



# Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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<b>Environmental Politics.....</b>	<b>1</b>
A CHANGE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE: OBAMA'S ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN .....	
<b>Climate Change .....</b>	<b>2</b>
CLIMATE TECHNOLOGY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS DEVELOPED- DEVELOPING COUNTRY DIVIDE.....	
ENERGY AGENCY CALLS FOR TOUGH ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE .....	
<b>Intellectual Property .....</b>	<b>6</b>
COALITION CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR DEMANDS ON BIODIVERSITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS .....	
<b>In Brief .....</b>	<b>7</b>
FIRST BATCH OF CERTIFIED PALM OIL EN ROUTE TO EUROPE.....	
EU OUTLINES STRATEGY ON RAW MATERIALS; NGOS REACT.....	
TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANISATION LAUNCHES NEW SUSTAINABLE TRADE INITIATIVES.....	
ASBESTOS, ENDOSULFAN REMAIN OFF TRADE WATCH LIST AT PIC COP 4.....	
<b>Events &amp; Resources .....</b>	<b>10</b>
EVENTS.....	
RESOURCES.....	

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## **Environmental Politics**

### **A CHANGE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE: OBAMA'S ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN**

Barack Obama was elected the 44th president of the United States in what many observers are calling one of the most important elections in the country's history. Americans strongly backed

Obama and his promises for 'change' in the 4 November election. And when it comes to environmental issues, such as climate change and energy, there is widespread expectation that change is indeed coming.

The proposed Obama-Biden plan for the environment aims to discard many of the Bush administration's policies and in its place, integrate major climate change and energy bills that will bring the US back into the international climate change arena. This shift can be seen most immediately in the president-elect's decision to send his own representatives to the 1-12 December UN Climate Change Conference (COP-14) in Poznań, Poland.

In addition to newfound US engagement in climate change dialogue, some say Obama's proposed environmental plans would not only thrust the US back into global initiatives, but possibly overtake the standards and commitments of many European countries.

This is true, for instance, with the president-elect's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050 using an economy-wide 'cap-and-trade programme', which would put a price on carbon emissions that reflects the costs of global warming. The administration also says it will introduce a mandate to reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. If these ambitious objectives are achieved, the US would go from one of the world's worst polluters to a leader on climate change, surpassing Europe's commitment to reduce emissions by 60 percent by the same year.

"We cannot afford more of the same timid politics when the future of our planet is at stake," president-elect Obama said during a rally in New Hampshire. "Global warming is not a someday problem, it is now. We are already breaking records with the intensity of our storms, the number of forest fires, the periods of drought. By

2050 famine could force more than 250 million from their homes.”

Comments such as these have been well-received by environmentalists, and it is clear that expectations for change are high. “Obama’s victory will give crucial climate negotiations a much greater chance of success – the United States must face up to its international responsibilities and show positive global leadership in low-carbon economic development,” says Andy Atkins, Executive Director of the London-based Friends of the Earth.

In addition to a strong stance on greenhouse gas emissions, many environmentalists are praising the president-elect’s other proposed environmental policies as comprehensive and multifaceted – particularly when compared to those of the current administration.

“We are confident President-elect Obama will view these challenging times as an opportunity to reverse the ill-chosen policies of the past and chart a new course that will lead America and the world to a healthier, safer, more sustainable and prosperous future,” said Carter Roberts, CEO of WWF-US, in a press release circulated shortly after the 4 November election.

Obama’s energy plan includes provisions such as investing US\$150 billion over the next ten years to help catalyse private efforts to build clean energy, establishing a national low-carbon fuel standard, and weather-proofing one million homes annually. The policy also has incorporated other ambitious objectives including putting one million hybrid cars on the road in the US by 2015 and ensuring that by 2012, 10 percent of domestic electricity comes from renewable resources.

Yet, while environmentalists are optimistic about the future under Obama, trade observers are exercising more caution. Among some in the trade community, there is concern that future policies will be more protectionist than those seen under the Republicans.

However, in a memo on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for instance, senior Obama advisor Austin Goolsbee wrote that “Obama is less about fundamentally changing the

agreement and more in favour of strengthening/clarifying language on labour mobility and environment and trying to establish these as more ‘core’ principles of the agreement.” Another reason, it seems, for environmentalists to be smiling.

But sceptics are urging prudence to all those who have set high expectations for the president-elect on the environment and other policies. The global financial crisis could severely deter many well-intentioned plans. Furthermore, because Obama’s cabinet remains to be filled, all speculation on his priorities once in office remain just that – speculation.

Yet, many supporters appear to be content with the undeniable hope inspired by Obama’s presidential campaign. As the president-elect said during a pre-election rally, “this is not the future I want for my daughters. It’s not the future any of us want for our children. And if we act now and we act boldly, it doesn’t have to be.”

Just how boldly he will act remains to be seen.

ICTSD reporting; “Obama victory signals rebirth of US environmental policy,” THE GUARDIAN, 5 November 2008; “WWF congratulates President-elect Obama,” WWF, 5 November 2008.

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## Climate Change

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### CLIMATE TECHNOLOGY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS DEVELOPED- DEVELOPING COUNTRY DIVIDE

Traditional differences between developed and developing countries in current climate change negotiations resurfaced at the recent High-level Conference on Climate Change Technology Development and Technology Transfer in Beijing, China.

The 7-8 November conference took place against the backdrop of the global financial crises and the potential chilling effect it will bring with regard to investment in the area of climate change, as well

as the recent US presidential election of Barack Obama, who is widely expected to usher in a more progressive climate agenda in the US. Co-organised by the UN Division of Social and Economic Affairs and the National Development and Reform Commission of China, the meeting focussed on the key role and potential of technology in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. The conference also looked at ways to devise a legal and institutional framework on the development and transfer of technology as part of a future global agreement on climate change.

Discussions over the two-day conference took place under three parallel tracks. The first focussed on the status of technology transfer, obstacles to implementation, and best practices. The second track looked at potential mechanisms for overcoming technology transfer barriers and obstacles. Finally, the third track looked at the possible roles and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Ministers and other delegates agreed, in general, that the development and transfer of technology from developed countries to developing countries is an essential requirement for the international community if it wants to succeed in addressing climate change.

### **China calls on developed countries to take the lead**

Developing countries, starting with a speech from Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, reiterated their calls for developed countries to take a leading role in ensuring effective transfer of technology to developing countries, through necessary fiscal and tax measures and enhanced policy guidance and incentives. Wen restated China's position that the burden of responsibility for reducing emissions should be upon developed countries.

"It took developed countries several decades to solve the problems of saving energy and cutting emissions, while China has to solve the same problem in a much shorter period. So the difficulty is unprecedented," the Chinese premier said at the conference. "Developed countries shoulder the duty and responsibility to tackle

climate change and should alter their unsustainable lifestyle."

The international press have widely interpreted Wen's comments as a new, hard-line stance on the issue. Indeed, the victory of Barack Obama in the US election earlier in the week had several media outlets speculating that China would be pressing harder for the future Obama administration to take a more active role in addressing climate change issues. However, others have dismissed this as media hype, insisting that China's position on the issue has not noticeably changed. Nevertheless, it is clear that many now expect the future US administration to alter the course of climate change policy from that seen under the Republicans (see related article, this issue).

### **High expectations for Obama on road to Copenhagen**

The role of the US on the road to the December 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will be watched closely by observers. Participants at the conference acknowledged that public funding from developed countries should be the main financial source of any future technology transfer mechanism. And securing US funding for this purpose from a more sympathetic government will undoubtedly play a prominent role in future negotiations.

Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), underscored this expectation for a shift under the new administration. "With President-elect Obama, my hope is that the US can take on a leadership role and help to move the negotiations forward," de Boer said at the conference.

### **Countries remain split on IP issues**

De Boer also outlined five key technology areas that would need to be part of an agreed outcome in Copenhagen: a new technology mechanism to realise the full potential of technologies; increased private sector involvement; research and development and commercialisation; diffusion and transfer of technologies, including the development of measurable, reportable and verifiable indicators; and, finally, intellectual

property (IP)-related issues to reward innovation and foster private investment and deployment of technologies around the world.

Intellectual property and transfer of climate change technology played a prominent role in discussions, with two dominant perspectives emerging. Developing countries – in particular India – suggest that IP is a major barrier to accessing required climate change mitigating technologies. However, developed countries refute this, saying that IP protection is not a barrier but rather a driver of innovation that can develop many of the technologies that will be needed to address climate change.

### **Differentiation amongst developing countries**

Another theme addressed both formally and informally at the conference was the understanding that developing countries cannot be treated uniformly under a future climate change agreement. “Mali is not China, and Ethiopia is not Saudi Arabia,” said Connie Hedegaard, Denmark’s Minister of Climate and Energy.

This issue of differentiation – which was formally put on the table this past August at the UN Climate Talks in Accra, Ghana (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 5 September 2008 <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/28685/>) – further underscores the split between developed and developing countries in current talks on climate change.

Developed countries want to see further differentiation amongst developing countries, based on their varied levels of emissions and their capacity to contribute to mitigation efforts. However, more industrialised developing countries are resistant to the move as it could increase their burden of responsibility under a future plan.

In response to the Danish Minister’s aforementioned comments, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, South Africa’s Minister of Environment and Tourism, responded strongly that developing countries would resist any attempt to categorise them into different groupings. The objective of the current negotiations is to advance international cooperative action on climate

change, as outlined in the Bali Action Plan, not to renegotiate the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, van Schalkwyk remarked.

Ministers and delegates are now preparing for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP-14), which will take place from 1-12 December in Poznań, Poland.

### **Additional Resources**

The Beijing Statement can be found here: <http://www.ccchina.gov.cn/bjctc/en/NewsInfo.asp?NewsId=154>

ICTSD Reporting; “Beijing advises west to step up climate efforts,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 8 November 2008; “China tells rich polluting nations to change lifestyle,” REUTERS, 7 November 2008; “China tells rich states to change,” BBC NEWS, 7 November 2008.

### **ENERGY AGENCY CALLS FOR TOUGH ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

The 2008 edition of the International Energy Agency’s World Energy Outlook reaffirmed previous predictions about the world’s continued heavy reliance of fossil fuels. The agency somewhat scaled back its projected oil growth rates due to the current recession, and called for urgent action to address climate change.

“Current trends in energy supply and consumption are patently unsustainable – environmentally, economically and socially – they can and must be altered”, said Nobuo Tanaka, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Overall, the IEA projected that global energy demand will grow by 45 percent by 2030, implying a 1.6 percent annual increase. A third of this new demand will be met by coal. In addition to the obvious climate concerns this raises, the World Energy Outlook also said that the rapidly growing demand requires major investment, which is not necessarily being made – especially in light of the current economic recession. The one trillion US\$ needed on an annual basis are not being invested

due to the credit crunch. In fact, the report warned of a potential energy crunch once the global economy begins to pick up speed again.

On a positive note, the IEA projected that renewables will become the second largest source of electricity soon after 2010, in part because of the high prices of fossil fuels.

### **The volatile oil market**

According to the IEA, oil will remain the dominant energy source in the world. In terms of production, the World Energy Outlook said Middle East OPEC members will provide most of the additional oil demand, while traditional non-OPEC providers will register a slight production decline. Even under strict climate change policies, oil production would continue to grow within the period up until 2030.

The market itself will change, as more government producers emerge, and there will be less room for market price signals. In addition, many current oil fields will be declining in productivity, leaving expensive and challenging options for new exploitation.

Commenting on the current price of oil – at just under US\$60 a barrel, down 60 percent since historical highs in July - Tanaka said that “one thing is certain. While market imbalances will feed volatility, the era of cheap oil is over.”

### **Climate mitigation scenarios**

As in previous years, the IEA juxtaposed “business as usual” projections of the global energy landscape in 2030 with those needed to actively address the very real threat of climate change. The report developed two different alternative scenarios, comprising the interventions necessary to contain global warming at plus two degrees Centigrade – a target embraced by the EU because it would allow the world to avoid the full force of “dangerous climate change” – and three degrees Centigrade, respectively. Under the “business as usual” scenario, run-away warming would amount to six degrees Centigrade within a century, with catastrophic consequences for humanity, warned the IEA.

Stressing the importance of reaching an agreement at the upcoming meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen in December 2009, the World Energy Outlook noted the need for action not only on behalf of OECD-countries. In fact, in order to stay within the two degree target, emerging economies would have to curtail their emissions growth as well, with emissions peaking at around 2020. Even if OECD countries were to bring down their emissions to zero, this would not be enough without action on behalf of the emerging economies, the report says.

While staying clear of any suggestions for burden-sharing or financing arrangements, the IEA developed its global alternative policy scenarios based on low-carbon energy development. The most important measures related to increased energy efficiency. In reaching both the target of a maximum warming of two and three degrees, efficiency measures would contribute more than half of the necessary decarbonisation of growth. The following categories of measures, in order of importance, were renewables and biofuels, carbon capture and storage, and nuclear.

Environmental group WWF said it agreed with the need for an energy revolution to tackle climate change, as called for by the IEA. Regarding the US\$17 trillion investment needed under the alternative policy scenario set to keep temperatures at plus two degrees maximum, Stephan Singer, Director of WWF's Global Energy Programme, said, “that sounds a lot of cash. But it's only around 0.5 percent of global GDP which is far less than the price of inaction in form of the much higher costs of damaging impacts of climate change. Also, the various non-climate benefits such as reduced air pollution, new market opportunities for clean technologies, and saved money from energy bills are not included in this calculation.”

“We cannot let the financial and economic crisis delay the policy action that is urgently needed to ensure secure energy supplies and to curtail rising emissions of greenhouse gases,” Tanaka says in conclusion. “We must usher in a global energy revolution by improving energy efficiency and increasing the deployment of low-carbon energy.”

ICTSD reporting; “New Energy Realities – WEO Calls for Global Energy Revolution Despite Economic Crisis,” IEA RELEASE, 12 November 2008; “New Energy Realities – WEO Calls for Global Energy Revolution Despite Economic Crisis,” WWF RELEASE, 12 November 2008; “International Energy Agency raises alarm on oil, climate,” EURAKTIV, 13 November 2008; “IEA stokes doubts over world’s climate fight,” REUTERS, 12 November 2008.

## Intellectual Property

### COALITION CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR DEMANDS ON BIODIVERSITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

The EU and many developing countries reaffirmed their support for a requirement to disclose the source of genetic resources in patent applications and for wider protection for geographical indications in WTO meetings on intellectual property held in Geneva earlier this month. But opponents continued to resist such proposals.

At the same time, the Council of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Special Session of the TRIPS Council elected new Chairs. The Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, Dennis Francis, was elected as the new Chair of the TRIPS Council.

The Ambassador of Barbados, Trevor Clarke, who is the Chair of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property of WIPO, was also confirmed as the new Chair of the Special Session of the Council for TRIPS. Both Chairs are known for having played significant roles in various multilateral negotiations.

One of the primary sources of disagreement is whether some TRIPS issues should be part of the single undertaking in the WTO’s Doha Round negotiations on tariff-cutting deals on agricultural and industrial goods.

At issue are three topics on which talks have largely stalled in the TRIPS Council: extending to all products the strong protection currently accorded to geographical indications of wines and

spirits (GI extension); making it mandatory for patent applicants to disclose the origin of any genetic resources and/or associated traditional knowledge involved in their inventions; and the establishment of a register for geographical indications (GIs) of wines and spirits.

Those who support the parallel consideration of the three TRIPS issues under the Doha negotiations continued to advance their case, making reference to the draft modalities that a coalition of more than one hundred countries put forward in July (TN/C/W/52) (see Bridges Weekly 16 July 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/12791/>).

The EU confirmed its commitment to the common platform established under the draft modalities. Switzerland emphasised the importance it attaches to the parallel treatment of the three issues and the need for text based negotiations on the basis of the parameters determined in TN/C/W/52.

The EU further indicated that it supported a legally binding disclosure requirement regarding the country of origin or sources of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge to all international, regional and national patent applications, at the earliest possible time.

The EU demanded further discussion towards establishing a definition of ‘traditional knowledge’. According to the EU, the disclosure requirement might include a remedy that suspends the consideration of patent applications if the applying party either fails or refuses to disclose.

The countries that oppose this proposal – including Australia, Canada, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan and the US – have not taken a common position. Some have argued only against the parallel treatment of the three issues, while others have rejected outright the mere consideration of issues related to the Convention on Biological Diversity in the TRIPS forum.

The US and Japan restated their position that there is no need to amend the TRIPS Agreement in order to introduce a disclosure requirement. Nevertheless, a proposal to do just that garnered

the support of two-thirds of those present, including the addition of a new country, Sri Lanka which expressed its support for the TRIPS-CBD amendment.

During the Special Session, the EU, supported by several co-sponsors of the draft modalities for the TRIPS issues, said that the Special Session should focus on the three TRIPS negotiation issues in parallel and on equal footing.

There was no common African Group position, since some countries such as South Africa are not in favour of the parallel treatment of TRIPS issues that include register for GIs. But Nigeria, among others, supported the parallel consideration of the three TRIPS issues. It is unclear if the Special Session can consider the three TRIPS issues without further guidance from ministers.

ICTSD reporting.

## **In Brief**

### **FIRST BATCH OF CERTIFIED PALM OIL EN ROUTE TO EUROPE**

The first shipment of 'sustainable' palm oil left Malaysia for the Netherlands this week, but some conservationists argue that the system used to certify the oil is not strong enough to prevent environmental damage.

Four years ago, a coalition of industry groups and the environmental NGO WWF set up the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, or RSPO. The purpose of the initiative was to develop a certification system to counter growing criticism that palm oil production destroys wildlife habitat, causes widespread forest loss and releases huge quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

More than 28 million tonnes of palm oil are produced around the world each year. The oil is found in a variety of foods, including margarine, cooking oil, potato chips, cakes, and cookies. It is also an ingredient in many cosmetics, soaps, shampoos and detergents. Recently, palm oil has also begun to be used as a biofuel.

Over the past two decades, areas undergoing palm oil cultivation have grown by about 43 percent, according to RSPO – mostly in Malaysia and Indonesia, where deforestation pressures are already high.

RSPO says that its certification system can help ensure that such production is carried out

“The upcoming arrival of this first batch of oil is a small but significant step towards having all the world’s palm oil produced in a socially and environmentally sustainable way,” said Jan Kees Vis, President of the RSPO, Reuters reported.

Some environmentalists agree.

“The arrival of RSPO certified palm oil in Europe is an important milestone,” Rodney Taylor of WWF said. “With the RSPO’s certification system up and running, companies now have the means to buy responsibly.”

Several European companies, including Unilever, Sainsbury’s and Albert Heijn, have already promised to buy RSPO-certified palm oil, WWF said in a press release.

But not everyone believes that the certification system will have a significant effect on the ground. Environmental NGO Greenpeace released a report last week that criticised the scheme as hypocritical and called on the palm oil industry to take stronger action.

“Many RSPO members are taking no steps to avoid the worst practices associated with the industry, such as large-scale forest clearance and taking land from local people without their consent,” Greenpeace said. “On top of this, the RSPO actually risks creating the illusion of sustainable palm oil, justifying the expansion of the palm oil industry.”

“The RSPO...must support a moratorium on deforestation and pressure the Indonesian government to take urgent action,” Bustar Maitar of Greenpeace said. “Furthermore, the RSPO standards must be tightened to ensure that members stop deforestation and peatland clearance in all of their operations.”

ICTSD reporting; “First ‘sustainable’ palm oil on way to Rotterdam,” REUTERS, 12 November 2008.

## EU OUTLINES STRATEGY ON RAW MATERIALS; NGOS REACT

The European Commission has announced a wide-ranging plan aimed at improving and securing access to raw materials, amidst growing fears that the financial crisis could prompt a surge of protectionist policies around the globe.

“We must act, to ensure that access to raw materials for enterprises will not be hampered,” the EU’s Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, Günter Verheugen, said in a statement last week. “We need fair play on external markets, a good framework to foster sustainable raw materials supply from EU sources as well as improved resource efficiency and more use of recycling,”

Taking the form of a ten-point plan, the strategy is based on three ‘pillars’: access to raw materials on the global markets at undistorted conditions; establishing a framework for the sustainable supply of raw materials; and increased resource efficiency, including the promotion of recycling of raw materials. The strategy will receive input from the Commission, EU members and industry representatives, the Commission said in a press release.

The initiative is driven by concern within Europe, which imports between 70 and 80 percent of its primary resources, that governments and industries may soon struggle to source the materials that their manufacturing industries need to make finished goods. The production of a mobile phone, for example, requires 40 different raw materials. Some fear that inaction to secure a stable and undistorted supply of raw materials will put European industries at a competitive disadvantage.

“Many resource-rich countries are applying protectionist measures that stop or slow down the export of raw materials to Europe in order to help their downstream industries,” the EC said in the

statement. “On top of this, some emerging countries are becoming very active in resource-rich countries, particularly in Africa, with the aim of securing a privileged access to raw materials.”

European non-governmental organisations protested against what they perceived to be an aggressive EC strategy, however. Charly Poppe, trade and economic justice campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe said: “Europe’s wish to feed its insatiable appetite for raw materials has translated into a direct attack on developing countries’ sovereignty over their natural resources – this sends a very bad signal to the world and is damaging the EU’s reputation as a frontrunner in development and environmental protection.”

“The EU should instead support developing countries’ efforts to diversify their economy, reduce their export dependency on primary raw materials and protect their exhaustible natural resources. Strong regulation in Europe should not be bypassed by deregulating raw materials markets abroad,” he added.

Growing demand for primary materials from emerging economies has put pressure on the supply of these commodities. According to the EU, there are over 450 export restrictions – intended to reserve raw materials for use by domestic industries – on more than 400 raw materials, ranging from metals to wood and chemicals.

Furthermore, many essential raw materials are located in a limited number of countries. China produces 95 percent of all rare earth concentrates, which are used in the production of many consumer electronics, and Brazil supplies 90 percent of all niobium, which is needed for steel alloys. And some crucial raw materials are located in areas of political and economic instability, the EC said.

The EU has raised the issue of raw material supply several times over the last few months. In September former EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson warned that the EU may take action against countries that impose trade restrictions on raw materials (see BRIDGES Weekly 2 October 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/30186/>).



And currently, the US is challenging Chinese tax restrictions on exports of raw materials used in the steel industry through the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism (see BRIDGES Weekly, 25 September 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/29763/>).

ICTSD reporting; "European plan to improve raw materials security," PRC.COM, 10 November 2008; "EU launches strategy to ensure access to raw materials," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 5 November 2008; "EU Raw Materials Initiative: Industry Interests Undermine Sustainable Resource Use," FOE RELEASE, 5 November 2008.

### **TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANISATION LAUNCHES NEW SUSTAINABLE TRADE INITIATIVES**

Investments of some US\$5.65 million towards new initiatives aimed at improving sustainable use of forest resources in tropical timber producing countries were announced at a 3-8 November meeting of the governing body of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) in Yokohama, Japan.

The proposed funding will be split into two separate initiatives. The first, a US\$3.5 million programme, aims to reduce deforestation and forest degradation in pertinent countries. The second initiative will devote US\$5.1 million towards projects and activities related to conservation, sustainable management, use, and trade of tropical forest resources.

This was the 44th session of the ITTO, which was established in 1986 under the auspices of the UN Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The organisation operates under a framework – the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) – which is designed to allow tropical timber producing countries and tropical timber consuming countries to engage in dialogue on issues related to the sustainable management of timber trade and harvesting.

The ITTA has been revised several times over the years to reflect changes in the industry. However,

differences among members have left the most recent Agreement, dating from January 2006, in a state of limbo. While the ITTO's current membership includes 33 producer countries and 27 consumer countries – representing 90 percent of the tropical timber trade and 80 percent of the world's tropical forests – only 10 producer and seven consumer members have made moves to ratify the 2006 Agreement.

The ITTO's Council meets annually to discuss the organisation's agenda for promoting sustainable trade and tropical forest management. The group announced that next year's meeting would again take place in Yokohama from 9-14 November, followed by Guatemala City in 2010.

"US\$8.6 Million in New Funds for Tropical Forests," ITTO PRESS RELEASE, 8 November 2008; "Summary of the Forty-Fourth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council and Associated Sessions of the Four Committees: 3-8 November 2008," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 10 November 2008.

### **ASBESTOS, ENDOSULFAN REMAIN OFF TRADE WATCH LIST AT PIC COP 4**

A recent meeting on dangerous chemicals made limited progress, as parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides failed to agree on the treatment of two still actively traded chemicals.

The fourth Conference of the Parties (COP-4) of the Rotterdam Convention met in Rome, Italy, from 27-31 October. The PIC Convention demands that recipient countries in trade interactions are aware of and accept the dangers associated with the chemicals they import. Currently, 39 chemicals are listed as requiring the prior informed consent (PIC) procedure. The conference sought to add three more chemicals to the list, as recommended by its subsidiary scientific body. However, only tributyltin compounds (TBT) was listed – with parties failing to agree applying the PIC procedure to chrysotile asbestos, which has been controversial for years, as well as endosulfan.

The two latter chemicals are still in active use, and major exporters strongly opposed their listing under the PIC procedure, fearing this would hamper their trade – even though the PIC procedure by no means bans trade as such.

Canada bans the domestic use of chrysotile asbestos. However, the country still exports the carcinogen for use in cement in developing countries. While Canada officially remained silent on the asbestos issue at the Rome meeting, India, a major importer, actively lobbied to keep it off the PIC list. Several non-governmental organisations came out strongly against their governments' positions.

Madhumita Dutta, of the NGO Corporate Accountability Desk in India, said “millions of workers in India are getting exposed to asbestos every day. India is not only failing to protect its own people but is obstructing other countries their right to protect their people.” Canadian opposition Member of Parliament Pat Martin said “Canada’s defence of asbestos has nothing to do with reason or logic or economics. It’s all about domestic politics,” stressing that an industry employing only 700 people is maintaining its grip on the government on this issue.

“Endosulfan kills two cotton producers each month in Benin during application period,” said Remy Jonas Ahoyo, president of Benin-based NGO GAPROFFA. “It increases poverty, causes birth defects and reproductive harm, and degrades the environment. Benin has just taken the step to ban endosulfan, but, many other African countries have not, and they should at least be able to use the Rotterdam Convention to be informed about imports from India, China and the European Union (Germany).”

The fate of the two chemicals will be taken up at the next COP.

Among the successes of the meeting, participants agreed to arrange a “super-COP,” clustering all chemicals conventions – the Rotterdam Convention, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants – in 2009. This would allow for further collaboration

between the convention, capturing synergies, coordinating implementation and sharing resources.

### Additional resources

For a complete report of the meeting, see IISD’s Earth Negotiations Bulletin at <http://www.iisd.ca/chemical/pic/cop4/>

ICTSD reporting; “Summary of the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention,” ENB, 3 November 2008; “Conflict at the Rotterdam Convention: Handful of Asbestos and Endosulfan Producing States Denying the Right to Information for Other Countries,” CNW RELEASE, 29 October 2009; “Canada keeps asbestos off trade blacklist: MP,” REUTERS, 30 October 2009.

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## Events & Resources

### EVENTS

#### Coming up in the next two weeks:

14-17 November, Hannover, Germany. COUPLING SUSTAINABLE SANITATION AND GROUNDWATER PROTECTION. This international symposium will serve as a forum for exchange between practitioners of development cooperation, technical and scientific specialists and representatives of political institutions who are committed to substantive support for improved sanitation. It will therefore discuss technical and scientific approaches towards improved sanitation and groundwater protection within a political framework. For more information contact Thomas Himmelsbach, tel: +49 (0)511 643 3794; fax: +49 (0)511 643 3661; email: [symposium2008@bgr.de](mailto:symposium2008@bgr.de); internet: <http://www.bgr.bund.de/EN/symposium2008>

15-17 November, Strasbourg, France. EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS. The European Commission hosts this annual open forum, which includes some 3000 participants from every continent, representing over 1200 organisations in the development community. By breaking down walls between different issues, the

European Development Days aim to be a natural platform for debating the major issues of development cooperation and launching new initiatives. For more information refer to the EDD Website:

<http://www.eudevdays.eu/Public/Homepage.php?ID=518>; email: DEV-DAYS@ec.europa.eu

16-21 November, Wellington, New Zealand. 10TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE BIOSAFETY OF GMOS. This symposium is organised by the International Society for Biosafety Research. It will focus on recent developments in the science supporting biosafety research and state of the art risk assessment. For more information contact the Conference Secretariat, tel: +64-9-360-1240; fax : +64-9-360-1242; email: [isbgmo@tcc.co.nz](mailto:isbgmo@tcc.co.nz); internet: <http://www.isbgmo.info>

16-20 November, Doha, Qatar. TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL (MOP-20). This meeting is scheduled in conjunction with the eighth Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention. Among other issues on the agenda are replenishment and methyl bromide, items related to essential uses, projected regional imbalances of halons, and administrative issues. For more information contact the Ozone Secretariat, tel: 254 20 762 3850/1; fax: 254 20 762 4691; email: [ozoneinfo@unep.org](mailto:ozoneinfo@unep.org); internet: <http://ozone.unep.org>

17 November, Geneva, Switzerland. PRE-POZNAN ROUNDTABLE. This event will provide an opportunity to share views and expectations before the launch of negotiations on strengthened international action on climate change, the Poznań Climate Change Conference (COP 14/CMP 4). For more information contact Fatma Gordon, tel: +41 22 917 8326; fax: +41 22 797 3464; email: [fatma.gordon@unep.ch](mailto:fatma.gordon@unep.ch)

17-20 November, Venice, Italy. SECOND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ENERGY FROM BIOMASS AND WASTE. The aim of the Venice 2008 Symposium is to focus on the advances made in the application of technologies for energy recovery from biomass and waste and to encourage discussion on relevant aspects. For more information contact the

Organising Secretariat on Euro Waste, tel: + 39 049 8726986; fax: + 39 049 8726987; email: [eurowaste@tin.it](mailto:eurowaste@tin.it); internet: <http://www.venicesymposium.it>

17-20 November, New Orleans, US. 2008 AWRA ANNUAL WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE. Individuals and groups will have the opportunity to propose and organise panel discussions or special sessions that consist of linked presentations on a particular topic. In addition, the conference will host sessions that focus on water resources issues in the New Orleans area, especially those issues that may have national or international significance. For more information contact AWRA, tel: +1 (540) 687 8390; fax: +1 (540) 687 8395; internet: <http://www.awra.org>

17-21 November, Seattle, USA. 16TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH PACIFIC ANADROMOUS FISH COMMISSION. This meeting will consider enforcement and scientific research and statistics. For more information contact Denise Mcgrann-Pavlovic, tel: +1 (604) 775 5550; fax: +1 (604) 775 5577; email: [denisem@npafc.org](mailto:denisem@npafc.org); internet: <http://www.npafc.org/new/events.html>

24-26 November, Marseille, France. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF WASTES GENERATED AT SEA. This conference will seek to illustrate and debate the extent of the current inadequacy of arrangements for managing waste generated at sea, propose solutions and encourage partnerships to address the situation in different parts of the world. For more information contact the organisers, tel :33 6 72 65 61 65 ; email: [contact@we2c.org](mailto:contact@we2c.org); internet: [http://www.we2c.org/content/Anglais/conference-internationale\\_1008\\_english\\_0208.pdf](http://www.we2c.org/content/Anglais/conference-internationale_1008_english_0208.pdf)

25-29 November, Kuantan, Malaysia. THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: SUSTAINING OCEAN PRODUCTIVITIES, MARITIME COMMUNITIES AND THE CLIMATE. This conference will be held in conjunction with the International Year of Planet Earth, and is jointly organized by the Institute of Ocean and Earth Sciences, the University of Malaya, the National

Oceanography Directorate, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia, and the Malaysian Society of Marine Sciences. For more information contact Lim Phaik Eem; tel: 603 7967 4640; fax: 603 7967 6994; email: [scs\\_ioes@um.edu.my](mailto:scs_ioes@um.edu.my); internet: <http://ioes.um.edu.my/scs2008/scs2008.html>

### Other upcoming meetings:

1-5 December, Irvine, US. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WATER SCARCITY, GLOBAL CHANGES AND GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT RESPONSES. This Conference, convened by UNESCO and the University of California Irvine, will bring together water management and climate change experts, scientists and engineers, policymakers, lawyers and economists, and executives of water services of local and regional authorities. Among other objectives, the Conference will present innovative and appropriate technologies to address water scarcity and global change effects on water availability and quality, explore the specific scientific and technical tools for groundwater studies and management, and discuss how to incorporate such technologies into short-term decision-making and long-term water management and policy-making. For more information contact Jean Fried, tel: +1-714-679-6888; fax: +1-949-824-3672; internet: <http://www.waterunifies.com/>

2-3 December, San Francisco, USA. CORPORATE WATER FOOTPRINTING - CONSERVING WATER ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN. This event will look at how top companies are assessing and monitoring their water footprints as part of their global climate strategy. For more information contact Green Power Conferences, tel: +44 (0) 20 7801 6333 ; email: [info@greenpowerconferences.com](mailto:info@greenpowerconferences.com); internet: <http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/>

### 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).

INDUSTRIAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND ITS IMPACT ON SMALLHOLDERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. Susanne Gura. League of Pastoral Peoples (LPP), April 2008. This report discusses the growing issue of industrial livestock production. Fewer and fewer companies control the global market leading to genetically very similar animals bred for industrial farming. The report claims that livestock epidemics have become more pervasive with decreased genetic diversity and blames the growth of industrial farming for pushing many smallholder farmers out of business. The author warns that industrial farming is taking planet earth to its environmental limits and entrusting the world's food supply to too few hands. Several case studies are provided – the dairy industry in Pakistan and China, and pig and poultry production in Brazil, The Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam - as well as recommendations for action.

[http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/docs/gura\\_ind\\_livestock\\_prod.pdf](http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/docs/gura_ind_livestock_prod.pdf)

PROPOSALS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF EMERGING ECONOMIES TO THE CLIMATE REGIME UNDER THE UNFCCC POST 2012. Niklas Höhne, Christian Michelsen, Sara Moltmann, Hermann E. Ott, Wolfgang Sterk, Stefan Thomas, Rie Watanabe. German Federal Environment Agency, October 2008. This report provides a detailed overview of the national circumstances, emission levels, mitigation potential, and policies and measures for the major emerging economies, including Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa and South Korea. The study explores options for mitigation activities in these countries and elements of international financial and non-financial support for realising these contributions. <http://www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/3658.pdf>

SECTORAL APPROACH AND DEVELOPMENT. Nicklas Höhne, Ernst Worrell, Christian Ellermann, Marion Vieweg, and Markus Hagemann. Ecofys, September 2008. This paper for the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency provides background information on sectoral approaches and development in the context of the international

negotiations on climate change. Within this paper, the authors provide an introduction to three of the prominently discussed sectors - electricity, cement, and iron and steel. The paper then examines some of the concepts that are discussed under the term “sectoral approach” and summarises the current discussions on the categorisation of approaches. Finally it describes three relevant approaches in more detail - a bottom-up negotiated sectoral target, a “Best Available Technology” (BAT)-based approach, and sectoral sustainable development policies and measures. The paper discusses what needs to be decided in Copenhagen 2009 if any of these approaches is to be pursued further. [http://www.mnp.nl/images/sectoral%20approach%20and%20development%20final\\_tcm61-40487.pdf](http://www.mnp.nl/images/sectoral%20approach%20and%20development%20final_tcm61-40487.pdf)

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