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### LEAD STORIES

#### WTO MEMBERS TO MISS APRIL DEADLINE FOR MODALITIES

The WTO's beleaguered Doha Round negotiations suffered another blow this week, when trade diplomats had to acknowledge that they would fail to meet a key end-April deadline for a framework deal on cutting agricultural tariffs, farm subsidies, and duties on industrial goods.

Participants at an informal heads of delegation meeting on 24 April broadly agreed with Director-General Pascal Lamy's assessment that it would be pointless to summon ministers to Geneva for a high-level meeting at the end of the month, since divisions in the agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) talks remained so wide that there was no realistic chance of striking an agreement on modalities. Ambassadors from some 25-30 Member countries had recognized this earlier at a 'green room' gathering on the evening of 21 April. Instead of a ministerial-level meeting, a regular Trade Negotiations Committee has been scheduled for 1 May.

"It is not good news, but we have to face reality," said the WTO chief, who had said a month ago that missing the April deadline would be a "huge collective mistake" (see BRIDGES Weekly, 29 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-29/story1.htm>). He asked Members to engage in non-stop negotiations on agriculture and NAMA in the weeks to come. Although he did not specify any new dates for the circulation of negotiating texts, Lamy warned that waiting until the end of July for modalities in the two areas "would guarantee failure."

The 30 April target date for full modalities that WTO Member governments agreed to at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December 2005 is thus set to become yet another in the Doha Round's long list of missed deadlines. To put this into perspective, the Doha Declaration that launched the round in November 2001 had originally called for agriculture modalities to be agreed by 31 March 2003!

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Nevertheless, many see the decision to cancel a ministerial-level summit as a wise one. A spokesman for EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson went so far as to suggest that it may turn out to be a blessing in disguise, reported UK daily The Guardian. Some fear that a high-profile failure could even have killed off the round altogether.

On the other hand, outgoing US Trade Representative Rob Portman told reporters on 26 April that the decision to cancel the meeting was "a mistake." He said that he would go to Geneva towards the end of the month along with his successor, current Deputy USTR Susan Schwab, to meet with trade officials there to "try to figure out ways to break the deadlock" (see related story, this issue).

### **Lamy: texts needed as soon as possible**

Lamy believes ministers cannot make the big political decisions about the extent of subsidy and tariff cuts until they have more clarity about a number of other issues, particularly the nature of various exemptions that Members will use to shield products from reduction commitments.

"In order to make productive use of the direct involvement of ministers in the negotiations, we need to put well-developed texts before them for decision, and these texts are not yet there," he told the heads of delegation meeting.

Getting to text-based negotiations as quickly as possible should be Members' "immediate objective," he said, asking the chairs of the agriculture and NAMA groups to hold continuous talks. "Negotiators should be on call on a permanent basis."

Lamy exhorted Members to "think in weeks rather than months, and a small number of weeks." Several delegates are hoping for modalities in June. One source said that since Members are well aware of the broader time constraints they are facing, the absence of a specific deadline may actually be helpful, because failing to meet a specific target date is both embarrassing and demoralizing.

### **"The game is here in Geneva"**

Over the past few months, a number of smaller developing countries have expressed concerns about a series of high-level meetings among a handful of influential WTO Members -- meetings to which they were not invited. Over 125 civil society groups including ActionAid, Oxfam, and Third World Network echoed these concerns in an 18 April letter to Lamy, in which they argued that smaller developing countries were being left out of what appeared to have become the

Doha Round's main negotiating forum. They called on the Director-General to do more to ensure the participation of all Member delegations.

Perhaps in response to these process-related concerns, Lamy took pains to stress "there should be no doubt that the game is here in Geneva, in the multilateral arena, not anywhere else." Although Lamy has admitted that 'green room' meetings among 25-30 delegates are useful to push the debate forward, he reiterated his commitment to maintain transparency and inclusiveness in the negotiating process, in part by holding more meetings with all delegations.

### **Blame game continues**

In what has become a hallmark of the negotiations, Members have stepped up their attempts to blame each other for the lack of progress, even as Lamy said that this was "not a time for blame or recrimination."

When Mandelson tried to argue that responsibility for the failure lay with the US for not moderating its demands on farm tariffs, a US Trade Representative spokesperson responded that the EU was putting more effort into finger-pointing than into the negotiations.

According to one Geneva-based negotiator, the mudslinging was premature, as advances were taking place on the technical level. "It's sad if we start the blame game." The delegate said that Members needed to get down to work, and that the next few weeks would be critical to the outcome of the talks.

Lamy had a similar view of the negotiations, arguing that there had been genuine progress -- just not as much as was needed. "We may have missed the deadline but we are not in deadlock," he said.

ICTSD reporting; "Delegates try to kickstart Doha round," THE GUARDIAN, 24 April 2006; "US rejects blame for WTO impasse," REUTERS, 21 April 2006; "Trade talks to miss key deadline," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 25 April 2006.

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## **AG: MODALITIES DEADLINE WILL BE MISSED; SIX WEEKS OF CONTINUOUS NEGOTIATIONS LAUNCHED**

WTO Members will not meet the month-end deadline for agreeing 'full modalities' for farm subsidy and tariff cuts, the chair of the Doha Round agriculture negotiations finally acknowledged on 21 April. "We have not achieved full modalities... clear and simple" Ambassador Crawford Falconer of New Zealand said at the end of an 'agriculture week,' adding "I don't think

that can be done by the end of April." Instead, he proposed six weeks of continuous negotiations without any formal deadlines to enable Members to move towards consensus.

The heads of all WTO Member delegations agreed on 24 April that they were so far from meeting the deadline that there was no point in summoning ministers to Geneva at the end of April in an attempt to reach a deal. The same conclusion was reached earlier by the 25 ambassadors present at a 21 April 'green room' meeting called by WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, in light of the 'disappointing' assessments by the agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) chairs.

### **Falconer outlines process for way forward**

Falconer proposed an intensive cycle of three fortnight-long sets of informal meetings, beginning the week of 1 May.

According to the process he outlined for these two-week cycles, meetings in the first week would primarily be smaller group consultations; during the second, several informal meetings of the entire membership would be held along with consultations. Both of the weeks would end in a round-up for all Members to take stock of progress.

The new schedule aims to allow capital-based officials to return home during the first week of each cycle, and then return to Geneva for the second. Although the process was designed to facilitate input from capitals into the negotiations, several developing country delegates pointed to the high cost of repeatedly bringing senior capital-based officials back to Geneva. Many poorer developing countries already find it unaffordable to bring officials from capital to Geneva for important negotiations. Some delegates suggested that the chair should organize the discussions in such a way so as to minimise the need for continuous back-and-forth travel.

Falconer said that the six weeks of negotiations will be based on 'reference papers', spelling out areas of agreement as well as areas where further convergence was still needed. He already circulated five such papers ahead of the agriculture week. Falconer has indicated that in principle, these reference papers should form the basis for discussions among delegates, and eventually evolve into draft text. Reference papers will eventually be prepared on all topics under negotiation.

Comparing the negotiations to a pyramid, one source said that the six weeks of discussions would help solidify the base of the pyramid in order better to lay the foundation for the top, that is, the political decisions on

specific percentages for tariff and subsidy cuts that will ultimately be necessary.

Falconer told the press that there was no point in setting another specific deadline for an agreement in the talks. "Deadlines have no credibility in my view" he added, underlining instead the importance of getting things done. During the meeting, Members agreed that a new deadline would not be useful.

Several delegations emphasized that the start of the WTO's August break "is not a deadline", and that modalities should be agreed well before then. Many negotiators and other trade observers have long described the end of July as the real deadline for an agreement on full modalities if the round is to be concluded by early 2007.

In a briefing with reporters on 21 April, a senior US trade official stated his belief that negotiators must achieve "real tangible, meaningful, substantial progress through May and June" if they are to be able to complete the schedules of commitments each country must make by the end of the round. Developing country officials also emphasized the need to reach agreement on full modalities by the end of June.

Ahead of the six-week negotiations, Falconer scheduled meetings from 26-28 April to discuss some market access-related issues. Members remain profoundly divided on how deeply to cut farm tariffs, and have done little other than exchange rhetorical barbs on the issue. The three days of meetings will pay specific attention to flexibilities for developing countries, including the special safeguard mechanism and the rules for the 'special products' which they will be able to shield from the full force of tariff cuts.

In spite of the continuing impasse in the overall talks, Members made slow but steady technical progress during the agriculture week on a number of technical issues related to export competition and domestic support (see related story, this issue). While market access issues remain the most controversial, a developing country official underlined the fact that all three pillars were in fact linked. Noting that the overall picture was not bright, a developing country official nonetheless emphasized that "things can happen in a very short time, if there's the political will".

ICTSD reporting; "Planned Ministerial Scrapped as Key Members of WTO See Trade Pact Hopes Fizzle," WTO REPORTER, 24 April 2006; "Delegates try to kickstart Doha round," THE GUARDIAN, 24 April 2006.

## AG WEEK MAKES INCREMENTAL PROGRESS ON EXPORT COMPETITION, DOMESTIC SUPPORT

Although WTO Members did not make enough progress during a recent week of agriculture talks to put an agreement on tariff and subsidy cuts within their grasp by the end of April (see related story, this issue), the negotiations did move forward slowly on technical issues related to export competition and domestic support. Trade delegates in Geneva reported that some progress was indeed being made, and emphasized that the six upcoming weeks of intensive negotiations would be critical to the final shape of any Doha Round agriculture deal.

Ahead of the agriculture week, negotiating group Chair Ambassador Crawford Falconer (New Zealand) sent delegations the 'reference papers' he had promised them on food aid, exporting state trading enterprises (STEs), export credits, the blue box and the green box. Based on Members' inputs and discussions to date, these papers identified issues on which they had moved towards agreement, and areas where further convergence was still needed.

### **Export competition: monetisation of food aid remains controversial**

As part of their decision at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference to eliminate export subsidies by 2013, Members are currently negotiating disciplines on in-kind food aid so that it cannot serve as a loophole for subsidising exports. "To ensure that there is no unintended impediment to dealing with emergency situations," the Hong Kong Declaration mandated Members to create a 'safe box' that would shield bona fide food aid from disciplines.

The chair suggested that Members may have reached the 'zone of consensus' on this 'safe box' for emergency food aid. However, they remained sharply divided on two other issues: monetisation (the sale of food aid to raise funds for development programmes), and whether or not non-emergency aid should only be in grant form (as opposed to concessional sales at lower-than-market prices). The EU believes that outside emergencies, in-kind aid should be banned, and that non-emergency assistance should only be in the form of cash grants. The US opposes this view, insisting that there is a role for in-kind aid in such circumstances as well.

A March submission from the African and Least-Developed Country (LDC) Groups (TN/AG/GEN/13) had proposed allowing monetisation only "under exceptional circumstances," to fund activities directly related to the delivery of the aid or to facilitate

procurement of agricultural inputs by the final recipients (see BRIDGES Weekly, 29 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-29/story2.htm>).

According to their proposal, only a UN agency and the recipient government would be able to oversee this process, to minimise the risk of commercial displacement and disincentives to local production.

A 10 April food aid proposal from the US was based on the African and LDC paper, but removed reference to the limited exception for monetisation. Instead, it outlined a process for monetisation under which food aid donors would prepare a market analysis report to demonstrate that selling aid would not affect commercial import trends or domestic production, stipulating that monetisation would be permissible in such cases. However, at the end of the meeting on 18 April, Falconer concluded that he had not heard any arguments against the limited exception advocated by the African and LDC groups.

Negotiators also appeared to be converging on the 'triggers' that would determine whether a situation constitutes an emergency. Falconer's reference paper addressed the issue of whether only appeals from intergovernmental agencies such as the UN could be used as indicators, or whether appeals from non-governmental groups which cooperate with intergovernmental bodies would be considered too. He expressed the belief that it should not be too difficult to resolve this issue, noting that obscure non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would be unlikely to appeal for aid in order to get around export subsidy rules. Negotiators also seemed to agree that food aid should not in general be re-exported except in special circumstances.

The EU and the US in particular have argued that the monopoly powers of exporting STEs distort competition, and have sought strict disciplines to eliminate such powers. The three countries with major STEs -- Australia, Canada and New Zealand -- have sought less extensive disciplines for these entities. In their view, the new rules should simply seek to ensure that STEs do not misuse their monopoly power to evade their anti-subsidy obligations.

Also undecided was the issue of a timetable for eliminating all forms of export subsidies. In addition to the end-date of 2013, the Hong Kong Declaration stipulates that "a substantial part" of such support should be eliminated "by the end of the first half of the [Doha Round] implementation period. During the meeting, New Zealand proposed that 70 percent of the elimination should be completed by the mid-point of the period -- generally considered to be 2010. It also called on countries to freeze such subsidies that at current levels. Members such as the EU, which had been

expected to resist any such move, have not spoken out publicly against the New Zealand proposal. In informal discussions, however, they have indicated that they interpret "a substantial part" to mean "more than 50 percent," though how much more is not clear.

### **Blue box discussions address new rules, product-specific limits**

Members also began to make inroads into the more controversial area of domestic subsidies. Discussion focused on reform of the 'blue box,' which covers payments that are not directly linked to production; and the 'green box,' intended for policy measures that have no (or minimal) trade-distorting effects.

The blue box traditionally covered trade-distorting subsidies that were linked to limits on production (the so-called 'old blue box'). It was expanded in the July 2004 Framework (WT/L/579) to cover subsidies that require no production whatsoever (the 'new blue box'), allowing it to capture the US' controversial counter-cyclical payments to farmers, which rise when world market prices fall.

Considered to be less trade-distorting than 'amber box' subsidies, blue box subsidies are subject to relatively lower reductions. However, Members differ on precisely how to go about cutting them. For developed countries, the cap for overall blue box spending was set by the July 2004 Framework at 5 percent of the total value of agricultural production. While some countries believe that simply lowering this percentage would be sufficient -- many Members have proposed halving it to 2.5 percent -- others believe that new rules are necessary to govern what kinds of payments can qualify for the blue box, along with product-specific spending caps.

Two major issues preoccupied delegates during the recent week: the timeframe for implementation of the percentage cut to overall blue box support, and potential measures to avoid the concentration of support on specific individual products.

The G-20 argued that blue box support should be restricted to 2.5 percent of the value of agricultural production, and that this should be the case from the outset of the Doha Round implementation period. The G-10 countered that halving support was already a major concession, and that this figure should therefore only apply at the end.

The G-20 called for measures to avoid concentrating support on individual products. Both the G-10 and the EU indicated that they would be willing to discuss the issue; the US implied that the cut to overall spending limits was sufficient, though it said it was open to hearing further proposals on the matter.

### **Green box discussions centre on decoupled income support**

On green box support, Members continued to vary significantly in their views. Whilst the G-20, Canada and Australia argued that some of the criteria for green box spending need to be revised to ensure that payments do not distort trade, or only do so minimally, others (the US and the EU) see no real need to make substantial changes. The sums at stake in the debate are significant: currently, the lion's share of US and Japanese farm payments, as well as an increasing share of EU subsidies, qualify for the green box and are thus not subject to any cuts whatsoever.

The negotiations have focused primarily on what kinds of grants can qualify as 'decoupled income support' under the Agreement on Agriculture's Annex 2, which sets out the rules for the reduction-exempt green box. Paragraph 6 of the annex contains a list of criteria for decoupled income support payments, including disciplines specifying that they must not be linked to either production or prices for a particular product.

The G-20 and the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters would like to see these disciplines tightened, since they fear that the US and EU will be able to use them to shelter large amounts of support from cuts. One reform some Members are proposing would be to link payments to a 'fixed and unchanging base period.' The G-20, for instance, believes that allowing countries to update the eligibility criteria (such as income and production level) for green box payments would raise farmers' hopes of receiving more government grants in the future, which would in turn influence their production decisions -- even though these payments are supposed not to be linked to production.

According to Falconer's reference paper on the green box, Members seemed open to using the green box to address developing country concerns, so long as any such programmes did not cause more than minimal distortions to trade.

Though some in Geneva view the incremental progress on technical issues as grounds for a little optimism, the key question remains whether Members can agree on full modalities by June, within the next six to eight weeks. This timeframe is now widely seen as critical.

ICTSD reporting.



## NAMA: CHAIR CALLS FOR NON-STOP NEGOTIATIONS TO BRING MODALITIES WITHIN REACH

WTO Members have acknowledged that they will fail to meet a key end-April deadline for agreeing on Doha Round modalities for cutting industrial tariffs. At the end of an 18-21 April week of non-agricultural market access (NAMA) discussions, they remained profoundly divided on the central issues in the talks -- so much so that many were unwilling to even discuss potential values for coefficients to plug into the tariff reduction formula. "We did not have a good week," said Chair Ambassador Don Stephenson (Canada) when summing up the talks on 21 April.

Stephenson told the 24 April informal heads of delegation meeting that there would need to be non-stop negotiations from now on, suggesting that Members needed to develop modalities within six to eight weeks (see related story, this issue).

### **Members refuse to discuss numbers, turn to non-core issues**

The extent of Members' differences became quickly apparent at the outset of the NAMA week, when several delegations rejected Stephenson's suggestion that they discuss specific numerical values for the three core aspects of the negotiations: the tariff reduction formula, the flexibility given to developing countries to shield some products from the full force of tariff cuts, and the treatment of unbound tariff lines not currently capped in the WTO. Brazil, the US, Japan, and Switzerland questioned the appropriateness of discussing specific numbers given the state of the talks.

That Members were still suggesting it was too early to discuss specific numbers less than two weeks before the 30 April deadline was described by Stephenson as "striking." Indeed, Canada and the EU suggested that Members, instead of narrowing their differences, seemed to be drifting even further apart. One source told Bridges that prior to Hong Kong, Members had been discussing formula coefficients of 5 to 10 for developed countries, and 15 to 30 for developing countries, but the ranges had now widened to 2 to 10 and 15 to 40, respectively.

With meaningful discussions on the main sticking points in the talks seemingly impossible, Members turned their attention to what the chair described, as 'second-storey' issues, in particular, non-tariff barriers (NTBs) and sectoral tariff liberalization initiatives.

### **NTBs: EU calls for new agreement on export taxes**

At a session on NTBs on 19 April, the EU tabled a proposal calling for the creation of a new WTO agreement to broadly ban export taxes, with limited exceptions for developing and least-developed countries (LDCs). Sources report that developing countries including Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Venezuela protested that export taxes were not NTBs, and were not part of the Doha Round negotiating mandate. Some developing countries place taxes on certain goods for export, especially those of primary commodities, to gain revenue and to promote specific kinds of domestic industrial development. WTO rules currently prohibit most quantitative export restrictions.

Arguing that export taxes distort international trade, unfairly privilege domestic industries, and can effectively be as prohibitive as export restrictions, the EU proposed draft disciplines for a potential WTO agreement on export taxes. It would disallow export taxes apart from those permitted under existing exceptions in WTO law. However, developing countries and LDCs would be allowed to maintain "a limited number... at low levels" if necessary to maintain financial stability or to "avoid excessive dependence" on raw commodity exports -- so long as they "do not adversely affect international trade." The EU would have Members negotiate ceiling levels for these permissible taxes, with the cap higher for LDCs than for developing countries. Developing countries would have to negotiate which products they could maintain export taxes on through a request-offer process.

The EU also circulated papers identifying NTBs in the electronics, automotive, and textiles, clothing, and footwear sectors. They focused primarily on overly onerous or complicated labeling requirements and standards, and proposed disciplines for how their effects on trade could be reduced, often recommending that Members adopt international standards.

### **Sectorals: US supports Singapore draft text, Turkey doesn't**

Singapore proposed language on sectoral initiatives for the chair's report to the TNC that specified that such liberalization would go "over and above" the demands of the overall formula for tariff reduction. This raised the ire of Turkey, which in March called for the sectoral 'harmonisation' of textiles and clothing tariffs -- a proposal that seeks to subject several kinds of textiles to cuts lower, rather than higher, those demanded by the tariff reduction formula (see BRIDGES Weekly, 29 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-29/story5.htm>). Turkey pointed to the July 2004 Framework stipulation that sectoral tariff initiatives should "aim at elimination or harmonization."

Several other Members countered that harmonization at tariff levels higher than those required by the formula was against the Framework's mandate to apply the NAMA formula to each and every category of industrial products, i.e., on a 'line-by-line' basis. Most WTO Members have expressed opposition to the partial exemption of textiles and clothing from tariff cuts, although El Salvador, Jordan, Mauritius, and Tunisia reiterated their support for the Turkish proposal during the recent NAMA week.

Singapore's text lists the wide range of sector-specific liberalization initiatives, but deliberately left out the Turkish proposal -- because, it said, the harmonization initiative failed to go over and above general reduction commitments. Turkey argued that the chair's report should include all proposals.

Notably, the US said that it was "extremely supportive" of the Singaporean text -- an implicit rejection of the Turkish proposal. The US has been under heavy pressure from domestic textiles manufacturers to push for shallow tariff cuts of the sort envisioned by Turkey.

### **Developing country flexibilities briefly discussed**

Members did manage to agree on the threshold for exemption from tariff cuts granted by the July 2004 Framework to developing countries with a high number of unbound tariff lines. Paragraph 6 of the text's Annex B said that countries with binding caps for fewer than a certain percentage of tariff lines -- a figure of 35 percent was in brackets, indicating that it had not been approved by Members -- would be exempt from reduction obligations. However, these countries would be expected, as part of the round, to bind an undefined percentage of tariff lines -- 100, also in brackets -- "at an average level that does not exceed the overall average of bound tariffs for all developing countries after full implementation of current concessions."

On 19 April delegates achieved consensus on 35 percent as the binding coverage level for 'Paragraph 6' countries, and the brackets were duly removed from that figure. Finalising the threshold level allowed several of the eligible countries to be identified: Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ghana, Kenya, Macao, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Suriname, and Zimbabwe.

However, Members were unable to agree on the number and level of future bindings. Some delegations had found past proposals to bind 95 percent of lines at an average of 50 percent unacceptable because the average was too high. Kenya's proposal to bind 70 percent of tariff lines at an average of 28.5 percent was criticized by many countries for exempting too many products from tariff caps.

With regard to the so-called 'Paragraph 8 flexibilities,' Mexico proposed that developing countries that elect not to shield any tariff lines from the full force of tariff cuts should be rewarded with five extra points in their tariff reduction formula coefficient. This would mean that applying the formula would cut their tariffs to a maximum level that is five points higher than that of other developing countries. Several developing countries including China, India, and Malaysia found this unsatisfactory -- they have maintained that developing countries should not have to exchange flexibilities against leniency in the overall tariff reduction formula.

### **Stephenson: Members need to intensify the negotiations**

At the closing session, the EU described the week's proceedings as "very, very gloomy." Many other delegations also expressed disappointment with the lack of progress, and echoed the chair's exhortation to intensify the pace of negotiations in order to make success possible. Brazil deplored the standstill in agriculture as well as NAMA, and urged more Members to simulate the effects of different proposed coefficients on their own tariff structures in order to facilitate effective comparisons.

Sources report that Stephenson told Members that his report to the 1 May session of the TNC will contain very little modalities-like language -- primarily on technical issues related to the treatment of unbound tariffs and the flexibilities for developing countries. It would primarily contain his assessment of what issues Members must solve in order to move the negotiations forward. He will present the report to an informal meeting of all delegations on 27 April.

Sources report that Stephenson will convene plurilateral meetings and other consultations next week.

ICTSD reporting.

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## **OTHER NEWS**

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### **PORTMAN TO LEAVE USTR; SOME SEE RESHUFFLE AS BLOW TO DOHA ROUND**

US Trade Representative Robert Portman will step down to become the next White House budget director, President George W. Bush announced on 18 April. Deputy USTR Susan Schwab has been nominated to replace Portman, whose imminent departure is viewed by some as yet another blow to the precarious Doha Round negotiations.

The move comes as part of a broader shakeup within the Bush administration, whose approval ratings are at record low levels in opinion polls. Pending Senate approval, Portman will take over the Office of Management and Budget, the body responsible for preparing the president's annual budget proposal to Congress, which establishes spending limits and priorities for the upcoming year.

Schwab, who began her career in the 1970s as an agricultural trade negotiator, is widely recognized for her technical expertise and skills. However, she lacks the political connections that Portman forged over his twelve years in the House of Representatives -- ties that helped him secure Congressional support for trade deals during his tenure as the country's top trade negotiator.

Several observers interpret Portman's transfer as a sign that the US believes that a successful conclusion to the Doha Round is unlikely, and has decided to focus its efforts elsewhere. "That the White House sees little need for a heavyweight in the trade job suggests it is skeptical about the Doha Round, reluctant to push controversial bilateral deals and in no mood to try to convince Congress to extend the Trade Promotion Authority, which expires in June 2007," wrote The Economist.

Another observer, however, suggested that Portman's move might actually end up enhancing the profile of the multilateral trade talks in Washington, since it would place a strong pro-Doha Round voice at the heart of US policymaking.

Nevertheless, many governments were lukewarm to the change, pointing in particular to the fragile state of the ongoing WTO negotiations. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson captured the general overtone when he said. "We will of course manage without him, but at this stage in the round, it would have been easier to manage with him. In his short -- eleven-month -- tenure as USTR, Portman had won praise for his political savvy, persistent deadlock in the talks notwithstanding.

Portman, for his part, told the media on 26 April that his succession would be a "seamless transition," pointing out that the rest of the US' trade team was staying in place, including WTO Ambassador Peter Allgeier and Deputy USTR Karan Bhatia. In response to comments about Schwab's supposed lack of Congressional clout, he said that she had more experience on Capitol Hill than any past USTR nominee apart from himself.

Even though WTO Members agreed on 24 April that they had not made enough progress in the negotiations to warrant summoning trade ministers to Geneva at the end of April to try to strike a deal on modalities for

subsidy and tariff cuts (see related stories, this issue), Portman, who expressed regret that the ministerial-level meeting had been called off, announced that he and Schwab would nevertheless travel to the Swiss city at some point "early next week" to meet with trade officials there.

Trade officials indicate that a great deal of work needs to be done in upcoming weeks. WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy has long emphasised the need for the EU to make concessions on farm tariffs, the US on domestic farm subsidies, and the G-20 on industrial tariffs. One Geneva-based developing country trade diplomat suggested that the extent to which the US engages on domestic support would be a valuable barometer of how seriously they are taking the negotiations in the post-Portman era.

A date has yet to be set for Senate votes on the two nominations. Portman has indicated that he expects to leave the trade job within two to six weeks.

"US step stirs doubt on global trade talks," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 19 April 2006; "Hopes for Trade Talks Dim After Personnel Switch," WASHINGTON POST, 19 April 2006; "Trade official nominated to be next OMB director," GOVEXEC.COM, 18 April 2006; "US reshuffle signals downgrading of trade policy," FINANCIAL TIMES, 18 April 2006; "Changes raise doubts on US commitment to Doha trade talks," FINANCIAL TIMES, 18 April 2006; "Portman part of inner circle," CINCINNATI POST, 19 April 2006.

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## WIPO PATENT HARMONISATION TALKS ADrift AFTER MEETING COLLAPSES

World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) talks on whether countries should harmonise their distinct national patent systems are adrift, after a key negotiating committee was unable to agree on how to proceed with future discussions on the issue. Negotiators were so divided -- broadly along North-South lines -- that the committee's next gathering was cancelled altogether.

The 10-12 April informal session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) had been charged with outlining a work programme for the body's upcoming formal meeting, which had been tentatively scheduled for June. The question of what to do with the process will now be posed to WIPO's General Assembly, the organisation's senior decision-making body, which will meet in September.

At stake in these negotiations are the rules that govern what is eligible to receive patent protection.



Patentability criteria are not specifically defined in the WTO Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), leaving most countries considerable freedom to define them as strongly or weakly as they would like. These criteria include novelty, 'inventive step' and 'industrial application.' A relaxed interpretation of them could controversially require countries to accord patent protection for innovations such as business methods and gene sequences, as well as to relatively minor modifications to existing inventions.

### **Developing and developed countries split blocks SCP**

Broadly speaking, developed countries have been seeking a wider definition of patentability criteria in the SPLT. This would be to their benefit, as the bulk of patent-holders worldwide are from developed countries (particularly the US, the EU and Japan). Developing countries fear that lowering the threshold for the sort of "inventive step" necessary for patentability could require them to extend patent protection to inventions currently deemed insufficient for it because of their relatively low level of 'inventiveness' or lack of clear industrial applicability. Arguing that this would be detrimental to future innovation and the public interest, they have pushed for any SPLT to include a series of rules pertaining to development concerns including exemptions to patentability, as well as issues such as technology transfer and compulsory disclosure and benefit-sharing for any genetic material or traditional knowledge used in an invention.

Divisions on the subject of future discussions -- not to mention the content of a future SPLT -- prevented the recent meeting of the SCP from reaching an agreement. During the gathering, the US and Japan indicated that they wanted to undertake focused work toward substantive patent harmonisation on four specific issues: the definition of 'prior art,' novelty, grace period and inventive step. Each is central to determining the extent of patent protection. A 14-member group of developing countries known as the 'Friends of Development (FoD), on the other hand, wanted the next meeting of the SCP to focus on an additional nine issues. These included development and policy space, exclusions to patentability, exceptions to patent holders' rights, anticompetitive practices related to patents, requirements to disclose the origin of genetic material or traditional knowledge used in an invention along with proof of prior informed consent and benefit sharing, effective mechanisms to challenge the validity of patents, technology transfer, and alternative models for promoting innovation.

One delegate said that of these, work on disclosure requirements, prior informed consent and benefit

sharing was of the highest political importance to many developing countries. Many developing countries feel that they stand to gain from mandatory disclosure requirements in patent applications, since it would reduce the risk of 'biopiracy,' that is, the uncompensated and undisclosed use of genetic materials.

India and China proposed clustering the FoD's nine additional issues into a package of six for inclusion in the work programme for the SCP's next meeting. However, the US, Japan and various other members of WIPO's 'Group B' of developed countries refused to accept any new issues. In light of the deadlock, the chair of the SCP, UK Patent Office head Ron Marchant, said that it was "not yet the time" for an agreement. He urged members to rethink their current positions, and called for a political solution in order to define the committee's future work programme.

In an attempt to broker a compromise, the Indian delegation suggested that the SCP's work could be considered in parallel to the discussions of WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee On Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC). The IGC's work focuses on many of the genetic resources-related issues that several developing countries are trying to promote in the SPLT discussions. However, the potential compromise found few takers. Some sources attributed this to a perception shared by some developing countries that they have far less to gain from anything the IGC is likely to produce than developed countries stand to gain from patent harmonisation.

### **Potential threat to development agenda?**

Impressions on the outcome of the SCP meeting are mixed. While some governmental observers suggest that the simple fact that members clearly identified their interests was in itself a good sign, auguring eventual solutions to the lack of consensus, others expressed frustration that they did not even have any options for "give and take." One developing country source said "it can not be expected that we can just accept a list of issues that do not reflect our interests. It is time they [developed countries] understand we have also interests to be addressed and incorporated in the future of the patent system."

Intellectual Property Watch reports that some officials wondered aloud that an eventual collapse of the SPLT process might affect the progress of negotiations elsewhere in WIPO -- specifically, those on the 'development agenda.' The 'development agenda' negotiations spring from a September 2004 proposal from the FoD group calling for wide-ranging changes to integrate UN development objectives into the mandate

and functioning of WIPO. Sources suggest that many countries, developed and developing, view the SPLT and development agenda talks as bargaining chips to be traded off against each other.

Nevertheless, the potential impact of the SCP on other discussions in WIPO and in the WTO remains to be seen. During the IGC's week-long meeting that started on 24 April, several developing countries repeated their call for a binding international instrument to protect genetic resources and traditional knowledge.

In WTO negotiations on intellectual property rights, the issue of disclosure requirements in patent applications is still on the table, and has been reiterated in recent months by several Members. The reluctance to address disclosure requirements in the SPLT process could potentially bolster arguments by India and other developing countries that the WTO is the appropriate forum for addressing them.

ICTSD reporting; "WIPO Patent Harmonisation Effort Stalls until September Assembly," INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WATCH, 12 April 2006; "Nations Urge Legally Binding Biodiversity Outcome at WIPO," INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WATCH, 25 April 2006.

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### CHINA'S TRADE POLICY REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC DYNAMISM, POINTS TO CHALLENGES

In the first review of Chinese trade policy since the country joined the global trade body in 2001, the WTO Secretariat (WT/TPR/S/161) highlighted the role of trade and structural economic reforms in its rapid economic growth, but drew attention to some market-distorting practices that persist. Notably, it also suggested that China pursue a more flexible exchange rate regime. The Trade Policy Review took place on 19 and 21 April.

According to the Secretariat's report, China had enjoyed 9 percent annual GDP growth since its 1978 decision to open up to international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). Per capita income rose from USD 148 in 1978 to USD 1700 in 2005 while the proportion of the Chinese population living below the poverty line (USD 2 per day) fell from nearly 73 percent in 1990 to 32 percent in 2003.

Although the report noted that the private sector's contribution to China's GDP had grown to 60 percent in 2003, it said that state owned enterprises (SOEs) continued to dominate key sectors such as energy as well as in banking, insurance, telecommunications, and transport services, where China was only just beginning

to open up. It suggested that making the financial sector and capital more market-oriented would relieve resource misallocation and 'over-investment' in some sectors.

The Secretariat found that China's economic growth has been driven mainly by manufacturing exports and investment. Trade in goods alone accounted for around 64 percent of China's GDP in 2005 and 6.7 percent of global trade in 2004. In spite of the general liberalising trend, the report notes that China provides "guidance" to the economy. For instance, it uses measures such as interim export taxes and value-added tax (VAT) rebates to "manage" exports of products that are in short supply at home, particularly agricultural products, petroleum, and some minerals.

### Challenges and reform areas identified

While hailing the major reforms to tariff and non-tariff barriers that China had implemented, particularly as part of its WTO accession terms -- its average applied most-favoured nation (MFN) tariff fell from 15.6 percent before accession in 2001 to 9.7 percent in 2005 -- the report also notes the use of tariff-rate quotas for agricultural products and fertilizers, and the active role of state trading enterprises in petroleum imports.

The report also notes the textile and clothing export restraint agreements that China signed with the EU and the US. The restrictions are to be maintained until 2007 and 2008 respectively.

In agriculture, which accounted for 12.5 percent of China's GDP and 45 percent of employment in 2006, the Secretariat indicated that the Chinese government had introduced direct subsidies as part of its efforts to address the disproportionate tax-burden borne by rural areas.

The report highlighted a number of the key developmental challenges China was facing, most notably the need to create some 100 million jobs to compensate for the unemployment that would be caused by the restructuring of SOEs and the agriculture sector. This could be helped, it suggested, by expanding the more labour-intensive services sector, and raising the quality of labour in order to enable a shift to higher value-added production. Other tests will include growing inequalities in the distribution of income between urban and rural as well as between coastal and inland areas, bottlenecks in land, water, and energy resources together with environmental problems arising from economic growth.

In addition, the report noted that China's sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime and inspection procedures remained complex and unclear, although it had taken

steps to simplify them. It also pointed to China's recent push for regional and bilateral trade deals, as well as its extension of duty-free market access to some products from 39 least-developed countries.

### US adds voice of concern

During the meeting to discuss the report, US WTO Ambassador Peter Allgeier hailed China's emergence as the world's third largest trader. Though he acknowledged that US consumers had benefited from access to inexpensive Chinese imports, he noted that Chinese exports to the US were six times higher than imports from it, China's new status as the fourth biggest market for US exports notwithstanding. He called on China to offer deeper liberalisation commitments as part of the ongoing Doha Round negotiations.

He said that China "had not yet fully embraced the key WTO principles of non-discrimination and national treatment," and chastised it for using an array of WTO-inconsistent industrial policy tools to promote or protect favoured industries and require the establishment of local manufacturing or research and development facilities. The steel industry and the automotive sector were singled out as examples.

The US criticised the 'opacity' of China's services-related regulatory regimes, and described its enforcement of intellectual property laws as inadequate.

In response to the Trade Policy Review, Chinese Vice Commerce Minister Yi Xiaozhun said that the country had made tremendous progress in intellectual property protection. He also pointed to China's liberalisation of several services subsectors including key areas such as banking, insurance, distribution, telecoms, and accounting. Yi reiterated China's commitment to the multilateral trading system and called on all WTO Members to redouble their efforts to move the Doha Round forward.

ICTSD reporting; "China fully implements WTO accession commitments: official," CHINAVIEW, 20 April 2006.

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## IN BRIEF

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### IMF TO SEEK TO REDRESS GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMBALANCES

The International Monetary Fund is to dramatically expand its "multilateral surveillance" of how countries' economic policies including exchange rates affect each others' fiscal and trade imbalances, and take the new

role of mediating among states in an attempt to resolve problems that threaten global financial stability.

The finance ministers and central bank governors on the IMF's policy-setting International Monetary and Financial Committee agreed to the reforms on 22 April during their bi-annual meeting. They also approved an increase in the voting power of China, Mexico, South Korea, and Turkey to reflect the growth of their economies.

The moves come at a time when the IMF is being accused of having lost its *raison d'être*, as in recent years few countries have faced financial crises requiring them to seek emergency loans from the global monetary body.

In practice, the revamped IMF could potentially examine China's huge current account surplus and the US' enormous trade deficit, and try to broker a deal among major economic powers to address the situation. The US blames its trade deficit on China's failure to revalue its currency, as well as sluggish EU demand. China counters that people in the US need to save more, and EU leaders are asking Washington to do something about its budget deficit for the sake of the world economy.

While some have hailed the move for recognising the need for serious action to preserve global macroeconomic stability, sceptics question whether the IMF can actually get governments to change exchange rate or other policies. Indeed, Chinese and Japanese officials have already stressed the importance of retaining control over exchange rate policies.

According to Article IV of the IMF's articles of agreement, it already had the right to "exercise firm surveillance over the exchange rate policies of members." The same article commits governments to not manipulate currency values for unfair commercial advantage.

Further reforms may be discussed at the World Bank-IMF annual meeting in Singapore in September.

The IMFC Communique is available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2006/pr0681.htm>

"Can the new IMF work?" UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 24 April 2006; "IMF gains new role on global imbalances," FINANCIAL TIMES, 25 April 2006; "Balancing act," GUARDIAN, 25 April 2006; "New role for the IMF," BUSINESS STANDARD, 26 April 2006; "Economists raise doubts over deal on IMF reform," FINANCIAL TIMES, 26 April 2006; "IMF Will Take On New Mediation Role That May Tread on G-7 Turf," BLOOMBERG, 24 April 2006; "Why globalization

has stalled," WASHINGTON POST, 24 April 2006; "IMF wins new powers to police global economy," REUTERS, 24 April 2006.

### AFRICAN TRADE MINISTERS, LAMY, CALL ON RICH COUNTRIES TO BE FLEXIBLE IN TRADE TALKS

Trade ministers from the 53 members of the African Union (<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/memberstates/map.htm>) met in Nairobi, Kenya, from 12-14 April discuss progress, strategize and consolidate positions in the ongoing Doha Round trade negotiations as well as in regional trade initiatives. They agreed on a "Nairobi Declaration" which emphasizes the key negotiating areas and issues of importance to Africa. At the meeting, the ministers cautioned that if rich countries did not show flexibility in the talks at the WTO, and if development did not remain at the heart of the round, they would be compelled to seek avenues outside the multilateral trading system to secure better market access for Africa's exports. Nevertheless, they reaffirmed their commitment "to the important task of completing the trade negotiations" by the end of 2006 as agreed by WTO Members in the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration.

The Nairobi Declaration stresses that the outcome of the agriculture and non-agricultural market access negotiations "should effectively address particular trade-related concerns of commodities depending developing countries and least developed countries." On cotton, it emphasises the importance of ambitious cuts to developed country domestic subsidies and the establishment of a mechanism to deal with price fluctuations.

At the meeting, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy called on the EU and US commit to undertaking bigger cuts in farm subsidies in order to inject momentum into the faltering Doha Round negotiations. Deputy US Trade Representative Karan Bhatia announced that Washington planned to double its contribution to a global "aid-for-trade" initiative and promised African countries that aid for trade would not replace existing development assistance, as some fear.

ICTSD reporting; "AU Adopts Nairobi Trade Declaration," ALLAFRICA.COM, 19 April 2006; "African ministers resolve to push for fair trade," THE TIDE ONLINE, 17 April 2006; "US tells Africa will double "aid-for-trade" money," REUTERS, 14 April 2006.

## WTO IN BRIEF

### MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW SCOPE OF WTO'S AID FOR TRADE WORK

At a short meeting of the WTO Aid for Trade Task Force on 18 April, Chair Ambassador Mia Horn Af Rantzien of Sweden suggested that Members are seeking clarity on the scope of the task force's work, and in particular want to know how the WTO can add to existing initiatives on aid for trade.

Drawing on informal consultations held with Members, international organizations and other stakeholders, she suggested that it would be difficult for the task force to answer the latter without more information about the new resources that would fund the implementation of its eventual recommendations to the WTO Membership on how 'aid for trade' could contribute most effectively to the development dimension of the Doha agenda.

Since WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy's consultations with various international and regional financial institutions about funding for aid for trade are still in progress, his expected presentation on them was postponed until the next task force meeting, which sources suggested will be held in mid-May. Delegates believe that Lamy's presentation will provide information necessary for the scope-setting exercise, and have thus pushed those discussions back until then (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-08/WTOinbrief.htm>).

Some delegates expressed disappointment that the meeting was unable to achieve progress on the architecture of WTO work on Aid for Trade. Nonetheless, Zambia on behalf of the least-developed countries group (LDCs) submitted a paper that suggested that value chain analysis could be a useful tool to identify measures necessary to enhance supply-side trade capacity in developing countries (WT/AFT/W/1). On behalf of the African Group, Benin presented a report from a 7-8 April meeting in Montreux of African ambassadors and stakeholders on Aid for Trade (TI/TMIN/EXP/8(IV)Rev.1). The report suggests that trade capacity building and financing needs must be identified and that any funds offered under the initiative must come over and above existing development aid while being predictable and unlinked to conditionalities.

ICTSD reporting.



## DSU REVIEW: MEMBERS CONTINUE TO DISCUSS REVISED CONTRIBUTIONS

WTO Members focused on four proposals for changes to the global trade body's dispute procedures at the Special (negotiating) Session of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on 24 April.

The EU and Japan submitted a supplement to a 2005 joint proposal in which they suggest procedures to follow in cases where the target of a dispute had taken a measure to comply with the DSB's recommendations and rulings, while at the same time, the complainant had been granted authorisation to retaliate (see BRIDGES Weekly, 6 April 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-04-06/wtoinbrief.htm#3>).

Building on a previous proposal from the so-called 'G-7' group of countries focusing on issues related to enhanced third party rights in WTO disputes, Hong Kong tabled a contribution calling for both respondents and complainants to have an equal right to reject or accept all third party requests to join consultations. The G-7 advocates an "all or nothing" approach to third party participation -- according to which the responding Member would have the option of accepting or rejecting all such requests, but would not have the option to discriminate among would-be third parties. (see BRIDGES Weekly, 29 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-29/story6.htm>). The G-7 also introduced some modifications to their earlier proposal which sought to give a disputing party the right to request the DSB to send an appealed case back to the original panel in the event that the Appellate Body finds that the panel's report did not provide a sufficient factual basis to complete the analysis. Finally, drawing on a 2002 proposal, the US continued to call for enhanced transparency in the dispute settlement system, notably by opening dispute settlement procedures to the public and formalising the handling of so-called amicus curiae ('friend of the court') briefs (see BRIDGES Weekly, 18 September 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/02-09-18/story2.htm>).

Delegates present at the meeting reported that there is no consensus yet on any of these issues, and that a "chair's text" in which Ambassador Ronald Saborio Soto (Costa Rica) would compile the issues on which he felt there was or could be consensus, is not yet in sight. The next DSB Special Session is scheduled for 22-23 May.

ICTSD reporting.

## EVENTS & RESOURCES

### EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email [events@ictsd.ch](mailto:events@ictsd.ch).

#### Upcoming Events: 27 April - 3 May

27-29 April, Accra, Ghana: FORUM ON AFRICAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.: The African Regional Centre for Technology and Ghana's Ministry of Environment and Science will present this ministerial forum, which will consider "Frontier Environmentally Sound Technologies for Africa's Sustainable Development: The Role of the Diaspora." For more information, e-mail: [arct@sentoo.sn](mailto:arct@sentoo.sn); internet: <http://www.scidev.net/events/index.cfm?fuseaction=readevent&itemid=876&language=1>.

1-12 May, New York, US: FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The fourteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14) will meet at UN Headquarters in New York from 1-12 May 2006. As the first year of the second implementation cycle, CSD-14 will review progress in the following areas: energy for sustainable development; industrial development; air pollution/ atmosphere; and climate change. For more information, contact the Division for Sustainable Development, tel: + 1 212-963-8102; fax: + 1-212-963-4260; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>.

3-4 May Brussels, Belgium: TRANSFER PRICING AND CUSTOMS VALUATION. Organised by the World Customs Organisation and the Centre for Tax Policy and Administration, this conference aims to provide a discussion forum for customs administrators, revenue/tax authorities and economic operators in international trade and taxation. For more information, e-mail: [sales@wcoomd.org](mailto:sales@wcoomd.org); internet: [http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_36056246\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,2340,en_2649_201185_36056246_1_1_1_1,00.html).

3-6 May, Hyderabad, India: THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK. The 64 members of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank will meet to discuss the progress and future of the institution. For more information contact Jill Marie H. Drilon at tel: +632 632 4932; e-mail: [jdrilon@adb.org](mailto:jdrilon@adb.org); internet: <http://www.adb.org/AnnualMeeting/2006/default.asp>.

#### WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/meets.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO,

Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

27 April: COMMITTEE ON ANTI-DUMPING PRACTICES - INFORMAL GROUP ON ANTI-CIRCUMVENTION

27-28 April: GENEVA WEEK

27-28 April: COMMITTEE ON ANTI-DUMPING PRACTICES

27 April: COMMITTEE ON ANTI-DUMPING PRACTICES - WG ON IMPLEMENTATION

1-2 May: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES

### Other Upcoming Events

16-17 May, Paris, France: GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURE. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) organized this follow-up conference to a December gathering with the intent to foster an informed dialogue between member countries on agricultural policies, including trade and market policies. For more information: [http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en\\_2649\\_34609\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,en_2649_34609_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)

29-30 May, Tokyo, Japan: ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS. Organised by the World Bank with support from the Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics, the conference will focus on 'infrastructure and development,' and will address several major topics related to infrastructure and growth, climate change, energy efficiency, rural development, agriculture, and other implications for regional cooperation. For more information, contact Gaetano Vivo at e-mail: [gvivo@worldbank.org](mailto:gvivo@worldbank.org); internet: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECABCTOK2006/0,,menuPK:1869561~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:1869548,00.html>.

19-20 June, Paris, France: NEW RELATIONS BETWEEN CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES, CONSUMERS, AND CITIZENS. Hosted by the TransAtlantic Consumer Dialogue, this conference aims to bring people together to examine relations between creators and users, seeking to identify common interests and new opportunities to collaborate. For more information, contact Ben Wallis, e-mail: [bwallis@consint.org](mailto:bwallis@consint.org); internet: <http://www.tacd.org/docs/?id=296>.

## RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS REFERENCES TO TRADE. By 3D -> Trade -> Human Rights -> Equitable Economy. April 2006. References to trade and trade-related issues in the work of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are compiled by 3D in this publication. It should provide a useful resource to all those interested in the intersection between trade, economics, and human rights. To download the publication, see <http://www.3dthree.org/en/page.php?IDpage=49>.

IMPLICATIONS OF WTO LITIGATION FOR THE WTO AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS. By Tim Josling, Longyue Zhao, Jeronimo Carcelen, and Kaush Arha. International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council, March 2006. This briefing paper looks at how the WTO litigation process is being increasingly used in cases involving agricultural subsidies and other central aspects of farm policy, and highlights how this is affecting the Doha Round. The publication can be downloaded at <http://www.agritrade.org/Publications/WTO%20litigation.pdf>.

SOUTH BULLETIN 112. By the South Centre, 15 April 2006. This issue of the South Bulletin focuses on foreign investment, with articles about the India-Brazil-South Africa meeting, concerns about foreign investment contracts, the corporate lobby for investment liberalisation, and the challenge developing countries face in navigating international investment agreements. The publication can be accessed at <http://www.southcentre.org/info/southbulletin/bulletin122.pdf>.

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