



# Bridges Trade BioRes

*News, events and resources at the intersection of trade and biodiversity*

**Volume 7 • Number 6, 30 March 2007**

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Bridges Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at International Environment House II, Chemin de Balexert 7, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (+41) 22-917-8492; fax: (+41) 22-917-8093.

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ISSN 1682-0843

## **Fisheries**

### **US PROPOSAL CALLS FOR MAJOR CUTS TO COMMERCIAL FISHING**

The US on 21 March launched a far-reaching proposal to modify international trade rules to prohibit most government subsidies to commercial fishing, in an effort to halt the depletion of marine life globally.

The US is currently seeking input on the proposal from delegates and it has already elicited complaints from Japan, South Korea, Portugal, and Spain, all traditional opponents of constraints on fisheries subsidies. After receiving comments on the text, the US plans to submit a formal version at the next session of the Negotiating Group on Rules, tentatively scheduled for 30 April.

The new text represents the US' first comprehensive framework for future disciplines on commercial fisheries subsidies. It builds on the country's past positions, and is believed to have the support of a broad coalition of countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Chile and New Zealand.

### **Role of Doha in preserving marine fisheries**

Washington claims that its proposal represents an important step towards slowing the over-harvesting and depletion of fish stocks around the world. "Tough fisheries subsidy disciplines are an essential complement to strong fisheries management programs to ensure that wild fish stocks remain sustainable for future generations," said US Trade Representative Susan Schwab. She described the proposal as "a clear win for trade, the environment and sustainable development."

A 2006 report by the University of British Columbia put worldwide annual government spending on fisheries subsidies at about USD 34

billion. Of that, environmentalists blame some USD 20 billion in harmful payments, such as those that go toward building new fishing boats, for three-quarters of the world's overfishing. Japan, the EU, and China are the biggest subsidisers, respectively doling out about USD 5.3 billion, USD 3.3 billion, and USD 3.1 billion annually.

Scientists warn that global fish stocks risk irrevocable collapse within 50 years unless steps are taken to curb overfishing (see Bridges Weekly, 8 November 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-11-08/inbrief.htm#4>). According to Courtney Sakai, campaign director for marine advocacy group Oceana, strong WTO rules limiting fisheries subsidies could play a crucial role in doing so. "The international fishing fleet is so distorted by government subsidies that it is no wonder there are any fish left at all. It's about time we cut the bait and the WTO represents the best way to do that," she said.

Under the Doha mandate, Members are supposed to "clarify and improve WTO disciplines on fisheries subsidies, taking into account the importance of this sector to developing countries... with a view to enhancing the mutual supportiveness of trade and environment." The negotiations on such subsidies have been described as offering the greatest potential environmental benefits of any issue in the round. The gains would not be limited to conservation: fish is a heavily-traded good, an important commodity for developing countries in particular, and the source of at least 20 percent of the daily protein intake of 2.6 billion people worldwide, especially in developing countries. Worldwide it is estimated that one billion people depend on fish for their livelihood.

### **Broad ban, with negotiated exemptions**

The new proposal unveiled by the US calls for a broad prohibition on commercial fishing subsidies, targeting any initiatives that encourage wild-capture fishing for commercial purposes, such as payments for ships, fuels, and loan guarantees.

Specific negotiated exceptions to this ban would be available to policies that do not encourage increased fishing capacity, such as the removal of boats through buyback schemes, re-education for fishermen, and research initiatives focused on marine conservation. However, the proposal stressed that these exemptions will need to be strongly disciplined to ensure that they do not become a loophole for promoting overcapacity.

The US, along with the other members of a loosely-defined group of countries called the 'Friends of Fish', including Australia, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and New Zealand, has long supported a blanket ban with a list of negotiated exceptions. New Zealand in particular is viewed by marine conservationists as an early champion of aggressive disciplines on fisheries subsidies, and has worked with the US to get such an agreement at the WTO.

In contrast, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have taken the opposite approach: instead of a blanket prohibition, they want a negotiated list of specific banned types of subsidy payments.

Under the proposal, access fees would be counted as subsidies by the typically rich countries that pay them to developing country governments in return for the right to fish in their territorial waters, unless they meet certain conditions. They would not be treated as subsidies to the recipient coastal states. Access fees are an important source of revenue for some small island states.

The paper also calls for a periodic review of the new rules' impact and points to methods for increasing transparency, avoiding circumvention of the regulations, and helping countries make the transition into conformity with the policy.

The US' proposal does not outline any specifics on special and differentiated treatment for developing countries, but did refer to a recently revised Brazilian proposal (TN/RL/GEN/79Rev.4) that envisaged exceptions permitting payments to fisheries activities related to the subsistence of fishing communities in developing countries.

Washington claims that the current subsidy rules enable inefficient economic practices and distort

market forces, leaving many fishing industries at a distinct disadvantage against heavily subsidised fleets such as those of Japan and the EU. "Our proposal will help level the playing field for the US and other fishing communities that are disadvantaged by large subsidy programs," said Schwab.

Following the release of the proposal, the US Congress passed a resolution encouraging the slashing of harmful fishing subsidies that lead to overfishing worldwide.

Sources noted that despite their different approach to the issue, countries such as Japan and South Korea have been actively involved in the negotiations. The EU, whose position lies somewhere in between the Asian Members and the US, has been relatively silent, and delegates say that it is waiting to see how the negotiations evolve.

The European Commission's own attempts to encourage member states to slash catches by their fishing fleets have been deemed inadequate by conservationists.

Talks on the US proposal will continue over the coming weeks in the run-up to the end-April session of the negotiating group.

ICTSD reporting; "US Proposes Ban on Fishing Subsidies in Global Trade Talks," BLOOMBERG.COM, 21 March 2007; "US unveils Doha plan to cut fishing aid," FINANCIAL TIMES, 21 March 2007; "US Doha Round Initiative to Prohibit Harmful Fisheries Subsidies," US FED NEWS, 21 March 2007; "Kiwis Lead Way on Global Overfishing," THE NATIONAL BUSINESS REVIEW, 23 March 2007; "Hope for Trade Talks after G33 Concession," FINANCIAL TIMES, 22 March 2007.

## Biotechnology

### **BIOTECH UPDATE: SOUTH AFRICA REJECTS, EU ACCEPTS, NEW GMOS; GREENPEACE STUDY FINDS EVIDENCE OF GM TOXICITY**

#### **South Africa rejects first biofuel GM**

A new strain of maize developed by Syngenta to provide improved feedstock for the production of biofuels has been rejected by the authorities in South Africa. Called "maize event 3 272", the GMO contains elements from a micro-organism from the deep sea. Maize event 3 272 is the first variety developed explicitly to serve the biofuel industry (or indeed, any food crop variety developed for industrial purposes), and it has not yet been approved in any country.

Syngenta had applied for the approval of imports of the maize variety into South Africa, not for the approval of cultivation. Civil society groups had voiced their scepticism regarding maize imports from an unnamed country, assumed to be the US. Firstly, maize is an important food crop in South Africa that millions depend on as their staple food. Secondly, as the biofuel industry develops in South Africa, these groups would like to see them provide opportunities to local farmers. The local farmers without access to the new cultivar would hardly be able to compete with subsidised GM corn from the US.

In its decision to reject Syngenta's application, the Executive Council of the South African Department of Agriculture, which has jurisdiction in GM matters, cites the fear of contamination of conventional varieties. According to the Executive Council, "Contamination of South African export products with Event 3 272 could jeopardise the export of maize products and may have serious economic consequences." Further, testing of the GM had not followed World Health Organisation procedures for evaluating whether the new GM maize contained allergens, and the Executive Council said it had not been shown to be safe as food or animal feed.

Mariam Mayet of the Johannesburg-based African Centre for Biosafety, welcomed the decision.

"This is the first time (the government) has refused a new variety of GM crop on food safety grounds. It is a historic decision and sets a very important precedent," she said.

### **EU authorises GM rapeseed**

The European Commission on 26 March authorised German company Bayer to market three genetically modified (GM) rapeseed varieties across the EU for the next ten years.

The rapeseed varieties have all been genetically modified to resist the glufosinate-ammonium herbicide. Bayer's authorisation is for industrial applications, as well as for use in animal feed, but does not involve cultivation.

The decision to approve Bayer's application was a 'rubberstamp' procedure applied by the Commission. The 'rubberstamp' is a legal default process that comes into effect if ministers cannot agree after three months. Since the new European traceability and labelling regulations for GMOs entered into force in April 2004, ending an unofficial six-year freeze on approving new GMO products, a string of GMOs have been approved this way, much to the dismay of green groups.

A GM carnation, manufactured by Australian company Florigene, engineered to produce a blue pigment and be herbicide resistant, is also expected to be approved in this manner in the coming weeks.

### **France approves new GM trials, will adopt GMO legislation by decree**

In related news, the French agriculture ministry has authorised 13 field trials for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and announced that the EU rules on GMOs will be adopted by decree before the end of March.

Twelve trials for GM maize and one for GM tobacco were approved after their evaluation by the Commission du Génie Biomoléculaire (CGB), a panel responsible for evaluating the public health and environment risks linked to the dissemination of GMOs. Syngenta, Pioneer, Librophyt, Biogemma, Monsanto, and BASF are the companies that received licenses. The CGB

received 26,306 comments from the notoriously GMO skeptical French public during a public consultation period. None, however, caused it to reconsider the approvals.

Separately, the French agriculture ministry announced it will make two decrees in order to adopt the European directive on GMO commercial and experimental crops into French law. The Directive, regulating how GM crops can be grown and approved across the EU, was agreed to by EU members in 2001. The Directive covers seed cultivation and production, GMO imports, and processing for industrial purposes.

Deep public distrust of GMOs caused France to delay implementing the EU Directive from 2001. In December last year, the European Commission asked the European Court of Justice to fine France for its noncompliance. The fine has since grown to more than EUR42 million.

Under the new laws, farmers will be obliged to report precise details of their GMO fields, enabling France to create a national register of all GMO crops in the country.

### **Greenpeace finds evidence of toxicity in independent study of GE maize**

The European branch of Greenpeace recently released the results of an independently commissioned study on the effects of a GM maize variety, MON863, manufactured by Monsanto.

Using the data submitted to the EU by Monsanto when applying for approval to market the GM crop in the EU, researchers from the Committee for Independent Research and Genetic Engineering at the University of Caen found significant statistical differences that Greenpeace contends are grounds for the recall of the GM plant.

The new study found that rats fed for 90 days with MON863 showed signs of toxicity in their livers and kidneys. When applying to market MON863 in the EU a similar study was conducted. The findings of that study were considered "incidental" and "not biologically relevant" to Monsanto's application by the European Food Safety Authority.

"It appears that the statistical methods used by Monsanto were not detailed enough to see disruptions in biochemical parameters," said the authors of the new study to explain the discrepancy.

MON863 is an insect resistant GM maize, approved for use in animal feed in the EU in 2005 and for human consumption in January 2006. MON863 is also approved for use in Australia, Canada, China, the EU, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Philippines, Taiwan, and the US.

Greenpeace is calling for the immediate and complete recall of MON863, and urging all governments to reassess other approved GM products and testing methods.

The Greenpeace Press Release is available at [http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/gp\\_briefing\\_seralini\\_study.pdf](http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/gp_briefing_seralini_study.pdf)

### **Researchers develop malaria resistant mosquito**

Researchers at Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute have developed a mosquito that is genetically engineered (GE) to resist malaria infection.

The results of the study, published on 19 March in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, showed that when the GE mosquitoes fed on malaria infected mice, they had a much higher survival rate and produced more eggs than regular mosquitoes, suggesting that they could eventually replace regular mosquitoes in the wild and curb the spread of malaria.

Malaria is caused by parasites and is transmitted through the salivary glands of female Anopheles mosquitoes. Malaria has a detrimental effect on mosquitoes, as well as those they bite.

Researchers started with a population of half GE mosquitoes and half regular mosquitoes, and after nine generations, the GE mosquitoes made up 70 percent of the test population. Jason Rasgon, one of the scientists involved in the study, warned that the research is "...not anywhere near a field case," it only proves the principle.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), at least 1 million, and upwards of 2.7 million, people die of malaria each year; 75 percent of them are African children.

ICTSD Reporting; "South African government rejects modified maize," INDEPENDENT ONLINE, 29 March 2007; "France allow 13 GM trial for 2007; to adopt EU rules by decree by end-March," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 21 March 2007; "France adopts disputed EU laws on GMO crop growing," REUTERS, 21 March 2007; "Malaria-resistance mosquito developed," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 21 March 2007; "Researchers' Malaria-Resistant Mosquitoes thrive in lab," THE JOHN HOPKINS UNIVERSITY GAZETTE, 26 March 2007; "EU authorizes GMO rapeseed by legal rubberstamp," REUTERS, 27 March 2007; "EU set to rubberstamp GMO rapeseed, flower approval," REUTERS, 9 March 2007; "Greenpeace raises questions about Monsanto GMO corn," REUTERS, 14 March 2007; "Regulatory systems for GE crops a failure: the case of MON863," GREENPEACE PRESS RELEASE, March 2007.

## **Sustainable Land Management**

### **BIOFUELS DEBATE AT DESERTIFICATION MEETING**

Experts attending a recent meeting on desertification identified biofuels production and agriculture trade — when practiced in a sustainable manner — as measures that can help promote sustainable land management in dryland areas.

Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) met in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 12-21 March, to review the Convention's implementation in light of national and regional experiences, and to exchange information on initiatives to conserve soil, manage arid lands sustainably and prevent desertification. Interlinkages with climate change, the impact of global agriculture trade, and opportunities inherent in expanding biofuels production generated much interest and stirred debate at the meeting.

The meeting focused on affected country parties in regions other than Africa. In addition to reviewing the result of regional meetings, sessions were mainly dedicated to panel presentations and discussions on selected topics such as synergies with other environmental conventions, measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and investment in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification. The meeting also sought to provide input to the draft UNCCD strategy for the next 10 years, set to be agreed at the next Conference of the Parties.

### **Sustainable income from dryland agriculture?**

Meeting participants highlighted positive and negative trade impacts on land management, as well as trade-related factors that could enhance sustainable practices in arid areas. They noted that income generated from agricultural trade, physical access to markets, ecotourism development, and the dismantling of agricultural subsidies in industrialised countries could foster investment in sustainable land management (SLM).

During a session on measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) called attention to farmers' profit margins as the main driver for sustainable agricultural practices. In an intervention, IFAP stressed that for SLM to take place, there was a need to ensure the maximum possible benefits from trade for producers, physical access to markets, and trade reforms (Negotiations in the context of the WTO Doha round seek to, among other, open up trade in agricultural products by cutting subsidies and tariffs globally, see Bridges Trade BioRes 2 February 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/07-02-02/story1.htm>). IFAP underscored the need to guarantee that farmers receive a 'fair' price for the goods they produce. Following the same line of thought, Switzerland said that farmers' ability to invest in natural resources and SLM was related to income generation from agricultural production.

### **Biofuel potential in drylands**

The potential for biofuel production in drylands was also discussed at the meeting. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Food and Agriculture

Organisation (FAO) spoke out in support of biofuels production as a strategic opportunity in dryland areas. The EU and Brazil also said biofuels could enhance income generation and reverse land degradation and desertification. *Jatropha*, a small tree that does well in dry areas, provided one concrete example. Vegetable oil is extracted from the fruits of the *Jatropha* tree, which originates from Central America. As the tree grows, it binds carbon dioxide, and by selling such 'emissions reductions,' countries could tap into emerging international carbon markets in addition to gaining incomes from the oil itself.

### **The role of ecotourism in generating income in drylands**

In a presentation on investment in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification, Namibia stressed that biodiversity-based industries such as ecotourism provided more income, education, and job opportunities than farming in Namibia's marginal agricultural land. Namibia said that policies promoting a high "tradable value" for indigenous biodiversity increased investment in sustainable use of natural resources. A delegate from Brazil explained that entrepreneurship, access to capital markets and prospects of profitability, as well as public policies that create a positive investment environment and reduce the costs of doing business created the conditions for increasing investment in rural areas. During the discussions, Germany stressed that one of the conditions for small-scale farmers to invest in sustainable land use was the dismantling of agricultural subsidies in industrialised countries.

The report of the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-5) will be used to produce a series of recommendations for the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP-8) to the UNCCD, to be held from 3-14 September 2007, in Madrid, Spain. Proposals adopted included "giving priority to preventive policies and specific activities in the areas of agriculture and forestry, land tenure and promotion of agricultural trade" and the consideration of "potential gender-sensitive income-generating opportunities offered by drylands, such as national parks, community conservancies, wildlife farming, indigenous

biodiversity production and ecotourism developments."

### **Additional resources**

The meeting documents are available at <http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cric5/doclist.php>

A comprehensive summary report by IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cric5/>

ICTSD reporting; EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, Vol. 4, No. 195, 24 March 2007.

## **Sustainable Energy**

### **EUROPEAN BIODIESEL PRODUCERS RAISE CONCERNS OVER TRADE DISTORTIONS**

European biofuel producers have complained about unfair competition from imports. In a letter to European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson on 19 March, the European Biodiesel Board (EBB) noted that subsidised US imports have been flooding the European market. According to the EBB, "The US trade practice in fact is clearly breaching WTO rules and represents a serious threat to the fair trade of biofuels" at a time when a global biodiesel market is in its early stages of development.

#### **Loophole encourages triangular trade**

Under US policies to support biofuels, not only homegrown, but also imported biofuels that are blended in the US with as little as one percent mineral oil, enjoy a subsidy benefit of one US\$ per gallon. This B99 biofuel blend can then be re-exported. When the B99 arrives in Europe, it again benefits from a tax brake on environmental grounds, and out-competes European-produced biodiesel. In practice, a triangular trade has developed, claims the EBB, with US biodiesel refiners importing biodiesel from Brazil, Indonesia or Malaysia, blending in small amounts of mineral diesel to benefit from the subsidy, and immediately re-exporting to Europe.

This complaint comes as key biofuel producing and consuming countries have launched an initiative to help develop a global market for biofuels (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 16 March 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/07-03-16/story1.htm>). In its letter to Commissioner Mandelson, the EBB noted that the bases for international biodiesel trade are currently being set, and said trade should be 'fair' (most countries provide some subsidies to support their biodiesel production). The EBB said that US exports are distorting the emerging global market, making it difficult for developing countries to launch their own exports in this area.

To remedy the situation in the EU, the EBB is asking the European Commission to put in place countervailing measures to cancel out the unfair competitive advantage the US exporters currently are enjoying. The US National Biodiesel Board agreed that the loophole that allows the import and re-export of biofuels should be closed.

#### **Biodiesel growth slowing?**

Amidst a general biofuels hype and against the backdrop of the recent adoption of a new European climate and energy policy that includes support for biofuels — specifically a 10 percent blending target for vehicle fuels (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 16 March 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/07-03-16/inbrief.htm#2>) — European biodiesel producers say they are facing a tough market. In Germany, the government, which levies a hefty tax on petrol and diesel, has started to tax biodiesel as well. Meanwhile, high oil prices have begun to come down. Many biodiesel plants are producing below their capacity, and new projects have been put on ice.

"We have been promised a market but it is not yet there," said Raffaello Garofalo, secretary general of the European Biofuels Board. "If there is no legislative support on taxation or binding targets, there is no real market for biodiesel," he added. Thomas Vahle of BioWerk Kleisthohe, the first biodiesel refinery in Germany, said "I just do not understand the politicians. They say it is so important to stop global warming and then introduce a tax to stop me selling my biodiesel, which protects the environment."

Global biodiesel production grew by 80 percent in 2006, reaching 5.4 million tonnes, and is projected to grow by 46 percent in 2007. Biodiesel is produced from agricultural oil crops, such as rapeseed or soy. Germany is the largest EU producer.

### Additional information

Letter from the EBB to Mandelson  
<http://www.ebb-eu.org/EBBpressreleases/let%20to%20CM%20Mandelson%20unfair%20B99%20and%20DETs.pdf>

ICTSD reporting; "EU biodiesel firms blame politicians as demand falls," REUTERS, 22 March 2007; " World Biodiesel Output Growth May Slow - Licht," REUTERS, 29 March 2007; "EU Biodiesel Lobby Launches Attack Against US Subsidies," DOW JONES, 22 March 2007; "US Biodiesel Assoc Supports EU Call To End Export Loophole," 28 March 2007.

## In Brief

### CIVIL SOCIETY PROTESTS PATENTING OF NON-GM SEEDS AND FARM ANIMALS

A coalition of global environmental and development NGOs and farmers' organisations recently launched an initiative against a push by the European Patent Office (EPO) to broaden the scope of patentability by allowing patents for seeds, conventional plant varieties and animal species.

Launched on 26 March, the "Global Appeal Against Patents on Seeds and Farm Animals" is directed at the EPO, and seeks to raise public discussion and political pressure ahead of a key test case this year. Greenpeace, Swissaid and the Berne Declaration, along with farmers' groups from Brazil, India, Argentina and Italy are among the sponsors of the initiative. It aims to provide a voice to farmers, who are expressing their disbelief at the way intellectual property rights are affecting their livelihoods.

Under the European Directive on Biotechnological Inventions, plant and animal varieties are not patentable. However, the scope of patentability has been broadened by provisions that grant patents to inventions that cover more than one variety or species. This means that multinational corporations are increasingly able to obtain patents on conventional plants, in addition to genetically modified plants, and to control the market in plants and seeds. These practises restrict farmers' rights to save, exchange and sell seeds that they have cultivated over generations.

A controversial patent on broccoli (EP1069819B1), granted to Plant Bioscience Ltd by the EPO in 2002, has been challenged by plant breeding companies Limagrain and Syngenta. The case is due to be heard by the Enlarged Board of Appeal (the highest court within the EPO) later this year, and is seen as a test case for the validity of patents on conventional seeds and breeding methods. Since Syngenta itself is applying for similar patents — for instance in relation to rice — the case is expected to clarify rather than reject the criteria for patentability of conventional seeds.

The organisations behind the Global Appeal argue that the broccoli patent should be revoked, as the patent does not refer to a genetically modified plant but rather covers conventional seeds and breeding methods. This contravenes the European Patent Convention (while such patents are granted in the US). If the broccoli case became precedent-setting, a mere genetic description of a plant or animal would suffice for patenting a plant or animal as well as the methods for their production.

The initiative further rejects the patenting life and urges policy makers and patent offices to stop granting patents on gene sequences or methods for the conventional breeding of plants and animals. The Global Appeal also urges companies not to apply for any patents of this kind.

### Additional resources

The Global Appeal against patents on conventional seeds and farm animals is available at [http://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=27](http://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=27).



ICTSD reporting.

### **CHINA TIGER BREEDERS URGE END TO TRADE BAN**

Tiger breeders in China are lobbying for the legalisation of domestic sales of tiger parts — a deeply controversial issue that has outraged conservationists.

Chinese traditional medicine makes use of tiger parts for a number of remedies, and the country used to be the largest consumer. Chinese authorities stopped the sale of tiger parts in 1993. However, there are ca 4000 tigers that have been bred on farms. Following the 1993 ban, the breeders opened their facilities to the public in the form of tiger parks. However, the breeders are making economic losses and are now calling for the legalisation of the sale of tiger parts.

“If legal channels exist and patients can legally get their wanted materials of tiger bone in their medicine, the motivations to purchase tiger bones from illegal sources can be greatly minimised,” said Wang Ligang, general manager of the Heilongjiang Siberian Tiger Park said on 29 March.

Environmental groups disagree. They argue that any legal trade would lead to great increases in illegal trade of the critically endangered species. Animal rights activists further claim that the tigers that are bred have no chance of natural survival, and the practice should be banned. Any tiger parts coming from the parks would further be more expensive than those from illegal sources.

“Reopening any legal trade in tiger parts would be an enormous step backwards for tiger conservation,” said Leigh Henry of wildlife monitoring network TRAFFIC. “A legal market in China would muddy the waters for enforcement officials and provide smugglers with a convenient cover for laundering wild tigers since farmed and wild products are indistinguishable,” he added.

TRAFFIC recently released a report on the potential effects of lifting the domestic sales ban on tiger products, entitled “Taming the Tiger Trade: China’s Markets for Wild and Captive Tiger Products Since the 1993 Domestic Trade

Ban.” There are only 2500-7000 tigers left in the wild, mostly in India.

India, for its part, is looking to strengthen its legislation to combat illegal sale of tiger parts, as required under the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

### **Additional resources**

The TRAFFIC report “Taming the Tiger Trade: China’s Markets for Wild and Captive Tiger Products Since the 1993 Domestic Trade Ban” is available at <http://www.traffic.org/content/842.pdf>.

“China to farm tigers, India wakes up,” TIMES OF INDIA, 30 March 2007; “China Breeders Urge Lifting of Tiger Parts Ban,” REUTERS, 30 March 2007; “China Urged to Uphold Domestic Tiger Trade Ban,” ENS, 13 March 2007; “Lifting Chinese tiger trade ban a death sentence for wild tigers say WWF and TRAFFIC,” WWF RELEASE, 12 March 2007; “Wild Tigers Face A New Threat From China,” THE STRAITS TIMES, 21 March 2007.

### **G-8 ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS SET STAGE FOR HIGH-LEVEL MEET**

The environment ministers from the G-8 industrialised nations as well as the five largest emerging economies — Brazil, Mexico, China, India and South Africa — met in Potsdam, Germany from 15-17 March. While they did not reach any binding outcomes, they agreed a number of measures to stop biodiversity loss, and set the stage for heads-of-state discussions on climate change at the G-8 Summit, to be held in Heiligendamm from 6-8 June this year.

On biodiversity, the group decided to initiative a global study outlining the costs of biodiversity protection of loss, similar to the Stern review detailing the costs related to climate change. They also agreed, among other, to strengthen scientific research and step up biodiversity financing.

Regarding climate change, German environment minister Sigmar Gabriel said “Potsdam was another important step for the climate year 2007.” He added that “We have discussed with the most

important international partners, in a very open and constructive atmosphere, how we can make progress in the climate negotiations. After this meeting, I am confident that we will be able to enter into comprehensive negotiations on the future of climate policy at the end of this year in Bali."

Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Japan, Canada, the US and Russia make up the G-8 states. Germany heads the G-8 this year.

### Additional resources

The Potsdam Initiative: Biodiversity 2010.

"Environment Ministers Agree on a Potsdam Initiative on Biological Diversity and Identify a Common Base for Climate Protection," G8 RELEASE, 17 March 2007; "G8 + 5 Environment Ministers Confer on Climate, Biodiversity," ENS, 16 March 2007; "Climate on the World's Agenda," DER SPEIGEL, 16 March 2007; "G8 assesses cost of species loss," BBC, 16 March 2007.

## Events & Resources

### EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar. 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.

### Coming up in the next two weeks

1-2 April, Cairo, Egypt: SAICM REGIONAL MEETING - ARAB SUBREGION. This meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) for Arab countries will be held at the Cairo headquarters of the League of Arab States. For further information, visit <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/meeting/arabsubreg/april07/default.htm>.

2 April, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT - SESSION ON AID FOR TRADE. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: (41 22) 739 5007; fax: (41 22) 739-5458; email: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org).

2-6 April, Paris, France: CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD STANDARDS. Jointly organized by WHO and FAO. The main points that the meeting will address are the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods and Risk Analysis for Food Safety. For more information contact the joint office of WHO and FAO +39 06 57051, or by e-mail at [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org). To access the full agenda visit [http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/681/gp24\\_01e.pdf](http://www.codexalimentarius.net/download/report/681/gp24_01e.pdf).

12-13 April 2007, New York, NY, USA: SYMPOSIUM ON THE STATE OF THE CONSERVATION OF WHALES IN THE 21ST CENTURY. This meeting will analyse options for the conservation of whales, specifically exploring policies for resolving the current impasse over commercial whaling at the International Whaling Commission. Participation is by invitation only. For further information contact the New York Symposium Secretariat, c/o Varda Group, e-mail: [whales@vardagroup.org](mailto:whales@vardagroup.org); internet: <http://vardagroup.org/whalesymposium/index>.

### Other upcoming events

6-29 July, Ravello, Italy: 11TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGIES: NEW FRONTIERS AND PRODUCTS - ECONOMICS, POLICIES AND SCIENCE. The International Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology Research (ICABR) will convene the conference, focusing on thirteen topics. These include : 1) the impact of agricultural biotechnology on international trade; 2) biofuels; 3) public acceptance; 4) biotechnology and developing countries; and 5) regulation of biotechnology. For further information visit [http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr2007/call\\_for\\_paper.asp](http://www.economia.uniroma2.it/conferenze/icabr2007/call_for_paper.asp).

19-21 September, Bern, Switzerland: NEW APPROACHES TO PLANT BREEDING OF ORPHAN CROPS IN AFRICA. This conference is being organised by the University of Bern. It will bring together scientists from both developed and developing countries to discuss techniques that could be implemented in a scheme of orphan crop improvement. Orphan (neglected or lost) crops are crops of high economic value in developing countries, particularly in Africa. These include cereal crops (such as millet and tef), legumes (cow pea, grass pea, and bambara groundnut), and root crops (cassava and sweet potato). In addition, the future prospects and feasibility of modern biotechnology in African agriculture will be discussed. For further information visit <http://www.botany.unibe.ch/deve/orphancrops/index.htm.a>

## RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy for review by the BRIDGES staff to Malena Sell.

LIVESTOCK GENETICS COMPANIES: CONCENTRATION AND PROPRIETARY STRATEGIES OF AN EMERGING POWER IN THE GLOBAL FOOD ECONOMY. By Susanne Gura. League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development, Ober-Ramstadt, Germany (2007). Consumers are usually not told which breed of chicken, cattle or swine have produced the eggs, milk and meat offered in the supermarkets or the butchery shops. They should get interested, since they are contributing to the development of a global genetic monoculture. Meat processing factories and factory farms want uniform animals. Hardly noticed by the public, a concentration process is taking place not only in livestock production and processing, but also in the livestock breeding industry. The industry has not only dramatically revamped itself by developing new technologies and forming new companies but also changed its name, from "breeding industry" or "artificial insemination companies" to "livestock genetics". With patents on animals and other appropriation strategies, the livestock genetics companies are increasing their power, acting as if consumers all

over the world want ever larger quantities of ever cheaper meat, milk and eggs without caring for environmental, social and cultural impact. To access the report, visit [http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/docs/Livestock\\_genetics.pdf](http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/docs/Livestock_genetics.pdf).

GLOBAL BIOPIRACY - PATENTS, PLANTS AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE. By Ikechi Mgbeoji (Cornell University Press, 2006). The appropriation of plants and traditional knowledge by corporations and other entities is often called biopiracy. Such practices arise from a cultural milieu that systematically marginalises non-Western forms of knowledge, which are devalued as "folk knowledge" or characterised as inferior. Global Biopiracy rethinks the role of international law and legal concepts, global patent systems, and international agricultural research institutions as they affect legal ownership and control of plants and the knowledge that makes them valuable. Ikechi Mgbeoji first examines the Western assumptions and biases that inform the patent system, international law, and institutions affecting farmers around the globe. He next analyses the cultural and economic traits that divide the industrialised world and the developing world. Finally, Mgbeoji confronts the phenomenal loss of human cultures and plant diversity that has already occurred and that will continue in the future unless protective measures are implemented and enforced. For further information visit [http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/cup\\_detail.ta?ti\\_id=4615](http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/cup_detail.ta?ti_id=4615).

A NEW ERA IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. By Steve Bass (IIED Briefing Paper, 2007). This briefing paper claims that the 20 year international effort to put the planet on a path to sustainable development has been woefully inadequate and will need a radical rethink if it is to achieve its aims. It calls for: traditional, local and non-Western approaches to play a major role in a new, globally constructed and globally shared drive towards genuine sustainable development; a shift from the inviolability of economic growth to the inviolability of human well-being and environmental limits; and governments to account for the economic and social benefits that natural resources provide and the costs of mismanaging these environmental assets. To access the paper visit

<http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=110711IED>.

**VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKETS: AN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS GUIDE TO WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY WORK.** Edited by Ricardo Bayon, Amanda Hawn and Katherine Hamilton (Earthscan, January 2007). This is a business guide to the 'next big thing', with complete coverage of what voluntary carbon markets are, where they are, how they work and how to capitalise - as a buyer or a seller - on a market that has the potential to mirror oil and gas in scale and to slow climate change. Foreword by Al Gore. For further information visit <http://shop.earthscan.co.uk/ProductDetails/mcs/productID/746/>.

"Integrated Assessment of Trade-Related Policies: Agricultural Trade Liberalisation and the Convention to Combat Desertification." By Karel Mayrand in *IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROJECT APPRAISAL* 24 (4, 2006). This article looks at the interconnections among agricultural trade liberalisation, land degradation, and poverty in the world's rural drylands. It seeks to better understand the implications of the Doha Round on United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) implementation, and to derive policy implications to improve coherence among agricultural trade, poverty alleviation, and land management strategies, with a specific focus on activities to combat desertification under the framework of the UNCCD. In line with the UNCCD approach, the analysis considers both the environmental and socio-economic drivers of desertification.

"Making Trade Sustainable Impact Assessment More Relevant to Trade Negotiations." By Tancrede Voituriez, et al. in *IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROJECT APPRAISAL* 24 (4, 2006). While trade sustainability impact assessments (trade SIAs) have generated much useful information about the potential impacts of trade liberalisation, they have made very limited impact on trade negotiations, which generate unresolved controversy, if not deadlock. This paper contends that one reason for this is that trade SIAs do not explicitly recognise the motives for countries to resist free trade. Five such

motives are identified, with very different characteristics and validity from the perspective of social welfare enhancement and sustainable development. The paper suggests revisions to the trade SIA methodology to help decision-makers better understand the obstacles to trade liberalisation negotiations and whether it is likely that these obstacles will, and desirable that they should, be overcome.