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LEAD STORIES

US FARM SUBSIDY HINT NOT ENOUGH TO JOLT SLUGGISH DOHA NEGOTIATIONS

A breakthrough in the Doha Round negotiations does not yet appear within reach, despite modest (though rare) progress in the agriculture talks over the past three weeks.

Hopes for an accord received a boost last week when US agriculture negotiator Joe Glauber suggested that Washington could accept capping its trade-distorting farm payments at between \$13 and 16.4 billion dollars, the range for a potential deal outlined in July by the chair of the WTO agriculture talks. Several countries have long insisted that US subsidy concessions were necessary for a Doha agreement to become possible.

US officials have subsequently downplayed the significance of the statement, suggesting that it was implicit in their acceptance of the draft deal as a basis for further discussion. Nevertheless, the comments, made in a meeting of the agriculture negotiating committee on 19 September, marked Washington's clearest signal yet that it might be willing to accept a spending limit below \$17 billion, let alone the \$22.5 in its formal standing offer at the WTO.

"I had never heard them say that before. It's not a small thing," said agriculture chair Ambassador Crawford Falconer (New Zealand) after the gathering.

Representatives from other countries, including the EU and Brazil cautiously welcomed the US' possible shift in position. Some developing country delegates noted that the range of subsidy figures in Falconer's draft was quite wide, and that much would hinge on where on that spectrum Washington was willing to go.

Also crucial are the concessions the US would settle for in return, and whether its trading partners think the "exchange rate" is worth it. Furthermore, even if WTO negotiators can agree on a Doha deal, it remains far from clear that the unpopular President George W.

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Bush administration would be able to sell it to Congress.

Sean Spicer, a spokesperson for the US trade representative's office, said that subsidy moves would require others to "step up to ensure the strongest possible market access outcomes implied by the texts in agriculture [and] manufacturing" trade, according to Agence France Presse.

Several major developing countries protested that the industrial tariff cuts laid out in the draft agreement by chair Ambassador Don Stephenson (Canada) were too onerous – at least compared to the farm reform on offer in the agriculture text, or even the demands made on rich country manufacturing tariffs.

One industrial goods negotiator said that Glauber's remarks were significant in that they appeared to recognise that the US had to go where "many thought they had to go anyway." However, they had not "jolted the talks" into action, the official said. Following the draft text's chilly reception, discussions on non-agricultural market access have avoided the central issues of the tariff reduction formula and associated exceptions for developing countries, pending movement in the farm trade talks.

Falconer: ag delegates "negotiating seriously"

Falconer saw increased hope for rapprochement on farm subsidy and tariff cuts, telling reporters on 21 September that delegates were "negotiating seriously," and had finally ceased "posturing for the sake of posturing."

Delegates now have two weeks off to meet with each other, consult their capitals, and explore ways forward. Falconer will resume consultations on 8 October for two weeks.

Though shying away from discussing headline percentage figures for farm tariff cuts, Members have been discussing a different piece of the market access puzzle: the range of exceptions to standard tariff treatment, from the 'sensitive' and 'special' products set to be shielded from the full force of tariff reduction, to the 'tropical products' slated to receive an additional level of liberalisation. Compromise will require balancing exporters' interests against other countries' import sensitivities.

Falconer's July draft text did not include detailed provisions on several of these exceptions. He has indicated that he wants to provide Members with some sort of focus for further discussions, possibly through issue-specific working papers. He is expected to release a revised text fleshing out the skeletal

provisions in the existing draft in the second half of October.

The chair's so-called 'Room E' consultations with 36 delegations representing a cross-section of coalitions and negotiating interests have been at the centre of recent discussions.

Also prominent has been a group of senior officials from eight major trading powers that has been meeting to discuss various issues in the talks. This latter group has expanded, reportedly at India's behest, to include China, Indonesia, South Africa, and Jamaica. With the addition of the four developing countries, the 'group of 8' comprising Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, the EU, India, Japan, and the US has now been dubbed the 'G-12' by some officials. The group is believed to be steering clear of major political decisions, but identifying issues for further clarification and technical work, in parallel to the Room E meetings. Sources familiar with their deliberations suggest that participants are operating under a 'code of conduct' whereby they will not present issues to Falconer unless everyone has agreed on them.

The emergence of yet another small, exclusive, and influential group of Members has left some delegates concerned about transparency and inclusiveness, although concerns were somewhat assuaged by the group's expansion. Others suggested that the G-12 has been willing to bring in other countries as needed.

Last week's talks on the 'special safeguard mechanism'(SSM), which will enable developing countries to raise tariffs temporarily above bound ceiling levels as a defence against import surges, served to highlight Members' differences.

Agricultural exporters from both the developed and developing world, including the US, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Thailand, and Malaysia want the mechanism's scope to be limited, fearing blocked-off export opportunities. The G-33 group of developing countries, which includes India, China, and Indonesia, wants the precise opposite: a mechanism that is relatively easy to invoke when import volumes rise or import prices drop. Notably, Brazil, a leading developing country and major farm exporter that has generally preferred to stay above the fray in South-South disagreements, also expressed misgivings about the G-33's demands.

Particularly contentious was the issue of whether safeguard duties should be permitted to exceed developing countries' current binding tariff caps, agreed to during the Uruguay Round. Exporters argue that this is necessary to prevent backtracking on previous liberalisation, and that the SSM should only be

available to offset the negative consequences of Doha-related tariff cuts. Others counter that this would risk robbing the new mechanism of its effectiveness. Least-developed countries point out that such a restriction would render the new safeguard useless to them, since they are not required to lower bound tariff levels under the Doha Round. Recently acceded Members, which have low tariff levels already, warned that strong limits on remedial duties could hit them especially hard.

‘Exchange rate’ remains crucial – and controversial

“The leviathan is beginning to move,” Falconer told negotiators about the talks last week. “That’s my impression. We’ll see if it remains that way.”

For the leviathan to keep moving, say the EU and the US, developing countries like Brazil and India need to slash their industrial tariff caps deeply enough to reduce applied duty rates on a substantial proportion of goods.

These demands have been controversial thus far, not least because bound ceiling limits for tariffs and subsidies have been the traditional currency of WTO negotiations. Years of autonomous tariff liberalisation have left India and Brazil with applied tariffs on many products low enough that they would only be ‘bitten into’ by deep percentage cuts to their bound ceiling rates. However, neither Brussels nor Washington has offered to cap trade-distorting farm subsidies at levels that go substantially beyond already-planned reforms (and the bulk of their farm payments, deemed not to distort trade, are exempt from cuts under the Doha Round anyway).

This has complicated the political optics with regard to the ‘exchange rate’ between concessions in the negotiations, even though it is natural for governments to want their trading partners to change existing practice rather than theoretical limits.

For instance, according to calculations carried out by the WTO Secretariat earlier this month based on data from 2005, even the gentlest tariff cuts provided for in Stephenson’s NAMA text would cut Brazil’s average bound industrial tariffs by about half, and its average applied duties by 6.3 to 7 percent. Capping most of Brazil’s tariffs at 23 or 26 percent would force down applied rates on over 40 percent of tariff lines, affecting 38.6 to 48.7 percent of imports by value, depending on the flexibilities used to shield some products from the full force of tariff reduction. For India, similar caps would reduce current average bound rates by close to 60 percent, and applied rates by 6.6 to 8.6 percent. New Delhi would see applied rates reduced on over half of all tariff lines, although it could keep this to a quarter by foregoing the use of flexibilities to cushion the most

vulnerable manufacturing sectors. Between 9.5 and 46 percent of imports would be affected by the cuts.

The most demanding figures in the NAMA text – a tariff cap of 19 percent – would cut India’s applied tariffs by an average of over 13 percent, biting into duties on close to four-fifths of tariff lines. For Brazil, the corresponding figures would be 11 to 12 percent, and over 50 percent of tariff lines. In both cases, roughly half of import value would be affected.

By comparison, Washington’s actual spending on ‘overall trade-distorting farm support’ (OTDS) last year was estimated to be \$11 billion, with payment levels low due to high global prices. In other words, below the \$12 billion-odd cap sought by the G-20 developing countries, not to mention the \$13 billion lower figure in Falconer’s text – even though practical restrictions on how subsidy schemes can be classified within the different components of OTDS mean that these caps would nonetheless likely entail at least some restructuring of US farm programmes.

In the calculus of this negotiation, the US is seeking to preserve its freedom to boost subsidies to farmers, while Brazil and India are pushing to retain the ability to raise tariffs on some industrial products.

Although the G-20 has insisted that the US’ subsidy cap should be no more than \$12 billion, one source suggested that some members of the group might eventually accept a ceiling close to \$14 billion.

The significance of the precise figures in both draft texts is hard to pinpoint, because governments appear to have meant different things when they called them a basis for further negotiation. For example, the EU suggests that an agreement should be found within the ranges of figures identified. Japan, though it also accepted the texts as a basis from which to proceed, has steadfastly maintained that the figures for farm tariff cuts were unacceptable.

US political climate unfriendly

Two former senior diplomats from the US and the EU earlier this week called upon WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy to present Members with a comprehensive compromise agreement of his own, saying that “the major players will not do what they know needs to be done unless everyone moves together.” In an op-ed in the Washington post, Stuart Eizenstat, a former US ambassador to the EU, and Hugo Paemen, a former EU envoy to Washington, wrote that Lamy “is the only one who can force the recalcitrant countries to bridge the remaining gaps. He must make them recognize that the future of the institution, barely a decade old, is at stake.” A similar

move by GATT Director-General Arthur Dunkel in December 1991 infuriated many countries but ultimately formed the basis of the Uruguay Round agreements.

Reuters reports that Lamy told journalists in Stockholm that the current situation did not justify such an exceptional initiative, since "the [Geneva-based negotiating] process is moving in the right direction."

Other optimistic views came from New York, where world leaders are currently gathered for the UN's annual summit. President Bush, Brazilian President Lula Inacio Lula da Silva, and Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath reiterated their commitment to the WTO talks, promising to demonstrate flexibility. Of course, similar expressions of support have been made for the better part of the six years since the Doha Round was launched.

An even more formidable obstacle than finding consensus on a Doha tariff and subsidy package might be getting it through the US Congress in the foreseeable future.

House agriculture committee chair Collin Peterson (Democrat-Minnesota) has vowed to oppose deeper farm subsidy cuts barring dramatically expanded market access elsewhere, despite the soaring value of US agricultural exports. The Democratic leadership is loath to risk fragile support in newly-won rural districts by pushing farm reform. Extra cuts to cotton subsidies appear to be an especially hard sell.

The Financial Times suggests that the current view on much of Capitol Hill is that between the Bush administration's diminished political capital and Democrats' scepticism about economic globalisation, the Doha Round will have to wait until a new administration takes control of the White House in 2009.

That would be just in time for Indian elections due later that year.

ICTSD reporting; "The short, unhappy life of Doha... (or D.O.A.)," THE PRAIRIE STAR, 16 September 2007; "A Trade Deal on the Ropes," WASHINGTON POST, 24 September 2007; "Doha set for backburner as trade talks near a halt," FINANCIAL TIMES, 25 September 2007; "US prepared to negotiate based on WTO farm proposal," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 19 September 2007; "US Signals Ready to Limit Farm Subsidies," 19 September 2007; "US farm talks offer get guarded response at WTO," REUTERS, 21 September 2007; "US, EU hope WTO farm talks progress will spur Brazil, India to make concessions," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 21 September 2007; "World leaders express new optimism on Doha deal," REUTERS, 25 September 2007.

CANADA ISSUES COMPULSORY LICENCE FOR HIV/AIDS DRUG EXPORT TO RWANDA, IN FIRST TEST OF WTO PROCEDURE

Rwanda last week came one step closer to becoming the first nation to use a WTO procedure designed to allow developing countries to import cut-price copies of patented medicines, when Canadian patent authorities issued a compulsory licence authorising the generic production of a patented HIV/AIDS drug for export to the central African country.

"This is big step forward in finally getting at least one affordable medicine from Canada to a developing country in need," said Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. However, noting that it had already been three years since Canada introduced a legal system for making such exports possible, he said "it's also a wake-up call" about the need to simplify the process to make it more efficient and effective.

The Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) cleared large generic pharmaceutical company Apotex to manufacture and deliver 260,000 packs of Apo-Triavir at cost to Rwandan health authorities. This would be enough to treat 21,000 AIDS patients for a year.

Rwandan WTO delegate Edouard Bizumuremyi told Bridges he was delighted with the development and said Rwanda had been "waiting for this."

The authorisation follows Rwanda's July notification to the WTO that it wanted to import that quantity of the medicine from Canada (see BRIDGES Weekly, 25 July 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-07-25/story2.htm>), becoming the first country to try to import generics under a WTO procedure criticised as too complex to be effective.

Trial run for WTO health amendment

The WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) allows members to issue compulsory licences in specific circumstances, including public health emergencies, effectively suspending patent rights on products to clear the way for the production of cheap generics. However, the TRIPS Agreement also stipulates that the generics thus produced should be "predominantly" for the domestic market, thus limiting the amount that can be exported to countries with an insufficient domestic pharmaceutical base.

To address this, governments agreed in August 2003 to waive the domestic consumption requirement under certain conditions to allow poor countries to import drugs produced under compulsory licence elsewhere. This provisional waiver was made into a formal amendment to the TRIPS Agreement in December 2005, despite criticism from health activists that its administrative requirements were so complex that no country had tried to use it (see BRIDGES Weekly, 7 December 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-12-07/story1.htm>).

Nearly four years after the '30 August Decision' waiver, Rwanda became the first country to try to use the mechanism when it notified the TRIPS Council of its intention to do so in July.

Canada was one of the first countries to respond to the 30 August Decision, clearing the way for the export of generic versions of essential medicines through initial legislation in 2004, and then through the Canadian Access to Medicine Regime (CAMR) in May 2005.

Canada licences drug under access-to-medicine regime

From the outset, Canadian health groups criticised the CAMR for exceeding the already exacting conditions set out in the WTO compromise; one provision, for instance, requires regulatory approval by Canadian authorities, and not just the World Health Organisation.

The CAMR was finally inaugurated on 19 September when the Canadian patent commissioner, Murray Lewis, granted Apotex a compulsory licence to manufacture and export Apo-Triavir, a fixed-dose combination of three drugs under patents held by Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK), Shire, and Boehringer Ingelheim. The licence is valid for two years and restricted to the supply of 260,000 packs to Rwanda exclusively.

In response to the health activists' concerns, the patent commissioner described Canada's process for granting the licence as "almost as simple as it could get," with the "self-explanatory" application forms spelt out on the website.

Generic makers, health activists unsatisfied

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network's Elliott countered that obstacles arose in the "hoops that have to be jumped through, which act as a disincentive for companies to act." For instance, under the CAMR, a would-be generic producer must first negotiate with the patent holders for a voluntary licence, and would only become eligible for a compulsory licence if negotiations have failed after 30 days. Thus, he explained, licences for each specific quantity and destination country are

potentially subject to delay. Furthermore, the requirement opens the recipient country to the possibility of political pressure from the brand-name company.

Apotex Director Elie Betito was scathing about the company's experience with the CAMR, telling Bridges "it makes no sense if you are trying to save lives."

He said that Apotex's attempts to negotiate voluntary licences had lagged for over a year, until Rwanda's WTO notification triggered the Canadian regime's compulsory licence provisions. For any more than a country-specific quota, "the brand pharmaceuticals can attach whatever conditions they like" to a licence, Betito added.

Following Rwanda's petition, both GSK and Shire waived their right to the low royalty fee determined in accordance with the African country's place on the UN Human Development Index. GSK did challenge the name Apo-Triavir, however, arguing that it could be confused with their brand-name fixed-dose combination Trizivir, but the patent commissioner did not agree. Apotex said the generic would cost \$0.405 per tablet, compared to \$20 per tablet in the US for the brand-name equivalent. Moreover, it predicted that this price would drop once production of the active pharmaceutical ingredients is ramped up.

In any event, the path for Rwanda to import generic Apo-Triavir is now fairly straightforward. Canada must notify the TRIPS Council of its intention to export the drug to Rwanda, detailing information about the licence, the quantity, and the two-year duration. Apotex needs to create a website providing information about the quantity of medicine and the distinguishing characteristics – packaging, shaping, or colouring – aimed at ensuring that the generics are not illegally diverted into other markets.

However, if Canada is serious about wanting to facilitate the provision of medicines to developing countries, Elliott recommended reforming the CAMR to create a 'one-licence solution' that would authorise a company to produce the same drug for export to different countries that submit notifications to the WTO or Canadian government.

Elliott acknowledged that "there is not much appetite to revisit the legislation" among Canadian policymakers. He expressed concern that now the CAMR had been shown to work, in however limited a way, there would be no impetus to improve it.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER STORIES

WTO AID-FOR-TRADE INITIATIVE GETS A BOOST FROM REVIEWS IN LIMA, MANILA

The WTO-led 'aid-for-trade' initiative is supposed to help give developing countries the financial and technical assistance they need to boost their capacity to take part in international trade.

However, since the initiative was launched nearly two years ago, few concrete signs have emerged on how this goal would be accomplished, apart from a high-level task force report last year identifying a range of organisational and monitoring priorities. The donor community has not come forward with new funds for implementation. Nor, for that matter, have would-be recipients clearly articulated how they would spend money on trade-related reforms and infrastructure.

This appears set to change. Conferences held in Lima and Manila during the past two weeks called on donors and recipient countries in Latin America and Asia to get organised at the national, regional, and multilateral levels: developing nations were asked to identify a few objectives that would help them boost exports and remove bottlenecks to growth; donors were urged to commit stable financing to the projects thus developed.

The two "regional reviews," along with one in Dar es Salaam in October, are building towards a "global review" of aid-for-trade efforts at WTO headquarters in Geneva scheduled for 20-21 November.

The WTO co-organised the 12-13 September meeting in the Peruvian capital with the Inter-American Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank was its partner for the Manila gathering the following week. The principal purpose of the meetings was to encourage policymakers, donors, and the private sector to cooperate on constructing and implementing a comprehensive trade-led growth strategy at the national and regional levels.

Both conferences were attended by trade and finance ministers from the respective regions. Officials from poorer countries and small island states were particularly well represented. Also present were private sector groups, bilateral and regional donors, regional development banks, and institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank.

In both Lima and Manila, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy stressed that in order to take advantage of the developmental opportunities presented by the current global economy, countries "need access to the basic infrastructure that drives globalisation": modern telecommunications and transport networks to connect exporters to markets, rapid and efficient customs facilities, testing labs to ensure that exports meet international standards, 'safety nets' to deal with trade-related economic adjustment, and "the sophisticated expertise and institutions needed to navigate a highly complex trading system." Lamy stressed the importance of national 'ownership' of aid-for-trade plans as well as the need for coherence among government ministries, donors, and business.

Participants repeatedly emphasised that donors should respond to recipients' priorities, rather than vice versa, according to sources who attended both meetings.

Major donors expressed willingness to increase funding for trade-related assistance. However, they stopped short of explicitly repeating promises of some \$15 billion made by the EU, Japan, and the US at the WTO's Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December 2005, where the aid-for-trade initiative was launched.

In an op-ed piece in The EastAfrican newspaper, Lamy and African Development Bank President David Kamberuka described some of the infrastructural shortcomings that aid-for-trade efforts could target: freight costs in Africa that amount to 13 percent compared of total import value, compared to 8.8 per cent for developing countries elsewhere and 5.2 per cent for industrialised countries; or per kilometre operating costs in Tanzania that are two and half times those in Indonesia or Pakistan. They quoted World Bank estimates that a US\$20 billion road network linking Africa's capitals could boost trade by US\$250 billion within 15 years, with great benefit to the rural poor.

Potential gains notwithstanding, participants were emphatic that aid-for-trade efforts could not substitute for smart domestic policy or a successful conclusion to the struggling Doha Round global trade talks, which were initiated to rebalance multilateral rules to make them more development friendly. The Associated Press reports that Filipino President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo told the Manila that the multilateral talks offered developing countries the best opportunity for poverty reduction, with the growing number of bilateral and regional trade accords a "second-best solution."

The aid-for-trade initiative is distinct from the Doha Round, but some officials suggest that momentum is likely to falter if the talks fail.

ICTSD reporting; "Philippine leader says bilateral trade agreements '2nd-best solution' next to WTO deal," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 20 September 2007; "Why we must improve our trade capacity," THE EAST AFRICAN, 24 September 2007.

IN BRIEF

WIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY TAKES OFF AMIDST CONTROVERSY OVER IDRIS' AGE

As the World Intellectual Property Organization's annual General Assembly kicked off on 24 September, member delegations were preoccupied by an issue that had nothing to do with intellectual property, development, or innovation: the age of WIPO Director-General Kamil Idris.

WIPO's highest decision-making body will meet through 3 October, and is set to consider the future of the 'development agenda', a series of proposals to integrate development concerns into all of the institution's activities.

However, as the meeting opened, delegates focused mainly on a provisional agenda item with the unrevealing title of "WIPO Internal Audit Report Number IAOD/INV/2006/2 of November 2006 and Appropriate Follow-up Thereto." This report confirmed explosive allegations that Idris had changed his official year of birth from 1945 to 1954 in WIPO records after joining the institution. Being born in 1945 would have allowed Idris to be hired at a more senior level; subsequently changing it to 1954 would have created potential for financial benefits upon leaving his job. Idris' conduct violated staff rules, the audit found.

Prior to the meeting, the US managed to secure the confidential report's place on the provisional agenda, setting the stage for a discussion of Idris' fitness to continue at the helm of WIPO. Switzerland, Japan, Canada, Australia, and Canada backed the US' efforts.

Opposing the discussion of the audit was the 53-member African Group, which argued that the age issue was best discussed privately, and was in any case not important enough to cause the Sudanese WIPO chief's dismissal. The WIPO Secretariat, for its part, decried attempts to "destabilise" the organisation, and rejected the suggestions that Idris stood to benefit from the age change. Argentinean Ambassador Alberto

Dumont and some other developing country delegates expressed concern that the age issue risked distracting attention from more important issues including the development agenda.

Notably, the UK and the EU did not openly push for the debate on Idris.

On 25 September, a compromise was struck under which a group of 'friends of the chair' would examine the audit and report back to the General Assembly. Sources suggest the group will comprise one official from each of the various regional blocs, as well as alliances such as the EU and the G-77.

The assembly is also set to discuss the fate of moribund discussions on a potential treaty to protect broadcasters' rights, and whether to extend discussions on traditional knowledge and genetic resources.

ICTSD reporting.

WTO IN BRIEF

PANEL ESTABLISHED TO EXAMINE US CLAIMS OF CHINESE IP VIOLATIONS

The WTO on 25 September established a formal panel to investigate US allegations that Beijing is tolerating intellectual property rights violations and maintaining trade barriers against books, music, and other copyrighted goods.

Washington (WT/DS362/7) claims that China is doing too little to enforce copyright and trademark protection on a wide range of goods such as books, CDs, and DVDs. It argues that Beijing sets an unacceptably high bar for punishing copyright infringements with criminal prosecution, allowing large-scale commerce to take place in pirated movies and music with the threat of little more than an administrative fine.

Furthermore, the US contends that the Chinese government's policies on intellectual property-right infringing goods - including counterfeits - are too lax. It says that China's denial of copyright law protection to works that have not received censorship approval for publication and distribution in the country allows for piracy without the risk of legal punishment. Washington also claims that Beijing's censorship procedures and copyright law give better and prompter protection to works by Chinese citizens than to those by foreign nationals.

China blocked the US' first request for a panel in August. WTO rules prevented it from doing so a second time (see BRIDGES Weekly, 5 September 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-09-05/story5.htm>).

At the meeting of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body, a US official acknowledged China had tried to improve the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, but said that it was not enough. Bilateral discussions "have not resulted in a mutually agreeable solution to our concerns," the delegate added. The US initiated the dispute in April (see BRIDGES Weekly, 18 April 2009 <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-04-18/story4.htm>).

The Chinese WTO mission in Geneva issued a statement after the gathering insisting that the laws in question were in full accordance with WTO rules, according to the state-owned China Daily.

According to the standard timetable for WTO disputes, once panelists have been appointed, they should issue their ruling in six months.

ICTSD reporting; "China's IPR action to be probed," CHINA DAILY, 27 September 2007.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

VACANCY

A diplomatic mission in Geneva seeks an Assistant to work on international trade matters as part of its delegation to the WTO. Successful candidates would have a good knowledge of the WTO, its mission, and functions; a degree in international law, international relations, or a related field; excellent command of English with knowledge of French or Spanish an advantage; good social and representation skills; and the ability to work independently and report regularly to supervisors. Experience with the WTO or other international organisations would be a plus. For further inquiries, please send your CV by e-mail to wtoposition@gmail.com, with "WTO Position in Diplomatic Mission" in the subject field.

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.

Coming Up: 27 September - 3 October

1-2 October, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. MOBILIZING AID FOR TRADE: FOCUS AFRICA. The purpose of this meeting is to bring to light the ongoing issues in the region, as well as the fruitful endeavours of the Aid for Trade program. Specifically, it aims to encourage governments, donors, and the public sector to address the challenges in the region and to prioritise Aid for Trade needs. Internet:

<http://www.uneca.org/aidfortrade/>

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/meets_public/meets_e.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.

28 September: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

28 September: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES - SPECIAL SESSION

28 September: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT - SPECIAL SESSION

1, 3 October: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - GABON AND CAMEROON

1 October: NEGOTIATING GROUP ON TRADE FACILITATION

2 - 3 October: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES - AIR TRANSPORT

2 October: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT - SPECIAL SESSION

Other Upcoming Events

4-5 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO'S 2007 PUBLIC FORUM ON HOW THE WTO CAN HELP HARNESS GLOBALISATION. The Forum is intended to provide civil society, academics, and the public with a unique opportunity to debate with WTO Members about how the WTO can best contribute to the management of globalisation. Trade and global governance, the contribution of the WTO to the construction of a coherent multilateral system, and the interaction between trade and sustainable development will be but a few of this year's topics. Participants can come to Geneva or participate online. Internet:

http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum2007_e/programme_e.htm

15-16 October, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK: SUSTAINABILITY IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND GOVERNMENT. Organised by the International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC). Recognising that agriculture and food security face a range of pressing challenges from increasing population growth to global warming, IPC will bring together international food and agricultural trade experts, environmental experts, farm leaders, government officials, and agribusiness and food retail executives to discuss how the private sector and governments can best address these sustainability challenges. The seminar will also discuss the role of trade in the sustainability debate. For further information, contact Amy Testa, tel: +1 202 328 5117; email: testa@agritrade.org; internet: http://www.agritrade.org/events/sustainability_agriculture.html.

22-26 October, Jaipur, India. DEVELOPING SKILLS ON COMMERCIAL & ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY - Training Seminar for Junior-level Civil Servants and Executives (CDS.03). This Training Seminar, organised by the India-based CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition, will impart knowledge and information on multiple aspects of commercial and economic diplomacy in the present and future context of globalisation and economic relations among countries. Experienced resource persons from various backgrounds will conduct sessions with case studies and hands-on exercise. It is aimed for junior level government officials (from trade and other economic ministries), representatives from inter-governmental and multilateral agencies, and other stakeholders such as business persons. For details, please see <http://circ.in/CDS03/Pdf/CDS03.pdf>

RESOURCES

BIOFUELS AT WHAT COST? GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ETHANOL AND BIODIESEL IN SWITZERLAND. By Ronald Steenblik and Juan Simón. Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI)/International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), June 2007. This report is the most comprehensive account to date of the Swiss government's government support for biofuels. It is part of a multi-country effort by the Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI) to characterise and quantify subsidies for biofuels production, distribution, and consumption, as well as the subsidies to producers of key factor inputs. Similar reports on Australia, Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Indonesia, and Malaysia will be released over the summer and fall of 2007. Available online at

http://www.globalsubsidies.org/IMG/pdf/Swiss_Support_to_Biofuels2.pdf.

CAN THE TRADING SYSTEM BE GOVERNED? INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE WTO'S SUSPENDED ANIMATION. By Robert Wolfe. Centre for International Governance Innovation Working Paper No. 30, September 2007. Do the difficulties in reaching an agreement in the Doha round signal the need for institutional reform of the WTO? Members face great difficulty in undertaking needed renovations and new agreements through negotiations, even as the organisation goes about its daily work as usual. This paper is structured by two hypotheses, that the way in which interests are aggregated changes outcomes; and that deliberation aids learning, which changes outcomes. The paper shows that WTO decision-making principles, dominated by the Single Undertaking and consensus, are essential given the nature of the membership and the political saliency of the issues, which has implications both for what is discussed (the agenda) and how (process). New rules apply to all, which means that voice for all Members matters. While exit is difficult, any Member can deny consensus, in principle if not in practice, which creates more roles for small groups and coalitions, and a common need for transparency. The paper concludes that procedural improvements by themselves will not solve intractable policy disagreements, but the lessons now being learned in the Doha Round on how to manage traditional negotiations involving many more Members within a changing global power structure might pay off in a subsequent round. Nevertheless the engagement of thousands of officials in the WTO process continues to shape collective management of the global trading system, even when revisions to the treaty prove elusive. Available online at http://www.cigionline.org/cigi/Publications/workingp/cant_hetr.

BUSINESS GUIDE TO PARTNERING WITH NGOS AND THE UNITED NATIONS. By the UN Global Compact, 2007. This guide was created through a partnership between Dalberg, the UN Global Compact, and The Financial Times. It seeks to facilitate partnerships between companies and NGOs or UN agencies. Available online at <http://www.civicus.org/new/media/ExSum-Business-Guide.pdf>

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Paige McClanahan. Director: Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, rmelendez@ictsd.ch. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 7, ch. de Balexert, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from **BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest**® may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editor or the Director.

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