



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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Intellectual Property

WIPO ASSEMBLIES ENDORSE CONFERENCE ON PATENTS AND PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGES, INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE

The latest annual meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) General Assemblies endorsed the work programmes of its bodies -- including a plan for the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents

(SCP) to convene a conference on the implications of patents on certain areas of public policy, such as health, the environment, climate change and food security.

Meeting from 22-30 September, the General Assemblies ended on a positive and consensual note after having witnessed much controversy and polarisation in recent years. The WIPO member states welcomed the appointment of a new Director-General, Australian Francis Gurry (see Bridges Weekly, 25 September 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/29785/>), and appeared keen to steer the organisation towards a fresh start.

During the meeting, members of WIPO reviewed the activities of the organisations in a number of key areas endorsing, in most cases, the recommendations adopted by WIPO bodies during the year. The implementation of the WIPO Development Agenda emerged as a key priority in the statements by most delegations, in particular developing countries, which highlighted the need to allocate the necessary resources for this endeavour and integrate the development dimension in all aspects of the organisation's work (see Bridges Weekly, 2 October 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/30166/>).

IGC to speed up work through inter-sessional mechanisms?

On genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore, the General Assembly noted the work under the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) on the analysis of gaps in the protection available for traditional cultural expressions/expressions of folklore and for traditional knowledge. With a view to accelerating the Committee's work, the October 2008 session of the IGC will consider establishing inter-sessional mechanisms. Member states also welcomed the further successful

implementation of the WIPO Voluntary Fund for Indigenous and Local Communities, noting that it had significantly enhanced the depth and diversity of representation in the IGC process.

Developing countries, in particular the African Group, reaffirmed their long-standing demand for an international binding instrument to protect genetic resources, traditional knowledge and expressions of folklore, making reference to regional instruments recently concluded in Africa with this objective.

Patent committee to consider public policy implications

In the area of patents, member states welcomed the revival of discussions within the SCP. The Committee had met from 23-26 June to discuss how to continue its work following a three-year break. Developed and developing countries had been in a stand-off in particular as to how the SCP should continue its work with regards to the Substantive Patent Law Treaty (SPLT), a treaty that would expand the minimum standards agreed in the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). At the June meeting, they managed to agree on a broad-based work programme (see Bridges Weekly, 2 July 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/12246/>), which the WIPO Assemblies now endorsed.

Delegates to the WIPO Assemblies also endorsed the recommendation to convene in 2009 a conference on issues relating to the implications of patents on certain areas of public policy, such as health, the environment, climate change and food security. The conference would be convened in April in the framework of the SCP and, where relevant, would work in conjunction with other WIPO bodies. The proposal for such a conference was welcomed by Member States and developing countries in particular.

In August 2008, WIPO organised a related conference entitled the Life Sciences Symposium on Patent Landscaping and Transfer of Technology under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). The meeting examined the use of patent information tools in identifying technological developments of relevance to the

environment and in facilitating the transfer of technologies within the context of MEAs.

Ultimately, the harmony prevailing in this year's Assemblies may not reflect a narrowing gap in substantive differences in many policy areas so much as it might indicate a greater maturity in the deliberations of the organisation and a growing realisation that the priorities and views of all countries need to be addressed, as is reflected in the new work programme of the SCP.

In any case, said a delegate of a developing country, "WIPO's new leadership understands that the organisation can no longer operate in isolation from the outside world and needs to engage more significantly with policy challenges it has shied away from in past years."

For more information on the Life Sciences Symposium on Patent Landscaping and Transfer of Technology under Multilateral Environmental Agreements, see http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/2008/lifesciences/ip_lss2_ge/

ICTSD reporting; "Optimism reigns as WIPO Assemblies close, Gurry takes office," IP WATCH, 30 September, 2008; "WIPO Assemblies conclude," WIPO PRESS RELEASE, 1 October, 2008.

Chemicals

US REGULATION OF E-WASTE EXPORTS UNDER SCRUTINY FROM WITHIN

According to a report by the investigative branch of the United States government, current US regulations have not stopped the export of millions of potentially hazardous used electronics.

The investigation by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) revealed a vast demand for US e-waste exports, especially in developing countries. In a search of one internet e-commerce site, investigators observed brokers from around the world place 2,234 requests to purchase liquid-crystal display (LCD) screens. On the same site, they found 430 requests for central processing units and 665 requests for used

computers. Brokers in developing countries represented over 60 percent of all requests observed.

Trade in used electronics is highly profitable for developing countries and can provide development benefits like access to inexpensive refurbished electronics. Some argue that these exports extend the life of electronics and therefore cut down on waste. The extraction of metals from used electronics, if handled responsibly, can also be an environmentally friendly alternative to mining.

Environmental effects

But environmentalists worry that, if improperly handled, used electronics like TV screens, computer monitors, and even cell phones can have devastating consequences for the air, land, and water.

Jim Puckett, an environmental activist at Seattle-based Basel Action Network, has observed areas where processing takes place in the developing world. "Whole villages were making their living burning little wires, cooking computer chips, breathing toxic fumes," Puckett says. "Vats of chips were soaked in acid to extract the gold and all the residues were flushed into the river."

According to surveys made on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), these practices are not uncommon in developing countries where large quantities of electronics are informally recycled using the environmentally unsafe methods Puckett describes.

In the report, US government investigators claim that over 75 percent of the requests for used electronics observed on e-commerce websites offered US\$10 or less per unit, and almost half offered US \$5 or less. Low prices (under US\$10 per unit) indicate a high likelihood that these items will ultimately be handled and disposed of unsafely.

Weak enforcement of current regulations

The report partly blames the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for weak American

enforcement regulations. US regulation of e-waste exports currently only controls the export of cathode ray tubes (CRTs). CRTs are found in old computer monitors and contain hazardous amounts of lead. Under current rules, CRTs can only be exported if the seller properly notifies the EPA. Furthermore, the importing government must give its consent and shipments must be clearly labelled. But investigators claim that many US companies export these hazardous products outside EPA regulations.

To ascertain the level of noncompliance with CRT rules, investigators monitored E-commerce websites under fictitious profiles. When they requested CRTs they received 43 offers from US companies, none of which had submitted a proper notification, according to EPA records.

According to the report, the EPA has made no effort to improve its monitoring and has only ever issued one penalty for noncompliance with CRT rules. This leaves the onus on foreign ports to intercept shipments of hazardous CRTs.

A sales representative for a large New Jersey-based electronics recycler told the Government Accountability Office's fictitious buyer from Hong Kong not to worry about U.S. laws' holding up export of untested CRT monitors. He explained that "it's the laws at [the port of Hong Kong] that you have to find out about." When asked about the CRT rule, another electronics recycler replied that it would definitely not affect shipment: "We ship these overseas all the time," he wrote. The report found that many exporters mix toxic products in with legal shipments or hide the broken electronics toward the back of the container in order to avoid interception at foreign ports.

Through follow-up emails and interviews, investigators found that weak enforcement of CRT rules has led to scandalous environmental profiteering by American recycling companies, many of which boast environmentally friendly practices. One Maryland electronics recycler charges anywhere from US\$ 10 to US\$ 30 to collect used monitors for recycling. According to their website, this fee is collected in order to cover the company's "responsible domestic recycling costs." Yet the same recycler asked undercover

investigators what price they were willing to pay for used CRTs destined for Singapore.

Many hazardous materials not included in US regulation

But the report goes on to say that enforcing the CRT rule is not enough since many other forms of e-waste are recognized internationally. While the US regulates only one form of e-waste (CRTs), many countries that receive and export US e-waste have much broader definitions and regulations of hazardous materials. To address this inconsistency, most industrialized countries have harmonized their regulation of hazardous materials with the definitions agreed upon in the Basel Convention, an agreement the US has signed but not ratified.

In 2001, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) revised its hazardous waste definitions to harmonise with those outlined by the Basel Convention, since most of its members have ratified it. The report claims that, as a member of the OECD, the US must adopt the classification system to facilitate coordination among exporting and importing countries; however, these changes have not yet been implemented.

The report also recommends that the Basel Convention, which aims to minimise the generation of waste, treat wastes as near as possible to where they were generated, and reduce international movements of hazardous wastes, be brought before US Congress for ratification. According to the report, American implementation of the Basel Convention could help protect developing countries from the health and environmental impacts the e-waste trade.

ICTSD Reporting, "EPA faulted for failing to control e-waste exports," ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 18 September 2008, "EPA Needs to Better Control Harmful U.S. Exports through Stronger Enforcement and More Comprehensive Regulation," UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, August 2008.

Forests

NEW UN SCHEME TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE BY AVOIDING DEFORESTATION

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has officially unveiled a new climate change programme aimed at moving climate change goals beyond the Kyoto Protocol. Proponents of the much talked about Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Programme, or 'UN-REDD', say the initiative will help prevent climate change by creating economic incentives to help reduce deforestation in developing countries.

The programme, launched on 24 September, allows participating tropical forested developing countries to generate carbon credits by demonstrating their capacity for tree planting and avoiding deforestation. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), felling, slash and burn agriculture and other deforestation effects accounts for close to 20 percent of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere - the second largest source after the energy sector.

If incorporated as a part of the post-2012 successor to the Kyoto Protocol, the UN initiative would eventually allow developed countries to purchase these generated credits which, in turn, would help to create revenue while simultaneously preserving forests and become an integral part of a potential future global carbon market. The fate of REDD has, in fact, become one of the hottest topics in the current round of negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 5 September 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/28685/>).

Norway has donated US\$35 million to the initiative to assist in initial capacity building. As a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions - due to its large natural gas industry - Norway has been looking to global initiatives that might help them offset their emissions. In addition to financing the initial phase of the UN-REDD programme, Norway also announced on 16 September a US\$1 billion contribution to

Brazil's Amazon protection fund over the next seven years.

"Fighting greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is a priority for Norway now and also in the years to come," Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg said at the UN-REDD unveiling. "If we are successful in stage one, Norway will certainly continue support for the UN-REDD Programme and on an even more substantial scale."

Countries participating in the first phase of the program include Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Republic of Tanzania, Panama, Bolivia, Paraguay, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea.

Some of these countries (Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Tanzania) have opted for a "quick start" approach that will require early development of national strategies, establishment of systems for monitoring, assessment, reporting and verification of forest cover and carbon stocks, and capacity building.

The UN-REDD programme will be jointly administrated by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). This collaborative effort is part of a new UN initiative to increase cooperation among agencies.

"Reducing carbon emissions by providing countries and local communities with incentives for not cutting down forests is emerging as a creative and effective way to help us address the climate change challenge, protect vital ecosystems and support livelihoods," says UNDP representative Kemal Derviş. "The UN-REDD Programme, which brings together the skills of FAO, UNDP and UNEP, with generous assistance from Norway, sets the stage for this kind of 'win-win-win' situation,"

With the Kyoto Protocol set to expire in 2012, the environmental community is looking towards the future. If the initial stages of the UN-REDD programme are successful, organisers plan to gradually unveil a series of pilot projects in

participating countries that could be a component of Kyoto's successor.

"This initiative will not only demonstrate how forests can have an important role as part of a post-2012 climate regime," says Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "It will also help build much needed confidence that the world community is ready to support the implementation of an inclusive, ambitious, and comprehensive climate regime once it is ratified."

Critics of the programme point out that establishing benchmarks for 'avoided deforestation' and validating data could prove to be overwhelming and open to manipulation. For its part, the UN says it is looking into "rigorous verification systems," which could include measures such as satellite monitoring.

Officials hope to have a functioning system in place in time to strike a formal agreement at the December 2009 Conference of the Parties (COP-15) in Copenhagen, Denmark.

ICTSD Reporting, "REDD Letter Day for Forests," UNEP PRESS RELEASE, 24 September 2008; "Norway pledges \$1 billion to Brazil Amazon Fund," REUTERS, 17 September 2008; "Brazil government 'worst logger'," BBC NEWS, 30 September 2008.

In Brief

EU WARNS AGAINST TRADE RESTRICTIONS ON RAW MATERIALS

European Union trade representative Peter Mandelson warned on 29 September that the EU may take action against countries that impose trade restrictions on raw materials.

"The goal of the EU's trade policy is, and will remain, an open global market completely free of all distortions on trade in energy and raw materials," Mandelson said in a speech to industry leaders in Brussels.

Europe, which imports 70 to 80 percent of its primary resources, wants to secure access to these raw materials, much of which are transformed by

European industry into finished consumer products. But growing demand for primary materials from emerging economies has put pressure on the commodity supplies.

Mandelson said export duties act like indirect subsidies, making it much harder for industries in other nations to compete with domestic manufacturers. "Imposition of an export tax can price a European company out of the market overnight," he cautioned. Globally, export restrictions also pose a problem as they can skew international price signals.

Mandelson said that the recent rise in global commodity prices has been matched "by a proliferation of export restrictions for commodities," including at least 450 export restrictions on raw materials including metals, wood, leather, ceramics, chemicals and textiles.

In particular, Mandelson drew attention to export restrictions in Argentina, China, India and Russia: Argentina has taxes of up to 40 percent on the export of raw hides and skin; China has an export duties of 120 percent on yellow phosphorous and on coke of up to 40 percent; India taxes iron ore exports at 50 rupees per tonne; and Russia imposes a 50 percent export duty on scrap aluminium.

Many developing countries use export taxes to raise revenue and encourage domestic processing of raw materials. They have resisted efforts to constrain the use of such measures in negotiations at the WTO.

The US is currently considering challenging Chinese tax restrictions on exports of raw materials used in the steel industry through the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism (see Bridges Weekly, 10 September 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/29066/>). Mandelson said that he could not "rule out that the EU would use the WTO in the same way to enforce Chinese commitments" to its WTO accession obligations and that any instance of export duties that hurt European markets would also "attract the scrutiny of our trade defence system."

Additional resources

To access Peter Mandelson's full speech, visit http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/mandelson/speeches_articles/sppm219_en.htm

ICTSD reporting; "Peter Mandelson prepares to fight Chinese export taxes alongside US," THE TIMES, 29 September, 2008; "EU to act against raw material exports curbs," REUTERS, 29 September, 2008.

US LAUNCHES GUIDELINES FOR GM ANIMAL APPROVAL

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is putting in place guidelines for the regulation of genetically modified (GM) animals for human consumption.

On 18 September, the FDA announced draft guidelines for the regulation of GM animals, paving the way for their commercialisation. The guidelines are up for public comment until 18 November. While the biotech industry welcomed the draft rules as a large boost for this nascent industry, consumer groups expressed concerns. GM animals are modified to become disease-resistant, grow faster, contain health promoting substances such as omega-three fatty acids, or produce medicines. Often referring to the products as "Frankenfoods," consumer groups have raised a range of environmental, ethical and health concerns.

The public is especially worried about the secrecy of the approval process, which would not be open to the public, but rather geared towards the needs of industry to protect trade secrets. "The first time that the public will learn about a genetically engineered animal will be the day it is approved," said Margaret Mellon of the Union of Concerned Scientists. "This requires that you completely trust the FDA to do this right, and I don't think folks trust FDA that much."

In addition, only food with altered qualities would be required to be labelled as derived from GM animals. The labels would provide information on the health benefits of the foods, for example,

while foods derived from faster-growing or disease-resistant GM animals need not be labelled.

As with GM plants, exported food produced from US GM animals -- especially if unlabelled -- may meet resistance among consumers in trading partners.

"Rules on Bioengineered Animals," WASHINGTON POST, 18 September 2008; "FDA Plans Rules for Modified Food Animals," WALL STREET JOURNAL, 19 September 2008; "FDA Releases Draft Guidance On Genetically Engineered Animals," FORBES, 19 September 2008.

EUROPEAN STEEL INDUSTRY RAISES COMPETITIVENESS CONCERNS

The European steel industry is calling for exemptions from tough climate measures in order to allay competitiveness concerns.

The industry demands come as lobbying in Brussels intensifies with regards to a legislative package on energy and climate change, which the EU is set to adopt by the end of the year (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 25 January 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/9354/>). The EU is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 percent by 2020, and the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) serves as a key tool for achieving the target. Industry, power production and airlines will all be covered by the ETS. Discussions regarding the proportion of emissions permits different sectors will have to buy, or get for free, are ongoing.

The European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) and European Confederation of Iron and Steel Industries (EUROFER) are appealing to decision makers to "ensure a fair balance between climate change measures on the one side and the competitiveness of the European industry, sustainable investment and high quality jobs on the other." They stressed that significant action has already been taken and cannot be hit by additional costs amounting to billions of Euros per year.

Specifically, the groups would like to see an improvement in the ETS proposal on leakage, benchmarks, waste gases, electricity costs and international agreements. As long as Europe is moving ahead alone, argue EMF and EUROFER, sectors susceptible to "leakage" -- the relocation of carbon-intensive industries to countries with laxer regulations -- these sectors should be allocated all their emissions allowances for free. According to a report by the European Commission, industries such as primary aluminium, hot rolled steel and slabs produced in basic oxygen furnaces and clinker would be facing competitiveness concerns unless all trading partners join global efforts to address climate change.

Additional information

To view the EMF-EUROFER statement, see http://www.emf-fem.org/press/press_releases/emf_and_eurofer_joint_appeal_to_the_political_decision_makers_on_the_revision_of_the_eu_emissions_trading_system.

ICTSD Reporting; "Steelmakers Urge EU to Improve Emissions Proposal," REUTERS, 3 October 2008.

BRAZIL, US TO COLLABORATE ON BIOFUELS

A bill designed to improve Western Hemisphere cooperation on energy was approved by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 23 September. Notably, the bill aims to promote collaboration on biofuels between the world's two top ethanol producers - Brazil and the US.

President of the Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association (UNICA), Marcus Jank, said in an interview with Reuters that the bill would allow the two countries to move beyond past trade disputes and that the bill would help the US and Brazil to work "as partners in the creation of a global market for biofuels." The Brazilian sugarcane industry also disclosed that US\$ 58 million has been earmarked for the bill.

Sponsored by Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, Senate Bill 1007 expands on an existing Memorandum of Understanding inked in March

2007 by President George W. Bush and his Brazilian counterpart, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. A change in the title of the new legislation - from "United States-Brazil Latin America Energy Cooperation Pact" to "The Western Hemisphere Energy Compact" - suggests there is a growing US interest in developing regional cooperation on energy issues.

Although Brazil exports approximately 50 percent of its ethanol to the US, Brasilia has been at odds with Washington over certain agricultural subsidies and tariffs, particularly in the areas of cotton and ethanol. After the breakdown of world trade talks at the WTO in July, a Brazilian trade official had indicated that Brasilia was likely to initiate dispute proceedings at the WTO with the US over its ethanol import tariffs.

Brazil and the US together account for 75 percent of world ethanol production and over 50 percent of biodiesel output. According to UNICA, US ethanol production has risen to almost 11 billion gallons annually and Brazil, whose output reportedly may triple by 2020, produced approximately 5.8 billion gallons in 2007.

ICTSD reporting; "Interview - Brazil, U.S. to cooperate on biofuels - official," REUTERS, 24 September, 2008; "New bill to expand promotion of biofuels is a welcome boost for U.S.-Brazil relations according to Brazilian Sugarcane Industry," PRN NEWSWIRE, 23 September, 2008.

Events & Resources

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>.

Coming up in the next two weeks

5-14 October, Barcelona, Spain. IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS. This forum is a grand public gathering hosted by the world's conservation community, bringing together people from all over the world to discuss, share and learn.

Addressing the world's most pressing sustainable development challenges, the forum offers four days of debates, workshops, dialogues, art and film, roundtable discussions, training courses, music and exhibitions on the following three streams: a new climate for change; healthy environments - healthy people; and safeguarding the diversity of life. For further information, please refer to http://www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm.

6-7 October. Geneva, Switzerland. EIGHTH AND FINAL MEETING OF THE UNCTAD-FAO-IFOAM INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HARMONISATION AND EQUIVALENCE IN ORGANIC CULTURE (ITF). This project is a joint initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development. The ITF has worked since 2003 to remove technical barriers to trade in organic agricultural products that result from the lack of harmonisation and interoperability of organic regulations, private standards, and certification requirements. The six-year working period of the ITF (2003-2008) has led to an increased understanding of issues, dialogue between private and public sectors and among governments, improved cooperation including catalysing regional harmonisation processes and increased influence on new regulations and revision of existing ones. For more information contact Sophia Twarog, email: sophia.twarog@unctad.org; internet: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intItemID=2068&lang=1&m=16161>.

6-8 October, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. NEXT GENERATION BIOFUELS MARKETS - DRIVING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEXT GENERATION BIOFUELS. As competition between food and fuel threatens to become a pressing constraint on the current biofuel industry, the biofuels world is starting the transition to next generation biofuels. Green Power's 4th next generation biofuels event will bring together key players who are pioneering the development of next generation biofuels to address the latest developments in creating cost competitive, industrial scale production of next generation

biofuels technologies. For further information, please refer to www.greenpowerconferences.com/biofuelsmarkets/nextgen_08.html.

8 & 10 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY - KOREA. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: +41 22 739 5007; fax: +41 22 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

8-9 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: +41 22 739 5007; fax: +41 22 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

9 October, Barcelona, Spain. SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP. This workshop is for institutions, donors and young professionals who want to work together to shape training for the future. The workshop will begin with several short presentations by researchers and young professionals on the current status of leadership training, followed by breakout groups with facilitators designed to put together a series of concrete steps to increase international investments in sustainable development leadership training. For more information contact Carolee Buckler, Project Manager, tel: (204) 958-7700; fax: (204) 958-7710; email: cbuckler@iisd.ca; internet: <http://www.iisd.org>

9-10 October, Kyoto, Japan. IGES-NIES-ESCAP POLICY FORUM: TOWARDS A COPENHAGEN CONSENSUS. The forum is designed to bring together stakeholders from both developed and developing countries and identify ways of reconciling potentially competing perspectives on important provisions of the Bali Action Plan. For more information contact Izumi Munekata at cp-info@iges.or.jp

13-17 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WIPO IGC-13. The thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of the World Intellectual

Property Organisation (WIPO) is taking place in October 2008. For more information contact: tel: +41-22-338-8161; fax: +41-22-338-8120; e-mail: grtkf@wipo.int; Internet: <http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/>

13-16 October, Accra, Ghana. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA. This conference will highlight the importance of traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK) towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable forest management. The conference will cover context and history of the relationship between formal forest knowledge, and "scientific" forestry and TFRK with respect to forest management, including community participatory approaches in Africa. For more information contact Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, email: otengyeboah@yahoo.co.uk; internet: http://www.iufro.org/download/file/2595/95/g_hana08-tftfk-1st-announcemt-call-upd.doc

14 October, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO GENERAL COUNCIL. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: +41 22 739 5007; fax: +41 22 739-5458; email: enquiries@wto.org.

14-15 October, London, UK. UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKETS. This conference serves as a platform for business to learn about the latest developments in VCM standards and market opportunities. For more information contact Greenpower Conferences, tel: +44 20 7099 0600; fax: +44 20 7900 1853; email: lenka@greenpowerconferences.com; internet: http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/carbonmarkets/vcm_2008.html Upcoming events

14-17 October. Rome, Italy. FAO COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) will host the 34th session of the Committee on World Food Security from 14-17 October 2008, at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. This Committee will assess the current global food situation and implications for the future. Special events will also

be organised to consider the impact of high food prices on nutrition and the theme of high prices, food security issues and policy responses. For more information contact: Kostas Stamoulis; e-mail: FAO-CFS@fao.org; Internet: http://www.fao.org/UNFAO/Bodies/cfs/cfs34/index_en.htm

Other upcoming events

22 October, Paris, France. 2ND INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SECTORAL GHG EMISSION REDUCTION POTENTIAL. This conference, organised by the Government of Japan, will discuss the issues relevant to emission reduction. The aims of the conference are to enhance understanding of strategies and models of emissions reduction and to create synergy among policy makers, researchers, and industry sector representatives. For more information contact Hiroaki Teshima, tel: +81 3 5521 8330; fax: +81 3 5521 8276; email: hiroaki_teshima@env.go.jp

28-31 October, Hong Kong, China. ECO EXPO ASIA. This conference will bring together leading environmental protection industry suppliers, academics, and experts for networking and informative seminars. For more information contact the organisers, tel: (+852) 2238 9929; fax: (+852) 2598 8771; email: ecoexpo@hongkong.messefrankfurt.com; internet: <http://www.ecoexpoasia.com>

7-10 November, Alexandria, Egypt. NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DRYLAND DEVELOPMENT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DRYLANDS - MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE. This conference will provide an opportunity to examine the probable impact of global climate change on the natural resources and agricultural productivity of dry area ecosystems and exchange information on possible ways to enhance the resilience of these systems through adaptation and mitigation strategies. For more information contact Mohan C. Saxena, tel: +202-35681581; email: M.Saxena@cgiar.org; internet: www.icarda.org/Announcement/2008/9th-IDDC/9th-IDDC_FirstAnn.htm

10 November, London, UK. MAKING TRADE WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA. This conference will look at ways in which trade agreements can be used to enhance development and ensure that benefits from trade reach the poorest. For more information contact Chatham House Conferences, tel: +44 (0)20 7957 5753; fax: +44 (0)20 7321 2045; email: conferences@chathamhouse.org.uk; internet: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/events/conferences/view/-/id/130/>

24-26 November, Geneva, Switzerland. CONFRONTING THE GLOBAL FOOD CHALLENGE. This conference has been prepared by a diverse group of civil society organisations from around the world. They aim to bring together different constituencies that work on agriculture, trade and human rights to deepen our collective understanding of the impact of trade and investment on the right to food, to explore the impact of climate change and agrofuels, and to develop new approaches to trade and investment that put human rights at the core. For more information contact the organisers, email: foodconf@e-alliance.ch; internet: <http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?RefID=103833>

25-26 November, London, UK. BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM FINANCE. This conference is designed to help companies understand the business benefits that can be derived from biodiversity and ecosystem services, rather than focusing simply on the risk elements such as reputational risk from negative publicity if they do not get involved. For more information contact Chantell McNeish, tel: +44 (0)207 099 0600; email: chantell.mcneish@greenpowerconferences.com; internet: www.greenpowerconferences.com/carbonmarkets/biodiversity_lon08.html

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.

TBOFUELS AT WHAT COST? GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR BIODIESEL IN MALAYSIA. By Gregore Pio Lopez and Tara Laan. Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI) of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), September 2008. The report highlights a number of risks inherent in subsidising fuel: subsidies increase consumption, discourage more efficient use of resources and absorb national budgets that could be spent on social services, such as health and education. It offers the case of Malaysia as a kind of cautionary tale and makes the recommendation that the biofuel industry should be allowed to function in response to market signals-consistent with environmental and social standards-so that the industry establishes itself on a sustainable rather than a government-dependent basis. The report is available at <http://www.globalsubsidies.org/en/research/biofuel-subsidies-malaysia>

BIOSAFETY AT THE CROSSROADS: AN ANALYSIS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MARKETING AND TRADE POLICIES FOR GENETICALLY MODIFIED PRODUCTS. By Guillaume P. Gruère and Debdatta Sengupta. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), September 2008. IFPRI analyses the marketing and trade policies for genetically modified (GM) products in South Africa that have been successful in the past and critically reviews recent reforms to these policies. The research shows that South Africa is effectively a significant exporter and importer of both GM and non-GM products. IFPRI also finds that there is a clear movement toward more costly and rigid trade and marketing regulations for GM products in South Africa, with local special-interest groups having an increasing influence on decision making. Yet, the past 10 years have demonstrated that South Africa's success in taking advantage of biotechnologies under changing global conditions stems mainly from the flexibility of its system. Based on the analysis, the authors provide six policy recommendations to improve rather than rigidify market and trade regulations. The report is available at <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/dp/ifpridp00796.asp>

THE ROLE OF SECTOR NO-LOSE TARGETS IN SCALING UP FINANCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION ACTIVITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By Murray Ward et al. Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, UK, May 2008. This report addresses policy tools that are becoming increasingly important in what has been referred to as "the new energy revolution." The paper covers key issues around sector no-lose targets (SNLTs), including necessary steps for implementation at an international level, links between SNLTs and Sustainable Development Policies and Measures (SD-PAMs), domestic implementation and the carbon market, and key challenges. The report is available at http://www.sectoral.org/images/presentations/default_papers/sector%20on%20sector%20no%20lose%20targets_final.pdf

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