on the Basel Convention agenda so that Parties to the Convention can continue to debate the best way to input into the IMO negotiations to ensure that the new instrument fulfils the Basel Convention's environmental objectives.

The discussion on synergies with the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, which includes proposals to consolidate the leadership and secretariats of the three conventions, proved particularly controversial. One Nigerian delegate warned that "Basel is being

weakened and subjected to a marriage that is going to kill the Convention". This issue, and others, will be discussed at the Convention of the Parties to the Basel Convention, to be held in Nairobi in November 2006.

ICTSD Reporting.

RATIFICATION OF EU-MOROCCO FISHING AGREEMENT STALLED

The European Parliament on 4 April voted against ratifying the EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) owing to controversy regarding Moroccan control of the Western Sahara region. Although the FPA treats Western Sahara as part of Morocco, and requires only the ratification of the accord by Moroccan authorities to justify fishing in the waters of Western Sahara, there is uncertainty whether the Moroccan government has legal responsibility for the region. The confusion stems from Morocco's invasion of Western Sahara in 1975 and a advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice that Morocco had no claim to the Western Sahara and that the Saharawi living in the region have a right to self determination. EU Fisheries Commissioner Joe Borg contended that because Morocco is the de facto administrator of the territory, the planned deal is valid under international law. However, France and Portugal spoke against ratifying the FPA, saying that it was too rushed, while northern European countries led by Sweden said that the deal should not be ratified because it would be against international law for the EU to seal a pact with Morocco under the assumption that it includes Western Sahara. The vote will further stall the implementation of the July 2005 agreement which was originally hoped to come into effect on 1 March 2006 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 2 September 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/05-09-02/inbrief.htm#1>). Discussions will continue amongst members of the EP and will focus on the possibility of inserting a clause into the agreement registering the unease of the EU of allowing access to waters off the Western Sahara. The agreement is due to come before the Fisheries Committee and Parliament for ratification next month.

"EU-Morocco Fishing Deal Sparks Tensions on W. Sahara," REUTERS, 3 April 2006; "Saharan Fish and the EU," ZNET, 28 March 2006; "Commission under fire over Morocco fisheries agreement," MUSLIM NEWS, 10 March 2006.

Events & Resources

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies.

Coming Up In the Next Two Weeks

17-21 April, Dehra Dun, India: 21ST SESSION OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION. The Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) is one of six FAO Regional Forestry Commissions that cover the world's major geographic regions. It is a forum for advising and taking action on key forestry issues and focuses on issues pertinent to Asia and the Pacific. At this session, there will also be a special session "Toward Sustainable Forest Management" that will examine the findings of the 2005 Forest Resources Assessment, review the accomplishments of APFC and FAO in the region, and consider major forestry developments in APFC member countries. For further information contact Patrick Durst, tel: (+66) 2697-4000; fax: 2697-4445; email: patrick.durst@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.apfcweb.org/events/events.html>.

19-21 April, Beijing, China: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ROLES OF FORESTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY. The goals of the conference are to share and exchange rural community forest management experiences and technologies, to promote the development of relevant disciplines and to enhance more importantly the sustainable utilization of forest resource. For further information contact Guan Xiuling, tel: (+0086 10) 62889819; fax: 62889817; email: csf_org@forestry.ac.cn; Internet: http://lists.iisd.ca:81/read/attachment/28615/1/International%20conference_Beijing.pdf.

24-25 April, Paris, France: WORKSHOP ON POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN FISHERIES. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) committees for Fisheries and the Development Assistance are jointly hosting this workshop, which will further explore key issues in policy coherence for development in fisheries. For further information contact Carl-Christian Schmidt, email: carl-christian.schmidt@oecd.org; Internet: http://www.oecd.org/document/26/0,2340,en_2649_33901_35283162_1_1_1_1,00.html.

24- 25 April, Wroclaw, Poland: MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE (MCPFE) ROUND TABLE 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 organizations that participate as observers. For further information contact Bozena Kornatowska, email: b.kornatowska@lu-warsaw.pl; tel: (+48) 22 331 790 331; Internet: <http://www.mcpfe.org/>.

24-28 April, Geneva, Switzerland: NINTH SESSION OF WIPO'S INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GENETIC RESOURCES, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOLKLORE. This meeting, organised by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), will address issues related to genetic resources and the protection of traditional knowledge. For further information contact the IGC Secretariat, tel: (+41 22) 338-8161; fax: 338-8120; email: grtkf@wipo.int; Internet: http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=9765.

24-28 April, Alnarp, Sweden: SECOND MEETING OF THE CONTACT GROUP FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE STANDARD MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT. This meeting will consider what a typical genetic resource benefit-sharing deal would look like under the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. For further information contact José Esquinas-Alcázar, tel: (+39 6) 570-54986; fax: 570-53057; email: Jose.Esqinas@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/AG/cgrfa/cgmta2.htm>

26-28 April, Quito, Ecuador: BIOTECHNOLOGY IN ECUADOR: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES. This workshop is organised by the REDBIO Ecuador National Co-ordination. For further information contact REDBIO, e-mail: redbio2006@usfq.edu.ec; Internet: <http://www.redbio.org/newsredbio.asp?id=271>

24 April - 5 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO RULES WEEK. For further information contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41-22) 739- 5007; fax: 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org; Internet: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf.

Other upcoming events

10-12 May, Bad Blumau, Austria: WORKSHOP ON REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. This workshop will consider methodological and policy approaches to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries – an issue taken up during the eleventh Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) in Montreal in December 2005. The matter will be taken up officially at the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies meetings taking place in Bonn later in May 2006. For further information contact Neil Bird, tel: (+43) 316-876-1423; email: neil.bird@joanneum.at; Internet: <http://www.joanneum.at/REDD>.

15-26 May, Bonn, Germany: TWENTY-FOURTH SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE. For further information contact the UNFCCC Secretariat, tel: (+49)228-815-1000; fax: (+49)228-815-1999; email: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>.

22-26 May, New York, USA: REVIEW CONFERENCE FOR THE STRADDLING AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT. This conference will assess the effectiveness of the agreement on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. The discussions will focus on where implementation of the agreement is proceeding well, where implementation has made little progress, and how to strengthen the substance and methods of implementation. For further information contact UNDOALOS, tel: (+1 212) 963-3962; fax: 963-5847; email: doalos@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/review_conf_fish_stocks.htm.

12-16 June, Madrid, Spain: FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (ITPGR) GOVERNING BODY: This conference is organised by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) acting as the Interim Committee for the International Treaty. For further information contact José Esquinas-Alcázar, tel: (+39 6) 570-54986; fax: 570-53057; email: Jose.Esquinas@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/>.

14-16 June, Metro Manila, Philippines: 4TH MEETING OF THE ASEAN EXPERTS GROUP (AEG) ON THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES). This meeting, organised by the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA), will discuss the status of the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna 2005-2010. For further information contact Virgilio V. Vitug, tel: (632)925-8952; fax: 924-0109; Internet: http://www.cites.org/common/news/2006/4th_ASEAN_EXP_GRP_2.pdf.

19-21 June, Tunis, Tunisia: THE FUTURE OF DRYLANDS CONFERENCE. This conference will focus on drylands research, conservation, policy and

sustainable drylands development. Organised by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in partnership with several international organisations, the conference is held within the context of the United Nations International Year of Deserts and Desertification (2006) as part of collective efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals. For further information contact Thomas Schaaf, e-mail: sc.drylands@unesco.org; Internet: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/ecosyst/futureDrylands.shtml>.

RESOURCES

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

ICTSD Resource

FISHERIES ACCESS AGREEMENTS: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. By Stephen Mbithi Mwikya, ICTSD, April 2006. The paper provides an overview of different types of fisheries access agreements and assesses their socio-economic and sustainability impacts, including on employment, value-addition, competitiveness and stock levels. He examines a range of policy options for addressing access issues in the fisheries subsidies negotiations, negotiating fisheries access agreements, and setting up domestic policies to enable developing countries to exploit their own fisheries resources. Available at http://www.ictsd.org/pubs/ictsd_series/nat_res/Mbithi_2006.pdf.

Other Resources

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND SOIL NUTRIENT MINING IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT. By Julio Henao and Carlos Baanante (International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development (IFDC), March 2006). This report shows that 75 percent of farmland in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is plagued by severe degradation, and is losing basic soil nutrients needed to grow the crops that feed Africa. Africa's crisis in food production and battle with hunger are largely rooted in this "soil health crisis." To access this paper, visit http://www.eurekalert.org/africasoil/report/Soil_Nutrient_Mining_in_Africa_Report_Final.pdf

EU FLEGT INITIATIVE: ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION OF RELEVANCE TO EXCLUDING ILLEGAL TIMBER FROM EU MARKETS - UK STUDY. By Duncan Brack (Chatham House, March 2006). This paper considers national legislation which could be applied to seize timber and

timber products produced illegally overseas but imported into the UK and to prosecute those responsible for carrying out the crimes and handling the products and the profits deriving from them. It covers both the applicability in theory of the legislation's application and - in some ways more importantly - its applicability in practice. The paper is divided into four sections, covering criminal law, civil law, customs misdeclaration and money laundering. To access this paper, visit http://www.illegal-logging.info/events/UK_study_Add_Options.doc.

CHINA AND THE GLOBAL MARKET FOR FOREST PRODUCTS: TRANSFORMING TRADE TO BENEFIT FORESTS AND LIVELIHOODS. By Andy White, Xiufang Sun, Kerstin Canby, Jintao Xu, Christopher Barr, Eugenia Katsigris, Gary Bull, Christian Cossalter and Sten Nilsson (Forest Trends, March 2006). This report looks at China's industry and timber trade and what this means for China, countries that supply China with forest products and countries that have imported manufactured products from China since 1997. One of the key findings of the report is that domestic and export demand for Chinese manufactured wood products will continue to grow dramatically, at least over the medium terms and probably well beyond. So, in turn, will the demand for both home-grown and imported timber. Furthermore, China should be seen as the harbinger of even greater change, as India and other populous developing countries increase their demand for forest products. To access this report, visit http://www.illegal-logging.info/papers/China_and_the_Global_Market.pdf.

ANIMALS, ETHICS AND TRADE. Edited by Jacky Turner and Joyce D'Silva, April 2006. The complexities of animal behaviour revealed in the last few decades are astonishing, but what are the implications? In this book, internationally respected contributors are brought together for the first time to debate and attempt to answer these questions. The first sections discuss scientific and ethical perspectives on the consciousness, emotions and mental abilities of animals. Later sections address how human activities such as science, law, farming, food production, trade, development and education respect or ignore animals' sentience and welfare, and review the options for changes in our policies, our practices and our thinking. To access this book, visit <http://shop.earthscan.co.uk>

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN TRADE AGREEMENTS. By Dale Colyer, Estey Journal, April 2006. Member nations of the World Trade Organisation are permitted to develop regulations that might restrict trade if they do so for the purpose of protecting human, animal or plant life or health. The regulations, under both the Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade agreements, must be based on science, be non-discriminatory and be the least-trade-restrictive alternative. Uncertainty, a lack of adequate scientific evidence and differing interpretations have led to disputes about regulations applied by particular countries. If consultations cannot resolve the issues, dispute settlement panels and an appellate body adjudicate them; in these forums, scientific knowledge, studies and testimony by scientists play key roles. To access this article, visit http://www.esteyjournal.com/j_pdfs/colyer7-1.pdf.

VACANCIES

PROGRAMME OFFICER, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD (TWAS). TWAS is currently seeking a candidate with a PhD for a position based in Trieste, Italy involving programme design, implementation, coordination and evaluation. For further information contact the Personnel Office, e-mail: personnel_office@ictp.it; Internet: <http://portal.ictp.it/vacancy/TWASVN0859b.pdf/file>.

PROJECT MANAGER, UNEP GREAT APES SURVIVAL PROJECT (GRASP) SECRETARIAT. The main tasks of the new GRASP team member will be to manage the European Commission project and to develop new project proposals. The position is classified as an L3 post within the UN system. For further information visit http://www.unep.org/grasp/Support_GRASP/jobs.asp.

PROGRAMME MANAGER, CHATHAM HOUSE. The programme manager for Chatham House's Energy, Environment and Development Programme would be based in London. The Manager assists the Head in the overall management of the Programme and all its activities, and is responsible for the smooth running of the Programme in the Head's absence. For further information visit <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/index.php?id=16>

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