



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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Doha Round

CRUNCH-TIME AT THE WTO

The WTO Doha Round, launched in 2001, has reached a critical juncture. Ministers and high-level officials from three dozen countries are gathered in Geneva for talks to hammer out differences in key areas. The negotiations started on Monday, 21 July and will continue until Saturday, 26 July and most likely beyond - unless there is a complete breakdown earlier. The negotiations have been slow, and major Members have yet to narrow their divergences.

While discussions are narrowly focused on key areas of the negotiations - agricultural and industrial market access in particular - and environment is not officially on the agenda, the outcome will have direct and indirect implications for the environment and natural resources management.

Agriculture and industrial goods liberalisation continues to divide Members

The framework agreements on agriculture and industrial market access that ministers are aiming to reach this week would include formulae and figures that will determine countries' future subsidy and tariff levels. These 'modalities' are a prerequisite for countries to draw up the tariff and subsidy schedules that would become their post-Doha WTO obligations.

In terms of main positions, developing countries continue to push the US to cut agricultural subsidies and the EU to improve market access, while developed countries want to see developing countries open up their industrial markets further. Within this general constellation, specificities abound. For example, smaller developing countries are concerned about the effects of preference erosion, and there are specific coalitions looking to shield special and sensitive

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agricultural goods from the full force of liberalisation. The US made a revised offer on Tuesday, 22 July, which was welcomed by other countries, although they maintained it did not go far enough.

In addition to agriculture and industrial goods, Members will have a discussion on the level of ambition with regard to services liberalisation.

The negotiations, presided over by WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, are taking place in a variety of formats. At the beginning of the week, discussions were held in so called “green rooms” that gather the 30-odd most important ministers. However, as Lamy deemed these insufficient to bridge the gaps, a new G-7 has emerged, composed of Australia, Brazil, China, the EU, India, Japan, and the US, seeking to hammer out a deal. There are also regular sessions of the Trade Negotiations Committee to keep the full membership abreast of developments - any deal will eventually have to be agreed by each and every Member in order to enter into force.

Patents and biological resources

The only environment-related agenda item on the table during the week is related to whether patent applicants should be obliged to disclose any biological resources or traditional knowledge used in their inventions. This trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) issue is clustered together with a push to extend intellectual property protections to geographically-linked foods such as Darjeeling tea or Roquefort cheese.

A North-South coalition of a hundred-odd countries, led by Brazil, the EU, India, and Switzerland, has called on ministers to accept both as part of a modalities agreement. They also called for a modalities deal to launch negotiations to accordingly amend WTO intellectual property rules as part of a final Doha Round package. These demands have been rejected by the US, Australia, Canada, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, South Korea, and Taiwan, which argue that it would be inappropriate for ministers to make such detailed decisions when attempting to hammer out modalities.

Thus far, the US, one of the most powerful opponents to moving ahead on this area, has strongly signalled its unwillingness to compromise. “These TRIPS issues are important to many members, but we think it’s vital to keep the focus of this meeting on agriculture, (manufactured goods), services. This meeting is not the time to create new mandates on the TRIPS issues,” said a spokesperson for US Trade Representative Susan Schwab at a press briefing on 22 July.

Other environmental-related issues

Environmentalists have often pointed to new disciplines on fisheries subsidies, negotiated within the group that deals with trade rules, as a potential concrete deliverable of the Doha Round for the environment. While these issues are not on the table in Geneva this week, the outcome of the talks will affect how negotiations on fisheries subsidies proceed (see related story, this issue of the BioRes). The same holds for the Doha Round negotiations specifically focusing on environment, including on the relationship between the WTO and multilateral environmental agreements, information-sharing arrangements between the secretariats and the WTO, and the liberalisation of environmental goods and services.

Meanwhile, there are many indirect links between the outcomes of the talks this week and the environment. Among issues drawing increasing attention in other fora are the environmental impacts of the expansion of trade in physical terms through transport. Coupled with concerns related to high fuel prices, the climate change impacts in particular are creeping up the agenda.

There are suggestions within the ongoing climate change negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to start regulating greenhouse gas emissions from “bunker fuels” - ie fuels used to power international transport, both maritime and aviation. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has also launched a process to begin regulating greenhouse gas emissions from shipping, seeking to come up with a new legally-binding instrument in some form by December 2009. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is taking less concrete action.

Prospects uncertain

Overall, the outcome of the talks this week is far from assured. The WTO Doha Round has failed to meet critical deadlines a number of times before. Yet several officials in Geneva report a palpable sense that this year is somehow different, that this meeting merits the ‘make or break’ moniker in a way that past ‘moments of truth’ did not. US elections in November will handcuff trade policymaking in autumn. In 2009, as an Obama or McCain administration gets on its feet in Washington, Indians will go to the polls amidst rising food and fuel prices, and the European Commission will be replaced.

A failure to put the Doha negotiations on a clear track towards conclusion, their thinking goes, would make it easy for political leaders, especially in the US, to leave the talks to languish for a couple of years - at a time when the ongoing food price crisis is already making some wonder whether the agenda is out of date. “The institution will be totally discredited if nothing happens” this week, said one Geneva-based trade diplomat, suggesting that countries would look for alternatives to the WTO.

ICTSD is providing daily reports on the mini-ministerial in multiple languages. Please refer to the ICTSD’s website for up-to-date information and analysis.

ICTSD reporting.

Fisheries Negotiations

NEW FISHERIES SUBMISSIONS ON THE EVE OF THE MINISTERIAL MEET

Key players in the fisheries negotiations submitted papers emphasising their positions just in time for the mini-ministerial taking place in Geneva during the week of 21 July - this despite the fact that ministers will not be discussing fisheries subsidies.

The most recent development in a spate of communications on fisheries subsidies, a 21 July proposal by China, India and Indonesia focused on developing country exceptions. A coalition of six Latin American countries and a group

comprising Australia, New Zealand and the US circulated statements last week outlining their positions regarding fisheries subsidies: both papers leant support to the level of ambition contained in the draft text issued last November by the Chair of the WTO’s rules committee, Ambassador Guillermo Valles Galmés of Uruguay (TN/RL/213, available at <http://docsonline.wto.org>). The two statements and proposal followed an earlier communiqué from Galmés framing a path for the group’s future negotiations.

While the proposal by China, India and Indonesia stressed the need for effective special and differential treatment for developing countries, the focus of both papers was on the need for meaningful disciplines to combat the trade-distorting effects of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overexploitation of marine resources. That notwithstanding, the two statements also acknowledge the necessity of this special and differential treatment. They argue that such flexibility is not a blank cheque. For the Latin American group in particular, fisheries management schemes are a requirement for sustainable marine resources.

Proposal by China, India and Indonesia

The latest proposal on fisheries subsidies was tabled on 21 July by China, India and Indonesia during the ongoing ministerial meeting in Geneva (TN/C/W/51). Trade ministers are currently convened in an attempt to reach a compromise in WTO negotiations on agriculture and non-agricultural market goods (see related story, this issue). While fisheries subsidies are not on the ministerial agenda, they are considered to be an important facet of the Doha development round.

The proposal emphasises the importance of special and differential treatment for developing countries given the particular importance of fisheries for livelihoods, poverty reduction and food security. More specifically, China, India and Indonesia call for exemptions from subsidies disciplines for developing country small and artisanal fishermen, as well as fisheries infrastructure and capital and operating costs.

The sponsors of this recent submission tabled the last proposal discussed in the fisheries negotiations. Much of the substance of the new proposal was covered in discussion on their previous proposal. For this reason, sources have commented that it is unclear when the opportunity to talk about the recent paper will arise or what value it will add to negotiations. While Courtney Sakai, campaigner for environmental group Oceana, called the tabling at the ministerial “misplaced,” others assume that the intent of the sponsors was to raise the profile of the capacity constraints and particular vulnerabilities of developing countries in the fisheries subsidies negotiations.

Latin American paper: no blank cheque for developing countries

Circulated last week, the paper co-sponsored by Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru took the form of a sixteen point statement (TN/RL/W/234). Although the Chair’s draft has proved somewhat contentious, the regional grouping endorsed the need for “substantial and ambitious disciplines,” as originally envisaged by the Chair’s text.

“The main focus is and must continue to be a prohibition of subsidies that is sufficiently broad to achieve the substantial results ... but, at the same time, accompanied by limited general exceptions and adequate flexibilities for developing countries,” stressed the six countries.

The Latin American grouping went on to say that the general exceptions and flexibilities must “necessarily be subject to appropriate management requirements.” The paper cites the common experiences of the sponsors - all developing countries - where proper management was found to be essential to ensuring the sustainability of marine resources. Moreover, the group argued that the challenges faced by developing countries should not be used as an excuse not to implement fisheries management measures. Accordingly, the group drew attention to the fact that developing countries require technical assistance, in all its forms, to achieve satisfactory fisheries management regimes.

Alex Munoz Wilson of the South American office of Oceana commented that “the statement shows that strong measures to limit fisheries subsidies can be compatible with the social and economic objectives of developing countries.”

Australia, New Zealand and US: strong subsidies disciplines required

Australia, New Zealand and the US distributed a second statement last week on fisheries subsidies (TN/RL/W/235). They stressed, in particular, the urgency of realising a strong fisheries subsidies agreement in light of recent developments - such as rising fuel costs, the closure of commercially important fisheries and food security concerns - which encourage subsidisation. However, this would ultimately undermine the long term goal of sustainable marine resources.

The sponsors outlined general principles and practical steps for propelling fisheries subsidies negotiations forward. The core principles identified for inclusion in a final agreement include a strong prohibition of subsidies, appropriate special and differential treatment and technical assistance for developing countries, sustainability measures, and a greater level of transparency concerning fisheries subsidies.

In order to facilitate future negotiations, Australia, New Zealand and the US proposed intensifying technical work on areas of general consensus and finding convergence on core issues that continue to divide delegations. Echoing the position of the Latin American delegations, Australia, New Zealand and the US believe that the Chair’s draft - a “landmark” in encouraging worldwide sustainable fisheries - is a sound basis for negotiation.

Their call for strong subsidies disciplines and for maintaining the level of ambition contained in the Chair’s draft, reiterated in both communications of last week, contrasts with the reality of the last few rounds of fisheries negotiations, where the focus has been on finding exceptions to prohibited subsidies and mitigation of the level of ambition of the text. For instance, the most recent proposal tabled by China, Indonesia and India, unlike the Chair’s draft, would not require developing countries to construct fish

management regimes (see Bridges Weekly, 21 May 2008). As such, sources have said, it contains significant carve-outs for developing countries on fisheries subsidies.

Moreover, the papers reflect the fact that the divisions in fisheries subsidies negotiations are not between developing and developed countries. The position of Australia, New Zealand and the US, for example, contrasts with that of the EU, Japan, Norway and Canada, which have sought to narrow the scope of proposed prohibitions. While the Latin American group and China, India and Indonesia converge on the necessity of special and differential treatment for developing countries, they diverge on how to most appropriately accomplish it.

Rules Chair outlines strategy for future negotiations

Earlier this month, the Chair of the WTO's Negotiating Group on Rules issued a communiqué outlining how the rules talks could proceed in the event that modalities on agricultural and industrial goods trade are established at this week's mini-ministerial conference. The rules negotiations cover anti-dumping, horizontal subsidies and fisheries subsidies.

In the message, which was sent to all WTO Members via fax on 14 July, Chair Galmés stated his intent to issue draft texts on anti-dumping and horizontal subsidies after modalities are agreed.

However, Galmés acknowledged that the state of affairs in the fisheries subsidies negotiations is vastly different from anti-dumping or horizontal subsidies. With no pre-existing agreement to work from, delegates are "faced with fundamental challenges" in developing new rules.

Galmés holds that the fisheries negotiations have not yet reached a stage advanced enough to issue a draft text containing both effective fisheries subsidies disciplines and adequate special and differential treatment for developing countries. Thus, to facilitate further dialogue on fisheries, Galmés intends to issue a 'road map' highlighting the key questions to address and areas that require

compromise at the same time he tables draft texts on anti-dumping and horizontal subsidies.

Also in the facsimile, Galmés outlined his plan for intensive rules negotiations throughout September. Recognising that all areas of the rules group mandate must progress together, Galmés allotted the first two weeks to fisheries subsidies; the group will address anti-dumping and horizontal subsidies later in the month. From there, Galmés noted that "regular and in fact nearly continuous" meetings would be required in order to negotiate a rules text acceptable to all Members.

At the end of July, Galmés said he would submit a report to the Trade Negotiations Committee providing a more detailed schedule for the negotiations.

Additional resources

The facsimile text can be accessed [here](#).

ICTSD reporting.

Climate Change & Sustainable Energy

BIOFUEL MANDATES UNDER REVIEW

The biofuels target set by the US and EU- which spend billions of dollars each year supporting their biofuels industries - are continuing to be put into question.

In the US, Texas governor Rick Perry is asking the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to waive the national biofuels mandate for a year, while in the EU a group dealing with environmental issues within the European Parliament has voted to revise the European mandate to derive ten percent of transport fuels from renewable sources by 2020. An EU expert group is continuing its work to hammer out sustainability requirements for biofuels.

Meanwhile, a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) adds to well-known concerns that biofuels, while costing tax payers billions, are not

effectively addressing the climate problem, and a World Bank document suggests that 75 percent of the increase in food crop prices can be linked to biofuels production.

EPA to decide on biofuels waiver

In the US, Texas governor Rick Perry wants the EPA to cut its 9 billion gallon mandate for ethanol production - set in an energy bill from December 2007 - by half this year due to high corn and feed prices. His emergency waiver is supported by a coalition of food, livestock and environmental groups. They are, however, pitted against farmers, carmakers, ethanol and other biofuel producers. The public has been exceptionally active on the issue, submitting 15,000 comments to the EPA.

“This is a critically important decision that will determine the future of biofuels in this country,” said Brent Erickson, a lobbyist at the Biotechnology Industry Organization. “There will be a dramatic reaction from whoever loses.”

A coalition of 12 Republican Senators and 50 Republicans in the House of Representatives have also asked for a rollback of the US biofuels mandate, because it “is clearly causing unintended consequences on food prices.”

On 22 July, the EPA decided to postpone the decision on the waiver until August. The EPA can only approve or reject the waiver. Sky-high corn prices have come down in the last weeks and days.

EU biofuels mandate under scrutiny

On 7 July, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament voted to in favour of a modification the EU biofuels target. According to the Committee, Europe should derive four percent of its transport fuels from renewables in 1015, after which a major review of the target would take place.

The Committee also supported a stronger focus on electric or hydrogen cars, as opposed to just biofuels. Environmental lobby groups have stressed the need to focus on cleaner cars. Friends of the Earth, speaking ahead of the vote of the Environment Committee, said that instead of the target “we want measures that will double the fuel

efficiency of new cars, a real climate change solution.”

The Committee has also eyeing imports from Brazil. “My analysis shows the only country where we can sustainably import substantial quantities of agri-fuels to the EU at the moment is Brazil,” said EU lawmaker Claude Turmes. “Such an agreement would be a test case, with tough criteria both on sustainability and social issues,” he added. “At the same time, Brazil would have to show us it can halt deforestation.”

These sustainability criteria, which would apply to home-grown and imported biofuels alike, are still being hammered out by an EU expert group. Meeting in early July, the group generally agreed on criteria related to biodiversity and human rights. The experts still disagreed on what the greenhouse gas savings of compliant biofuels would have to be. Ethanol from sugar cane - the main feedstock used in Brazil - reduces greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 percent compared to fossil fuels. Biofuels produced from wheat, sugar beet or vegetable oil, the main feedstocks in Europe, rarely provide emission savings of more than 30 to 60 percent. Savings from corn-based ethanol are generally less than 30 percent.

At the end of the meeting, one participant commented “I see a philosophical challenge, as we’re taking more care over the vegetable oils you put in your car than the oils you put in yourself through what you eat. He added that “If you put that same oil in chocolate, nobody would say a thing.”

Individual European countries have also questioned the biofuels mandate and made comments on the sustainability criteria. The UK government commissioned a comprehensive report on the topic. Released on 7 July, the Gallagher report detailed the knock-on effects of biofuels production and use. According to the report, indirect land use change impacts of biofuels production have not been adequately addressed. The report called for the incorporation of social issues, such as land rights, into the sustainability criteria for biofuels. While generally taking a positive stance on second generation biofuels, the report noted that their production

should not displace food production on agricultural land.

The final fate of the biofuels target will be decided along with the European energy and climate package as a whole by the end of the year.

OECD report slams biofuels

In a new report, "Economic Assessment of Biofuel Support Policies," released on 16 July, the OECD detailed how the EU, US and Canada spent EUR11 billion to support biofuels in 2006. This spending is expected to rise to EUR25 billion per year by 2015 -bringing, however, only a 0.8 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

The report therefore recommended the three countries to consider implementing other, more cost-effective strategies to deal transport emissions. The OECD suggested a focus on lowering energy consumption in the transport sector, and policies to free biofuels markets and trade, which would lower costs and lead to higher efficiencies.

The report further highlighted risks posed by biofuels, which is said "will contribute to higher food prices over the medium term and to food insecurity for the most vulnerable populations in developing countries." While the OECD linked the current use of food stocks for biofuels to higher food prices, it said the effect should not be overestimated. "Current biofuel support measures alone are estimated to increase average wheat prices by about five percent, corn by around seven percent and vegetable oil by about 19 percent over the next 10 years," according to the report.

These figures are substantially lower than figures from a World Bank report leaked in early July, which said the percentage was as high as 75. According to the World Bank report, food prices rose by 140 percent between 2002 and February 2008. Only 15 percent of that rise was attributable to higher energy and fertiliser costs, with biofuels being the main driver. Biofuels production distorted food prices "by diverting grain away from food for fuel, by encouraging farmers to set land aside for biofuel and by sparking speculation

in grains, driving prices up higher," said the report.

ICTSD reporting; "OECD report says massive biofuel subsidies not helping to cut greenhouse gases", AP, 17 July 2008; "OECD: Biofuels Ineffective at Curbing Global Warming," ENS, 17 July 2007; "Biofuels Blamed for Food Price Crisis - Report," REUTERS, 7 July 2008; "EU Backs Away from Biofuel Goal, Eyes Brazil Accord," REUTERS, 7 July 2008; "Human Rights, Rare Species on EU Biofuels Agenda," REUTERS, 1 July 2008; "EU launches investigation into US biodiesel imports," EU RELEASE, 13 June 2008; "Ethanol industry braces for EPA decision on its future," IHT, 22 July 2008; "EPA postpones decision on ethanol requirements," AP, 22 July 2008.

In Brief

CHINA RECEIVES GO-AHEAD FOR IVORY IMPORTS

Despite strong resistance from environmental groups, China has been given the right to buy elephant ivory from the government stockpiles of four African countries.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) held the 57th meeting of its 33-member Standing Committee (SC-57) from 14-18 July. The committee, which provides policy guidance and oversees the convention, voted in favour of allowing China to take part in a one-time auction of 108 metric tonnes of ivory from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. In 2007, CITES authorised the four countries to sell off their stockpiles of ivory, which come from elephants that died of natural causes.

This is the third such auction since the promulgation of an international moratorium on ivory sales in 1989. After the sale, however, the four countries are not allowed to export ivory for at least nine years.

The Standing Committee had granted the same privilege only once before, to Japan in 2006 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 8 June 2007).

“China has acted rather successfully against its own illegal domestic ivory market,” Tom Milliken, director of TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa, a wildlife trade monitoring organisation, said. He added that “following the last one-off ivory sale under CITES in 1999, it is encouraging to note that the illicit trade in ivory progressively declined over the next five years. We hope a similar result is achieved this time.”

A document prepared by the CITES Secretariat and presented to SC-57 stated that China’s law enforcement effort scores have improved steadily, rising from six percent in 2002, to 30 percent in 2004, to 58 percent in 2007. The document also noted that “China’s legislation contains some of the most severe criminal sanctions for CITES-related violations of all Parties and the courts have not hesitated to impose very substantial penalties (including capital punishment and life imprisonment) upon those who attempt to smuggle ivory into mainland China. China’s enforcement agencies have set combating illegal trade in ivory as a priority and its Customs anti-smuggling units have been particularly effective.”

In spite of the confidence endowed to China by the committee, many environmentalists are convinced that the decision spells a death warrant for thousands of African elephants. They argue that China’s lack of requisite trade controls and internal law enforcement, coupled now with increased trade, will stimulate demand and drive up prices, increasing the incentive to poach and smuggle ivory.

Will Travers, CEO of the Born Free Foundation and president of the Species Survival Network, characterised the decision as “unbelievable, naïve and deadly.”

“It was bad enough when Japan was approved as a trading partner more than a year ago but approving China is, in my view, like pouring petrol on an open fire,” Travers said.

China and Japan will bid for their share of the ivory stocks in a sale that will take place later this year. All proceeds of the sale will go towards conservation and development programmes that

aim to protect local elephant populations in African communities.

Additional resources

Documents from the meeting can be found [here](#).

For more daily updates and a summary report of the Standing Committee, see IISD’s Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

ICTSD reporting; “China gets ivory imports go-ahead,” BBC, 15 July 2008; “Four African countries to sell ivory, China permitted to buy,” ENS, 15 July 2008; “UN body lets China import African ivory,” AP, 15 July 2008; “UN panel paves the way for elephant poaching and ivory laundering,” WORLDWIRE, 15 July 2008.

UGANDAN COFFEE CROP AND TRADE EARNINGS THREATENED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a real threat to the future of Uganda’s main cash crop and source of export earnings, coffee, claims a new report.

British charity Oxfam released the report, which details the effects climate change is having on agriculture, water, health and poverty in Uganda. Entitled “Turning up the Heat, Climate Change and Poverty in Uganda,” the report claims that recent changes in weather conditions could, if they persist, have a drastic effect on the country’s coffee production.

Uganda is currently Africa’s second largest coffee producer after Ethiopia, but its coffee crops would face severe destruction or could completely disappear if average global temperatures were to rise by more than 2 degrees Celsius. This change could become reality in as soon as 30-40 years. The coffee crops rely heavily on Uganda’s two rainy seasons, which have become more erratic, more intensive, and have caused an increasing amount of damage through floods, landslides and erosion. Droughts that affect the western, northern and north-eastern districts are also becoming more frequent. If the weather conditions remain as unpredictable as they recently have become, effects are likely to worsen.

Farmers are doing their best to adapt to the situation, favouring those varieties of coffee bean most likely to survive the dryness. Export earnings have not suffered as of yet - on the contrary, they have continued to increase. Nevertheless, Oxfam has called on industrialised nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The report goes on to stress that the right strategies to adapt to climate change will also serve to promote truly sustainable development and the reduction of poverty if properly implemented.

“Ugandan Coffee May Disappear in 30 Years-Oxfam”, REUTERS, 18 July 2008; “Climate Change Bleaks Uganda Coffee Harvest”, AFROL NEWS, 18 July 2008; Ugandan Coffee Could Soon Disappear”, DAILY MONITOR, 22 July 2008; “Climate Change Poses Threat to Uganda’s Coffee Sector”, AFRICA NEWS NETWORK, 20 July 2008.

BURKINA FASO COMMERCIALISES GM COTTON

Burkina Faso recently signed a commercial agreement with Monsanto to import Bt cottonseeds, making it the first country in West Africa to test genetically modified (GM) crops.

The tests, conducted jointly by the Burkina National Agricultural Research Institute (INERA) and Monsanto, began in late June. The strains of Bt cotton, developed from local varieties, have been approved for both production and general sale. Burkina Faso’s National Biosecurity Agency has authorised 15,000 hectares for seed production.

Bt cotton is a second-generation product that contains a protein from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* bacteria, which shields it from specific lepidopteron pests such as moths, butterflies and caterpillars. Burkina Faso experiences frequent droughts and insect infestations that sometimes damage up to 90 percent of the crop.

Researchers at INERA argue that Bt cotton requires only two pesticide treatments per season, opposed to the six to eight treatments for non-modified cotton. Using GM strains would therefore cut pesticide use by 60 percent, lowering costs by about 20 percent. Estimated total

earnings, counting savings and increased revenue from higher yield, would increase by 90,000 CFA per hectare each season. In terms of costs, local farmers will be provided seeds at a discount; Monsanto will receive only 28 percent of the royalties from the seed sales.

Added revenue could boost Burkina Faso’s struggling economy, which is mainly based on subsistence agriculture and the cotton cash crop earnings that make up 50 percent of its exports. Burkina Faso is currently the top cotton producer in West Africa. It harvested over 660,000 tones in the 2006-2007 season. However, its harvests have fallen by over half this past year. Savings on the cost of insecticide treatment could possibly boost yield and remove barriers to international competitiveness, said Dr. Ouola Traoré, head of the Cotton Program at INERA.

However, safety concerns about GM products persist, and the use of cottonseed for edible oil in the West African region has raised some alarm. INERA researchers, however, are assuring the local population that tests are currently conducted not only to assess the effectiveness and financial viability of Bt cotton, but also to analyse its impact on the environment and its safety for animal and human consumption.

ICTSD reporting; 18 July 2008, “Burkina launches Monsanto GMO cotton to boost crop,” REUTERS; 12 July 2008, “Burkina Faso has commercialized Bt cotton,” AFRICA SCIENCE NEWS SERVICE.

WWF: STOP EUROPEAN IMPORTS OF ILLEGAL WOOD PRODUCTS

Environmental group WWF has flagged the massive scale of European imports of illegal logs and wood products, and is calling for an effective response.

WWF published a new report, “Illegal Wood for the European Market: An Analysis of the EU Import and Export of Illegal Wood and Related Products,” based on data from 2006. According to the study, nearly one fifth of wood imported into the EU in 2006 was either illegal or suspect. WWF cites Russia, Indonesia and China as the main

sources and Finland, Germany, the UK and Italy as the main importers.

An estimated 30 million cubic metres of illegal wood was imported into the EU in 2006. WWF states that Finland was of particular concern, since close to half of all timber exports from Russia were first processed into pulp or paper in Finland before being exported to other countries in the EU.

WWF points an accusatory finger at the EU for its lax legislation concerning licensing. The existing EU licensing scheme, the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) system, excludes negotiations with key countries such as Russia and China and does not cover all wood products. Furniture and paper, for example, are not covered by the FLEGT scheme. Starting from the autumn of 2008, all timber imported into the EU must be certified as being logged legally, says WWF. WWF also urges the EU to adopt a more rigorous penalisation system concerning the illegal trade in timber.

Illegal logging has an effect on wood prices as well as the environment. The illegal business is bringing down timber prices and proving to be the cause of substantial economic losses for countries, industries and local communities. Illegal logging equally adds to deforestation, which is a major contributor to climate change and biodiversity loss. When logging is done illegally, it is most likely also done unsustainably, rapidly destroying local environments irreversibly. The companies logging illegally log endangered trees in the process, and do not take means to re-grow forests or pay due taxes to the producing country. Deforestation also leads to the loss of ecosystem services, as forests are no longer in place to protect from natural disasters such as floods and landslides.

“WWF: Finland EU’s Biggest Importer of Illegal Timber”, YLE UUTISSET, 22 July 2008; “EU Countries Add to Illegal Logging Trade”, WWF RELEASE, 22 July 2008; “EU Fuelling Illegal Logging Trade”, EURACTIV, 22 July 2008.

Events & Resources

VACANCY

POLICY OFFICER, BRETTON WOODS PROJECT: The Bretton Woods Project works with NGOs and activists worldwide to monitor and challenge the World Bank and IMF. This position is an opportunity to research, write and do advocacy work on a number of environment and development policy issues; to facilitate network strengthening with emphasis on the UK; and to monitor the role of UK institutions in the World Bank and IMF. Applicants need a good working knowledge of development and environment issues and the role of the World Bank and IMF. Experience with producing accessible briefings, and with NGO networks essential. Experience with international networks, government development or environment institutions, work in Southern countries and ability to speak other languages desirable. Application deadline: 9 am, 30 July 2008. Further details and application instructions are at: <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/jobs>; jobs@brettonwoodsproject.org.

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD’s web calendar, <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/calendar.htm>.

Upcoming meetings

5-8 August, Manado, Indonesia. **SECOND ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM.** This meeting is organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Internet: <http://www.fao.org>.

11-13 August, Manado, Indonesia. **ASIA-PACIFIC FISHERY COMMISSION.** This is the Commission’s 30th session. The meeting is organized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). For more information, please contact Simon Funge-Smith.

15-17 August, Dhaka, Bangladesh. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE - CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD. This conference is arranged by Bangladesh-based think tank Unnayan Onneshan and will focus on financial mechanisms for supporting mitigation activities to combat climate change. Internet: <http://www.unnayan.org>.

17-23 August, Stockholm, Sweden. PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS FOR WATER: FOR A CLEAN AND HEALTHY WORLD. This topic is the theme for the 2008 World Water Week, the leading annual global meeting place for capacity-building, partnership- building and follow-up on the implementation of international processes and programmes in water and development. The World Water Week in Stockholm is arranged by SIWI. For the printable Programme Schedule please refer to <http://www.worldwaterweek.org/Downloads/Overview.pdf>. For more information, please contact: tel.: +46 (0)8 522 139 60; e-mail: katarina.andrzejewska@siwi.org.

18-20 August, Auckland, New Zealand. FOURTH AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND CLIMATE CHANGE AND BUSINESS CONFERENCE. This conference will focus on emissions trading, voluntary markets, investment issues, the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation. For more information please contact Fiona Driver, tel.: +64-9-480-2565; fax: +64-9-480-2564; email: f.driver@climateandbusiness.com; Internet: <http://www.climateandbusiness.com/>.

24-27 August, Cork, Ireland. AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (ABIC 2008). The theme for ABIC 2008 will be "Agricultural Biotechnology for a competitive and sustainable future". Taking a global perspective, industry and scientific leaders along with visionaries will address agricultural biotechnology and its impact on world agriculture from food production to maximising bioenergy potential. For more information, please refer to <http://www.scidev.net/en/events/agricultural-biotechnology-international-conferenc.html>.

25-28 August, Rome, Italy. 20TH SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION AMONG REGIONAL PLANT PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS. For more information, please contact Dominique Greboval, FAO.

25-28 August, Umeå, Sweden. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: ADAPTATION OF FORESTS AND FOREST MANAGEMENT TO CHANGING CLIMATE WITH EMPHASIS ON FOREST HEALTH: A REVIEW OF SCIENCE, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES. Co-hosted by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, this conference will focus on the current state of knowledge of ongoing changes in climatic conditions in different regions of the world, and the implications of these changes for forest health, forest management and conservation. For more information please contact Alexander Buck, tel.: +43 1 877015113; email b...@iufro.org; Internet: <http://www.forestadaptation2008.net/home/en/>.

25-29 August, Davos, Switzerland. IDRC DAVOS 2008. The International Disaster and Risk Conference will take place to discuss climate change, critical infrastructure, integrated risk management as well as pandemics and diseases. For more information, please refer to <http://www.scidev.net/en/events/idrc-davos-2008.html>.

25-29 August, Rome, Italy. 2ND SESSION OF THE TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DEEP-SEA FISHERIES IN HIGH SEAS. For more information please contact Dominique Greboval; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/nems/38028/en>.

26-29 August, Libreville, Gabon. FIRST INTER-MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT. Organized by The World Health Organization and the UN Environment Programme, in partnership with the Government of Gabon. The main objective of the conference is to secure political commitment for catalyzing the policy, institutional and investment changes required to reduce environmental threats to health, in support of sustainable development.

For more information, please refer to <http://www.unep.org/health-env/>.

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 at msell@ictsd.ch.

THE LIMITS TO TRAVEL: HOW FAR WILL YOU GO? By David Metz (Earthscan, 2008). Transportation is one of the biggest contributors to climate change. The Limits to Travel is the first book to address the links between why we travel, how we travel, and the environmental impacts of our actions that will ultimately limit our travel. The arguments in the book challenge conventional transport economics and policy, and are based on original analysis by the author, a former Chief Scientist at the Department of Transport, that will stimulate debate about both transport policy and the future contribution of travel to global warming.

GLOBAL TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT 2008. By UNEP, July 2008. This analysis by the UN Environment Programme shows a surge in renewable energy investments in 2007, driven by oil prices and concerns about both climate change and energy security. The report also highlights the increasing proportion of investment in China, India and Brazil. To access the report (requires free registration), please refer to <http://sefi.unep.org/english/globaltrends1.html>.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN EVALUATION OF WORLD BANK SUPPORT. By the IEG World Bank, July 2008. This evaluation looks at the effectiveness of World Bank Group support to the environment from 1990 to 2007. While there are difficulties in comparing the experience of the public and private sectors, a contribution of this evaluation is in bringing together findings on the World Bank, IFC (International Finance Corporation), and MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency), and assessing the effectiveness of the World Bank Group as a whole. In doing so, it also attempts to identify the external and internal constraints on Bank Group effectiveness and

suggest ways in which some of them, particularly the internal ones, can be reduced. The report can be accessed online at the World Bank website, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTOED/EXTENVIRONMENT/0,,contentMDK:21798364~menuPK:4681948~pagePK:64829573~piPK:64829550~theSitePK:4681890,00.html>.

POLICY REPORT BY THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY GERMAN STUDIES. By Alexander Ochs. This report examines the twin challenges of climate change and energy security for Germany and the United States. It focuses on the third industrial revolution - the revolution that has to occur to transform our current fossil fuel-based societies into an energy-secure, efficient and climate-friendly world - and makes a strong economic case for why it has to be initiated. The Policy Report can be accessed on AICGS website at <http://www.aicgs.org/documents/pubs/polrep34.pdf>. Mr. Ochs is also the Editor and founder of the Forum for Atlantic Climate and Energy Talks (FACET), an initiative that aims at enriching the transatlantic dialogue on climate change and energy by providing a platform for the open exchange of opinions. It can be accessed at <http://aicgs.org/facet/>.

A GREEN NEW DEAL. Report by the Green New Deal Group, a UK alliance of experts in energy, the environment and finance. The report calls for a co-ordinated response to the 'triple crunch' of climate change, high oil prices and the credit crisis. It is the first attempt to address the nature of broader financial and monetary reform necessary to create the investment framework needed for the energy transition to avert dangerous climate change. To access the full Green New Deal report, please refer to http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=258.

WORLD TRADE REPORT 2008: TRADE IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD. World Trade Organisation, 15 July 2008. The World Trade Report is an annual publication that aims to deepen understanding about trends in trade, trade policy issues and the multilateral trading system. The theme of this year's Report is 'Trade in a Globalising World'. The report provides a

reminder of what we know about the gains from international trade and highlights the challenges arising from higher levels of integration. It addresses a range of interlinking questions, starting with a consideration of what constitutes globalisation, what drives it, what benefits does it bring, what challenges does it pose and what role does trade play in this world of ever-growing inter-dependency. The report asks why some countries have managed to take advantage of falling trade costs and greater policy-driven trading opportunities while others have remained largely outside international commercial relations. It also considers who the winners and losers are from trade and what complementary action is needed from policy-makers to secure the benefits of trade for society at large. In examining these questions, the report reviews both the theoretical gains from trade and empirical evidence that can help to answer these questions. For further information and to access the report, please refer to http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/wtr08_e.htm.