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which, in the words of a Geneva-based negotiator, "no one moved one inch."

The inconclusive high-level discussions have prompted some delegates to suggest that Members were unlikely to be able to meet the April deadline for 'full modalities' -- a comprehensive framework agreement including numbers for tariff and subsidy cuts -- on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA), and that their chances of doing so were decreasing by the day.

In spite of the incremental progress the ministers reported on technical issues related to farm subsidies, Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath said after the meeting that "we have no formula... no numbers, the only thing there is hope." Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile said that "the connections between the issues and areas for compromise were clearly identified" despite the absence of breakthroughs.

Though they declined in the days before the gathering, hopes for the summit had originally been high, with suggestions that the countries would come forward "in concert" with deepened offers in the areas found most wanting by their major trading partners: the US on farm subsidies, the EU on agricultural market access, and India and Brazil on NAMA. This did not happen.

Just prior to the London meeting, the EU's ability to deepen the tariff and subsidy cuts it presently has on offer was called into question yet again by a memo sent to the European Commission by agriculture ministers from several EU member states stressing that Brussels' existing October 2005 proposal "exhausted -- perhaps exceeded -- all the room for manoeuvre" on market access and domestic support (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-02/story1.htm>).

French sources indicate that representatives from 13 current member states including France, Poland, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, and Finland lent support to the memo, which said that even if other WTO Members were to meet the EU's controversial demands for market access in NAMA and services, this would only "mean a rebalancing of negotiations, and it would be unnecessary, indeed illogical, to respond with a further concession on agriculture." Sources elsewhere report that other EU member states do not share this view, but are remaining quiet for the sake of preserving EU unity.

LEAD STORIES

G-6 MINISTERIAL IN LONDON FAILS TO BREAK DEADLOCK IN DOHA ROUND

Trade ministers from the EU, the US, Australia, Brazil, India, and Japan -- the so-called G-6 -- proved unable to bridge the gaps that have deadlocked the Doha Round trade negotiations during a gathering in London on 10-11 March. The talks followed a 7-9 March preparatory meeting in Geneva of senior trade officials from a larger group of ten influential WTO Members at

Ministers discuss tariff simulations, but nobody budes

Both in Geneva and London, ministers and officials discussed the results of an informal simulation exercise to assess how the main proposals on the table in the agriculture and NAMA talks would affect the bound and applied tariffs of the G-6, Canada, Egypt, Malaysia, and Norway (for more details on the simulation results, see related article, this issue). Although delegates generally report that the results did not reveal anything unexpected, US Trade Representative Rob Portman said that the data helped countries understand what "the good, the bad, and the ugly of a potential deal might look like."

Nevertheless, the discussions in both Geneva and London appeared to repeat those of earlier meetings, albeit this time armed with a common set of numerical statistics. Brazil and India used the data to argue that the flexibilities sought by many developing countries to partially or fully shield some products from the tariff reduction formula would actually have a minor effect on overall liberalisation. The US and the EU countered that the reduction commitments that the developing countries were pursuing -- including a 'Swiss formula' with a coefficient of 30 informally proposed by Brazil -- would force only small cuts to their applied tariff rates. The coefficient of 15 that they would like developing countries to accept, however, found little favour with Brazil and India -- this would bring all tariffs under 15, and make relatively smaller cuts to lower tariffs.

With regard to agriculture, the US continued to refuse to accept cuts to its 'amber box' trade-distorting domestic subsidies deeper than the 60 percent that it offered last October unless the EU offered greater market access (which would in turn allow for proportionately higher tariff cuts by developing countries). It also resisted proposals for further cuts to 'blue box' and 'de minimis' support. The EU was unwilling to offer deeper cuts to its farm tariffs, and maintained that it should be able to designate 8 percent of all tariff lines as sensitive -- compared to the 1 percent limit for developed countries sought by the US and the G-20. Trade sources report that the EU did demonstrate some openness to new approaches for expanding tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) for sensitive products -- for instance, in cases where a country's import volume of a particular product was very low, it suggested that it might accept using overall domestic consumption of the product as part of the basis for expanding TRQs.

Brazilian officials have suggested in the past that they would find it impossible to secure political support for a NAMA formula that reduces bound rates by more than the cut to farm tariffs that the EU has offered, currently at approximately 39 percent. Nath, for his part, warned

that developed countries' demands were disproportionate, and threatened to turn the negotiations into "a suicide round, not a development round."

Oxfam's Liz Stuart criticised the EU and the US for insisting that developing countries cut NAMA tariffs further as the price for progress on agriculture. "They've been promising to cut their trade-distorting agriculture subsidies and tariffs for more than a decade now. Let's not forget that's why developing countries agreed to join the round," she said.

The ministers also discussed a number of issues related to export competition. Further discussions on the subject are expected to take place on the margins of the agriculture negotiations scheduled for next week.

Sources report that the ministers did recognise that the plurilateral approach to market access negotiations for trade in services had helped reinvigorate the talks in that area.

Lula, Blair call for leaders' summit

On the eve of the G-6 meeting, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva made a joint call for a summit that would bring together heads of state from the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK, the US), Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa in an attempt to achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations. "Current offers on the table fall well short of the deal we want," they said in a communique issued at the end of Lula's state visit to the UK. The British daily Guardian reports that the meeting would be likely to take place some time between April and July.

Some trade observers are wary of the idea, warning that if a leaders' summit ended in political posturing and a high-profile collapse, it could effectively spell the end of the Doha Round. On the other hand, Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim expressed the belief in London that Members "cannot get to a deal in incremental steps."

The G-6 ministers, for their part, made no decision about meeting again. They also did not discuss whether to organise another ministerial-level meeting closer to the end-April deadline.

Lamy convenes 'green room' to report on London meeting

On 14 March, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy held a so-called 'green room' meeting of 25-30 ambassadors representing a wide range of different regional and

issue-based groupings, to brief them on the London meeting, which he had attended. Little of substance was discussed, and EU Ambassador Carlo Trojan simply reported to Members on the different issues that had been discussed in London. Lamy encouraged delegations to renew their efforts to work towards an agreement in the negotiations in Geneva.

The 'Geneva process' is heating up: formal negotiations on agriculture and NAMA are scheduled for next week, and a services 'cluster' that will see the start of plurilateral market access negotiations is set to kick off on 27 March. Sources report that the 'green room' meetings are also likely to continue through the end of April.

"Blair was right, the striptease summit was embarrassing," GUARDIAN, 13 March 2006; "G-6 Fails to Narrow Doha Differences Over Agriculture, NAMA at London Meeting," WTO REPORTER, 14 March 2006; "Talks to save trade deal takes off in London," PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, 10 March 2006; "WTO talks have no formula yet: Nath," TIMES OF INDIA, 13 March 2006; "Deal on Doha trade round inches forward," FINANCIAL TIMES, 12 March 2006; "Talks fail to break deadlock over trade deal," INDEPENDENT, 13 March 2006.

OTHER NEWS

TARIFF SIMULATION RESULTS REVEAL NOTHING NEW, SAY DELEGATES

The results of an informal simulation exercise to assess how the main proposals on the table in the Doha Round agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) talks would affect ten WTO Members with a wide range of economic profiles "do not show us anything we did not already know," according a Geneva-based trade diplomat.

The data on how implementing the different proposed reduction formulae would impact the bound and applied tariffs of the G-6 (the EU, the US, Australia, Brazil, India, and Japan), Canada, Egypt, Malaysia, and Norway were circulated to the ten delegations prior to a 7-9 March set of senior officials' meetings in Geneva, and are expected to soon be sent to the wider Membership. They served as a basis for discussion both there and at the subsequent 10-11 March G-6 ministerial meeting in London (see related story, this issue).

NAMA date makes flexibilities, applied rates clearer

In spite of the fact that none of the proposals turned out to be unexpectedly palatable to everyone concerned, one official said that the NAMA simulation was helpful for demonstrating how different proposals would affect the tariff rates that Members apply (as opposed to the bound ceiling rates that will be plugged into the reduction formula). Another said that some methodological questions about how the formulae would be applied had been resolved in the course of the complex mathematical exercise, leaving countries free to focus on arguing about numbers.

One of the sticking points in the NAMA negotiations has been the flexibilities outlined in Paragraph 8 of the NAMA mandate in Annex B of the July 2004 Framework (WT/L/579), which provide for letting developing countries retain some unbound tariffs or apply tariff cuts smaller than those required by the formula to a to-be-determined percentage of products (or even exempt some altogether). The text contained provisional (bracketed) figures that would allow them to make cuts half as big as those demanded by the formula to 10 percent of tariff lines or to completely exempt 5 percent of tariff lines from cuts (or to keep them unbound), so long as they did not account for more than 10 or 5 percent of total import value respectively. Some countries argue 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 (this would not necessarily entail a smaller percentage reduction than industrialised countries, since their NAMA tariffs are generally much higher).

Sources report that the NAMA simulation indicated that granting these 'Paragraph 8' flexibilities to developing countries would have a fairly mild effect on the final average tariff rates after the application of the reduction formula -- of the order of a couple of percentage points, and likely to be even lower. At the senior officials' meeting as well as in London, developing countries reportedly made the case that these flexibilities could thus help protect sensitive sectors crucial to employment without compromising overall liberalisation. Developed countries countered that they could potentially be used to exempt from tariff cuts precisely those sectors in which they were seeking greater market access.

The argument was reversed over the issue of how much the reduction formula should cut into Members' applied tariff rates. Developed countries reportedly used the simulation to contend that a 'Swiss formula' with a coefficient of 30 informally put forward by Brazil - which would slash all developing country tariffs to below 30, and reduce lower tariffs by progressively smaller percentages -- would only result in a 2 to 3

percent cut to the duties currently levied by Brazil and India (see BRIDGES Weekly, 7 December 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-12-07/inbrief.htm#1>).

Brazil reportedly countered that this 'Swiss 30' would force reductions in the tariffs applied to a third of all products and trade volume, thus providing the "real market access" its trading partners seek. Brazil's formal negotiating position, along with India and Argentina, would link Members' post-reduction tariff levels to their current tariff average.

Sources indicate that the simulation appeared to demonstrate that a coefficient of 30 would slash Brazilian and Indian bound tariffs by between 45 to 55 percent, depending on the extent of the flexibilities, and that coefficient of 15 that the US and the EU continued to push for would do so by 60-65 percent and 65-70 percent respectively. The 'Swiss 15,' it is estimated, would cut the tariffs applied by Brazil and India by over 20 percent.

The simulations in both negotiating areas made separate calculations for the different proposals' effects on all tariff lines and those for 'duty-free' product categories, i.e., the lines for which tariffs are not bound at zero. With regard to NAMA, this is notable because it makes the tariff cutting 'effort' seem greater for countries with several such lines – for instance, the simulation indicated that a 'Swiss 5' would lead to a 30 percent reduction in all bound tariff levels in the US, but a 50 percent cut to 'duty-free' tariff lines, according to one source. This could potentially fuel calls for industrialised countries, which tend to have more duty-free lines, to essentially receive what would amount to 'credit' for past liberalisation, while developing countries' own 'autonomous' liberalisation initiatives go relatively unrewarded.

With regard to unbound tariff lines, the simulation made clear that the value of the 'mark-up' -- the number of percentage points added to the rate currently levied before it is subjected to the overall tariff reduction formula -- made little difference to the final tariff level; what mattered was the value of the coefficient associated with the formula.

Agriculture pillars discussed; simulation less useful

A number of officials suggested that the simulations on agriculture were considerably less useful than those on NAMA, since the precise treatment to be enjoyed by 'sensitive products' (which developed and developing countries alike will be able to slate for tariff cuts less than those required by the reduction formula, so long as they provide increased market access through a combination of tariff cuts and tariff-rate quota expansion) remains far from determined, thus making it

hard to evaluate the real effects of the different proposals on the table. The calculation assumed that sensitive product tariffs would be cut by half as much as other ones. Furthermore, for the purpose of the mathematical exercise, countries simply designated products with relatively high tariffs as sensitive, which would not be how they would do it in reality.

The EU has maintained that its October 2005 proposal would cut its own average farm tariff by 46 percent. Several of its trading partners, on the other hand, have said that the various flexibilities the EU was seeking brought the real figure down closer to 39 percent. According to the simulation, the EU's proposed formula would, if 8 percent of all products were eligible for sensitive product status, cut its own average tariff from 22.78 percent to 13.29 percent -- a 41.65 percent reduction. A scenario based on the US' proposal would cut EU tariffs by between 55.21 to 74.82 percent, depending on the number of sensitive products. For a 1 percent limit on the number of sensitive products, the G-20 formula would slash EU tariffs by 58.88 percent and US tariffs by 52.16 percent. For an identical number of sensitive products, the G-20's lower proposed cuts for developing countries would see a 37.05 percent reduction in India's average farm tariff level, and a 29.44 percent cut in Brazil's.

At a 14 March 'green room' meeting that WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy convened to tell ambassadors from 25-30 Member countries about the meeting in London, some delegates called for the WTO Secretariat to make the simulation data public.

NAMA and agriculture weeks are set to kick off on 20 March.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

US AND MALAYSIA TO NEGOTIATE BILATERAL FTA

The US and Malaysia will begin negotiating a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) in three months, announced US Trade Representative Rob Portman and Malaysian International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz in Washington on 8 March. The talks will start after a mandatory 90-day consultation period with the US Congress.

The US is Malaysia's top export market and its largest foreign investor. Malaysia is already the US's tenth-largest trade partner.

Some foresee problems in securing Congressional support for an eventual agreement, since Malaysia's participation in a trade boycott of Israel may prove controversial. A day before the announcement, Malaysia lifted its ban on US beef imports, which had been seen as another potential stumbling block in the talks. Portman said that ending the ban was not a prerequisite for launching negotiations.

Trade sources report that an agreement on financial services may also turn out to be problematic, since Malaysia maintains limitations on foreign ownership and operation in the banking, insurance, and brokerage sectors that are unlikely to appeal to the US. Some of these restrictions on foreign investment are part of Malaysia's 'bumiputra' policy, a longstanding affirmative action scheme aimed at increasing the participation of ethnic Malays in the economy.

Public interest groups also remain sceptical. For example, a Malaysian HIV/AIDS patients' organisation sent an open letter to Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi warning that provisions in past US FTAs have impeded the production of generic drugs, and expressed concerns that a similar accord could render lifesaving medicines unaffordable.

The US has already completed a comprehensive bilateral trade and investment pact with Singapore, and is currently in FTA negotiations with Thailand and South Korea. The Bush Administration's 'Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative' seeks to create a network of FTAs across Southeast Asia.

Malaysia has also been moving towards FTA talks with Australia.

ICTDS reporting; "US Expects Easy FTA Talks with Malaysia," BILATERALS.ORG, 9 March 2006; "Strong Congress Support for US-Malaysia FTA Talks," BERNAMA, 9 March 2006; "Malaysia, US to Launch FTA Talks," BUSINESS TIMES, 9 March 2006; "United States, Malaysia Announce Intention to Negotiate Free Trade Agreement," OFFICE OF THE US TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, 8 March 2006; "Free Trade Agreement: US-Malaysia Fact Sheet," OFFICE OF THE US TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, March 2006. "Malaysia and Australia Sign MoU on Agriculture," BERNAMA, 10 March 2006.

WTO IN BRIEF

FIVE NEW PROPOSALS IN FISHERIES SUBSIDIES NEGOTIATIONS

On 15 March, WTO Members started discussions in the Negotiating Group on Rules on five new proposals on disciplining fisheries subsidies from New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, India and Brazil. The negotiations will continue on 17 March.

New Zealand, a leading Member of the "Friends of Fish" group of countries that advocate for a broad ban on fisheries subsidies with certain exceptions, put forward draft legal text (TN/RL/GEN/100) for a new fisheries-specific amendment to the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures. The text attempted to demonstrate how such a ban could be simple, enforceable, transparent, and flexible. Notably, it left several issues undetermined for future negotiation, including special and differential treatment (S&D) and the conditions to be placed on permissible subsidies, such as those for access payments, aquaculture, research related to fisheries management, and vessel decommissioning. Brazil (TN/RL/GEN/79/Rev.1) submitted a revised version of the draft amendment it had proposed on 16 November 2005 (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 17 February 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-02-17/story2.htm>).

In their recent proposals, Japan and Taiwan, which have traditionally opposed the approach favoured by the Friends of Fish, reiterated their preference for a 'bottom-up' approach that would generally permit fisheries subsidies, with specific prohibitions. Japan's paper (TN/RL/W/201) described two kinds of subsidies that it thought merited prohibition, both related to capacity enhancement. Taiwan (TN/RL/W/202) suggested that grants to promote fish stock recovery, social security, welfare, and research and development, should be exempt from challenge.

India highlighted the need for S&D in any new disciplines, and put forward a list of 'general characteristics' of small-scale, artisanal fisheries (TN/RL/W/203). It contended that disciplines on fisheries subsidies shifted the ambit of the ASCM from trade distortions to problems related to over-fishing and overcapacity, as a result of which developing countries would require policy space over and above that already provided for in the agreement.

ICTSD will provide coverage of the rules negotiations in upcoming issues of BRIDGES Trade BioRes and BRIDGES Weekly.

ICTSD reporting.

MEMBERS LOOK AT TRIPS-CBD RELATIONSHIP

WTO Members focused on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights at the 14-15 March meeting of the TRIPS Council (regular session). Some countries believe that the objectives of biodiversity conservation and intellectual property protection would be best achieved by amending the TRIPS Agreement to require patent applicants to disclose the origin of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge used in their invention, along with evidence of prior informed consent and benefit-sharing. Others believe that patents need not require such disclosure.

A group of mainly developing countries including Brazil, Cuba and India, along with Norway, called for text-based negotiations to start by the end of April on an amendment requiring disclosure in patent applications. Paragraph 39 of the Hong Kong Declaration calls for progress on the issue by no later than July 2006. However, countries such as Australia and the US expressed disagreement, stating that work on text would be premature because of the large differences that remain in the negotiations. The latter for instance believe that no amendment to the TRIPS Agreement is necessary; they contend that the two agreements are mutually exclusive and thus can be implemented independently. The discussions centred on whether disclosure requirements would help solve the problems of sharing benefits deriving from an invention with the local communities involved and improve the quality of patents.

ICTSD will provide more coverage of the TRIPS Council session and related discussions in the upcoming issue of BRIDGES Weekly.

ICTSD reporting. "New Submissions Feed CBD Debate At TRIPS Council Meeting," INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY WATCH, 15 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: 16 March - 22 March

13-31 March, Singapore: DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE FOR THE ADOPTION OF A REVISED TRADEMARK LAW TREATY (TLT). This conference, organised by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), is meant to revise the existing Trademark Law Treaty so as to bring it in line with the technological advances of the past decade. For further information contact Angelia Chia, tel: (+65) 6331-6572; e-mail: angelia_chia@ipos.gov.sg or Joann Tan, tel: (+65) 6332-8828, e-mail: joann_tan@mlaw.gov.sg; internet: <http://www.wipo.int/meetings/2006/tlt-singapore/en/>.

16-22 March, Mexico City, Mexico: 4TH WORLD WATER FORUM - LOCAL ACTION FOR A GLOBAL CHALLENGE. The main theme of the 4th World Water Forum is Local Actions for a Global Challenge. The organizers of the 4th Forum share the belief that, regardless of their root causes, water related problems have their greatest impacts at the local level. As a result, local actions are key for generating concrete results that, when amalgamated across sectors and regions, will move us closer to meeting the water-related targets set by the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit on Sustainable Development Implementation Plan and Local Agenda 21. For further information, e-mail: feedback@worldwaterforum4.org; internet: <http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/home/home.asp>.

16-17 March, Paris, France: CHINA AND INDIA: WHAT'S IN IT FOR AFRICA. This conference, organized by the OECD Development Centre, will facilitate discussion on the impact on Africa of China and India's integration into the global economy. It will look specifically at how Africa could benefit from the 'windfall' of raw material exports and the long-term risks associated with continued poverty on the continent. Contact Marsha Mayer at tel: +33 1 45 24 96 14; e-mail: marsha.mayer@oecd.org; internet: http://www.oecd.org/document/50/0,2340,en_2649_201185_36093874_1_1_1_1,00.html

19-21 March, Buenos Aires, Argentina: ASIPI - AIPPI SEMINAR ON INDUSTRIAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY. This seminar is jointly organised by ASIPI, the Interamerican Association of Industrial Property, and AIPPI, the International Association for Protection of Intellectual Property. The seminar will consist of eight sessions discussing such topics as the violation of intellectual property rights on the internet, the Madrid Protocol, and the protection of biotechnology through law. For further information contact AIPPI, Warren N. Sprigings, tel: (+1) 416-777-2270; fax: (+1) 416-777-

2271; e-mail: <mailto:wsprigings@hitchman.com>;
internet: <http://www.aippicanada.org/>.

20-21 March, Geneva, Switzerland: THE WTO AND FISHERIES: A WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF THE WTO AGREEMENTS AND THE CURRENT WTO NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FISHERIES SECTOR. This meeting is organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and includes sessions on international fish trade and the WTO negotiations on non-agricultural market access (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: (+39 06) 5705-6500; e-mail: 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 feature discussion on what drives current intellectual property rule-making. The meeting will examine how the struggles over the control and ownership of the new knowledge economy relate to concepts of ideology, in party political positions, platforms, and political rhetoric. e-mail: bwallis@consint.org; internet: <http://www.tacd.org/index2.htm>.

20-24 March, Geneva, Switzerland: SOUTH CENTRE WORKSHOP ON TRADE IN SERVICES. The South Centre will host its annual workshop covering the issues of services trade, development, and GATS negotiations. Attention will be given to least developed countries primarily the first two days, then will be opened to all developing countries. internet: http://www.southcentre.org/tadp_webpage/ServicesWorkshop/ServicesWorkshop.htm.

21-22 March, Brussels, Belgium: TRADE SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT: STOCKTAKING CONFERENCE. The conference will review various experiences and lessons in the field of sustainability impact assessment (SIA) of trade policies. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend this two day event to discuss the work done so far in EU trade SIAs and in other studies of interest, and to share views and ideas as to how to move forward with them. For further information contact Nadia de Brito Pires, European Commission, e-mail: trade-sia@cec.eu.int; internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/issues/global/sia/seminar0306_en.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 March: SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEAST-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

16-17 March: COUNCIL FOR TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS - SPECIAL SESSION

16-17 March: WORKSHOP ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

17 March: COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

17 March: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

20-24 March: NAMA WEEK

20-24 March: AGRICULTURE WEEK

21-22 March: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY - SPECIAL SESSION

22 March: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Other Upcoming Events

24-25 March, Curitiba, Brazil: 2010 BIODIVERSITY FORUM. The 20th session of the Global Biodiversity Forum will take place during the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Workshops will address financing, measuring progress, and reaffirming the 2010 targets. Registration online. For more information contact Laurence Christen, tel: +41 78 608 3009, e-mail: Laurence@gbf.ch; internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/others/2006/2010BDannouncement.pdf>

25-27 March, Cairo, Egypt: CONSULTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE (ITC) ON "GENDER EQUALITY, EXPORT PERFORMANCE AND COMPETITIVENESS - A PRACTICAL APPROACH." This consultation, co-hosted by the ITC Executive Forum and the Egyptian Businesswomen Association (EBWA), aims at developing a concrete, practical approach to enhancing the export

competitiveness of businesses owned by women. With an emphasis on exploring the linkages between gender equality and competitiveness, the business case in favour of gender-sensitive approaches will be sharpened. For further information contact Natascha Weisert, e-mail: weisert@intracen.org or Sabine Meitzel, e-mail: meitzel@intracen.org; internet: http://www.intracen.org/execforum/ef2006/IES_Gender_Programme.pdf.

5-7 April, New York, USA: CONFERENCE AND CELEBRATION OF THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WTO. Columbia University will host the WTO's Tenth Anniversary Conference bringing together scholars, heads of state, and other thought leaders to explore dispute resolution and other key international trade issues. The event is part of a yearlong series of events designed to consider the past, present, and future of the WTO at this important milestone. For more information, internet: <http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/wto/>.

24 April, New York, USA: ECOSOC HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WITH BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS, WTO AND UNCTAD. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will hold its ninth Special High-Level Meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO, and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to consider four sub-themes within the overall framework of "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit Outcome." The four sub-themes are: the implementation of and support for national development strategies, towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); fulfilling the development dimension of the Doha work programme, including in the area of aid for trade; external debt -- building on current initiatives to enhance debt sustainability; and supporting the development efforts of middle-income developing countries. For more information contact Sarbuland Khan, Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, tel: (+1) 212-963-4628; fax: (+1) 212-963-1712; e-mail: ecosocinfo@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/bwi2006/index.html>.

19-20 May, Shirakawa, Japan: BUSINESS FORUM ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This invitation-only forum is organised by the World Sustainable Development Forum (WSDF), which was created by the Energy Research Institute (TERI). The gathering will discuss the role of science and technology and the need to bridge the divide between developed and developing countries in this field. For more information contact

Annapurna Vancheswaran, TERI; tel: (+91) 11-2468-2100 (Ext. 2509); e-mail: avanche@teri.res.in; internet: <http://static.teriin.org/dsds/2006/index.htm>.

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.

NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Due to a technical malfunction last week, the 8 March 2006 issue of BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest -- Vol. 10, No. 8 -- may not have reached all of our readers. It is available online at <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-03-08/index.htm>. We apologise for the inconvenience, and thank you for your continuing interest and feedback.

Back issues of *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*® can be accessed at: <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/archive.htm>.

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