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LEAD STORIES

NAMA WEEK: MEMBERS DIFFER ON S&D FLEXIBILITIES, LINK TO AG

WTO Members remain divided over the extent of special and differential treatment (S&D) in the negotiations on non-agricultural market access (NAMA). During an informal meeting of about 25 delegations on 1 March, several developing countries, including China, insisted that developing countries should be allowed to slate no fewer than 10 percent of products for tariff cuts lower than those required by the overall tariff reduction formula, or to exclude 5 percent from reduction commitments altogether. The NAMA week ran from 27 February - 3 March (see BRIDGES Weekly, 1 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-01/story1.htm>).

China insisted that these flexibilities in tariff treatment, provided for in Paragraph 8 of the NAMA mandate set out in Annex B of the July 2004 Framework (WT/L/579), are a fundamental principle in the negotiations, and that the specific figures, which were bracketed in the text to signify lack of agreement, were the lowest that it could accept. Several (primarily developed) countries, however, repeated their longstanding position that the flexibility figures would remain in brackets until the formula was finalised. They have long maintained that developing countries should give up recourse to the flexibilities in exchange for a formula coefficient that would leave them with tariff levels higher than those of developed countries after reduction.

One trade observer suggested that China, as a very efficient producer of industrial goods, would benefit from a situation in which coefficients were low but flexibilities high, since this would steeply lower tariffs elsewhere while allowing it to shield sensitive sectors from deep tariff cuts.

Members read different meanings into Para 24

In a subsequent informal gathering on 1-2 March, Members discussed what was entailed by the mandate in Paragraph 24 of the Hong Kong Declaration to

"ensure that there is a comparably high level of ambition in market access for agriculture and NAMA ... in a balanced and proportionate manner consistent with the principle of special and differential treatment."

The mandate is being interpreted differently by different delegations. Canada, Norway and Switzerland said that the paragraph did nothing more than simply repeat the Doha mandate for ambitious liberalisation in both agriculture and NAMA. A group of ten developing countries referred to as the 'NAMA-11,' on the other hand, described it as a "moment of inspiration by ministers," one that required Members "to ensure that real [export] opportunities are created for developing countries" while simultaneously taking into account their lower developmental level and capacity to adjust to liberalisation. South Africa, speaking on behalf of the group (which also includes Argentina, Egypt, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Namibia, the Philippines, Tunisia, and Venezuela), pointed to Paragraph 24's reference to S&D and said that "the percentage reduction in the formula for developing countries should be a proportion of that provided for developed countries."

The NAMA-11, which came together in the run-up to the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, reiterated its belief that developing countries must have recourse to the 'Paragraph 8 flexibilities' in addition to a formula that requires them to make tariff cuts less onerous than those required of developed countries.

Argentina suggests ways to compare ag, NAMA ambition

Although several delegations, including Taiwan, the US, Colombia, Japan and Singapore, suggested that making a numerical comparison between the agriculture and NAMA negotiations was difficult, Argentina outlined some ways to compare the level of ambition in each.

Specifically, Argentina proposed comparing the depth of tariff reduction demanded by different proposals on NAMA and agriculture. For example, the EU's NAMA approach -- a simple 'Swiss formula' associated with a coefficient of 10 for both developed and 'advanced developing' countries -- would slash a 35 percent tariff to 7.78 percent, while its proposal for cutting farm tariffs would reduce an identical duty to only 19.25 percent. Argentina's calculations indicated that the EU's agriculture proposal was roughly equivalent to a Swiss formula with a coefficient of 42.78, and that the US and Japan were also pushing for far deeper tariff cuts on industrial goods than on farm products.

Argentina also said that the proportion of trade affected by reduction commitments, along with the percentage of tariff lines exempted, could be used to compare the

level of ambition in each area of the talks. It contended that the various exemptions and market access flexibilities that the EU was seeking in its agriculture proposals would allow it to shield a far higher share of agriculture tariff lines and import value from cuts than what was available to developing countries in the NAMA negotiations. Argentina also posited the proposed future maximum tariff levels in agriculture and NAMA as another potential basis for comparison.

The EU, for its part, said that if other countries felt justified in using Paragraph 24 as a basis for not altering their negotiating positions in NAMA, then it too had an excuse for not budging from its position on agricultural market access -- since no new offers had been made on NAMA.

Several countries said that a numerical link was difficult in light of the differences between the two negotiating areas, and that Paragraph 24 was more of a political concept that Members would have to interpret.

The NAMA negotiations are likely to feature high on the agenda when ministers from the 'G-6' countries -- the US, the EU, Australia, Brazil, India and Japan -- meet in London from 10-11 March. WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy has suggested that the ministers would have to discuss specific numbers for reductions to industrial and agricultural tariffs as well as farm subsidies if they are to have a chance of pushing the negotiations forward.

The Hong Kong Declaration sets out a 30 April target date for a comprehensive agreement on NAMA modalities. The next NAMA week is scheduled to kick off on 20 March, alongside a week of agriculture negotiations.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO key partners must 'talk figures' at forthcoming London meeting - Lamy," AFX NEWS, 8 March 2006.

PROPONENTS OF COTTON PROPOSAL CLARIFY CALL FOR AMBITIOUS CUTS IN COTTON SUBSIDIES

At the WTO Cotton Sub-Committee meeting held on 2 March, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali expanded on an earlier proposal for cutting trade-distorting subsidies for cotton more deeply and quickly than those for other commodities in the agriculture negotiations, as stipulated in the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration (see BRIDGES Weekly, 29 June 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-06-29/index.htm>). They also proposed a timeline for the development of a support mechanism to help African cotton farmers cope

with the effects of cotton subsidies before reforms take effect.

Propose specific methodology for cotton subsidy cuts

The paper (TN/AG/SCC/GEN/4) spells out a formula that would ensure that cotton subsidies would be cut steeply even if the overall reduction to trade-distorting 'amber box' support were quite modest. Over and above the standard reduction, the proposal specifies that cotton subsidies would be cut by an additional component equal to a third of the percentage difference between the agreed overall cut and the complete elimination of such support. The size of the supplemental cut for cotton subsidies would thus decrease if the general cut were more ambitious. In effect, if amber box support were slashed by 60 percent, the approach would see cotton subsidies cut by 82.2 percent. However, the latter would only rise to 84.3 percent for an overall cut of 70 percent, and to 93.7 percent for a cut of 90 percent. Furthermore, these cuts would be undertaken over a period amounting to one third of the implementation period for cutting amber box support to other agricultural products.

The so-called 'Cotton Four' countries, the proponents of the WTO work programme on cotton, put forward 31 March as a deadline for a decision on the proposed formula for cutting cotton subsidies. They also called for capping 'blue box' subsidies, which are partially decoupled from production and less trade-distorting than amber box payments, at a level that corresponds to a third of the general ceiling for the blue box.

Citing World Bank data suggesting that the West African countries would draw the maximum benefit from cotton market liberalisation if all support programmes were eliminated, the submission calls on WTO Members to agree, in April, to eliminate all trade-distorting domestic support by a to-be-determined date. This date would subsequently be determined before the end of the Doha Round.

Proposes calls for support mechanism

The Cotton Four also addressed the mandate contained in the Hong Kong Declaration that urges the WTO Director-General "to further intensify his consultative efforts with bilateral donors and with multilateral and regional institutions... and to explore the possibility of establishing through such institutions a mechanism to deal with income declines in the cotton sector until the end of subsidies."

The paper points to "the need to set up a safety net for cotton producers in the least-developed countries enabling them to survive until such time as internal and

external reforms bear fruit," and set out some parameters for what such a support mechanism should look like. They stress that support must be time-limited, determined in relation to the effect of subsidies on prices, and distributed directly to producers. They ask Members to agree in principle to creating a safety net in April, and to create a task force to come up with a proposal for a mechanism by July, so that the programme can ultimately be included in an eventual Doha Round single undertaking.

These dates correspond to the end-April target set out in the Hong Kong Declaration for a comprehensive agreement on farm subsidy and tariff cuts, and the July date for a report from Director-General Pascal Lamy's Aid For Trade Task Force.

While a number of countries supported the proposal (including China, Brazil and New Zealand), some noted that they needed more time to examine it. Others, including the US, requested an English version of the paper, which was available in French only at the meeting. Sources reported that the US said that it could not engage in a substantive discussion on the proposal until developments in the agriculture negotiations as a whole became clearer. According to the US, a substantial result on domestic support for cotton would require a substantial result in all three pillars in agriculture (export subsidies, domestic support and market access).

Regarding the development aspects of cotton, the WTO Secretariat reported on the assistance some Members are offering to a number of African countries. The next meeting of the Sub-Committee is tentatively scheduled for 27 March.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER NEWS

CTD-SS CONTINUES EXAMINING S&D PROPOSALS

Meeting on 6 March, the WTO Committee on Trade and Development Special Session (CTD-SS) again failed to agree on where to discuss the implementation of the Hong Kong Ministerial Decision on duty- and quota-free access for products originating in least-developed countries (LDCs). Consensus seemed within reach in flexibilities in the application of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures. Sharp differences of views, however, prevail on exempting LDCs from WTO disciplines on government assistance to economic development.

The new CTD-SS Chair, Ambassador Burhan Gafoor of Singapore, enjoined Members to refrain from political statements in order to move on with text-based negotiations.

On behalf of the LDCs, Nepal argued that the CTD-SS was the right venue to address the implementation of the Hong Kong decision on duty- and quota-free market access since it was a negotiating body, while the US maintained this was not a negotiating issue (see BRIDGES Weekly, 1 March 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-01/WTOfnbrief.htm#2>). Instead, the US suggested that discussions on how to proceed should be dealt with at the regular session of the CTD. The Chair invited both sides to consult bilaterally in order to find a solution.

Members also considered the wording of three proposals (from the African Group, Thailand and India) aimed at giving more (binding) flexibilities to LDCs with respect to providing import statistics on products subject to import licensing. According to one developing country delegate, there is room to find compromise language that would combine the three proposals. However, many developed countries said that flexibilities already existed and that more flexibilities should not be given at the expense of the need for transparency in the application of the agreement.

The discussion was much more contentious on a proposal by the African Group concerning GATT Article XVIII (which outlines "protective or other measures affecting imports" that governments can take to promote the development of their economies). The proposal calls for LDCs to be exempted from all restrictions on government assistance under Article XVIII. Kenya, which took the floor several times, said that the purpose of the proposal was to ensure that flexibilities for LDCs to pursue development objectives were maintained. Kenya argued that such flexibilities were being "squeezed every day" and that LDCs wanted them strengthened.

The US, supported by other developed countries, said it was not prepared to "rewrite history" in order to make Article XVIII more precise, effective and operational. Switzerland noted that there was a need to balance rights and obligations for all WTO Members, and that the African proposal would encroach on those of other (developing) countries. Although none of these other countries took the floor on this issue, some developing country delegates privately indicated that the African proposal went too far in undermining the predictability of the trading system. The Chair will hold consultations on the basis of new language proposed.

Discussions were postponed until the next CTD-SS, on 7 April, on waivers and obligations under GATT 1994

and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

ICTSD Reporting

WTO IN BRIEF

PLURILATERAL SERVICES REQUESTS CONTINUE TO TRICKLE IN

Collective requests from groups of WTO Members seeking access to services markets in other countries continue to trickle in. 'Plurilateral requests' have been tabled in a wide range of sectors, including telecom, financial, logistics, construction, legal, environmental, energy, computer, maritime transport, audiovisual, and postal services. Sources report that at an informal meeting of the Special Session for the Council for Trade in Services (CTS-SS) on 7 March, Members discussed how to schedule the plurilateral market access negotiations that will follow these requests in a manner that does not overburden the limited negotiating capacity of developing country delegations. These meetings between demandeur and recipient groups will take place during the next 'cluster' of services negotiations, scheduled for 27 March - 7 April.

Broadly speaking, the plurilateral requests identify the demandeur countries, and specify that they "are also deemed to be recipients" of the request that they are sponsoring (see BRIDGES Weekly, 22 February 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-02-22/story2.htm>). Demandeurs are seeking commitments, for example, the removal of limitations on foreign ownership, discrimination between domestic and foreign services suppliers, prohibitions on the cross-border supply of services, unfriendly regulatory policies, and barriers to the international movement of people to provide services. Not all demandeurs sign on to the entire suite of requests -- for instance, the US specifically opts out of seeking liberalisation of the temporary access for their individual workers (so-called 'Mode 4'), but will formally receive the request for such commitments.

The requests do not name all of the recipients, though many of them indicate the number of Members targeted, generally ranging between 19 and 27. Sources suggest that Argentina, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines,

South Africa and Thailand have received many of the collective requests. Although the bulk of demandeurs are industrialised countries -- such as Australia, Canada, the EU, Japan, Norway, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and the US -- some developing countries have

participated in collective requests. For example, Chile, India, Pakistan and Peru were among the sponsors of the request on computer-related services.

ICTSD will provide coverage of the plurilateral market access negotiations in upcoming issues of BRIDGES Weekly.

ICTSD reporting; "Plurilateral requests aim at maximum opening of South's services," THIRD WORLD NETWORK, 3 March 2006.

LITTLE PROGRESS AT G-6 COUNTRIES MEETING ON WTO FARM TALKS

Senior agriculture officials from the G-6 countries (the US, the EU, Australia, Japan, Brazil and India) met in Paris from 27 February to 1 March to discuss the deadlocked Doha Round farm trade negotiations, but made little overall progress.

Notably, the EU indicated that it would be willing to deepen its cut to trade-distorting 'amber box' domestic support if the US agreed to do the same. The EU is now saying it would make cuts by 75 percent -- up 5 percent from the 70 percent it had proposed in October 2005 -- if the US moved to 65 percent from the 60 that the EU had originally been seeking. The US, however, was cool to the EU offer.

The US did, on the other hand, seem more open to the EU's apparent willingness to accept a lower cap on 'blue box' subsidies, those linked to limits on production volume. Such grants are currently limited to 5 percent of the total value of agricultural production. This may signal the start of a move towards convergence on blue box reform.

In terms of the 'green box,' both the US and the EU have resisted a June 2005 proposal by the G-20 that would allow developing countries to use the reduction-exempt box to cover subsidies for development purposes, such as various kinds of support for subsistence farmers.

Discussions remain stalemated with regard to market access.

Senior officials from the six countries are meeting from 7-9 March in Geneva to discuss all of the issues in the negotiations, along with representatives from Canada, Norway, Malaysia, Egypt and Kenya. G-6 trade ministers are scheduled to reconvene in London from 10-12 March in an attempt to put together a

comprehensive agreement on agriculture and NAMA modalities in time for the 30 April deadline set by the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration.

"WTO Farm Talks Make Little Headway," THE COURIER MAIL, 3 March 2006; "G-6 Officials' Agricultural Meeting Wraps Up With Few Signs of Progress," WTO REPORTER, 2 March 2006; "G-6 Senior Officials to Hold Further Talks in Preparation for March 10 London Summit," WTO REPORTER, 6 March 2006; "EU Sets Out Conditional Offer at WTO for Further Cuts on Domestic Support," WTO REPORTER, 6 March 2006.

WTO AID FOR TRADE TASK FORCE STARTS MAPPING FUTURE WORK

At its first meeting on 3 March, the newly-established WTO Aid for Trade Task Force focused on procedural issues to determine how it could fulfil its mandate, contained in Paragraph 57 of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, to provide recommendations to the General Council by July 2006 on how 'aid for trade' could contribute most effectively to the development dimension of the Doha agenda. The Task Force is composed of 13 members -- Barbados, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, the EU, Japan, India, Thailand, the United States and the coordinators of the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States, the African Group and the LDC (least-developed countries) Group - and chaired by Ambassador Mia Horn Af Rantzen of Sweden in her personal capacity.

Delegates -- many of them ambassadors -- agreed to commence their work with a stock-taking exercise on what has been done on trade-related development assistance so far, what needs to be done in the future, and how to structure such work to be able to draw up recommendations in time for the July deadline. The specific subjects to be addressed by the Task Force, however, remain to be decided. Acknowledging the complexity of these issues and the wide range of actors involved, the Task Force members generally supported the idea of engaging experts from outside the WTO system -- including from civil society groups, international organisations, regional development banks and the private sector -- possibly by inviting them to act in an advisory role.

The next meeting of the Task Force is likely to be held in late-March although no specific date has been set yet.

ICTSD reporting; "Composition of Aid for Trade Task Force announced," WTO PRESS RELEASE, 8 February 2006.

WTO REJECTS MEXICO'S APPEAL IN SWEETENER DISPUTE

In a report released on 6 March, the WTO Appellate Body rejected Mexico's appeal of an earlier panel finding that it had violated its WTO obligations by imposing certain tax measures on imported soft drinks and syrups. The measures in question were a 20 percent tax on soft drinks and other beverages sweetened with anything other than sugar grown in Mexico, and a 20 percent tax on their distribution and sale. These taxes were primarily directed at US high-fructose corn syrup.

The taxes were introduced in 2002, two years after Mexico had attempted to launch a dispute under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) charging that the US had failed to comply with its obligations under the accord by restricting the access of Mexican sugar to the US market (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 August 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.08-08-00.htm>). Mexico requested the establishment of a panel to assess its claim, but the US has consistently refused to participate in the panel selection process.

Before the WTO adjudicative bodies, Mexico never pretended that the tax measures were consistent with its WTO obligations. Instead, it argued that the measures were justified under General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article XX(d), which allows countries to implement measures that are "necessary to secure compliance with laws or regulations which are not inconsistent with the provisions" of the GATT. Mexico contended that its measures were necessary to ensure US compliance with its NAFTA obligations. This argument was, however, rejected by the panel and the Appellate Body, which found that countries cannot use Article XX(d) to justify measures imposed to ensure that another Member complies with its international rights and obligations.

Mexico had also argued that the WTO dispute bodies could dismiss the case entirely. However, the panel concluded that it was not within its discretion to throw out a case that had been brought before it under the correct procedures, a finding that the Appellate Body went on to confirm.

The panel and Appellate Body reports are available at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds308_e.htm.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO: Mexico violated global trade rules", BUSINESS WEEK, 6 March 2006.

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: 9-15 March

8-9 March, Sao Paulo, Brazil: BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BRAZIL: IMPLICATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GLOBAL AGRICULTURE. Biotechnology and Brazil is the first major international conference to focus on Brazil's recently approved seed legislation and the effect it will have on the prospects in Brazil itself and around the world. The conference is an opportunity to meet and discuss biotechnology issues with people who are actively involved in the subject. Biotechnology and Brazil will examine the implications of biotech regarding cost of production of soybeans and future GMO crops; the positions and policies that Europe has taken with regard to GMO soybeans, cotton and corn, and consumer concerns surrounding GMO labeling, tel: +44 (0)207 017 7496; email: conferences@agra-net.com; internet: http://www.agra-net.com/portal/marlin/system/render.jsp?siteid=20000000062&MarlinViewType=MARKT_EFFORT&marketingid=20001305908

8-10 March, Hong Kong, China: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL LOGGING: INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON BEST PRACTICE FOR BUSINESS AND CIVIL SOCIETY. This initiative is being organized by the Forest Dialogue of Yale University, in collaboration with various other organisations and agencies such as the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund. The dialogue has three objectives: to raise awareness among business leaders of the problems posed by illegal logging, identify solutions, and agree on how participants can work together for widespread adoption of these resolutions. For further information contact Gary Dunning, tel: (+1 203) 432 5966; fax: 432 3809; email: info@theforestsdialogue.org; Internet: <http://research.yale.edu/gisf/tfd/logging.html>.

13-17 March, Curitiba, Brazil: THIRD MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY (MOP3). Organised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). For further information contact the CBD Secretariat, tel: (+1-514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588;

email: secretariat@biodiv.org; internet:
<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=MOP-03>

13-31 March, Singapore, Singapore: DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE FOR THE ADOPTION OF A REVISED TRADEMARK LAW TREATY. The World Intellectual Property Organization invites Member States of WIPO; representatives from the African Intellectual Property Organization, the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization, and the European Community; and non-Member States to join in the debate and adoption of the Revised Trademark Law Treaty, tel: (41 22) 338 9111; internet:
http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=6982

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 March: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

13-15 March: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY: UNITED STATES

13-17 March: RULES WEEK

14 March: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

14-15 March: COUNCIL FOR TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

15 March: COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Other Upcoming Events

20-21 March, Geneva, Switzerland: THE WTO AND FISHERIES: A WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF WTO AGREEMENTS AND THE CURRENT WTO NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FISHERIES SECTOR. This meeting is organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and includes sessions on international fish trade and NAMA, fisheries subsidies, quality and safety aspects for fish trade, financing infrastructure and fishing activities, disputes and fishery products and fisheries management, access and labelling. For further information, contact Audun Lem,

tel: (+39 06) 5705 2692; fax: 5705 6500; email: audun.lem@fao.org; Internet:
<http://www.fao.org/fi/default.asp>

20-21 March, Brussels, Belgium: THE POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND THE KNOWLEDGE COMMONS. The two day event, hosted by The Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), will bring together a broad variety of political figures and stakeholders to look at the thinking that drives current intellectual property rule-making. For further information, email: bwallis@consint.org; Internet:
<http://www.tacd.org/docs/?id=286>

25-27 March, Cairo, Egypt: GENDER, EQUALITY, EXPORT PERFORMANCE AND COMPETITIVENESS- A PRACTICAL APPROACH. This consultation, co-hosted by the International Trade Centre Executive Forum and the Egyptian Businesswomen Association (EBWA), aims at developing a concrete, practical approach to enhancing the competitiveness of women in export and their contribution to national export performance. With an emphasis on exploring the linkages between gender equality and competitiveness, the development arguments in favour of gender-sensitive approaches will be revisited and the business case sharpened. For further information contact Natascha Weisert, email: weisert@intracen.org or Sabine Meitzel, email: meitzel@intracen.org; internet:
http://www.intracen.org/execforum/ef2006/IES_Gender_Programme.pdf

28-30 March, Edinburgh, Scotland: AQUACULTURE TODAY 2006. Aquaculture Today 2006 will explore the key issues affecting the aquaculture industry in a national, European and international context. Leading figures from the industry will participate in formal presentations, discussion sessions, exhibitions and networking. For further information contact Claire Anderson, tel.: +44 (0) 131-312- 4550; email: canderson@specialpublications.co.uk; internet:
<http://www.aquaculturetoday.co.uk>

RESOURCES

AID FOR TRADE REFERENCES DATABASE. Produced by the Overseas Development Institute and funded by International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty. The database identifies reports and policy documents that are relevant to the current discussions of Aid for Trade in order to inform policy debate. Can be found online at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/iedg/Projects/Aid4trade.xls>

NEW NGO POSITION PAPERS FOR THE WTO. Three new NGO position papers have been put on the WTO website. The most current include papers by Belgium

based European Information and Communications Technology Industry Association (EICTA), the Fédération Internationale des Vins et Spiritueux (FIVS), and the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations. All three can be found online at http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/ngo_e/pospap_e.htm.

DOMESTIC TAXES AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE: SOME EVIDENCE. By Michael Keen and Murtaza H. Syed. IMF Working Paper. February 2006. This working paper discusses the effects on trade performance of corporate taxes and the value-added tax using panel data from the OECD countries over the last forty years. It finds that increased reliance on VAT revenue tends to be associated with a sharp reduction in net exports, which quickly fades. Increases in corporate tax are associated with sharp short-run increase in net exports, which rapidly reverse, leaving an increase in net exports converging to zero. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=18788.0>

THE IMPACT OF REACH ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH. By the European Commission, 15 February 2006. The latest study on the draft REACH legislation (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) assesses the potential benefits of REACH for the environment and humans who are exposed to chemicals via the environment. This study comes as a contrast to other more economic studies done on the impacts of REACH. The study concludes that the draft REACH legislation on chemicals could save the EU billions of euros in water treatment and other environmental costs such as sewage treatment. Available at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/pdf/impact_on_environment_report.pdf.

CORRIGENDUM

The 'Events and Resources' section of last week's edition of BRIDGES Weekly (Vol. 10, Number 7) accidentally listed the following events in error:

7 March, Copenhagen, Denmark: EU, TRADE AND AFRICA: ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. This seminar is organised by the 'WTO, Trade & Development' network, an initiative based at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). It will include presentations from an African representative involved in EPA negotiations, Martin Jess Pilegaard of DIIS and Paul Goodison of the European Research Office. The meeting is part of the DIIS' monthly 'Trade Mondays' seminar series. For further information, contact Michael Friis Jensen, tel:

+45 3269 8787; fax: +45 3269 8700; email: mje@diis.dk; internet: <http://www.diis.dk/sw239.asp>.

8-10 March, Hong Kong, China: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO COMBAT ILLEGAL LOGGING: INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON BEST PRACTICE FOR BUSINESS AND CIVIL SOCIETY. This initiative is being organized by the Forest Dialogue of Yale University, in collaboration with various other organisations and agencies such as the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund. The dialogue has three objectives: to raise awareness among business leaders of the problems posed by illegal logging, identify solutions, and agree on how participants can work together for widespread adoption of these resolutions. For further information contact Gary Dunning, tel: +1 203 432 5966; fax: +1 203 432 3809; email: info@theforestdialogue.org; internet: <http://research.yale.edu/gisf/tfd/logging.html>.

14-18 March, Geneva, Switzerland: UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD) COMMISSION ON TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES AND COMMODITIES, 9TH SESSION. The main agenda includes discussions on market access, market entry and competitiveness; trade in services and development implications; trade, environment and development; and a progress report on the implementation of agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Commission, including the post-Hong Kong follow-up. For further information contact Mr. Mehmet Arda, tel: +41(0)22 917 5790; fax: +41(0)22 917 0509; email: mehmet.arda@unctad.org; internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=1942&lang=1&m=9478&year=2005&month=3>.

4 April, Copenhagen, Denmark: TWISTING THE RULES OF TRADE? ANTI-DUMPING, SAFEGUARDS AND COUNTERVAILING DUTIES. This conference is part of a series of conferences entitled 'Trade Mondays.' They are an initiative of the 'WTO, Trade and Development' (WTRADE) Network, and funded by the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) and the Governance, Economic Policy & Public Administration Research Network (GEPPA). Three topic areas that will be discussed at this seminar are anti-dumping policy and Denmark; how 'fair' anti-dumping practices are in dealing with 'unfair' trade practices from a developing country perspective; and the EU's anti-dumping policy towards non-market economies. For further information contact Michael Friis Jensen, tel: (+45 32) 69 88 27; fax: (+45 32) 69 88 00; email: mje@diis.dk; internet: <http://www.diis.dk>.

14 April, Paris, France: STUDIES ON THE IMPACT OF TRADE AGREEMENTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ASSESSMENT AND PROSPECTS.

Organised by the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development, and GRET, Research and Technological Exchange Group. The seminar, which will be given in French and English, aims specifically to bring together experts involved in impact assessments and sustainable development (the ministries of EU member states, international organisations, research institutes, the private sector, and NGOs) so as to take stock of impact assessments and reflect on operational ways to improve this tool. For further information, contact Isabel Berest, tel: +33 1 40 05 61 51; email: berest@gret.org.

These events took place in 2005, and are not scheduled to take place this year. The BRIDGES Weekly team regrets any confusion.

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