



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

Bridges

Weekly Trade News Digest

11 October 2006

Volume 10 Number 33

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LEAD STORIES

DOHA COMPROMISE NECESSARY BY SPRINGTIME, LAMY TELLS WTO MEMBERS

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy told Members on 10 October that they have not yet come forward with the significantly altered negotiating positions necessary to restart the stalled Doha Round trade talks. He said that they would have to do so "between November and springtime" in order to be able to strike an agreement in 2007.

In a speech to the General Council, Lamy said that since the trade talks were suspended in July, he had met with ministers and senior trade officials from around the world "in order to facilitate resumption of the negotiations," and could report that "the desire to come back to the negotiating table and to make a deal is widespread and genuine."

However, he emphasised, despite the expressions of support for the talks from virtually every quarter, "we can only resume when substantive positions have changed on key problem issues, in particular in the key area of agriculture, which holds the key to unlocking the rest of the agenda." There had been "no visible indications of flexibilities" thus far, added Lamy. "Unless and until it happens, we will remain deadlocked."

The WTO chief identified two other "parameters" of the path back to the bargaining table. One was that the "window of opportunity" in which to act was limited. "If we are to have a chance of finishing in 2007," he said, "the space to move is somewhere between November and springtime, which appears to be the latest time to get the breakthrough we need." Furthermore, negotiations can only be resumed "across the board," i.e., in every area of discussion.

Spring 2007 would be shortly before the end-June expiry of the US presidential administration's mandate to negotiate trade agreements and submit them to Congress for a take-it-or-leave-it vote without the possibility of major amendments. Although it is already too late for Members to fully finalise a Doha Round

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accord by then, Congress might agree to a short-term extension of the Bush administration's 'trade promotion authority' if a deal looks to be coming together in early 2007.

Lamy stressed the costs of failing to resolve the impasse, both to the global economy and the multilateral trading system. He said that developing countries would be most hurt by a failure to conclude the round, suggesting that this is why they have been "the loudest in clamouring for a resumption of the negotiations."

Countries call for resumption of talks

Many countries and blocs called for the rapid resumption of talks. Speaking for the African Group, Benin said that it did not want to risk losing what had already been accomplished in the negotiations. Australia stressed the Cairns Group farm exporters' commitment to getting back to the bargaining table as soon as possible, as did Brazil on behalf of the G-20.

Bangladesh, representing the Least-developed Country (LDC) Group, asked the "countries concerned" to bridge their differences, since a successful conclusion to the round would help the poorest countries see benefits from economic globalisation.

A handful of Members made more pointed remarks. On behalf of the G-33 group of developing countries, Indonesia criticised what it described as attempts to undermine already-agreed flexibilities for developing countries in the agriculture negotiations -- specifically, the ability to use a 'special safeguard mechanism' (SSM) to protect farmers from the effects of import surges, and to designate 'special products' (SPs) for lower tariff cuts on the basis of food security and livelihood concerns. It complained that some countries were too focused on the export interests of agribusiness, blinding them to the needs of vulnerable farmers in poor countries. Although Indonesia did not name any countries, the US has been particularly critical of the G-33's demands for such flexibilities, describing them as a 'black box' that render it impossible to determine the true value of any market access offer.

Cuba openly blamed the impasse in the talks on the US, saying that Washington had simply not been willing to take the steps necessary for a compromise.

Lamy urges informal discussions

Lamy called on Members to work to make the resumption of negotiations possible, since "resuming makes no sense if nothing has changed since July." "This is no time for inaction but rather for discreet and

quiet activity," he said, adding that he would work with Members to facilitate movement and had encouraged the negotiating group chairs to do the same. "I urge all of you to continue technical work, discreet calculations, private sounding to prepare the ground. I do not believe anything else is acceptable to the global community."

Sources report that Singaporean Ambassador Burhan Gafoor cautioned that the credibility of the multilateral trading system would be jeopardised if the negotiations did not resume soon. A time-out was fine, he said, but an indefinite suspension would take the pressure off governments. He suggested that the chairs of the negotiating groups could start holding informal meetings. Formal gatherings are impossible because the talks are suspended.

The Philippines said that Members should start thinking about a backup plan in case the negotiations are not concluded in 2007, according to reports from trade officials. It said that if the talks finished in 2008 or 2009 -- if at all -- it would be necessary to ensure that developmental considerations are not left by the wayside in the push for an agreement.

The next General Council session is scheduled for 14-15 December. A special meeting may be convened earlier to vote on Vietnam's accession to the WTO.

ICTSD reporting.

GC: MEMBERS ENDORSE RECOMMENDATIONS ON AID FOR TRADE, SVEs

Although the Doha Round negotiations remain at an impasse, WTO Members at the 10 October General Council meeting were able to agree to endorse the course of action set out in July by the Aid for Trade Task Force. Work on aid for trade will proceed separately from the troubled trade talks. Members also agreed on a set of recommendations aimed at making it easier for small and vulnerable economies to implement their WTO obligations.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said there was clear "progress and momentum" on aid for trade "despite the current temporary setback in the negotiations," and that it was important to move forward on it.

Time for action on aid for trade: Members

Many countries, both developing and developed, intervened at the meeting to say that it was now necessary to act on the aid for trade recommendations.

Emphasising the need for adequate funding, the Least-developed Country (LDC) Group specifically asked that no conditionalities be attached to aid for trade grants.

The 13-member panel's report (WT/AFT/1) had been uniformly praised when first presented to the WTO Membership in July (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 August 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-08-02/story3.htm>). It had outlined policies for the WTO, donors, and recipients to follow in terms of identifying and fulfilling trade-related needs, and monitoring the progress of aid for trade activities. It had also set out a series of steps for Lamy and the WTO Secretariat to take, including setting up an 'ad hoc consultative group' to follow up on the report's recommendations, and to examine how to implement, monitor, and review aid for trade efforts.

Lamy welcomed Members' approval of the recommendations, saying "the present time-out in our negotiations should allow us to think more creatively about how trade, development and growth can fit together into a coherent whole, and aid for trade is a key piece of that puzzle." He said he had been consulting with donor and recipient governments, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, UN organisations, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and regional development banks in an attempt to enhance "clarity on the resources pledged and on strategies for securing additionality to current aid for trade spending." He reported that he had worked with the US, the EU, and Japan to clarify the specific details of the multi-billion dollar pledges they had made during the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December 2005.

"I am convinced that there is a strong and broad commitment to increasing aid for trade in the context of a projected overall increase in [overseas development assistance]," said Lamy, pointing to rich country promises to increase total foreign aid spending to USD 50 billion by 2010. What was necessary, he emphasised, is to make aid mechanisms work more effectively and coherently. Lamy noted that recipient countries have vastly differing needs, which each would need to determine "working closely with national stakeholders, particularly the private sector, and with their development partners."

Lamy emphasised that aid for trade was not part of the Doha Round single undertaking, but said that there were nevertheless "obvious synergies" with the negotiations. This was echoed by Canadian Ambassador Don Stephenson, who added that the purpose of aid for trade was to build the supply-side capacity that developing countries needed to take advantage of new market access opportunities. Sources report that Stephenson clarified that the WTO was not going to take on the role of a development

agency, but would be responsible for promoting coherence between aid for trade efforts and the broader development agenda.

Moldova, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Armenia asked to become beneficiaries of aid for trade programmes, pointing out that as low-income transition economies that had paid a high price for their recent accession to the WTO, they faced many of the same problems as developing countries.

Regional bodies to get enhanced role for SVEs

Members also adopted a separate report, this one recommending that small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) should be allowed to use regional bodies when implementing obligations under the SPS, TBT and TRIPS Agreements (WT/COMTD/SE/5). This would allow a particular group of SVEs to receive assistance from a single shared regional body.

The report, produced by the Dedicated Session of the Committee on Trade and Development, also said that the WTO and donors should consider providing technical and financial assistance to these regional bodies. However, it also specified that even if SVEs decide to use regional bodies, they would remain individually (rather than collectively) liable for notifications and other obligations.

Sources report that some Members said that non-SVE developing countries should also be permitted to seek a greater role for regional organisations. There is currently no agreed definition for SVEs in the WTO.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER STORIES

EU SLAPS ANTI-DUMPING DUTIES ON SHOES FROM CHINA, VIETNAM

After months of contentious discussions, EU member states narrowly voted on 4 October to slap anti-dumping duties on shoes imported from China and Vietnam. The Chinese government and footwear manufacturers believe that the additional duties are not justifiable, and have threatened to challenge them at the WTO and in EU courts. EU shoe retailers are also considering legal action against Brussels.

The decision had badly split EU members. Mediterranean states, led by Italy, generally supported the measures, in the face of active opposition from the Scandinavian countries and Germany. The UK was

another of the 12 countries that voted against the new tariffs -- just one short of the majority that would have been necessary to block them.

On 7 October, the EU started imposing extra duties of 16.5 percent on leather shoes from China, and 10 percent on those from Vietnam. These replace higher provisional duties that had been in place since April. Under a compromise brokered by France, they will remain in force for two years, though the European Commission had originally sought five.

Brussels claims that there is "compelling evidence of serious state intervention" in the footwear sector in China and Vietnam -- in the form of cheap finance, tax holidays, favourable land rental and electricity rates, and the like -- which allow them to 'dump' goods on the EU market at unfairly low prices.

Beijing and Hanoi argue that the EU's calculations were flawed. A Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson said that the EU's assessment lacked "factual evidence" and did not comply with WTO rules. Both the Chinese government and local industry groups particularly object to the EU's allegation that Chinese footwear makers did not merit 'market economy status' -- an assessment that made it easier for Brussels to justify anti-dumping measures. They complain that even though the vast majority of exporters to the EU are private or foreign-owned enterprises -- and thus receive no subsidies whatsoever -- the European Commission found a mere one out of the 163 Chinese shoe exporters examined to be worthy of market economy status. Suing Brussels at the WTO is an option not open to Vietnam, which is not yet a member of the global trade body.

Some factories in both China and Vietnam have seen sales drop in recent months, as the fear of renewed duties was enough to convince purchasers to look elsewhere for more secure suppliers. The Chinese government estimates that over 70,000 of the 4 million workers in the shoe industry could lose their job if the duties remain in place for the next two years.

EU retail groups said that the new duties would simply punish consumers and not lead to any increased employment in the EU, echoing similar views from Chinese trade officials. Brussels has downplayed concerns about higher shoe costs, suggesting that the increases would be modest.

Wu Jinglian, a senior policy advisor associated with the Chinese State Council Development Research Centre, has used the row over shoes to argue that China needs to seriously reflect upon its broader trade and industrial policy. In an article published early this month in the business magazine *Caijing*, Wu argued that China's

export-oriented policy had increasingly made the country a "specialist in labour intensive products," thus inducing hostility among blue collar workers in importing countries and triggering trade conflicts.

As part of the Doha Round, WTO Members had been debating how to tighten the rules governing the use of anti-dumping measures. However, those discussions had largely ground to a stalemate even before the broader negotiations were suspended in July over divisions on farm trade.

ICTSD reporting; "EU settles Asia shoes row, Mandelson sets strategy," REUTERS, 4 October 2006; "Vietnam counts cost of shoe penalties," BBC NEWS, 5 October 2006; "Europe to Put Shoe Tariffs on Vietnam and China," NEW YORK TIMES, 5 October 2006; "China considers fighting EU tariff," BLOOMBERG, 5 October 2006; "Deal ends EU impasse on Asian shoe tariffs," FINANCIAL TIMES, 5 October 2006; "Shoemakers stay calm at EU's anti-dumping duties," XINHUA, 7 October 2006; "China slams EU tariffs on shoe imports," BANKGOK POST.com, 5 October 2006; "Bad for all: Chinese shoes exporters express strong dissatisfaction," ZHONGHUA GONGSHANG SHIBAO, 10 October 2006; "Wu Jinglian: Reflections on export-oriented policy," CAIJING, No. 169, 2 October 2006; "EU Anti-dumping would induce 70,000 shoe workers laid-off," ZHONGGUO QINGNIAN BAO, 10 October 2006.

NEW EU TRADE STRATEGY: PURSUE BILATERAL FTAs, REDUCE NTBs

The European Commission on 4 October unveiled a new trade policy strategy under which Brussels will pursue bilateral free trade agreements with major economies in order to secure new markets for EU companies. It will also push for stronger intellectual property rights and reduced non-tariff barriers in its trading partners. In a speech accompanying the release of the report setting out the strategy, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said "the core message of today's review is clear: rejection of protectionism at home; activism in opening markets abroad."

In spite of recommendations favouring bilateral accords as well as other measures on trade, investment, competition, and public procurement that go well beyond current WTO rules, the report insisted that the EU remained committed to reviving the stalled Doha Round trade negotiations. Mandelson dismissed suggestions that the EU was shifting its attention from the WTO to bilateral agreements. "There will be no European retreat from multilateralism," he said. "Doha remains our top priority."

The strategy focuses primarily on the need to identify and lower barriers to market access for the higher-end products and services that make up the bulk of the EU's exports -- in terms of both tariffs and other obstacles to commerce. The Commission says the new agenda outlines how trade policy is to contribute to the EU's attempts to balance its social model with competitiveness and economic reforms, in response to new challenges posed by the emerging economies in Asia and South America. The report singles China out for special attention, describing it as "the single greatest test of Europe's capacity to make globalisation an opportunity for jobs and growth." It also calls for a review of how trade remedies such as anti-dumping duties are used.

The paper emphasised that the European Commission and EU member states needed to ensure that the benefits of trade liberalisation were passed down to consumers. "European citizens expect to see positive results from economic and structural change," it said. "The case for openness is undermined if its benefits do not reach citizens."

Identifies key markets for bilateral FTAs

The EU's new policy says that bilateral accords can address "key issues including investment, public procurement, competition, other regulatory issues and IPR enforcement, which remain outside the WTO at this time." It prescribes seeking free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries and trade blocs based on "market potential (economic size and growth) and the level of protection against EU export interests."

On this basis, it identifies ASEAN (10 Southeast Asian nations), Korea, and Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela) as priority targets, along with India, Russia, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. The EU has already started FTA talks with the Gulf Cooperation Council, which comprises six Arabian Peninsula countries centred around Saudi Arabia. Its FTA negotiations with Mercosur, suspended since 2005 over disagreements on agriculture, industrial goods, investment, and services, are set to resume in November. Brussels and New Delhi are also exploring possibilities for starting FTA talks. The paper did not call for an FTA with China in spite of its large and growing market, saying that the country required "special attention because of the opportunities and risks it presents."

According to the strategy paper, the EU's bilateral FTA talks should aim at the "highest possible degree" of trade, investment, and services liberalisation, in addition to a ban on export taxes and quantitative import restrictions. Regulatory convergence should be pursued, where possible, to address non-tariff barriers,

and the EU should push for stronger provisions on IPRs and competition. The report also raised the possibility of provisions on good governance, labour, and environmental standards. Notably, the paper said that the EU would have to take the erosion of its existing trade preferences into account when negotiating FTAs - which could translate into sheltering certain products from tariff cuts.

Bilateral FTAs have been widely criticised by economists, trade experts, and companies for creating a 'spaghetti bowl' of overlapping trade rules that erode the principle of non-discrimination and raise the transaction costs of doing business (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 January 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-01-19/story1.htm>).

Although the report acknowledges some of these criticisms, it maintains that comprehensive FTAs that go beyond WTO disciplines can have a positive impact, and help lay the foundation for future multilateral liberalisation.

Some of the EU's key FTA objectives have met vocal opposition at the WTO from some of the same countries it has identified as potential partners. Investment, government procurement, and competition were originally on the Doha Round agenda -- with the strong support of the EU -- but eventually had to be dropped due to opposition from developing countries. In WTO negotiations, some developing country commodity exporters, such as Argentina, Brazil and India, have rejected the EU's appeals for a ban on export taxes (see BRIDGES Weekly, 26 April 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-04-26/story4.htm>).

Even apart from the realm of FTA negotiations, the report called for a renewed focus on addressing non-tariff barriers, export taxes, IPR enforcement, investment conditions, and competition. In addition, Mandelson promised "new proposals for opening public procurement markets abroad." The report labelled public procurement "probably the biggest trade sector remaining sheltered from multilateral disciplines," describing it as an "area of significant untapped potential" for the EU's world-leading public works and utility companies.

Diversifying sources of energy supply and transit is a key EU objective. The strategy paper thus calls for efforts to improve "transparency, governance, and trade in the energy sector in third countries through non-discriminatory conditions of transit and third party access to export pipeline infrastructure." It also says that the links between trade policy and climate change need to be explored further.

Review of trade defence instruments urged

The report says that trade defence instruments such as anti-dumping duties may need to be modernised to strike an appropriate balance between consumers and suppliers, since changes in international production mean that EU-based manufacturers now often compete with products made overseas in factories owned by other EU companies. It called for strengthened transparency requirements to monitor subsidisation and unfair pricing and trading practices, and announced that the European Commission will produce a paper on trade defence instruments later in the year.

Anti-dumping duties have in recent years proven divisive among EU members. Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Italy want to protect Brussels' ability to impose such measures when necessary. They have clamoured for additional duties on products such as textiles to shield their own small companies from what they argue is unfair Chinese competition -- demands that the UK, Sweden, and Germany have called protectionist.

Indeed, the paper's release coincided with EU members' decision to introduce anti-dumping duties on shoes from China and Vietnam, a move that critics in the EU and elsewhere derided as protectionist (see related story, this issue). EU companies producing leather shoes in the two countries are also affected by the measures.

Mandelson indicated that the European Commission will on 24 October publish a comprehensive strategy on economic relations with China.

More information on the EU's new trade strategy is available at http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/competitiveness/global_europe_en.htm.

ICTSD reporting; "Mercosur meeting postponed for November," MERCOPRESS, 26 September 2006.

WTO IN BRIEF

VIETNAM ENTERS FINAL PHASE OF WTO ACCESSION

WTO Members and Vietnam may be able to finalise the Southeast Asian nation's terms of accession to the global trade body by the end of the month, thus concluding negotiations that have lasted over 11 years.

The working party responsible for Vietnam's WTO accession held a brief formal meeting on 9 October. Norwegian Ambassador Eirik Glenne, who chairs the

working party, has set 13 October as the deadline for sorting out any unsolved problems. "This means that very intensive work must be carried out this week to close all the remaining issues," he said. "I recognise it is tight, but we have no alternative."

The accession package consists of three main agreements. The first sets out Vietnam's commitments on goods, detailing specific commitments to reduce tariffs and agricultural subsidies -- these are the result of bilateral negotiations between Vietnam and several WTO members that were concluded in May 2006. The second outlines its obligations to open services sectors to foreign competition, along with any limits on foreign ownership. The third is the working party's report, which sets forth the institutional and legal framework for trade.

Notably, as part of its accession commitments, Vietnam joined the company of fewer than half of the WTO's Members by signing on to the Information Technology Agreement, requiring it to eliminate duties on most information technology products.

Finishing the deal by the end of the month would in principle allow the General Council to adopt the proposal at a special meeting in early November, making Vietnam the 150th member of the WTO in early December.

Vietnamese government officials and groups such as Oxfam have complained that the country has had to make deeper liberalisation commitments than other comparable states as the price of its WTO accession (see BRIDGES Weekly, 26 July 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-07-26/wtoinbrief.htm>).

The final formal meeting of the working party has been scheduled for 26 October.

ICTSD reporting; "Viet Nam's membership deal possible by end of month, Chair says," WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION, 9 October 2006; "Vietnam's WTO accession talks slowed but entry still possible this year, officials say," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 9 October 2006; "WTO: Viet Nam membership Possible By End Oct," INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES, 10 October 2006; "Vietnam to cancel agricultural and industrial subsidies," VIETNAMNET BRIDGE, 7 October 2006; "Vietnam's WTO Accession Talks Slowed," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9 October 2006.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

VACANCIES

The International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) is searching for a HOUSE MANAGING EDITOR AND PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR. His/her duties will include overseeing every step of the production and distribution of its series of periodical and occasional technical publications, as well as corporate newsletters and presentation material. He/she will also supervise and lead development of online publications, including all ICTSD websites. The House Managing Editor and Publications Director will set production schedules for all publications, and be responsible for their quality, accuracy, and final delivery. This is designed as a senior management position. It requires a relevant educational background and proven experience at a suitable functional and strategic level, as well as perfect command of English and advanced knowledge of French or Spanish. For further information, please see http://www.ictsd.org/about/ar/ToR_SH_Managing%20Editor.pdf. The application deadline is 15 October.

ICTSD is also looking for a YOUNG PROGRAMME OFFICER (AFRICA TRADE PROGRAMME AND ICTSD PUBLICATIONS). The ATP Young Programme Officer will assist in the coordination of ICTSD's overall work on Africa, manage an interactive website on Africa, and help with various publication processes. His/her main responsibilities will include internal coordination and gap-filling on Africa issues, dialogues, and partnerships; maintaining ICTSD's Africa web page; programme management and coordination; desk-based research on Africa trade issues and respond to requests for information on Africa and ACP issues; writing articles on Africa and ACP-related issues for publications such as Bridges Monthly, and Bridges Weekly; and assisting in the publication of Passerelles, Trade Negotiations Insights and the French version Eclairages. Candidates should possess a Master's degree in development economics, international relations, African studies or related discipline; a good understanding of Africa- and ACP-related trade processes; and excellent writing, analytical, and organisational skills. For further information, please see http://www.ictsd.org/about/ar/ToR_YPo_AfricaTradePg.pdf. The application deadline is 15 October.

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: 12-18 October

12 October, Brussels, Belgium: ACP-EU RELATIONS: THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE OF EPAS. The South Centre, in partnership with a consortium of non-governmental organisations from African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group and European countries, is organising a high-level conference on negotiations related to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). NGO co-hosts include: Africa Trade Network, CPDC, Christian Aid, ICCO, 11.11.11, Oxfam International and Traidcraft. The purpose of this conference is to provide a platform for ACP governments to voice their views on these negotiations, in particular in light of the EPAs review expected before the end of this year. Ministers from various ACP regions will participate in this event, whose audience will also comprise: EU member state policy-makers and parliamentarians, as well as representatives from the European Parliament and European Commission, intergovernmental agencies, journalists and civil society. For more information, please see internet: http://www.southcentre.org/Events/2006Oct_EPA_conf_ereference.htm.

16-18 October, Geneva, Switzerland: EXPERT MEETING ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SOLUTIONS TO FACILITATE TRADE AT BORDER CROSSINGS AND PORTS. Organised by the UN Centre for Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Experts attending the meeting will discuss recent developments in trade and transport, particularly new requirements for customs modernization and other trade and transport facilitation measures at the regional and national levels, as well as the need for an enabling and accommodating legal framework. They will also look at recent efforts to formulate rules, regulations and standards which contribute to customs modernization and efficient transport and trade. Experts will examine available ICT tools for facilitating trade at border crossings and ports, and consider to what extent they can be introduced in developing countries and least developed countries. To assess the roles of UNCTAD and other international agencies in cooperation with their national and regional counterparts, experts will look into the capacity-building and technical assistance requirements of countries planning to implement specific technology-based trade facilitation measures, including those related to the institutional, commercial, legal and operational environment for Customs and other operations at border crossings and ports. For more information, please see internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=1942&lang=1&m=11898&year=2006&month=10>.

17-20 October, Rome, Italy: **TECHNICAL CONSULTATION - DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES ON ECOLABELLING OF FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS FROM INLAND AND MARINE FISHERIES.** The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) is a subsidiary body of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council that was established in 1965. Meeting every two years, COFI is the only global intergovernmental forum where major international fisheries and aquaculture problems are examined, producing recommendations addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, fish workers, NGOs and the international community. It has also been used as a forum for the negotiation of global agreements and instruments, such as the Code of Conduct. For more information, please contact: Rolf Willmann; e-mail: rolf.willmann@fao.org; internet: http://www.fao.org/fi/NEMS/events/detail_event.asp?event_id=33207.

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

18-19 October, Bangkok, Thailand: **MAXIMISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE TO ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION, AND THE UNEP-UNCTAD CAPACITY BUILDING TASK FORCE BRIEFING SESSION.** This is the first of two events sponsored by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The sessions will focus on fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals in the Asia and Pacific Region. For further information, contact Ulrich Hoffmann, tel: +41 (0)22 917 5780; email ulrich.hoffmann@unctad.org; internet: http://r0.unctad.org/trade_env/test1/meetings/bangkok7.htm.

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.

16-18 October: **EXPERT MEETING ON ICT SOLUTIONS TO FACILITATE TRADE AT BORDER CROSSINGS AND PORTS**

18 October: **COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

18 October: **ONLINE CHAT WITH WTO DIRECTOR-GENERAL PASCAL LAMY**

Other Upcoming Events

12-16 December, Haikou City, Hainan Province, China: **THE EAST ASIAN SEAS (EAS) CONGRESS 2006.** This event will bring together international organisations, experts and multi-sector stakeholders to exchange knowledge and build capacity in developing strategies to implement the Millennium Development Goals and World Summit on Sustainable Development objectives for the region's coasts and oceans. With the central theme, "One Ocean, One People, One Vision," the five-day event will feature several key activities designed to enhance regional cooperation for the benefit of the Seas of East Asia. For more information contact The EAS Congress Secretariat, tel: + 632 9 202211; e-mail: congress@pemsea.org; internet: <http://www.pemsea.org/eascongress/>

RESOURCES

THE SOUTH CENTRE QUARTERLY ON TRADE DISPUTES. By the South Centre, October 2006. This issue suggests that the suspension of negotiations is unlikely to result in increased dispute settlement activity for most developing countries. It also highlights, in a case analysis, the interpretation of Article X:3 of the GATT 1994 and its relevance to the trade facilitation negotiations. A section on pending disputes is also included. For more information see internet: <http://www.southcentre.org/info/scquarterlytradedisputes/TradeDisputesQtrly2006q3.pdf>.

UNEQUAL PARTNERS: HOW EU-ACP ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs) COULD HARM THE DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF MANY OF THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES. By Claire Godfrey. Oxfam International, September 2006. This briefing paper focuses on the EU's efforts to forge Economic Partnership Agreements with 75 of its former

colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP). The paper argues that there are massive disparities in power and influence between the EU and the countries with which the trade agreements will be made, and that this situation could all too easily produce unfair results, with the future development of the ACP countries being jeopardised by Brussels' tactics. For more information visit: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/trade/downloads/bn_epa.pdf?m=234&url=.

GLOBAL TRADE, JOBS AND LABOUR STANDARDS. By the Center for Global Development, 2006. This issue brief highlights some of the complexities in the relationship between global trade, availability of employment and labour standards in the US, pointing out that there are both negative and positive aspects of the increase in global trade. For instance, the increase in less expensive imports in the US has resulted in the loss of millions of job in the manufacturing industry, yet the high tariffs that the US places on many cheap imports from developing country negatively impacts low income families that depend on these items. For further information, visit: http://www.cgdev.org/files/2846_file_LABOR_STANDARDS1.pdf.

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BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest® is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org/>.

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BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest is made possible through the generous support of the Government of the United Kingdom (DFID) and ICTSD's core donors including the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK) and NOVIB (NL). *BRIDGES Weekly* also benefits from support for the BRIDGES series of publications from donors including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. ISSN 1563-0