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LEAD STORIES

FALCONER PAPER ON SPECIAL PRODUCTS SPLITS G-33, FARM EXPORTERS

The G-33 group of developing countries has criticised the chair of the ongoing WTO agriculture negotiations for his unfavourable assessment of the market access flexibilities they are seeking, particularly his implication that the approach they favour would allow developing countries to shield an inappropriately high proportion of farm imports from the full force of tariff cuts. On 5 May, delegates from the group accused Chair Ambassador Crawford Falconer (New Zealand) of seeking to introduce market access considerations into the basis for selecting 'special products' (SPs), even though this was not part of the negotiating mandate.

The day before, Falconer had circulated a reference paper to Members highlighting the "wide gaps" between their positions on how many products developing countries should be able to designate as 'special' for lenient tariff treatment on the basis of food security, livelihood security, and rural development concerns. While the Hong Kong Declaration stipulates that developing countries "will have the flexibility to self-designate an appropriate number of tariff lines as SPs guided by indicators" based on the three criteria, their precise number and treatment remains unresolved, as does the extent to which the indicators should determine what can qualify as an SP.

The issue has revealed deep divisions between farm exporters, who seek more extensive market access for their products, and the 42 members of the G-33, which want relatively expansive SP coverage. Indeed, a number of developing country exporters expressed support for the chair's reference paper.

Falconer warned that failing to resolve the issue now would simply postpone arguments over which products countries designate as 'special' to later in the talks, when Members will have to approve each other's product-specific liberalisation commitments. Of course, before getting to the stage where they can review each other's commitment schedules, Members must first

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agree on modalities for tariff and subsidy cuts. Progress towards this remains slow, in spite of intense discussions over the past week.

Falconer: "serious mismatch" between proposals and intentions

Some of the most controversial sections of the reference paper sprang from a calculation, carried out at Falconer's request by the WTO Secretariat, to examine the possible effects of the G-33's November 2005 proposal to make "at least 20 percent" of all tariff lines eligible for SP status. The Secretariat found that designating 20 percent of tariff lines as SPs could allow two unnamed developing countries to shield as much as 98.4 and 94 percent of the total value of their respective farm imports from Doha Round tariff cuts.

If this were the case for other countries, Falconer wrote, "it would trump anything envisaged under" the July Framework's provisions for special and differential treatment, by essentially exempting developing countries from the obligation to cut tariffs. He asserted that no Member could plausibly describe that much of their trade as 'special.' "There might be a debatable line defining what percentage of trade would represent 'special' as opposed to 'normal,' but I'm comfortable with the judgment that 94 percent or 98 percent is a long way from a debatable line," he added.

These assessments provoked a strong response from the G-33, which took the position that no considerations apart from food security, livelihood security, and rural development should guide the number or selection of SPs. Speaking on behalf of the group, Indonesia said that the paper "amounts to a re-negotiation of the mandate," arguing that the needs of developing countries must not "be held hostage to the exporting interests of a few." Indonesia's remarks received support from Cuba, India, Honduras, Peru, the Philippines, Venezuela, and the African Group.

In contrast, Chile, Costa Rica, Malaysia, and Thailand said that the paper reflected their concerns that the G-33 proposal would endanger South-South trade. The latter two countries have proposed a more circumscribed version of SP eligibility, excluding products in which developing countries dominate world trade (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 May 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-05-03/story1.htm>).

G-33 negotiators insist that their governments have no intention of using their SPs to shelter nearly as high a proportion of agricultural imports from Doha Round tariff cuts. They question whether the two countries examined by the Secretariat were indeed representative, as Falconer implied. Furthermore, they point out that, since special products would not

necessarily be the ones imported in the greatest quantities, a set of SPs that adequately responds to the three criteria outlined in the mandate could easily cover a substantially lower proportion of imports. One source suggested that this range could be of the order of 25 to 30 percent. At the meeting, the G-33 emphasised that the entire notion of SPs is not based on trade-related concerns, and thus should not be viewed through the prism of commercial considerations.

The agriculture chair acknowledged some of the group's concerns in his reference paper, saying that discussions had indicated that no developing country "seriously intends to resort to such a high level of use for SPs." However, he identified an unintended "mismatch" between the G-33's proposal and Members' expressed view that SPs were to be a 'genuinely special category' in line to receive treatment that "could not and would not be the norm" for all farm imports. "In order to lower the potential size of trade coverage to something closer to an ordinary meaning of 'special,' the percentage [of tariff lines] at issue would have to come down significantly from 20 percent," he claimed.

G-33 delegates also took issue with Falconer's assertion that they had demonstrated "little readiness" to consider treating SPs "in anything other than a firmly import-limiting manner." They faulted his reference paper for failing to mention that their proposal would cut tariffs on one quarter of SPs by 5 percent, and those on another quarter by up to 10 percent, though the rest would be completely exempt from tariff reduction.

Sources report that Falconer has acknowledged in consultations that the most restrictive proposal for SPs currently on the negotiating table -- the US' bid to limit SP status to five tariff lines -- would also be unlikely to garner consensus (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 May 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-05-03/story1.htm>). At the 6-digit HS level, a country would need 8 tariff lines simply to shield fresh and powdered milk and cream from tariff cuts.

Three options for way out of impasse

Falconer defended his paper against criticism, arguing that it merely examined potential effects of the G-33 proposal, as other Members were doing anyway. Members simply needed to confront uncomfortable facts, he said. "Everybody's been pussy-footing around this for too damn long."

The agriculture chair outlined three options that could help resolve the impasse on SPs. The first two would be to make a lower percentage of tariff lines eligible for SP designation or to require their tariff treatment to be "more permissive of trade." The third would have "particular Members" declare in advance that they

would either not designate any SPs, or that they would utilise them "to a lesser extent than what might be generally agreed." He noted that the notion of identifying SPs on the sole basis of a common set of finite indicators did not have adequate support, saying that "I think we have moved towards wanting to work on the hypothesis of numbers."

He added that finalising the number of SPs may not be possible at the level of Geneva-based negotiators, because of the immense reach of the decision's potential effects.

In the absence of an agreement on indicators or numbers for SPs, Falconer's reference paper said that everything would be left by default to the 'post-modalities' phase, when Members will review each other's scheduled liberalisation commitments. With no guidelines for how to proceed with the designation of SPs, this would risk turning into a protracted round of haggling over the number of and basis for shielded products. Potentially even more contentious would be which particular products countries designate as their SPs. Falconer noted that this "would put huge time-pressure on the later stages of the negotiations," and that most negotiators reported unease about the prospect of a 'tug of war' over their SPs at that point. Furthermore, the G-33 countries have threatened to withhold consent from any modalities package that does not include rules for SPs.

Sources report that the G-33 asked Falconer to revise his reference paper. The group may also come forward with a submission clarifying their perspectives on SPs.

ICTSD reporting.

NAMA: NO PROGRESS EVEN ON MINOR ISSUES; SVE PAPER MEETS OPPOSITION

WTO non-agricultural market access (NAMA) Chair Ambassador Don Stephenson (Canada) told a meeting of all Member delegations on 10 May that a week of informal consultations had not yielded "any meaningful progress" even on the relatively minor issues being discussed.

Since setting out a work plan for six weeks of continuous negotiations aimed at achieving an agreement on modalities by 16 June, Stephenson has convened a series of meetings involving very small groups of about six countries to discuss a range of issues in the NAMA talks (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 May 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-05-03/story3.htm>).

Some of these consultations focused on the liberalisation commitments that will be asked of countries slated for exceptions to the standard tariff reduction obligations that arise from the Doha Round: least-developed countries (LDCs); countries that currently have binding caps on fewer than 35 percent of their industrial tariffs (the so-called 'Paragraph 6' countries, after the pertinent section of the July 2004 Framework); small and vulnerable economies; and recently acceded Members. Others addressed technical issues such as the range of products that will be covered by the tariff reduction formula and the effects of the erosion of trade preferences.

Many of these meetings were rather unusual for their composition: two or so strong proponents of a particular position, a similar number of that negotiating stance's most vocal opponents, and a couple of major WTO powers. Stephenson's non-bilateral consultations tend to involve either 20-25 delegations or smaller groups of around ten. Sources say that he tried this in an attempt to facilitate progress on issues where Members were staunchly opposed. One delegate suggested that the simple fact that he did not convene any larger meetings to discuss the outcome of these smaller consultations was a sign that there had not been as much movement as he would have liked.

The chair had suggested that negotiators focus first on these issues before turning their attention to the 'core' areas in the negotiations: the tariff reduction formula, flexibilities for developing countries to partially or completely shield some products from tariff cuts, and the treatment of unbound tariffs. Members remain bitterly divided on the latter; Stephenson told the meeting that progress on them would depend on the agriculture negotiations.

New SVE paper draws opposition

A new informal paper on the identification and specific treatment of small and vulnerable economies (SVEs) proved controversial at the 10 May meeting.

The Hong Kong Declaration instructs to Members to "establish ways to provide flexibilities" for SVEs, but "without creating a sub-category of WTO Members." Finding a way of addressing SVE-specific concerns, or even identifying SVEs, without effectively creating a new sub-category of developing countries -- which would be anathema to many Members -- has proved difficult thus far (see BRIDGES Weekly, 3 May 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-05-03/story4.htm>).

Circulated to Members by a group of SVEs the same day, initial reports from trade officials indicate that the paper established thresholds defining SVEs as those accounting for less than 0.10 percent of world NAMA

trade, 0.40 percent of world farm trade, and 0.16 percent of overall world merchandise trade (agricultural and industrial goods together). The submission's 18 sponsors were Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bolivia, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

One source suggested that the new paper proposed exempting SVEs from the overall tariff reduction formula, and instead requiring them to bind a to-be-determined percentage of their tariff lines at an average level that will depend on each country's current tariff structure. The SVEs reportedly also asked for a longer implementation period than other developing countries.

Several developed and developing countries criticised the proposal, including Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Korea, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, and Singapore. They argued that the proposed definition of SVEs rested on arbitrary criteria. Many Members believe that the identification of SVEs for the purpose of industrial tariff liberalisation should depend exclusively on NAMA trade; some criticised the proposal for including farm trade but not trade in services. Taiwan noted that some of the paper's sponsors had relatively high GDPs.

South Africa, which reportedly helped the SVEs draft the paper along with the other NAMA-11 developing countries, reminded delegations that the SVE group's concerns were legitimate and deserved an appropriate solution.

Sources say that Stephenson's meeting with all Member delegations will conclude on 11 May. According to the work plan for the negotiations, his consultations until 19 May will focus on determining which countries will be eligible for the various exceptions, along with the commitments that they would have to make.

ICTSD reporting.

WIPO MOVES FORWARD ON BROADCASTING TREATY, WEBCASTING TALKS SPLIT OFF

World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) members have agreed to split off webcasting from their ongoing discussions on a potential new treaty intended to define the rights of broadcasters over their transmissions.

The compromise was reached during the 1-5 May meeting of the 'Standing Committee of Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR),' the WIPO technical body that is considering the controversial draft proposal for a WIPO treaty on the protection of the rights of the broadcasting organizations (SCCR/14/2). Talks on the issue started in 1999; the first draft basic treaty proposal was tabled in 2004 (SCCR/11/3).

Webcasting put onto separate track

The driving force behind the negotiations has been broadcasting organisations' desire to obtain a level of protection for their transmissions similar to the rights accorded by the 1961 Rome Convention to performers and the recording industry for their works -- albeit updated to account for decades' worth of technological advances, notably the switch to digital transmission. (see BRIDGES Weekly, 30 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-30/story6.htm>). The draft treaty proposes to grant the organisations exclusive rights to authorize the distribution and re-transmission of their broadcasts.

During the course of the negotiations, the issue of webcasting -- which refers to transmission by wire or wireless means over the internet -- entered the debate, primarily backed by the US. The notion of whether to grant webcasters rights comparable to those given to more traditional broadcasters that do not use computer networks has been particularly explosive, drawing heavy opposition from developing countries in particular. These countries fear that doing so would constitute an obstacle to the free flow of online information, and only benefit 'middlemen' rather than those who hold the copyright on the content being transmitted. They are also concerned that people's access to educational materials, online scientific data, and other forms of information in the public domain could be restricted.

Nevertheless, webcasting made its way into the 'draft basic proposal' text that was presented to the SCCR by Chair Jukkas Liedes (Finland). The "non-mandatory appendix" on the rights of webcasters was harshly criticised by many developing countries, and it became apparent that progress on discussions would be impossible unless webcasting were dropped from the scope of the prospective treaty.

Eventually, negotiators agreed to divide the issues into two separate tracks.

The primary track will deal with the protection of traditional broadcasting (wireless transmissions) and cablecasting (transmission by wire). For this Liedes will revise the current draft basic proposal by 1 August, based on existing drafts and proposals, as well as

comments made during the recent meeting. Another session of the SCCR will be held prior to the late-September meeting of WIPO's decision-making General Assembly, WIPO's senior decision making body. At this SCCR meeting, negotiators will attempt to finalise the debate and agree on a draft treaty to send to the General Assembly, which will in turn decide whether to call for a diplomatic conference to adopt the new treaty in 2007. In order to increase their chances of agreement on a basic draft proposal for the General Assembly, Brazil suggested that members could discuss the text article-by-article at the gathering.

Webcasting and simulcasting (which refers to traditional broadcasts shown simultaneously over the internet) will be considered under another track. Countries will be able to submit proposals on these issues to WIPO until 1 August. The chair will put together a revised document based on the submissions and comments made during the recent SCCR, which will then be discussed in future sessions of the committee.

The relationship between the two tracks was the subject of some disagreement. The US sought to establish a conditional relationship, so that if the first track were to fail, the two would be discussed jointly in the future. Others, such as India and Argentina, countered that the two tracks should be dealt with independently. Under the eventual compromise, discussions on webcasting will continue independently of those on traditional broadcasting, but will be the subject of subsequent sessions of the SCCR.

Future remains uncertain

Several issues remain unresolved, even with respect to the less contentious first track issues. Some countries want broadcasting and cablecasting organisations to only receive protection against signal theft, while others want the actual broadcasts to be protected.

Furthermore, the current draft basic proposal also refers to the protection of broadcasters' rights to transmissions "over any means," thus including the internet. For example, Article 6 of the current draft would give exclusive rights to broadcasters "for retransmission of their broadcasts by any means, including rebroadcasting, retransmission by wire, and retransmission over computer networks." Countries including Argentina, Brazil, and India have strongly argued for taking all references to computer network-based means of transmission out of the text. Whether the draft basic proposal that the chair produces on 1 August will do so remains to be seen.

Negotiators also found that simply defining a wide range of terms, even those such as 'broadcast' or what constitutes a 'programme,' would require further

discussion. Some countries expressed concerns about the draft treaty's obligations to prevent the circumvention of technological protection measures such as the locks that aim to prevent the unauthorised use or recording of digital content, for example 'broadcast flags.'. Describing the scope of the rights granted by the potential treaty as far-reaching and inexhaustible, a number of developing countries have also called for sufficient limitations and exceptions from obligations, to safeguard for instance the use of broadcasts by educational establishments and the disabled.

Finally, members continue to disagree on the duration of protection that a future treaty should offer to broadcasters. While India and Iran argue for limiting protection to a 20 year period, others, including Korea and Egypt, would prefer 50 years.

ICTSD reporting; "WIPO: Separate treatment for traditional broadcasting and webcasting" SOUTH NORTH DEVELOPMENT MONITOR 9 May 2006; "WIPO Copyright committee discusses simulcasting/webcasting and mulls way forward," THIRU BALASUBRAMANIAM, 5 May 2006 (<http://fromgeneva.blogspot.com/2006/05/wipo-copyright-committee-discusses.html>) ; "WIPO carves up the Internet (and the Broad Spectrum)," JAMES LOVE, HUFFINGTON POST, 4 May 2006; "Blogging WIPO: Webcasting out of WIPO Broadcasting Treaty, At Least for Now," CONSUMER PROJECT ON TECHNOLOGY, ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION, THE OPEN KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION AND THE YALE INFORMATION SOCIETY PROJECT (www.eff.org/deeplinks/archives/004637.php); "US Retreat Opens Way for Treaty on Broadcasting," FINANCIAL TIMES, 9 May 2006.

IN BRIEF

ACP SUGAR PRODUCERS DISAPPOINTED WITH EU COMPENSATION

Eighteen sugar producing countries from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group have expressed disappointment at what they deem to be inadequate compensation for the loss of revenues resulting from the EU's sugar reform process. Under the reform, which was prompted in part by an April 2005 WTO ruling against its sugar regime (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 May 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-05-04/story5.htm>), the EU is cutting the price that it pays domestic and ACP sugar producers by 36 percent. The reduced trade preferences are expected to cost the ACP countries

roughly EUR 265 million per year. The daily Jamaica Gleaner reports that an EU spokesperson indicated on 4 May that Brussels' compensation to ACP sugar growers is likely to be EUR 165 million in 2007, down from promises of EUR 190 million made on the eve of the December 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong. The EU did suggest that grants would average EUR 184 million annually from 2007 to 2013 in spite of budget cuts. EU sugar producers will receive EUR 6 billion over the same period.

Some Caribbean ACP countries appear to be addressing the fate of their sugar industries by diversifying into ethanol production in the hope of taking advantage of the growing market for it as an alternative motor fuel in the US and Europe.

In a related development, the EU has announced that from 23 May it will reduce its exports of excess-quota sugar in accordance with the ruling, as per the 22 May deadline set by a WTO arbitrator in October 2005 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 30 November 2005; <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-30/story4.htm>). After this date, Brussels will cease to issue new export licenses for excess-quota sugar. The European Commission insists that its decision to allow exports to continue for three months under licences issued prior to the deadline will not affect compliance.

ICTSD reporting; "EU finalises compliance with WTO ruling on sugar," FINANCIAL EXPRESS, 4 May 2006; "EU sugar reform – an uphill battle for survival for the ACP," MAURITIUS TIMES, 5 May 2006; "Poor sugar growers face scaled-down EU aid," FINANCIAL TIMES, 4 May 2006; "On defensive over aid promises," NATIONNEWS.COM (BARBADOS), 2 May 2006; "Caribbean Cane Producers Turn to Ethanol," FINANCIAL TIMES, 1 May 2006; "EC nears agreement for Caribbean funds," JAMAICA GLEANER, 7 May 2006.

MANDELSON OUTLINES EU'S POST-DOHA TRADE AGENDA

The EU may pursue bilateral and issue-specific trade agreements after the conclusion of the Doha Round at the WTO, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson implied on 4 May.

In a speech to business and political leaders in Wolfsberg, Switzerland, he said that EU trade policy would take "a decidedly hard-headed approach to ensuring that markets are genuinely open and that international rules are applied openly and transparently."

Mandelson said that the EU's approach, which the European Commission will set out in a formal report this autumn, will call for a "new strategic approach to market access" focusing on reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers to goods and especially services. "We need to ensure we have the tools available to respond to unfair barriers -- be they local standards, restrictions on competition, or discrimination in public procurement."

Many of these barriers are not currently the subject of WTO disciplines. While describing the Doha Round negotiations as his "paramount priority," Mandelson said that the contentious talks had shown that "in trade policy there are opportunities to build on what is put in place multilaterally." He said that the EU "can and should go further in pursuing the needs and interests of European businesses in particular parts of the world, or in particular areas of policy," especially in Asia.

Describing China as "the biggest single challenge of globalisation in the trade field," Mandelson indicated that the rising economic giant would feature prominently in the EU's commercial relations post-Doha. "Europe must get China right -- as a threat, an opportunity, and prospective partner," he said.

The EU trade chief indicated that he would also review the operation of anti-dumping measures, "to ensure that such rules are adapted to the complexity of global markets."

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson's speech is available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission_barroso/mandelson/speeches_articles/mandelson_sptemplate.cfm?LangId=EN&temp=sppm096_en.

ICTSD reporting.

WTO IN BRIEF

AG CHAIR CIRCULATES REFERENCE PAPER ON SVEs

WTO agriculture negotiators from some 20-odd countries expressed broad sympathy for the concerns of small and vulnerable economies (SVEs) during a so-called 'Room F' small-group consultation on 4 May. However, final arrangements for SVEs are likely to depend on the kinds of special and differential treatment ultimately agreed to for all developing countries. Agriculture Chair Ambassador Crawford Falconer convened the meeting after circulating a 'reference paper' on the subject earlier that day.

The Doha Declaration reaffirms Members' commitment to adopt specific measures to facilitate SVEs' fuller integration into the multilateral trading system "without creating a sub-category of WTO Members."

Unlike standard Room F consultations, many of the negotiators present were from SVEs that normally tend not to be included in such gatherings, although major traders were also present. According to sources, the meeting was primarily an opportunity for the demandeurs to set out their positions and hear initial responses. The chair indicated that future Room F consultations would have more of the main Member groupings represented and perhaps fewer SVEs present.

The reference paper drew on a November 2005 submission from 14 SVEs (TN/AG/GEN/11) calling for SVEs to be exempted from the standard tiered tariff reduction formula, and instead to cut all tariffs by no more than 15 percent, with a minimum of 10 percent per tariff line, and no tariff cap. They also wanted all of their agricultural tariff lines to receive automatic access to the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for developing countries, and the ability to self-designate 'Special Products' (SPs) for complete exemption from tariff reduction and tariff rate quota commitments. Finally, the SVEs requested other countries to cut tariffs substantially on the few products of export interest to them.

The Chair concluded that any SVE-specific arrangements would depend on the overall tariff reduction formula for developing countries, as well as the outcome of discussions on SPs and the SSM.

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.

Upcoming Events: 11-17 May

10-12 May, Bad Blamau, Austria: WORKSHOP ON REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. This workshop, put on by Joanneum Research, will consider methodological and

policy approaches to reducing 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 this month. For more information, contact Neil Bird, tel: +43 316 876 1423; e-mail: neil.bird@joanneum.at; internet: <http://www.joanneum.at/REDD/>.

11 May, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO LAW, SCIENCE AND RISK COMMUNICATION. Risk communication represents one of the three elements of risk analysis, the other two being risk assessment and risk management. It is a fundamental part of the science-based assessment and management of risks involved in the multilateral regulation of trade in genetically modified products, particularly with regard to Codex Alimentarius, the Cartagena Protocol, and the Aarhus Convention. This conference, organised by the Faculty of Law at the University of Geneva, will focus on three aspects of risk communication: public information; risk notification among governments; and consultations among governments regarding preventive and precautionary measures to limit risk. For more information, contact Urs Thomas, tel: +4122 379 8491; e-mail: urs.thomas@droit.unige.ch.

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://unfccc.int/meetings/sb24/items/3648.php>.

16-17 May, Paris, France: OECD GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURE CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT OF SUB-SAHARAN AGRICULTURE. The aim for the Global Forum on Agriculture, organised by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is to foster an informed dialogue between OECD countries and non-member developing and transition economies on agricultural policy issues. In recent years, the focus has been on the agricultural policy concerns of developing countries, in particular the links between domestic policy reforms, trade, liberalisation, economic development and poverty reduction. For more information, e-mail: Jean-Paul.Pradere@oecd.org; internet: http://www.dakardeclaration.org/IMG/doc/OECD_Global_Forum_on_Agriculture.doc.

17-19 May, Delft, the Netherlands: ENVIROWATER 2006 CONFERENCE. The Ninth Inter-Regional Conference on Environment and Water will focus on concepts for water management and multifunctional

land-uses in lowlands, with a particular focus on opportunities and threats, water and climate change, groundwater and salt water intrusion, and water management systems as a steering instrument for planning. For more information, tel: +31 7 483 849; e-mail: envirowater2006@wur.nl; internet: <http://www2.wau.nl/rpv/isomul/envirowater2006/>.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: 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.

10-12 May: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT - SPECIAL SESSION

11 May: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

12 May: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

12 May: INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

15-24 May: SERVICES WEEKS

15 May: GENERAL COUNCIL

17 May: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - URUGUAY

17 May: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

Other Upcoming Events

23-24 May, Paris, France: ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) FORUM AND ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING. The OECD's annual Ministerial Council Meeting will be chaired by Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, with discussions focusing on the theme of "delivering prosperity". OECD ministers will discuss the short-term economic outlook; how to ensure economic stability and improve economic performance; how to implement economic reforms for growth and employment; the follow-up to last December's WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong; and the future

strategic direction of the OECD. At the end of the meeting, former Mexican finance minister Angel Gurría will take over as OECD Secretary-General from Donald Johnston. For further information, go to <http://www.oecd.org/mcm2006/>.

15 July, St. Petersburg, Russia: G8 SUMMIT. This year's summit of the leading industrialised democracies (Russia, the US, the UK, France, Japan, Germany, Canada and Italy), to be chaired for the first time by Russia, will focus on global energy security, infectious diseases, and education. For more information contact Sergei Eduardovich Prikhodko, e-mail: orgcom@g8russia.ru; Internet: <http://en.g8russia.ru/>.

21-22 August, Singapore, Singapore: GLOBAL FORUM ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY 2006. The theme of GFIP 2006, organised by the Intellectual Property Academy Singapore, is "Tilting the Global Balance in the IPR landscape: The Strategic Implications of the growth in the Asia Pacific region". A distinguished line-up of international speakers and panelists will consider and address how Asia Pacific's growing economic influence, led by China, India and the Middle East, will exert an increasing influence on global intellectual property creation, protection, exploitation and management.. For further information go to <http://www.globalforumip.com/>.

RESOURCES

REVIVING THE SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE. Edited by Jean-Marie Paugam and Anne -Sophie Novel. Institut Francais des Relations Internationales, 2006. Forty years after being developed, the main concepts underlying the traditional approach of special and differential treatment (S&D) in the GATT/WTO system seem largely exhausted. Based on the notions of "preference" and "non-reciprocity" of trade commitments, S&D embodies a systemic contradiction within a world trading system built upon the basic principles of "non-discrimination" and "reciprocal commitments". The stalemate of S&D negotiations suggests that the system may have reached the bottom of the contradiction. Against this backdrop, this volume addresses two key issues in the development dimension of the Doha Agenda -- preference erosion and differentiation among developing countries -- as it aims to find an avenue forward in the negotiations. For more information, please see http://www.ifri.org/frontDispatcher/ifri/publications/travaux_et_recherches_1032185572262/publi_P_publi_tr_paugam_____1144935582973.

IMPLEMENTING DFID'S CONDITIONALITY POLICY: A HOW-TO NOTE. By the UK Department for International Development (DFID), January 2006. This draft "how-to" note spells out the practical implications of the new policy by DFID to rethink conditionality in order to ensure aid is used effectively for poverty reduction, strengthens countries' ownership over their own development strategies; and is more predictable so that governments can rely on it when making their public expenditure plans. The note will be reviewed in mid-2006 in response to feedback from donor, multilateral and civil society partners. Available online at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/draft-implementing-conditionality.pdf>.

EMERGING FOREST ASSOCIATIONS IN YUNNAN, CHINA: IMPLICATIONS FOR LIVELIHOODS AND SUSTAINABILITY. By Horst Weyerhaeuser, Shao Wen and Friedrich Kahrl. International Institute for the Environment and Development (IIED), April 2006. Yunnan is one of China's poorest and least urbanized provinces, with 73 of its 129 counties below the poverty line. With the largest total area of collectively-owned forest among China's 31 provinces, forestry development continues to play an important role in Yunnan's rural economic development. This report assesses the competitive challenges that small and medium forest enterprises (SMFEs) face in response to China's huge rural to urban demographic transition, growth in trade and increasing environmental concerns. It describes the evolution of some of the emerging associations that will help SMFEs cope, such as the Yunnan Provincial Forest Products Industry Association. The reorientation of this association into a more independent industry body could provide a new model for SMFE coordination around Kunming. But in less industrial areas of Yunnan, the development of SMFE associations is likely to require greater catalytic support at the village level. Available online at <http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/13524IIED.pdf>.

Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editor or the Director.

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