



# Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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## **Biodiversity**

### **BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP MAKES HEADWAY ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING**

Recent discussions on an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing concluded on a positive note, with countries agreeing on a new structure to advance more detailed negotiations.

Access and benefit sharing (ABS) remains one of the most complex issues under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and a priority for many developing countries. These countries are concerned over "bio piracy," which refers to the misappropriation - generally by means of patents - of indigenous or traditional knowledge by foreign entities without compensatory payment. A Working Group under the CBD has been tasked with negotiating an international ABS system by 2010. Countries take different viewpoints on how rules for ABS should be implemented, however, and negotiations have been sluggish. Many developing countries support the development of an international treaty. Meanwhile, several developed countries have long opposed or dragged their feet with regard to negotiating text for an international treaty on ABS.

### **Working Group picks up speed on the road to COP-9**

The sixth meeting of the ad hoc open-ended Working Group on access and benefit-sharing of the CBD was held from 21 to 25 January 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. While negotiations seemed to have stagnated at previous meetings - including the last one, which was held in Montreal in late 2007 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 19 October 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/07-10-19/story2.htm>) - many participants said a constructive atmosphere prevailed in Geneva despite that fact that significant differences of

opinion remain. The Executive Secretary of the CBD, Ahmed Djoghlaif, and the Working Group Co-Chairs, Fernando Casas (Colombia) and Timothy Hodges (Canada), all called on participants to advance the talks and to progress towards more specific and concrete negotiations.

Two contact groups were established to advance discussions. The first focused on the nature, scope, and objectives of an international ABS regime, and the second was charged with discussing a draft recommendation to the upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) of the CBD, set to take place in Bonn in May this year. Intense deliberation took place in both contact groups, with heavily bracketed texts finally being presented to the full Working Group.

The major outcome of the meeting, a new working document on the international ABS regime will be forwarded to the upcoming COP. This may offer - for the first time in these negotiations - a solid basis for further discussions.

### **Nature, scope, and objectives of the international regime**

The most important outcome of the Geneva meeting was agreement on a framework for further negotiations of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing. The document has a four-part structure. Section I covers the objective of the regime, section II its scope, section III its main components, and section IV its nature. These sections in turn introduce various options. They are generally bracketed and represent different levels of discussion, negotiation, and agreement. Sources close to the negotiations stated that, although really only the titles of the sections had been agreed, the framework represented a significant advance in structuring discussions. Many participants were optimistic that the framework would provide a sufficient foundation for future meetings of the Working Group.

Language on the objective of the international regime, which was neither negotiated nor agreed, ranges from facilitating to regulating access, and from ensuring sharing of benefit to preventing misappropriation. A reference to the need to take into account the rights of indigenous and local

communities, and to ensure prior informed consent, was also included as the result of a proposal by the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity - endorsed by Haiti. Civil society sources considered it disquieting that action from an observer was required to include traditional knowledge within the objectives of the international regime. They noted that this fact demonstrates the low level of priority of the issue among countries.

The section on the scope of the international regime consists of a compilation of proposals based on parties' submissions and the recommendations of the Co-Chairs of the Working Group. The Co-Chairs suggested that the international regime cover "all genetic resources, and associated traditional knowledge, covered under the [CBD] and the benefits resulting from their use." Parties suggested diverse options, ranging from including "all biological resources, genetic resources, derivatives, products and associated traditional knowledge, innovations and practices," to including only genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge used in an environmentally sound manner.

Within the section on the main components of the international regime, possible elements were sorted into two categories. The distinction arose from the working method adopted by the Co-Chairs of the contact group. They aimed to facilitate discussions by distinguishing "components for further elaboration," which describe the main elements for an international regime as distilled from parties' positions, and "components for further consideration," which - although no less important - still require further discussion.

The approach, which also removed references to controversial issues, such as the nature of the regime, proved useful. There was some disagreement, however, on the level of consensus around the different components. On the last day of the Working Group meeting, the EU noted that the "components for further consideration" might still be shifted under different headings. Malaysia, speaking on behalf of the Like-minded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC)\*, expressed surprise at the reservation of the right to move the text in the future. Another point of contention

was the issue of international access standards as it related to compliance, with the LMMC and other developing countries resisting an EU proposal to include these standards as tools to enforce compliance. A developed country source stated that the European proposal, which links minimum access standards with enforceable compliance measures to ensure benefit-sharing, was simply not yet understood by other countries.

Positions on the nature of the international regime also continued to differ. Section IV of the framework compiled the various proposals, including the possibility of having one legally-binding instrument, a combination of legally-binding and non-binding instruments, and a non-binding instrument.

### **Group hashes out draft COP-9 decision**

The contact group charged with discussing the draft recommendation to COP-9 made substantial progress, although the group did not manage to remove all square brackets. The draft decision will accompany the framework text and set out the context and work programme for furthering the ABS negotiations after the COP. In addition to the references to the international regime, points of contention included indigenous participation in the negotiation of the international regime, the possible formation of a group of technical experts, and future meetings of the Working Group. A reference to the importance of indigenous peoples' participation was finally included in the preamble of the recommendation. The establishment of a technical expert or other additional group, however, was left for the consideration of COP-9. There was also no agreement on the number or timing of future meetings of the Working Group. Indeed, as one developing country delegate noted, it will be a "very difficult fight in Bonn, even for one meeting" of the Working Group.

### **Looking ahead to Bonn**

The ninth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 19-30 May this year. Following the Geneva meeting of the Working Group on access and benefit-sharing, many participants were more optimistic regarding the COP-9 outcome on the negotiation of an

international ABS regime. For example, observers noted that even traditionally critical countries seemed to have moved beyond questioning the need for an international regime of some sort. The active and informed engagement of regional groups, particularly the African Group, was also highlighted.

Nevertheless, there also seem to be some causes for concern. Commentators said that significantly more developing country organisation and collaboration would be necessary in order to move the negotiations forward. Others expressed concern because they felt that the parties still were engaging in negotiation tactics rather than coming forth with fully developed positions. Others noted that the need for further technical work on the various aspects of the international regime still was immense.

Whether these difficulties can be overcome and substantive positions moved toward convergence before the 2010 deadline remains unclear. On the other hand, advances at the Working Group meeting may prove to provide essential momentum, as well as a solid base, for the negotiations on an international regime on access and benefit-sharing.

### **Background**

The negotiation of an international regime for access and benefit-sharing dates to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which called for "an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources." At its seventh meeting in 2004, the CBD COP mandated the Working Group on access and benefit-sharing - in collaboration with the working group focusing on traditional knowledge, innovation and practices - to elaborate and negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing with the aim of adopting an instrument or instruments to effectively implement the provisions of Article 15 and Article 8(j) of the CBD. At the eight meeting of the COP, held in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2006, the Working Group on access and benefit-sharing was requested to continue the elaboration and negotiation of the international regime and was instructed to complete its work at the earliest

possible time before the tenth meeting of the COP in 2010.

### Additional resources

For daily reports and a summary of the meeting, see IISD Reporting Services at <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/abs6/>

\* The LMMC countries, all parties to the CBD, are Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, and Venezuela. The majority of the world's genetic resources are contained within the territories of these countries.

ICTSD reporting.

## Fisheries

### ROUGH SAILING FOR FISHERIES SUBSIDY TALKS

Divisions among WTO Members marked discussions last week on a set of potential multilateral disciplines on fisheries subsidy spending.

The talks marked the first formal meeting of the Doha Round negotiating group on rules to discuss the draft consolidated text on fisheries subsidies tabled by Chair Ambassador Guillermo Valles Games (Uruguay) last November.

Particularly contentious were proposed provisions for banning certain kinds of payments and according special and differential treatment to developing countries. This was unsurprising, since the two issues have in recent months been the principal cleavage among Members. India was especially vocal in arguing that the conservation requirements developing countries had to fulfil in order to make ordinarily-prohibited payments were so onerous as to render the rules useless.

Valles Games' text would ban several types of fisheries subsidy payments, particularly those that encourage overfishing through enhancing fishing capacity and creating other incentives to fish. In doing so, he appeared to be searching for an

acceptable middle ground between supporters of a 'top-down' blanket ban on fisheries subsidy payments (with negotiated exceptions), and countries that want a 'bottom-up' ban only on specific kinds of subsidies. "I am only a militant for consensus," the chair said during the 30 January - 1 February talks.

While Valles Games called the recent meetings fruitful, sources close to the negotiations say his text met resistance on a range of issues, and that strong divergences were apparent. Members such as Japan, the EU, Norway, Korea, Taiwan and India called for a new draft text as soon as possible - albeit with very different ideas in mind for what they want that text to look like.

Some delegates said that calling for a revised draft was not helpful, since countries doing so were not providing the chair with the tools necessary to amend it. More negotiations on the issue are needed before a new version is circulated, these delegates insisted. Chair Valles Games echoed this sentiment, and encouraged more contributions from Members.

Sources say that the call for a revised text so soon reflects differences elsewhere in the rules negotiations, especially on anti-dumping, an issue on which a separate text by Valles Games has proved deeply divisive. "When people are calling for a new text and they have only discussed three issues, that is the larger issues coming into play," one negotiator concluded.

### Prohibited subsidies: same divisions

Prohibited subsidies, permitted subsidies, and special and differential treatment for developing countries were the only three of the eight articles in the text discussed at the recent meeting.

On the prohibitions (Article I), Members fell into their usual camps. Brazil, Iceland, Pakistan, the US, Argentina, New Zealand, and Ecuador, expressed support for the chair's approach. They called the level of disciplines "groundbreaking", ambitious, and a good basis for negotiations.

Australia, another supporter of a broad-based ban, suggested that the list of prohibitions in Valles Games' text might not go far enough.

At the other end of the spectrum, countries including Japan, the EU, Taiwan, Norway, and Canada said that the prohibitions went too far. Japan said that the text lacked balance, and called for permitting subsidies for bait, fuel, insurance, and port infrastructure. The EU, though less categorical, expressed similar concerns, pointing to the effect of high oil prices on small-scale fishermen. Taiwan said that the prohibitions went well beyond the Doha mandate to deal with payments that cause overfishing; Canada pointed to an OECD report suggesting that two-thirds of fisheries subsidies were beneficial.

Representatives of small and vulnerable economies, including the Solomon Islands and El Salvador, and Thailand urged the chair to remove developing country subsidies for fish processing and port infrastructure from the prohibited list.

Valles Games challenged delegates opposed to his approach to explain how the listed prohibited subsidies do not promote overcapacity fishing.

### **Small-scale fishermen attract large-scale attention**

As for the subsidies that Valles Games' text permitted, the EU, Japan, Canada, Norway, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong said all Members should be allowed to subsidise small-scale fishermen in ways currently permitted for developing countries alone. They argued that such fishermen were among the most vulnerable populations in developed countries as well as poor ones.

The EU argued that governments need space to provide small fishing communities with the assistance necessary to develop their sectors and to subsist; Korea encouraged Members to look at small-scale fishing from a social welfare perspective. Canada called for exempting its programmes for small-scale fishing in aboriginal communities.

Norway argued that small-scale fisheries account for only seven percent of the country's annual catch. Japan similarly claimed that its small-scale fishermen did not contribute to overfishing. Furthermore, their numbers were declining, Japan noted.

India was particularly vocal on the issue of small-scale fishermen, albeit for different reasons. It stressed that most fishing in India is small-scale and does not contribute to overfishing, and therefore should be exempt from prohibition.

India was objecting to the text's provisions allowing developing countries to make otherwise-banned payments on the condition that they were linked to international-standard fishery management systems that followed practices such as those in UN accords on migratory fish stocks, and a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) code of conduct on responsible fisheries. In effect, India argued that these requirements, though motivated by conservation and sustainability concerns, would effectively make the exceptions impossible to use.

"The proposed WTO rules hold the threat to curtail the ability of developing countries to provide support to their artisan and small fishermen, and encourage fishing in their economic exclusive zone," said Indian commerce department official Jayanta Dasgupta in January to a Chennai audience, according to the Financial Express.

During the talks at the WTO last week, the Indian delegation invited Valles Games to visit the country's fishing villages and witness the situation firsthand.

New Zealand and Chile, among others, were reportedly not convinced by the arguments presented in favour of allowing exceptions for small-scale fishermen in developed countries. Here, New Zealand cited an FAO document claiming that small-scale fishing accounts for significant proportions of developed countries' fishing fleets. In the case of the EU and Japan, small-scale fishermen make up 80 and 90 percent of their fleets, respectively, as cited in the report.

### **Size matters**

As for the text's other provisions for special and differential treatment (S&DT) for developing countries, discussions were dominated by Barbados, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Mauritius on behalf of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific

(ACP) group of states, which urged for disciplines to be relaxed, notably on boat length.

The text permits developing countries to provide subsidies based on certain conditions, such as the size and capacity of the fishing vessels, currently capped at 10 metres.

Delegates opposed to relaxing the limit argued that doing so would nullify the purpose of the provision, since the average length of a fishing boat is 10-15 metres with a capacity of 20 gross tonnes. "At the end of the day, where do we draw the line and what is appropriate at that line?" said one delegate.

Policy space was another focus of attention. The Solomon Islands, Barbados, and South Africa argued that spending on port infrastructure should not face restrictions, saying that the text's disciplines would limit their policy space for developing fisheries industries.

Not all reactions were critical, however. Barbados, on behalf of the small and vulnerable economies, commended the chair for taking into account the group's needs on special and differential treatment. The Solomon Islands thanked him for exempting access fees from the list of prohibited subsidies. These fees, typically offered by rich country governments to a coastal state in exchange for the right to fish in the latter's waters, are a crucial source of revenue for some coastal countries - a source that they are keen to protect. In the chair's text, government-to-government subsidies are not considered subsidies and are thus not vulnerable to being challenged at the WTO.

### **Hoping for smoother waters ahead**

As negotiators look ahead, they say compromise is necessary for the talks to advance. Valles Games encouraged delegates to be sure that "when the ship reaches the port, it is balanced." But with such strong divergences, delegates are concerned about how the talks will play out.

The EU said that the negotiations were not in a good position because supporters of a broad ban were significantly happier than the other camp, sources report.

The next fisheries subsidy negotiations are scheduled for mid-February, when the rest of the text will be discussed. Provisions requiring an FAO peer review of fisheries management systems are likely to prove most contentious. Valles Games has asked delegates to consider inviting someone from the FAO to participate, in order to clarify the outside institution's potential role.

The draft text is available online at [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news07\\_e/rules\\_nov07\\_e.doc](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news07_e/rules_nov07_e.doc)

ICTSD reporting; "India wants to stop proposed WTO rules on fisheries subsidies," FINANCIAL EXPRESS, 18 January 2008.

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## **Sustainable Agriculture**

### **BIOTECH COMPANIES WITHDRAW FROM GLOBAL AGRICULTURE ASSESSMENT**

Three biotech companies delivered a blow to a major international assessment of agriculture by pulling out of the multi-stakeholder effort. Monsanto, Syngenta and BASF withdrew since they felt a draft project report devoted more space to the risks of genetically modified (GM) crops than to their benefits.

The International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) is a global multi-stakeholder initiative engaging hundreds of experts over three years. It aims to map how agricultural knowledge, science and technology can be used to reduce hunger and poverty, to improve rural livelihoods, and to facilitate equitable environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development. The expected outputs of this project are a series of published, critical, in-depth global and sub-global assessment of local and institutional knowledge and experiences. The project is set to wrap up in April this year.

### **Industry voice not loud enough?**

The companies said they resigned from the project because the industry perspectives on GM

technology were not reflected in the draft document. They argued the report should focus on the potential of biotechnology to secure future food supplies through yield increases and by making plants more resistant to droughts and higher temperatures. Their perspective is that biotechnology is central to reducing poverty and hunger.

Monsanto and Syngenta have made significant investments in research and development of drought-tolerant crops. "Water is one of the biggest limiting factors in agriculture. In the future, climate change does mean there are going to be more droughts", Sara Duncan of Monsanto said. The companies have focused on corn because not only is it a key raw material for a multitude of processed foods, but it also is a major animal feed and in growing demand to make ethanol for use in alternative fuels. These biotech firms hope to have their first transgenic drought-tolerant corn seeds on the market by 2012 at the latest.

Denise Dewar of CropLife International - a global federation representing the plant science industry - said "We were concerned with the direction the draft was taking and that our input was not being taken appropriately. We were looking to see references to plant science technology and the potential role it can contribute."

The draft International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development is lukewarm about the potential of biotechnology in developing country agriculture and includes a list of possible risks. For example, the report states that in developing countries, the use of intellectual property rights such as patents drive up costs, restrict experimentation by the individual farmer or public researcher, while also potentially undermining local practices that enhance food security and economic sustainability. It claims that an emphasis on modern biotechnology can alter education and training programmes and reduce the number of professionals in other core agricultural sciences. Also, the draft report claims that policy makers should consider biotechnology impacts beyond productivity and yield goals, and address wider societal issues of capacity building, social equity and local infrastructure if they want

this technology to achieve sustainability and development goals.

### **Other stakeholders regret company retreat**

A number of other stakeholders involved in the agriculture assessment lamented the retreat of the biotech companies from the project.

An editorial of the journal *Nature* noted that "The views outlined in the draft chapter on biotechnology, although undoubtedly over-cautious and unbalanced, do not represent the ranting of a fringe minority. The idea that biotechnology cannot by itself reduce hunger and poverty is mainstream opinion among agricultural scientists and policy-makers."

Bob Watson, director of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development, said "It's very unfortunate that they have walked out even before we agreed the final version. If they can bring evidence forward that we have not been objective, or that the language is biased, then we could discuss that." He also said the withdrawal of the companies would weaken the final report. "Our goal was to have them included. We wanted a multi-stakeholder group that included everyone, that was absolutely essential."

Jan van Aken of Greenpeace International, a member of the project, said "This assessment goes far beyond genetic engineering, it is about setting solutions for global agriculture and the world's poor and hungry. It is such a shame to withdraw from such a good initiative, simply because your business plans do not fit with sound science and experts voiced a more balanced opinion than yours."

The project is expected to agree its final report in April. CropLife International, which represents the biotech industry, has indicated that it remains open to rejoining the assessment if the other team members "are willing to be more even-handed." Unless Monsanto and Syngenta rejoin the assessment before the final report is agreed, observers have pointed out that the credibility of this important scientific assessment would be undermined.

## Background

The International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development started in 2005 and is expected to wrap up in April this year. The project was developed out of a consultative process involving 900 participants and 110 countries from all regions of the world. It was launched under the co-sponsorship of the FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, the World Bank and WHO. Themes beyond biotech discussed in the assessment are bioenergy, climate change, human health, natural resources management, trade and markets, traditional and local knowledge and community-based innovation, and women in agriculture. On trade and markets, the report says that the challenge of targeting market and trade policy to enhance the ability of agricultural and agricultural knowledge, science and technology systems to strengthen food security, maximise environmental sustainability, and support small-scale farmers to spur poverty reduction and drive development is immediate. The draft report presents global challenges related to these issues and identifies options for action to advance development and sustainability goals.

## Additional resources

The draft Synthesis Report of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) is available at <http://www.agassessment.org/>

ICTSD reporting; "Biotech Companies Race for Drought-Tolerant Crops", CHECKBIOTECH.ORG, 14 January 2008; "Deserting the Hungry?", NATURE, 17 January 2008; "Biotech Companies Desert International Agriculture Project", GUARDIAN, 22 January 2008; "Firms Pull Out of Sh70m Agricultural Project", ALLAFRICA.COM, 4 February 2008.

## In Brief

### EU HALTS BRAZILIAN BEEF IMPORTS ON FOOD SAFETY GROUNDS

Starting on 1 February, the EU has temporarily banned all imports of Brazilian beef due to a lack

of "adequate health and traceability systems in place" in Brazil to identify cases of mad cow and foot-and-mouth diseases. Analysts predict that the ban will last for at least 60 days.

Clodoaldo Hugueney, Brazil's Ambassador to the WTO, stated that the ban was "unjustified, arbitrary and disproportionate," in part because the problems identified with the system posed "no risk to human health and animal health." He also suggested the ban was intended to protect domestic beef producers from Brazilian competition.

Marcus Vinicius Pratini de Moraes, President of the Brazilian Association of Meat Exporters, echoed that sentiment, saying that "sanitary conditions are better than in most countries where mad cow is still a threat." He added that "These measures are being used to prevent Brazil from gaining access to markets."

The EU is Brazil's largest export market for beef and the ban could mean higher prices for European consumers.

Prior to the ban, Brazil agreed to inspect individual ranches to evaluate whether they met the EU's requirements. The initial list included approximately 300 ranches to be inspected and cleared. However, the EU became suspicious of Brazil's inspection efforts after the list was expanded to over 2,000 ranches, and thus "decided not to license any of the ranches... effectively creating a suspension of beef imports."

Brazil is leaving open the possibility of initiating a WTO dispute against the EU.

"Brazil Protests EU Ban on Imports of Brazilian Beef Over Traceability," BNA, 6 February 2008; "Brazil Decries at WTO 'Protectionist' EU Move Against Brazilian Beef Imports," BNA, 6 February 2008; "Brazil Could File a Complaint with WTO Over EU Ban on Meat Imports," Associated Press, 5 February 2008; "In Brazil, Anger Over European Ban of Beef Imports," New York Times, 5 February 2008.



## US SPONSORS MAJOR CARBON EMITTERS MEETING

A meeting organised by the US saw continued discussions on future global action to combat climate change, but delivered little in concrete terms.

Gathering in Honolulu, Hawaii, from 30-31 January, the participants represented the world's major emitters - 17 countries that account for 80 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, namely, the Group of Eight industrialised nations, China, India, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea and the EU. The debate continued on issues raised within the multilateral UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, where all countries agreed in December 2007 to embark on negotiations towards a comprehensive climate agreement by 2009 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 18 December 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/07-12-18/story1.htm>).

"We had a very constructive debate," said Matthias Machnig of Germany's Ministry for the Environment. "It's very important to have an international regime of mandatory targets based under the umbrella of the United Nations and hopefully we made a step forward here to come to real agreement in 2009."

Prior to the meeting, C. Boyden Gray, the US Ambassador to Brussels, touched on the need for all major emitters to take on climate mitigation commitments in order to avoid unfair trade competition among industries facing different carbon requirements. He said international sectoral initiatives within energy-intensive industrial sectors was a good option, but that if developing countries did not agree to sectoral limits, the US and EU would have no choice but to impose some form of 'carbon tariffs' on imports from these countries. The EU recently launched a draft energy and climate package that leaves the door open to the use of controversial border measures to safeguard the competitiveness of its energy-intensive industries (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 25 January 2008, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/08-01-25/story2.htm>) and similar measures are envisioned in draft US climate legislation.

"World's big polluters note change in US climate stance," REUTERS, 31 January 2008; "U.S. Envoy Says Carbon Offset Tax Inevitable If China, India, Others Do Not Agree to Limits," WTO REPORTER, 29 January 2008.

## NIGERIA SEEKS TO LIMIT IMPORTS OF 'JUNK' COMPUTERS

Nigeria has announced that it plans to impose a tariff on used computers imported into the country in order to "stem the influx of substandard and unserviceable computers." Some parts of the used computers have been put to new use, while other components - which often contain toxic substances such as lead and mercury - are directly discarded. The Nigerian move to levy the new tariff comes at a time when dumped computer parts pose growing health and environmental concerns.

According to Nigerian officials, a number of internal factors have contributed to the problem. Nigeria's growing market for affordable computers, the local culture of "patching things up," the fact that old computers can be imported duty free, and poor waste management have led to the increase in toxic electronic waste.

External factors have also influenced the growing electronic waste problem in Nigeria. According to Kitan Ogungbuyi, a senior scientist at the Nigerian Environment Ministry, 'it is easy to disguise the condition' of what is coming into the country. "Exporters from the North are intentionally mixing bad with good so that they are able to avoid disposal costs," said Jim Puckett of the Basel Action Network.

The problems associated with the transboundary movement of electronic wastes have been acknowledged at the international level under the Basel Convention (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 15 December 2006, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/06-12-15/story1.htm>).

"Nigeria Fears E-Waste 'Toxic Legacy'," BBC News, 19 December 2006; "Nigeria to Impose Import Duties to Stem Influx of Junk PCs," Agence France Presse, 7 February 2008; "Nigeria to Curb Imports of 'Toxic' Old Computers," Reuters, 7 February 2008.

## WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM STRESSES COLLABORATION

“Collaborative leadership” and “collaborative innovation” were two major themes at this year’s meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Held from 23-27 January 2008, in Davos, Switzerland, the WEF said these collaborative mechanisms could be used to address the challenges of globalisation. “If we are interconnected and the world is interconnected, the only way for the world to work is to have a set of common values,” said Tony Blair in his Forum address.

Within this framework, panels were convened on various topics, including climate change, water scarcity, agriculture and trade.

Panellists argued that collaborating on efforts to mitigate climate change was not only possible, but essential: “the world simply has no choice.” A carbon trading scheme is the salient policy choice for reducing global carbon emissions. However, the effectiveness of a carbon trading scheme would require such things as increased global recognition of a trading system, nations to “get over the circular blame game,” the creation of universal standards for measurement, and incentives for businesses to collaborate.

In addition to discussions on current fears regarding a global economic slowdown at the World Economic Forum, a set of trade ministers also met at the sidelines of the annual event to try and boost the faltering talks of the Doha Round (see Bridges Weekly, 30 January 2008, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-01-30/story1.htm>).

### Additional information

For more on the Davos meeting, visit <http://www.weforum.org/en/events/ArchivedEvents/AnnualMeeting2008/index.htm>

ICTSD reporting.

## 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

7-9 February, New Delhi, India: DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (DSDS) 2008: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE. The DSDS will offer a platform for leading figures from North and South to address the vital issues of climate change and sustainable development, and to set the stage for an intensified search for global solutions during the year. Internet: <http://www.teriin.org/dsds/2008>.

11-13 February, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW - MEXICO. For further information, contact the WTO Information and Media Relations Division, Geneva; tel: +41 22 739 5007; fax: +41 22 739-5458; email: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org).

13-14 February, Rome, Italy: EXPERT MEETING ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE. This is part of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, to be held from 3-5 June 2008. This workshop will identify key issues on climate change and biodiversity and contribute to developing a Policy on Climate Adaptation with regard to Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. Internet: <http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/expert/exp-meeting-8.html>.

18-22 February, Rome, Italy: SBSTTA-13. The 13th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice is organised by the CBD Secretariat. Internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/default.shtml>.

20-22 February, Monaco: TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AND GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM (GCSS-10/GMEF). The Governing Council constitutes the annual ministerial-level global environmental forum in which participants gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment. The ministerial consultations during the tenth special session of the Council/Forum will focus on the emerging policy issues of "Globalization and the environment - mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge"; as well as "International environmental governance and the United Nations reform." Internet: <http://www.unep.org/gc/gcss-x/>.

21-22 February, Beijing, China: CTI INDUSTRY JOINT SEMINAR: DIFFUSION OF CLIMATE-FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGIES IN ASIAN COUNTRIES. The Climate Technology Initiative (CTI) will hold a "CTI Industry Joint Seminar: Diffusion of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies in Asian countries" in cooperation with Bureau of International Cooperation, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the International Center for Environmental Technology Transfer (ICETT). Internet: [http://www.climatetech.net/events/index\\_new\\_detail.cfm?Page=1&ID=5561](http://www.climatetech.net/events/index_new_detail.cfm?Page=1&ID=5561).

### Other upcoming meetings

3-7 March, Arusha, Tanzania: UNDERUTILIZED PLANTS FOR FOOD, NUTRITION, INCOME AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The symposium will be organised around four main areas of importance for underutilised plants: food security; nutrition and health; income generation; and environmental sustainability. Participants will be invited to share and discuss reasons for the successes and failures of diverse types of approaches to promote underutilised plants. The meeting seeks to provide a global forum for exchange and debate on issues related to the promotion of underutilised plants. The symposium is an activity of the newly formed ISHS working group on underutilised plant genetic resources (PG3). Internet: <http://www.icuc-iwmi.org/Symposium2008/>.

20-25 April, Accra, Ghana: TWELFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD XII). The theme of UNCTAD XII is addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalisation for development. The conference will look at enhancing coherence at all levels for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in global policy making; key trade and development issues in the world economy; enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment; and strengthening UNCTAD. Internet: <http://www.unctadxii.org/en/>.

12-16 May Bonn, Germany: PLANT DIVERSITY - WORLD CONGRESS ON THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE. In May, the world of diversity is meeting during the official negotiations of the United Nations Rio-Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety. "Planet Diversity" will bring together representatives from local and regional grassroots movements and institutions working on food and agricultural innovation and reconciliation based upon cultural and biological diversity. The organisers believe that diversity in its full sense is the common denominator of a world wide movement in the making. Internet: <http://www.planet-diversity.org/registration.html>.

1-7 June, 2008 Valparaiso, Chile: VII LATIN AMERICAN COURSE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY. The course is hosted by the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB). Internet: <http://www.icgeb.org/MEETINGS/CRS08/Meetings2008.htm>.

30 June to 2 July Paris, France: ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ENERGY WORKSHOP. The International Energy Workshop (IEW) is a network of global energy experts who meet annually to discuss a wide range of topics, with particular emphasis on global as well as regional energy issues. The annual IEW meetings focus on energy assessments and try to understand the reasons for diverging views of development in the energy sector. Internet: [http://www.internationalenergyworkshop.org/Pre\\_announcement\\_2008.html](http://www.internationalenergyworkshop.org/Pre_announcement_2008.html).

September, Cape Town, South Africa: RISKS, BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE RELEASE OF GMOS IN AFRICAN REGIONS. The event is hosted by the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB). Internet: <http://www.icgeb.org/MEETINGS/CRS08/Meetings2008.htm>.

## 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](mailto:msell@ictsd.ch).

THE REGULATORY CHALLENGE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY: HUMAN GENETICS, FOOD AND PATENTS. Edited by Han Somsen (Edward Elgar, 2007). The book opens with two chapters that set out some general perspectives and themes on the regulation of biotechnology. Following the opening chapters, the book is divided into three distinct parts: human genetics, GMOs and agricultural biotechnology and the regulation of biotechnology through the patent system. The book sets forth primary objections of the public to the patenting of biological material raises the dominant issue of the role of patenting as a control or influence in the shaping of the moral and ethical dimensions arising from the application of genetic technologies. For further information see [http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/script-ed/vol4-4/kg\\_review.asp](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/script-ed/vol4-4/kg_review.asp)

GMOS IN AFRICA: FOOD AND AGRICULTURE STATUS REPORT 2007. By Shenaz Moola and Victor Munnik (African Centre for Biosafety, December 2007). This book is the fourth in ACB's Bio-safety, Bio-politics and Bio-piracy Series. It provides an overview of the current status of GMOs in Africa's agriculture and food systems, including a synopsis of the overall current situation in Africa, an analysis of the key issues and trends, regional overviews and country by country status reports. The book is available at [http://www.biosafetyafrica.net/portal/images/ACB/gmos\\_in\\_africa.pdf](http://www.biosafetyafrica.net/portal/images/ACB/gmos_in_africa.pdf)

BIO-PIRACY: IMITATIONS NOT INNOVATIONS. By Suman Sahai, Prasmi Pavithran and Indrani Barpujari (Gene Campaign, New Delhi, 2007). Referred to as Indigenous Knowledge or IK, this knowledge is actually a highly sophisticated technology and has been the mainstay of survival of communities especially in the key sectors of food and health. Biodiversity, and the indigenous knowledge associated with it, is a special strength of the local communities that are found in today's developing countries. The text of the book will help appreciate the need for a change in the current intellectual property rights regime at the national and international level as the current system is turning into a tool for the unjust exploitation of bio-resources and associated IK of the rural and indigenous communities. To access the publication, visit <http://www.genecampaign.org/Publication/FreePublication/Biopiracy-imitations-not-innovations2.pdf>