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LEAD STORIES

HIGH-LEVEL TALKS YIELD NO BREAKTHROUGH
ON DOHA 1

REVIEW OF EU TRADE POLICY REVEALS
"SUBSTANTIAL" BARRIERS TO AG IMPORTS
REMAIN 2

OTHER STORIES

US, BRAZIL SEEK TO EXPAND GLOBAL MARKET
FOR BIOFUELS 3

BANGLADESH AND BOLIVIA CALL FOR
EXTENSION OF WHO WORKING GROUP ON
PUBLIC HEALTH, INNOVATION, AND
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY 4

IN BRIEF

TRADING PARTNERS RAISE CONCERNS
REGARDING RUSSIA'S WTO ACCESSION 5

WTO IN BRIEF

ENVIRONMENT: WTO MEMBERS DISCUSS
INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH MEAs 6

NAMA TALKS MAKE PROGRESS ON NON-TARIFF
BARRIERS 6

INDIA UNDER PRESSURE IN WINE AND SPIRITS
SPAT 7

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

EVENTS 7

RESOURCES 9

LEAD STORIES

HIGH-LEVEL TALKS YIELD NO BREAKTHROUGH ON DOHA

The four major players in the Doha round -- the US, EU, India and Brazil -- met bilaterally, as well as with WTO Director General Pascal Lamy, during 3-5 March in London and Geneva. This was the first gathering of the G-4 at the ministerial level since talks officially resumed a month ago and part of an effort to charter in a breakthrough by means of 'quiet diplomacy' among the key players.

Following the meetings -- which did not involve all four players in a roundtable -- a spokesperson for US Trade Representative Susan Schwab said "Our meetings were constructive and we are continuing to make slow and steady progress." EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson agreed that "We're in a very different place than where we were last July," referring to the breakdown of talks at the WTO at that time. Indian Commerce minister Kamal Nath commented that "Agriculture has been the most structurally flawed part of global trade and I feel the US and EU need to converge on vital issues. However, I feel confident after the talks."

The discussions did not, however, yield any breakthrough or concrete results. Top officials had met a week earlier in advance of the high-level talks, without being able to pave the way for a deal (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 February 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-02-28/story4.htm>). A number of commentators expressed concern about this fact, given that time to conclude the Doha round is running short.

Looming over governments is the impending end-June expiry of the US administration's 'trade promotion authority' (TPA). Without this mandate, President George W. Bush will lose his ability to submit trade agreements to Congress for a yes-or-no vote without amendments. Lamy believes that without TPA renewal the Doha Round may fail.

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While it is not clear precisely what a 'breakthrough' would entail, negotiators seem to think that it would be similar to 'modalities' and at least provide guidance about the depth of eventual subsidy and tariff cuts, as well as the scope of exceptions.

In order to breathe life into the round, the EU is under pressure to lower agricultural tariffs, the US to cut subsidies and major developing countries to lower their tariffs on industrial goods and open up services markets.

What about transparency?

Meanwhile, countries outside the G-4 have raised concerns about being sidelined from a potential deal, or pre-deal by the four. Aftab Alam Khan of civil society group ActionAid, also said "We condemn the secretive WTO meetings this weekend among the EU, US, India and Brazil where the trade heavyweights are in danger of horse-trading away the livelihoods of millions."

African ambassadors meeting with Schwab and Lamy made the case for transparency and inclusiveness. Following the meetings, Schwab's spokesperson Sean Spicer stressed both that a deal was far from imminent and that "We are not going to come to a breakthrough and say to everyone, 'here is the deal, take it'."

Internal disagreements shine through

Meanwhile, outgoing French President Jacques Chirac lashed out against Mandelson, whom he accused of selling European farmers short in the Doha round talks. He said France would stand firm against Mandelson who "doesn't stop wanting to give away more" to the US and developing countries. French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin subsequently clarified that "France will not block negotiations, France will bring some common sense to the negotiations with a simple idea - agriculture will not serve as an adjustable negotiating item for negotiations."

The Wall Street Journal reported that tensions were growing within the Bush administration with regard to the Doha round, with some key players wanting the US to come forth with a bold offer rather than continue with the low-key negotiating strategy among the four big players.

Agriculture - the way forward

Discussions are set to continue in many fora. During a visit to Delhi, Mariann Fischer Boel, European Agriculture Commissioner, teamed up with India's Commerce Secretary G.K. Pillai to call for further cuts

to US agricultural subsidies. Pillai noted that "The whole Doha Round of trade negotiations is hostage to a handful of farmers...70% of the U.S. farmers don't even get subsidies -- It is like the tail wagging the dog."

The US has recently been pressuring India to open up its both its industrial and agricultural markets, accusing the country of intransigence (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 February 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-02-28/story4.htm>). There has been speculation that India is becoming increasingly isolated among the four. However, specifically on relations with Brazil, Nath denied any ruptures saying that 'There is no question of disunity. India and Brazil will continue to work together.'

Following the talks in London and Geneva, US Trade Representative Susan Schwab is due to discuss the Doha round with Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim in Sao Paulo on 10 March, following bilateral talks between the presidents of the two countries. Informal talks also continue in Geneva.

"Agriculture still stuck in trade talks: Kamal Nath," INDIA PR WIRE, 6 March 2007; "Chirac rails at Mandelson's trade strategy," THE GUARDIAN, 5 March 2007; "EU, U.S., India try to advance global trade talks," REUTERS, 4 March 2007; "Nations Meet Amid Worry Over Trade Talks," AP, 5 March 2007; "Brazil eyes EU market access, US subsidies," REUTERS, 6 March 2007; "India, E.U. Want US To Cut Farm Subsidies," DOW JONES, 6 March 2007; "US says made slow, steady progress in WTO meetings," REUTERS, 5 March 2007; "EU digs in heels in global trade talks," AFP, 5 March 2007; "France Won't Block WTO Deal; Looks For Common Sense -Villepin," AP, 5 March 2007.

REVIEW OF EU TRADE POLICY REVEALS 'SUBSTANTIAL BARRIERS TO AG IMPORTS REMAIN

A report prepared for the WTO's biannual review of EU trade policy, held on 26 and 28 February, has identified 'substantial' barriers to imports of agricultural goods. Tariffs for some products have even risen since the last review in 2004, despite pressure on the EU to reduce tariff barriers as part of the Doha round of trade negotiations. During the meeting of the Trade Policy Review Body, Members further complained that the EU maintains an unwieldy number of regional trade agreements and trade preferences.

The trade policy review report, prepared by the WTO Secretariat, indicated that the simple average tariff rate

for agricultural products, as defined by the WTO, had risen from 16.5 percent in 2004 to 18.6 percent in 2006. In contrast, non-agricultural products faced an average tariff of only four percent in 2006. The report also noted that "some 5.4 percent of all agricultural tariff lines are subject to rates higher than 50 percent". Products with relatively high tariff protection were "almost exclusively" agricultural or processed food, the report said, giving examples of a number of products that were protected by tariffs of between one hundred and over four hundred percent.

The report further stated that the "reduction / elimination of export subsidies and tariffs on agricultural imports would benefit EU consumers, improve resource allocation, and significantly contribute to the promotion of the world economy".

It noted that the EU had taken steps to reduce the market-distorting effects of its Common Agricultural Policy, by implementing the reforms that were agreed on in 2003. These "somewhat augmented the exposure of farmers to world market signals". Policies which have the most production-distorting effects -- market price support, output payments, and input subsidies -- therefore dropped to 63.8 percent of support to producers in 2005, down from 71.1 percent in 2003.

According to the report, "border protection and domestic support, together with limited liberalisation under preferential agreements, have insulated certain products from competition and contributed to surpluses". Subsidies had therefore become "indispensable" for exports of some of the surpluses, the report stated, whilst noting that ongoing reforms seek to "reorient" this policy.

Nonetheless, the report noted that the EU was the world's leading trader (exporter and importer) of agricultural products, and that it had an external trade deficit of EUR2.5 billion in food and agricultural products.

The report also highlighted the broader institutional context in which EU trade policy operates. In particular, it noted the implications of the accession of ten new EU Members in May 2004. It also underscored the fact that the EU's "extensive network" of regional trade agreements and unilateral trade preferences meant that only nine WTO Members traded with the EU under its most-favoured nation (MFN) tariff.

Several Members picked up on this last point in the WTO meeting that was held to discuss the report. They raised concerns about the extensive network of agreements that the EU has already concluded, as well as the trading bloc's decision to launch new

negotiations that could further complicate its regime and divert trade. The EU is currently negotiating a series of 'Economic Partnership Agreements' with countries from the African, Caribbean and Pacific grouping, with the aim of concluding WTO-compatible trade agreements by the end of this year (see BRIDGES Weekly, 14 February 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-02-14/story3.htm>).

In his concluding comments, Trade Policy Review Body Chair Vesa Himanen (Finland) indicated that, while Members "have shown appreciation to the EC for maintaining its market largely open", at the same time "the main area where many Members would like to have the EC's positive and prompt response is agriculture". He noted that "Members encourage the EC to pursue its trade liberalisation policy... on a multilateral basis", and that "liberalisation of agriculture would, inter alia, reinforce its support for developing countries".

To access the documents related to the EU Trade Policy Review, visit http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp278_e.htm

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER STORIES

US, BRAZIL SEEK TO EXPAND GLOBAL MARKET FOR BIOFUELS

The US and Brazil -- the world's two top ethanol producers -- have announced the creation of an International Biofuels Forum to help develop a global biofuels market. The forum also includes China, India, South Africa and the EU, which all are large potential consumers and producers.

Launched at the Preparatory Committee for the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) on 2 March, the Forum aims to develop global standards to help turn ethanol into an internationally traded commodity, find ways to open markets, and encourage investment in the industry. Developing technical standards to define quality levels for ethanol is considered a first step to turn it into a commodity that could be traded like oil. According to Brazilian environment minister Antonio Simoes, the International Biofuels Forum is "a mechanism to structure the dialogue among the biggest producers and consumers of biofuels interested in promoting the creation of an international market for those products."

Following the launch of the international forum, US president Bush and Brazilian president Lula da Silva are meeting in Sao Paulo on 9 March, where they are expected to sign a separate agreement to share scientific and technological research on biofuels. Together, the two countries account for a total of more than 70 percent of global ethanol production. While only an estimated 10 percent of global production currently is internationally traded, this trade is expected to expand. Brazil remains the world's top exporter of ethanol, although US ethanol production surpasses that of Brazil. However, Brazil's production of ethanol from sugar cane can be done more efficiently and at a lower cost than US corn-based production.

With domestic demand for ethanol growing both in Brazil and the US, the immediate priority is to satisfy the domestic markets. But Brazilian and US business groups see commercial opportunities in supplying advanced equipment to other countries, such as those in the Caribbean and Central America, as they become larger producers.

The US imposes a tariff of 54 cents a gallon on ethanol imported from countries like Brazil, but allows Caribbean nations and countries part of the Central American Free Trade Agreement to export home-grown ethanol to the US free of duties. In addition, under the Caribbean Basin Initiative -- an initiative established to promote development in the region by providing preferential market access into the US -- Caribbean countries can import partly processed ethanol from third countries including Brazil. They can then process it before re-exportation to the US, in quantities amounting to a maximum of seven percent of US ethanol consumption. It is estimated that in 2006, the US imported about 600 million gallons of ethanol, of which about 200 million gallons came indirectly from Brazil through the Caribbean.

While Brazilian producers are seeking to have the US remove the tariffs on ethanol, the US is expected to oppose such a change due to domestic pressure to limit imports and increase domestic production. In a letter sent to President Bush, Senator Chuck Grassley, an Iowa Republican and a ranking member of the Senate Committee on Finance has questioned the plans for cooperation with Brazil, saying "I appreciate that increased consumption of ethanol in such countries [third countries that would benefit from joint US-Brazilian technical assistance] might eventually benefit the US ethanol industry and US farmers. I fail to understand, however, why the United States would consider spending U.S. taxpayer dollars to encourage new ethanol production in other countries, production that could directly compete with US-produced ethanol."

In his 2007 State of the Union address, President Bush announced a plan to produce 35 billion gallons of ethanol and other alternative fuels a year by 2017 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 31 January 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-01-31/story4.htm>).

ICTSD reporting; "Les producteurs de biocarburants jettent les bases d'un marché mondial," LE MONDE, 2 March 2007; "U.S. and Brazil Seek to Promote Ethanol in West," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 3 March 2007; "U.S., Brazil Launch Biofuels Forum," THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4 March 2007.

BANGLADESH AND BOLIVIA CALL FOR EXTENSION OF WHO WORKING GROUP ON PUBLIC HEALTH, INNOVATION, AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Bangladesh and Bolivia recently suggested that countries need more time to finalise a plan at the World Health Organisation (WHO) for promoting research on diseases that disproportionately affect people in poor countries. At the end of February, the two countries made submissions to the WHO's Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (IGWG), addressing both procedural and substantive aspects of the IGWG's tasks and documents under negotiation.

Created in 2006, the IGWG was charged with submitting a global strategy and plan of action to the 2008 World Health Assembly (the WHO's top decision-making body), providing a new framework to support sustainable, needs-driven, essential research and development (R&D) work on diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries. The IGWG held its first meeting in December 2006 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 13 December 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-12-13/story5.htm>). Members were invited to submit comments by the end of February, allowing the WHO secretariat to update the negotiating documents.

The Bangladeshi and Bolivian submissions both called for the extension of the IGWG term for one additional year in order to set clear objectives and priorities for R&D on Type I and II diseases (mostly infectious or parasite diseases that heavily affect the poor) and enable all stakeholders to carefully examine all proposals made. The working group includes governments as well as a selected number of observers, invited experts and stakeholders.

Both proposals also highlighted certain recommendations made in the April 2006 report of the

Commission on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (see BRIDGES Weekly, 5 April 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-04-05/inbrief.htm#1>), requesting that these be incorporated in the final IGWG global strategy and plan of action. The work of the IGWG is based on the outcome of the Commission on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (CIPIH).

The recommendations the two countries supported included the creation of incentives and investment frameworks to facilitate technology transfer, and the extension of intellectual property flexibilities -- beyond standard trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) flexibilities -- that would allow use of downstream and upstream technologies (basic science and research tools to final products). They also supported new innovation models such as the Prize fund model and the Global Medical Research and Development Treat, and stressed the importance of regional WHO offices in implementing the future global strategy and plan of action.

The two submissions also highlighted issues of specific concern to least developed countries (LDCs) and small economies. Bangladesh -- an LDC with both absorptive and production capacities in the pharmaceutical field -- stressed that efforts to promote and facilitate transfer technology and investments in R&D in LDCs would generate benefits for both home and host countries.

Bolivia reiterated the importance of TRIPS flexibilities, such as compulsory licenses and parallel importation, for countries to be able to obtain drugs at affordable prices. The submission also proposed that free trade agreements should avoid including exclusivity schemes regarding data protection on the safety and efficacy of pharmaceutical products, which would hinder access to new molecules and active ingredients. Bolivia further suggested improving access and diffusion of medicines by the creation of patent pools.

The IGWG is set to meet again in October this year to finalise the global strategy and plan of action.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

TRADING PARTNERS RAISE CONCERNS REGARDING RUSSIA'S WTO ACCESSION

Russia denied criticisms this week from the US and EU that the country was 'dragging its feet' in WTO accession talks.

"As of today we are fulfilling all the commitments that we have taken on," said Russian Economy and Trade Minister German Gref. He went on to say, however, that he no longer was sure that the process would be completed by the end of the year as previously hoped.

EU Ambassador to Moscow Marc Franco said implementation of the bilateral WTO deal Russia signed with the EU in 2004 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 June 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-06-02/story5.htm>) was taking a long time. Pending areas included adjusted tariffs on goods shipped by rail and licensing of imports of alcoholic beverages. Another hiccup in the process was Russia's recent decision to raise export duties on unprocessed timber, announced in February. The raise more than doubled duties on raw log exports with more sharp raises planned in the future. Finland launched a strong protest on 2 March claiming the duties violated the 2004 treaty with the EU. Russia, however, defended the tariff as a means to spur domestic investment in the industry.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson plans to visit Moscow in late March for talks with Russian trade officials.

The US also prodded Russia to fulfil its commitments. US Trade Representative Schwab said the US was concerned over agriculture and intellectual property right issues, particularly software and video piracy. Russia recently held meetings in Geneva to present its new legislation on intellectual property, including enforcement, but Members reportedly remained unconvinced.

The US and Russia signed their bilateral accession deal in November 2006 (see BRIDGES Weekly, 22 November 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/06-11-22/wtoinbrief.htm>). Russia must also conclude bilateral negotiations with Georgia before joining the WTO. Talks are currently stalled because of Georgia's insistence that it be given control of two customs checkpoints -- Psou, and Roki. Moscow has not yet agreed to discuss the issue.

Russia's one trillion USD economy is the largest outside the WTO.

"Russia ready to discuss legalization of Psou and Roki Tunnel customs' checkpoints?" THE MESSENGER (GEORGIA), 2 March 2007; "Russia denies delaying WTO accession talks," MOSNEWS, 6 March 2007; "Finland says high Russian wood export duty hurts Moscow's WTO chances," MOSNEWS, 5 March 2007; "Russia denies foot-dragging in WTO entry talks," REUTERS, 5 March 2007; "Officials Say Concerns on

Russian IP Enforcement Remain Following WTO Talks," BNA, 2 March 2007.

WTO IN BRIEF

ENVIRONMENT: WTO MEMBERS DISCUSS INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH MEAS

A recent meeting of the special (negotiating) session of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) focused on the relatively less contentious agenda item of procedures for information exchange between multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) secretariats and relevant WTO committees. Informal talks continued on liberalisation of environmental goods and services.

The meeting of CTE special session, which took place from 1-2 March, was the first following the resumption of full Doha round talks a month ago. Discussions revolved around a new US submission (TN/TE/W/70, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>) on Para 31 (ii) of the Doha Declaration (information exchange). The submission proposed that MEA information sessions within the CTE take place on a regular basis, initially once per year. Regarding MEA observer status in other WTO bodies, the US proposed that the CTE special session develop a non-exhaustive list of "indicative questions" to aid these WTO bodies in making decisions on a case-by-case basis. Possible questions included whether an MEA contained specific trade obligations or other trade-related obligations, and if so, whether these were relevant to the particular WTO body's scope of work. The US also proposed that the CTE special session grant seven MEA secretariats (which now have ad hoc observership) permanent observer status for the remainder of the Doha.

The US stressed that communication between all interested ministries (i.e. transport, agriculture, customs) should be improved at the domestic level. It emphasised that enhanced international coordination, while useful and important, could not replace the much more direct and efficient means of ongoing national-level coordination between trade and environment officials. The submission proposed that the WTO secretariat, with the aid of relevant MEA secretariats, focus more assistance on building the capacity of developing country Members to foster their own internal trade and environment coordination processes.

Commenting on the submission, Switzerland wanted specific reference to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) included in any decision on information

exchange. The EU called for permanent observership for all MEA secretariats. 'On the whole,' however, one developing country delegate said, 'the US submission seemed acceptable to most if not all Members.'

Informal discussion also took place on the liberalisation of environmental goods and services (EGS). Generally, developed countries have proposed that Members should agree to a 'list' of specific environmental goods slated for liberalisation. Many developing countries fear that such a list would mainly feature goods of export interest to developed countries, and have come up with alternative approaches. A developing country trade delegate said the recent informal talks had been 'constructive,' noting that he sensed a certain 'softening' of attitudes among delegations.

The next CTE special session is scheduled for 2-3 May. According to trade sources, India is planning to submit a revised proposal on its 'project' approach to EGS before this meeting. The chair of the negotiations, Ambassador Toufiq Ali (Bangladesh), will likely convene an informal meeting on 30 March.

ICTSD reporting.

NAMA TALKS MAKE PROGRESS ON NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

While core issues related to reducing industrial tariffs remain blocked pending movement on farm trade in the Doha round negotiations, Members made progress on non-tariff barriers (NTBs) during a week of discussions on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) that wrapped up in Geneva on 2 March.

The chair, Ambassador Don Stephenson (Canada), called the developments encouraging. Specifically, he said Members had agreed to submit textual proposals on vertical (sectoral) and horizontal (general) NTBs by 23 March. He would then compile the proposals into a rudimentary negotiating text.

Members also met informally to discuss sectoral liberalisation initiatives, set to bring down tariffs in a particular sector once enough countries sign onto them. The US reported on the discussions on chemicals, Japan on the electronic and electrical sector as well as the autos and auto parts sector, Switzerland on enhanced health care and pharmaceutical products, Thailand on gems and jewellery, and Canada on fish and forestry products.

Members did not spend time discussing the main divisive NAMA issues: the tariff reduction formula

numbers that will determine the depth of cuts; flexibilities for developing countries to shield some products from tariff reduction; and the treatment of unbound tariffs (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 February 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-02-28/story3.htm>).

Discussions seeking to generate an overall political deal covering key areas of the Doha round -- especially agriculture, but also NAMA -- are ongoing (see related story, this issue).

Chair Stephenson will continue to hold informal talks on NAMA; the next week of official negotiations is scheduled to begin on 26 March.

ICTSD reporting.

INDIA UNDER PRESSURE IN WINE AND SPIRITS SPAT

Due to growing threats of WTO dispute settlement procedures, India has indicated that it is considering lowering its import duties on wine and spirits.

Brussels formally challenged the tariffs in November 2006 by requesting consultations at the WTO, with Washington following suit on 6 March. For years, Brussels and Washington have raised concerns over India's strong-beverage duties, which allegedly run as high as 550 percent in certain cases. Until now, India has refused to modify its system. Under its WTO commitments, the implicated tariffs are to be held within 150 percent. However, on top of this base duty, India purportedly imposes an 'additional duty' and an 'extra additional duty' on imports of wine and distilled spirits.

India's budget for 2007-2008, which was unveiled last week, did not reflect any reductions in tariffs on wines and spirits, prompting EU Agricultural Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel to state that she was 'disappointed'.

Kamal Nath, Indian Minister of Commerce, noted that a cut in the tariffs could be made outside the budget. "This is being discussed at the highest level in the government" Nath said after a meeting with Boel on 7 March. He further stated that he did not believe that "it will come to a stage where the WTO will have to settle the dispute." In addition, India's Secretary of Commerce Gopal Pillai's stated that India is planning to scrap the duties and introduce legislation that would level imported liquors with domestic ones. He said he believed a resolution could be reached in two months.

Exports of wines and spirits to India have grown continuously over the past years, but allegedly no where near its full potential. In 2005, EU spirit exports amounted to EUR43 million and wine exports to EUR7 million. US exports of wine and spirits to India have grown by 200 percent in 2000-2005.

ICTSD reporting; "Kamal Nath hints at cutting import duties on wines, spirits," ZEENEWS, 7 March 2007; "India sees end to wine, spirits duty dispute", REUTERS, 7 March 2007; "U.S. files WTO case against India over wine and spirits duties" PEOPLE'S DAILY, 7 March 2007; "US cites India for duties on wines, spirits" MALAYSIA SUN, 7 March 2007.

EVENTS AND 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.

Coming Up: 8-14 February

8 March, Copenhagen, Denmark: MAKING PREFERENCES WORK FOR AFRICA. The Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) will host this trade and development seminar featuring Paul Collier, Professor of Economics, Oxford University and Peter Gibbon, Senior Researcher, DIIS discussing "How trade policy for parts of Africa can offer more opportunities than aid," and "Making a difference in bilateral trade agreements: the case of rules of origin," respectively. For more information, contact event@diis.dk; internet: <http://www.diis.dk>.

8-9 March, Bangkok, Thailand: OECD/UNDESA/UNESCAP WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES IN ASIA. This workshop, jointly organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UN Division for Sustainable Development (UNDESA), and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), will review national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies in Asian and Pacific countries and the options for better integration of these policies; internet: http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,2340,en_2649_201185_32618737_1_1_1_1,00.html.

12-13 March, New Delhi, India: **SAVING DOHA AND DELIVERING ON DEVELOPMENT**. Organised by the Government of India, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Oxfam International, the National Council for Applied Economic Research, and the Consumer Unity and Trust Society International (CUTS), participants at this seminar will discuss progress, or the lack thereof, in the Doha round and how it can be redirected to benefit developing nations. For more information, contact Tpapanicolas@carnegieendowment.org.

13-15 March, Copenhagen, Denmark: **CARBON MARKET INSIGHTS 2007**. Organised by PointCarbon, this year's event will consider, among other topics, the opening up of the EU emissions trading scheme to the global carbon markets. Three programme areas - carbon trading, carbon projects, and carbon and energy - will be explored through a series of presentations, roundtables, case studies, and workshops. Al Gore will give the keynote address. For more information, contact conference@pointcarbon.com; internet: <http://www.pointcarbon.com/Events/Carbon%20Market%20Insights/category401.html>.

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.

8 March- **DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY**

12-14 March: **NEGOTIATING GROUP ON TRADE FACILITATION**

14 March: **COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS**

15-16 March: **COTTON- HIGH-LEVEL SESSION**

Other Upcoming Events

15-16 March, Geneva, Switzerland: **UNCTAD EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON THE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS (RTAs) AND THEIR INTERFACE WITH THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM (MTS)**. The Expert Meeting will aim to draw practical

lessons for policy options in approaching regional and multilateral integration processes. Participants will address recent trends in RTAs and their developmental and systemic implications; specific market access issues in regional trade negotiations in goods and services; regulatory provisions, including intellectual property rights, investment and competition policies; South-South trade integration and cooperation; and the manner in which RTAs and the MTS interact with each other and possible synergies and complementarities between the two processes. For more information, contact Mina Mashayekhi, Head of Branch UNCTAD TNCDB (Mina.Mashayekhi@unctad.org) or Taisuke Ito (Taisuke.Ito@unctad.org); internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intlItemID=2068&lang=1&m=13242>.

15-16 March, Nairobi, Kenya: **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LINKAGES BETWEEN TRADE, DEVELOPMENT, AND POVERTY REDUCTION**. The Consumer Unity and Trust Society International (CUTS) is organising this conference to bring together project partners from 15 countries across South-East Asia, Southern Africa, and Europe with representatives from inter-governmental agencies, civil society, and research organisations to discuss the involvement of civil society in implementing aid for trade programmes; internet: <http://www.cuts-citee.org/events/htm>.

20 March, Geneva, Switzerland: **SERVICES, RTAs AND DEVELOPMENT**, part of the 11th SESSION OF UNCTAD'S COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES, AND COMMODITIES (19 to 23 March). Regional integration agreements covering services trade are having increasing implications for the development of countries participating in such agreements, including by enhancing cooperative mechanisms amongst them. The morning session from 10 to 13 hours is entitled "Services Trade and RTAs - How to Maximize Development Benefits"; the afternoon session, from 15 to 18 hours will address "The Interface between the Regional and Multilateral Levels - Ensuring Coherence for Development". For more information, contact Mina Mashayekhi, Head of Branch UNCTAD TNCDB (Mina.Mashayekhi@unctad.org) or Elisabeth Tuerk (Elisabeth.Tuerk@unctad.org); internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intlItemID=1942&lang=1&m=12761>.

28-30 March, Oslo, Norway: **THE OSLO CONFERENCE ON GOOD GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**. The Oslo Conference aims to take the ongoing debate about business and sustainability beyond corporate social responsibility by providing a platform for an integrated approach comprised of key players from government, business, academia, trade-unions and non-

governmental organisations (NGOs). The conference is hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment and the City of Oslo; internet: <http://www.csr-oslo.org/>.

30 April to 11 May, New York, US: UN CSD-15. The fifteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15) will focus on the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change. For further information contact the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; tel: +1 212 963 8102; fax: +1 212 963 4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>.

RESOURCES

THE GUESSING GAME: HOW WILL THE US PLAY AGRICULTURE TRADE IN 2007? By the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (February 2007). This short brief attempts to untangle some issues from the complex web of interests that effect the US position on agriculture in the Doha Round. The renewal of the Farm Bill, American public opinion, pressures from manufacturing and service sectors, and rising world commodity prices all affect the US Trade Representative's position. View the brief online at <http://www.iatp.org/iatp/publications.cfm?accountID=451&refID=97511>.

DANCING WITH GIANTS: CHINA, INDIA, AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. Edited by L. Alan Winters and Shahid Yusuf (World Bank Development Research Group, January 2007). This report takes a critical look at the growth of China and India in the global economy. Six essays explore whether rapid growth through 2020 is feasible, any hints about the form it may take, and how such an expansion will impose on other countries. They explore whether growth be constrained by weak governance, inequality, and environmental stress.

Access the report online at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTCHIINDGLOECO/0,,menuPK:2842045~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:2841990,00.html>.

TRADE POLICY IN ASIA: WHERE NEXT WITH CRIPPLED WTO AND WEAK FTAS? By Razeen Sally (European Centre for International Political Economy, Policy Brief No. 01/2007). Trade policy in Asia is now highly unbalanced, based on discriminatory bilateral and regional free trade agreements (FTAs), further liberalisation has stalled, and countries are neglecting the WTO in favour of FTAs. The author presents a path to further liberalisation and regulatory reform across Asia, first advising East-Asian countries to join together to "set the WTO on its legs again." The author also urges caution in negotiation new FTAs and improvement of existing FTAs. He argues that the only route to liberalisation and regulatory reform across Asia is through competitive emulation, not trade negotiations. Access the paper online at http://www.ecipe.org/pdf/Policybrief_0107.pdf.

BANISHING THE BIOPIRATES: A NEW APPROACH TO PROTECTING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. By Krystyna Swiderska (International Institute for Environment and Development, 2006). The livelihoods of indigenous peoples and the conservation of biodiversity for future generations depend on protecting traditional knowledge and natural resources. However, this knowledge is increasing threatened by intellectual property regimes that reflect western norms and laws and focus narrowly on protecting intellectual rights. This paper describes calls from indigenous and farmers' organisations for a more holistic approach to protecting traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and culture, putting them in the framework of heritage as opposed to property. Download the paper at <http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/14537IIED.pdf>.

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

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