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the negotiating group, telling delegates that further gatherings would be pointless following a week of discussions in which they did not seriously attempt to move towards a compromise.

If anything, divisions had actually seemed to worsen, said Canadian Ambassador Don Stephenson, who mediates the Doha Round negotiations on non-agricultural market access (NAMA). He called on countries to meet amongst each other to try to develop compromises that could then be brought to the multilateral table.

The failure to bridge differences does not bode well for Members' ongoing push to strike framework accords on agriculture and NAMA by June or July, or for the ostensibly soon-to-start 'horizontal process' of cross-sectoral tradeoffs intended to prepare the ground for ministers to finalise these 'modalities' agreements, said one official.

However, sources report that officials from some countries appear to be preparing to meet outside the WTO, to see if a way forward can be found.

The week of talks had focused on an updated template for a potential NAMA deal that Stephenson had circulated to Members on 19 May.

That draft text provided multiple potential options for dealing with the central issues in the negotiations, notably the 'coefficients' for the formula that will determine countries' future tariff levels and 'flexibilities' for developing nations alone to shield some products from the full force of duty cuts. It also included possibilities for according some specific countries and customs unions special treatment (see BRIDGES Weekly, 21 May 2008, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-21/story2.htm>).

The text drew complaints from both ends of the spectrum in the talks. The US and the EU claimed that it would not expand access to developing country markets, while the NAMA-11 group (which includes Argentina, Brazil, India, and South Africa) countered that developing nations were still being asked to cut their manufacturing tariffs by a deeper margin than the industrialised world.

LEAD STORIES

NAMA CHAIR SUSPENDS TALKS, CITING UTTER LACK OF PROGRESS

The chair of the deadlocked WTO talks on manufacturing tariffs on 2 June suspended meetings of

Stephenson reminded the negotiating group that a week earlier, many Members believed that “there were too many unresolved issues” for the text to go to ministers, a view that he shared (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 May 2008, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-28/story2.htm>). But during subsequent discussions among the entire Membership as well as smaller groups, he said that instead of narrowing gaps, “you have actually made it worse. You have re-opened issues, you have maintained extreme positions... in a couple of instances taken even more extreme positions, and introduced new proposals.”

Audibly exasperated – a recording of his concluding remarks is available on the WTO website – the chair said that despite “a couple of interesting discussions... you certainly achieved nothing – nothing inside the negotiating group, and nothing outside it.”

“It remains as it was last Tuesday, a text in search of a negotiation,” he said.

Explaining his decision to stop convening meetings, Stephenson said that the week’s discussions had demonstrated that it was “useless to continue in this manner, that is to say, relatively large meetings in which there is not much more engagement than prepared statements.”

Instead, he said “it’s time for the Members and their senior officials to take responsibility for the negotiations in NAMA... to work to bridge their positions.” He added that he would schedule “no further meetings until Members signal to me that they have achieved some convergence on the issues, and they would like an opportunity to bring that convergence to the wider Membership.” He stressed that he would remain available to support countries in such endeavours.

Main issues ducked, differences repeated

Sources said that in meetings held on various issues in the NAMA talks last week, countries largely repeated well-known positions. The most contentious figures – those that will determine countries’ future tariff levels and the extent of developing country flexibilities – were not even discussed.

Members of Mercosur, a trade bloc comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, explained how they would be affected by their controversial proposal to exclude intra-customs union trade from import value limitations on the flexibilities. Other countries continued to oppose this, fearing that this would leave them more room to shield products from tariff reduction.

The developing countries that currently have binding caps on fewer than 35 percent of their tariff lines, including Nigeria, Cameroon, Sri Lanka, and Mauritius, asked to be allowed to bind the majority of their tariff lines at an average of 32.6 percent instead of the 28.5 percent provided for in Stephenson’s recent paper.

Small and vulnerable economies, another group of developing countries that is slated to receive gentler tariff treatment than the 30-odd states that will use the standard tariff reduction formula, asked for their future tariff levels to correspond to the highest figures provided for in the text. The US, with some support from other industrialised countries, pushed for figures towards the lower end of the ranges set out by Stephenson.

Preference erosion was another subject of disagreement during the recent talks. The draft text contains options for the US and the EU to receive an extended implementation period of seven to nine years for tariff cuts on several products, mostly types of clothing such as t-shirts, in order to soften the blow of liberalisation for countries – generally among the world’s poorest – that have benefited from preferential access to the two giant markets. Some of these goods, especially the textiles, are among those that the US and the EU protect most heavily, backed by influential lobbies. Sources say that the NAMA-11 group called for ensuring that developing countries’ own access to the EU and the US markets – often preferential, albeit under relatively less generous schemes – would not be affected. Alternatively, developing countries could be allowed grace periods for some products of their own choosing.

Officials to meet outside WTO?

Some delegates agree with Stephenson on the inefficacy of the current process. “At the level of the negotiating group, we can’t do anything,” one told Bridges.

Another trade diplomat said that there is “a realisation that there needs to be other ways to do this,” since the chair-led discussions are not yielding progress. Several countries are starting to feel that “we’re not going to do anything in these ‘Room D’ (small group) configurations.”

This official attributed some of the acrimonious tone of recent weeks to the fact that countries were unsure about how they stood to be affected by the various new proposals in the text. Negotiators need to know what they are agreeing to in order to assess whether it might be deemed acceptable back home, the delegate explained.

Delegates and possibly capital-based senior officials from some countries are reportedly planning to meet outside the WTO to discuss the NAMA negotiations. These talks might involve countries such as the US, the EU, Brazil, China, Mexico, India, Canada, and South Africa, among others, sources suggest.

Details about the timing of such talks – or indeed if they will take place at all – remain unclear. However, senior trade officials from several countries are expected to arrive at WTO headquarters in Geneva starting 9 June.

Even before that, ministers from the world's major trading nations will have an opportunity to discuss the Doha Round negotiations in Paris this week, at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's annual summit. The rich countries' club has invited ministers from Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, and South Africa to take part in its yearly gathering, which is set to focus on trade, climate change, and the global economy.

ICTSD reporting.

FEW CHANGES AS WTO FARM TALKS CONTINUE

Delegates reportedly began "digging in" to negotiations on a deal to reduce subsidies and tariffs on agricultural products at a 3 June meeting that was open to the entire WTO Membership.

At that meeting, as well as in a series of 'Room E' consultations held last week with some three dozen countries representing a cross-section of negotiating interests, delegates have sought to work through differences over the language in the draft modalities text on agricultural tariffs and subsidies that was issued by the chair of the agriculture committee on 19 May. Although important differences remain, Members are now focused on reducing the number of contentious issues on the table in anticipation of a potential high-level meeting of government officials in June or July. At such a meeting – if in fact one is held – trade ministers would attempt to make trade-offs among draft texts on agriculture, industrial goods, and other areas in order to reach a deal to bring an end to the round as a whole.

Brazil, on behalf of the G20 group of developing nations, and the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters, represented by Australia, issued statements criticising the recent US farm bill at yesterday's meeting (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 May 2008, www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-28/story5.htm). The groups see the current farm bill, which continues many direct payments to growers, as a move in the wrong direction when food prices are rising around the globe. The Doha

Round seeks to reduce tariffs and subsidies in the agricultural sector, and in other areas.

Though the meeting held yesterday was part of the 'transparency' process of fleshing out Members' responses to the recently released draft text, criticism of the US farm bill featured prominently in the discussions. However, Members did propose some slight modifications to the draft language on food aid and sensitive products.

Specifically, India issued a new proposal on sensitive products – goods that Members would be allowed to shield from tariff cuts in exchange for expanded access through import quotas. Under the Indian proposal, developing countries without tariff-rate quotas would be allowed two options. Either they could take a full formula cut in tariffs over three years in addition to the mandated eight, for a total of eleven years. Alternatively, they could deviate by 25 percent from the standard tariff cuts on two-thirds of their sensitive products over the course of six years instead of eight.

Additionally, the Dominican Republic issued a proposal on the monetisation of food aid. In a letter to the Membership, the country's delegation requested that development objectives be added to a list of permissible monetisation. Currently, food aid may be monetised for purposes of internal transportation and the procurement of related inputs. This proposal contributed to what the chair of the agriculture negotiations described as "useful" discussions.

In the meetings held since the release of the draft text on 19 May, delegates have indicated that no major progress has been made toward a consensus. However, negotiators do seem compelled to nudge the agriculture modalities to a level of agreement that would allow high-level officials to begin making trade-offs across sectors, a process that would occur at a potential ministerial meeting in the next two months.

Some countries, such as Uruguay, have suggested that artificial timelines – such as potentially impending ministerial meeting – should not be imposed on the Membership. However, Members, including Uruguay, acknowledge that when negotiations resume, by the middle of the week beginning 9 June, they will have to "go, go, go."

Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO, in remarks at a summit on the food crisis in Rome, said that "through greater and fairer competition, international trade can help lower prices."

Indeed, the rise in food prices has heightened the importance of WTO negotiations on agricultural trade. Alternating between periods of intensive negotiations

and consultations with capital-based officials, delegates in Geneva now have a heightened sense of urgency to push the negotiations forward. Many hope that the food crisis will provide the political will necessary to positively impact the negotiations.

ICTSD reporting.

DISAGREEMENT ON CONTENT OF SERVICES CHAIR'S REPORT

Potential WTO guidelines for the extent of future services trade liberalisation under a Doha Round agreement remained the subject of disagreement during a meeting of the negotiating committee this week.

The informal gathering of the Council for Trade in Services (Special Session) was held to discuss a report issued on 26 May by services chair Ambassador Fernando de Mateo (Mexico).

De Mateo's report is meant to serve as a tool to further the services negotiations, alongside the ongoing push for framework agreements on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA; see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 May 2008, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-28/story3.htm>). Countries negotiate access to their services markets through a process of bilateral and collective requests and offers, not through mathematical formulae. Therefore, the services report simply provides some guidance for the negotiations, including the market access talks.

At the meeting, sources report, the chair invited delegations to comment on two bracketed clauses – clauses that have yet to be agreed – in paragraph 4 of the text.

The first states that "Negotiations must be driven by the same level of ambition and political will as reflected in the agriculture and NAMA modalities. While respecting the existing structure and principles of the GATS, Members shall respond to bilateral and plurilateral requests by offering commitments that substantially reflect current levels of market access and national treatment and provide new market access and national treatment in cases where significant trade impediments exist."

The second bracketed clause reads: "Members reiterate that the next offers shall provide market access in sectors and modes of supply of export interest to developing countries, such as Modes 1 and 4, as indicated in bilateral and plurilateral requests."

A wide range of developing countries argued that the brackets around the latter clause should be removed, since its mandate – access in sectors where developing nations have export interests – is already part of the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Delegations expressing such views included Brazil, China, the Philippines (speaking on behalf of members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Kenya, Barbados (speaking on behalf of the Small and Vulnerable Economies, or SVEs) and South Africa (speaking on behalf of the African group).

Another delegate claimed that the clause was already present in the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, which Members adopted in December 2005, save for its specific reference to 'modes' 1 and 4 (WTO parlance for the cross-border provision of services and temporary labour movement, respectively).

As for the first clause, however, many developing country delegates claim it goes too far in requiring countries to bind market access and national treatment at existing levels, and to remove restrictions on currently bound access. Several delegates maintained that it would run contrary to GATS provisions allowing developing countries to take control of the extent, scope and timing of their liberalisation commitments, in particular depending on their level of development.

India noted that a requirement to legally bind current levels of liberalisation would be unfair to those countries that had significantly opened up access to their services markets since the end of the previous Uruguay Round negotiations in 1995.

The contested clause was based on a proposal from a group of primarily industrialised countries including Australia, Canada, the EU, Japan, Korea, Norway, and the US. At the meeting, the group called for the brackets around it to be removed, saying that proposals from other countries had not been similarly bracketed. Clear guidance about removing impediments to market access was required, they argued. Furthermore, they claimed that the paragraph was necessary in order for them to sell concessions made in negotiations on agricultural and industrial goods to their domestic stakeholders.

The EU said that it had made a huge effort in the agriculture and NAMA negotiations, and that it expected some returns in services trade. Switzerland also emphasised cross-sectoral links, observing that the point of the upcoming 'signalling' exercise was to assure services 'demandeurs' such as the EU and the US, which might make sacrifices on agriculture and industrial trade, that their services companies stood to gain increased access to overseas markets (see

BRIDGES Weekly, 14 May 2008,
<http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-14/wtoinbrief.htm>).

The tension between 'bound' minimum legal obligations and current (often quite different) 'applied' practice has surfaced elsewhere in the negotiations. The EU and the US insist that 'real' market access in the industrial goods talks would require cuts to the duties that key developing countries actually apply, not just to their theoretical maximum tariff levels. Many developing countries counter that proposed future limits on rich country farm subsidy spending remain billions of dollars above the payments that the EU and the US actually dole out.

Argentina made a similar argument on the potential provision in the services text calling for services liberalisation commitments to be of 'similar ambition' to those on agriculture and industrial goods. Would the EU bind its cereals tariffs at zero (the current applied level)? Would the US repeal domestic legislation barring it from making maritime commitments?

Not all delegates agree that a strongly phrased services text could facilitate progress in the agriculture and industrial goods talks. Noting that the current round of trade negotiations was supposed to be focused on developing nations, one developing country delegate argued that the notion of having to provide comfort to developed country lobbies amounted to turning the issue on its head.

Chile, Hong Kong and Singapore stressed that the text was not an end in itself, but rather a means to the end of advancing the market access negotiations.

Sources reveal however, that some developing countries are worried about what might happen with the text if agriculture and NAMA negotiations conclude successfully, or even if they break down altogether. They fear that the draft text could be used as a starting point in the future, and that the still-bracketed 'mandatory language' could become a precedent.

Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba reiterated their disapproval of the format of the chair's paper. Instead of a report with some observations and explanations from de Mateo followed by an annex containing a potential text in agreement-style language, they would prefer a unified report without an annex.

Lesotho and Bangladesh, speaking on behalf of the group of least-developed countries (LDCs), called for the LDC-specific provisions to be strengthened. Specifically, they asked for more definitive deadlines instead of the non-mandatory exhortation that Members 'strive' to develop mechanisms for granting 'special

priority' to LDC services exports before they submit revised market access offers.

De Mateo summed up the meeting by saying that he would hold consultations at the ambassadorial level in which all delegations would be welcome to participate.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER NEWS

HIGH COST OF CARGO SHIPPING COULD "REVERSE GLOBALISATION," REPORT SAYS

Rising international shipping costs driven by high oil prices could effectively wipe out decades' worth of trade liberalisation, according to new research from CIBC World Markets.

By making it substantially more expensive to ship cargo over long distances, higher freight costs are likely to change global trade and production patterns, said the Canadian investment bank. They may also make it easier for domestic manufacturers to withstand competition from lower-wage countries. For instance, US steelmakers have already become competitive against Chinese imports for the first time in more than a decade.

"In a world of triple-digit oil prices, soaring transport costs, not tariff barriers, pose the greatest challenge to trade," argue the study's authors, Jeff Rubin and Benjamin Tal.

They reckon that in 2000, when oil cost US\$20 per barrel, transport costs were equivalent to a 3-percent tariff rate in the US. At US\$100 per barrel, a threshold crossed at the beginning of this year, "transport costs outweigh the impact of tariffs for all of America's trading partners." Current transport costs (with oil above US\$130 per barrel) are equivalent to an average tariff rate of over 9 percent. If oil prices hit US\$150 per barrel, say Rubin and Tal, the 'tariff-equivalent' rate in the US would be 11 percent – comparable to import duties in the 1970s. At US\$200 a barrel – a rate which some analysts think likely over the next few years – "we are back at 'tariff' rates not seen since prior to the Kennedy Round GATT negotiations of the mid-1960s."

"Globalisation is reversible," they posit. "While trade liberalisation and technology may have flattened the world, rising transport prices will once again make it rounder."

Massive reductions in cargo transportation time and costs have played a major role in enabling the expansion of global trade. A particularly dramatic drop came with the advent of container shipping in 1956, as Nayan Chanda wrote in 'Bound Together', his recent account of the history of globalisation. The first rapidly loadable container ship cut port times and charges dramatically, slashing the cost of freight by more than 97 percent. With subsequent improvements, transport-related cost savings between 1950 and 1998 have been estimated to be equivalent to cutting average US manufacturing duties from 32 percent to 9 percent.

However, as Rubin and Tal point out, the fact that container ships spend so little time in ports means that changing fuel costs factor more heavily into shipping rates. It also increases the significance of ship speed. Faster speed invariably needs more energy; they figure that rising ship speed over the past 15 years has doubled fuel consumption per unit of freight.

"At today's oil prices," they write, "every 10 percent increase in trip distance translated into a 4.5 percent increase in transport costs." While shipping a standard 40-foot container from Shanghai to the east coast of the US cost US\$3,000 when oil was at US\$20 per barrel, it now costs US\$8,000. If oil goes up to US\$200, the cost would rise to US\$15,000.

In terms of shifts in trade and production patterns, products for which freight costs make up only a small proportion of final sale prices stand to be less affected if shipping becomes more expensive – additional freight charges would be dwarfed by everything else. However, where freight-to-value ratios are high, transportation expenses can be very significant.

A "surprisingly high percentage" of Chinese exports to the US fall into the latter category, according to the report. These include furniture, footwear, metal manufacturing, and industrial machinery. And while export growth to the US has in general slowed, the slowdown has been most pronounced for goods that carry relatively high freight costs, it says.

The study's authors suggest that manufacturers' worldwide search for low wage expenses "will increasingly take place within the constraints imposed by soaring transport costs. Instead of finding cheap labour halfway around the world, the key will be to find the cheapest labour force within reasonable shipping distance to your market."

Some low-cost manufacturing to supply the North American market is likely to move from China to Mexico, they forecast. Current oil prices mean that extra shipping costs from East Asia are equivalent to a 9-percent tariff in the US; this margin would rise to 15

percent if the cost of oil per barrel rose to US\$200. These differences could potentially more than offset any cost advantages enjoyed by East Asia-based industries.

Precedent suggests that high oil prices could divert trade based on geographical proximity, says the report. From the first OPEC oil shock in 1973 through the early 1980s, when trans-oceanic freight costs were high, the share of products from Europe and Asia in the US' non-petroleum imports fell by 6 percent, while those from Latin America and the Caribbean rose by a similar margin.

Meanwhile, from 1974 to 1986, world exports' share in global GDP stagnated, despite fairly robust recoveries from two economic recessions. Indeed, although worldwide GDP growth over that period was comparable to that from 1987 to 2002, the latter interval saw exports' share in global GDP expand by 60 percent, supported by tariff cuts and far lower energy prices.

Global trade still growing faster than GDP

WTO economists estimate that growth in global merchandise trade is slowing, as "sharp economic deceleration in key developed countries is only partly offset by continuing strong growth in emerging economies." The growth in world trade in goods dropped from 8.5 percent in 2006 to 5.5 percent in 2007; a 4.5 percent expansion is predicted for this year. However, this growth remains ahead of global GDP expansion, which is forecast to be 2.6 percent in 2008. Over the past ten years, growth in world merchandise trade fell behind output growth only once, in 2001.

A crucial part of economic globalisation, cargo shipping is also a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) recently demonstrated that shipping produces more carbon dioxide than previously thought. Intertanko, the global association of independent tanker owners, puts the annual emissions from the world's merchant fleet at nearly 4.5 percent of the global total. Shipping emissions are projected to rise by a further 30 percent by 2020, although it is not clear how these estimates will be affected by energy prices.

Dudley Curtis, a spokesperson for Transport and Environment, a Brussels-based campaign group, said that there was very little international regulation of maritime pollution, whether in terms of carbon dioxide emissions and fuel efficiency, or fuel quality.

While it is natural for oil prices to have some impact on demand, and thus on shipping-related pollution, "we

don't think that an oil price spike is a substitute for regulation," he said.

The ongoing UN climate talks are looking at how – if at all – to deal with emissions from maritime transportation.

The CIBC World Markets analysis is available at http://research.cibcwm.com/economic_public/download/feature1.pdf.

The WTO trade statistics for 2008 are available at http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres08_e/pr520_e.htm.

ICTSD reporting.

RULES CHAIR ISSUES NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE; DIFFERENCES PERSIST

The chair of the WTO's rules committee released a report last week outlining the state of play in the group's negotiations on dumping, fisheries support, and subsidies and countervailing measures. The paper does not aim to resolve ongoing differences of opinion; rather, it simply consolidates and summarises proposals that have been tabled to date.

In a written statement released with the working document, committee chair Guillermo Valles Galmes (Uruguay) assured Members that "all proposals and issues remain on the table."

The working document presents three sets of information in annexes on anti-dumping and fisheries: consolidated or textual proposals submitted to the group, the chair's draft text, and a summary of the delegations' reactions to the chair's text. In the less contentious annex on subsidies and countervailing measures, only the latter two sets of information are provided. The 282-page document (TN/RL/W/232) comes seven months after Galmes issued a draft text that stirred much controversy among the group's Members (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 December 2007, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/07-12-19/story4.htm>).

'Zeroing' controversy continues

On the controversial issue of dumping, Galmes' 2007 draft text raised the ire of many Members because it included a provision to allow zeroing, a method – used predominantly by the US – of calculating the extent to which a trade partner is selling its products more cheaply abroad than in its home market, a practice known as 'dumping'.

While the WTO's Anti-Dumping Agreement does not explicitly ban the practice, it allows countries that have suffered 'material injury' as a result of dumping to take anti-dumping actions against the offending Member. Such actions include measures that would normally be prohibited by WTO rules, such as charging an extra import duty on the 'dumped' product.

Under WTO rules, before a country can take any anti-dumping actions, it must first demonstrate that dumping is in fact taking place by calculating the difference between the export price and the exporter's home market price. The complainant country must then show that the dumping is causing or threatening injury to its domestic producers.

The process of this calculation is the source of much disagreement. Specifically, Members disagree over whether a country should be allowed to ignore (or 'zero out') cases in which a good commands a higher price abroad than in the exporter's home market, only taking into account cases where prices overseas are lower.

Critics say that this practice of zeroing, commonly deployed by the US Department of Commerce, inflates 'dumping margins', thus allowing complainant countries to impose inappropriately high anti-dumping duties on competing imports.

In a series of decisions, the WTO's Appellate Body has consistently ruled that zeroing violates the Anti-Dumping Agreement (ADA), which requires the "fair comparison" of export prices and home market prices in dumping calculations.

However, the text that the chair released in November would reverse those decisions by allowing a limited form of zeroing. That section of the paper drew harsh criticism from both the US, which argued that the limitations on zeroing were too narrow, and the rest of the delegations, which felt that too much zeroing was allowed.

The working document that the chair issued last week makes no changes to that position, although it does more fully acknowledge other delegations' disagreements with the proposal to allow some level of zeroing.

In a reaction statement to the working document, Shri Kamal Nath, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry said, in a thinly veiled jab at the US, that he was "deeply disappointed to note that one major developed country has again succeeded in holding up the process because of its desire to protect its WTO inconsistent measure of zeroing in anti-dumping."

African, ACP countries detail desired special treatment

The working document adds much detail to Galmes' November draft with regards to Article 15 of the Anti-Dumping Agreement, which specifies the 'special and differential treatment' (S&DT) to be accorded to developing country Members.

The chair's draft text released in November included little detail on this section. Responding to that deficit, two groups of developing country Members, the African Group as well as the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in February submitted a proposal (TN/RL/GEN/154) that details the specific types of technical assistance and S&DT that those countries would like to see included in the final text.

The African Group/ACP proposal relates to three broad areas: constructive trade remedies for developing country exporters that are found to be dumping their products; the role of the government in helping domestic industries launch dumping investigations; and technical assistance to help developing Members implement anti-dumping measures. Galmes included those provisions in the working document released last week.

Fisheries subsidies: differences remain on S&DT, small-scale fishing

Annex C of the working document relates to fisheries negotiations.

Under Galmes' November text, a wide range of fishery subsidy payments would be banned, particularly those that incentivise or boost fishing capacity. That draft provides a relatively narrow range of exceptions under which payments would be allowed if linked to effective fisheries management, with special provisions for developing countries.

What is evident at this stage, as is so clearly outlined by the comments and textual proposals contained in the working document, is that Members continue to disagree significantly on key issues in the fisheries negotiations. Among the various questions under debate are a few key concerns about the sections of the chair's draft that cover the prohibition of subsidies and the S&DT to be accorded to developing nations.

Regarding special treatment, Members continue to disagree over which of the otherwise-prohibited subsidies developing countries should be allowed to implement, as well as over the conditionalities that should be attached to the use of those subsidies. While there is general agreement that the new disciplines should include provisions for substantial S&DT,

including a blanket exception to place no restrictions on direct payments provided by least-developed countries (LDCs), many delegations consider the draft provision too inflexible for developing nations. Other Members, however, are wary of providing unlimited and unconditional subsidies - a 'blank cheque' - to developing countries.

Within the S&DT debate, Members disagree over whether developing countries should be required to implement fisheries management schemes in order to gain the right to provide certain types of payments. Some delegations argue that such a requirement would effectively put the special treatment out of reach of many developing Members. A proposal tabled by India, Indonesia and China at the last rules group meeting argued for what amounts to unconditional S&DT for developing countries by doing away with the conditionality of fisheries management (see BRIDGES Weekly, 21 May 2008, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/08-05-21/story3.htm>). Yet many delegations wonder whether eliminating the condition of basic fisheries management would contradict the overarching goal of achieving the sustainability of the world's fish stocks.

Another major topic of divergence has been over subsidies in the small-scale fishing sector. Canada, with support from the EU, Korea, Norway and Taiwan, proposed that exemptions for small-scale fishing should be extended to both developing and developed Members. India, Indonesia and China have argued that developing countries should be allowed to subsidise vessels up to 24 metres in length, instead of the 10-metre length limit in the chair's draft, arguing that fishing communities in remote areas are economically marginalised and require subsidies.

While most delegations are sympathetic to granting flexibility to artisanal fishing, many developed and developing nations are cautious of granting a definition so broad that it could ultimately encourage overfishing. In particular, some consider that the only exception for small-scale fisheries should be in the form of special and differential treatment for developing Members. However, the issue of small-scale fisheries is foremost hindered by definition, and further clarification of the concept of 'small scale' is required.

A third annex of the chair's latest paper outlines the state of the negotiations on subsidies and countervailing measures (SCM), a topic that has proven much less controversial than dumping and fisheries subsidies. The chief areas of remaining disagreement on SCM include export competitiveness, regulated prices, and whether to include a de facto list of export subsidies.

Working document adds value, but makes no progress

By reflecting the current state of negotiations and conflicting reactions to the chair's draft, the working document is intended to serve as an interim step to stimulate further dialogue. Galmes has stated his intent to issue a revised text, but does not consider there is yet sufficient basis for compromise to do so.

There have been varied reactions to the working document. Many Members, especially those involved in anti-dumping negotiations than in fisheries negotiations wanted the chair to issue a revised text to be considered by the ministers in the horizontal process. The fact that one hasn't come out has meant, for them, the dialogue has not been taken forward.

Nath, India's trade minister, said that Galmes' working document was "a mere compilation of 'who said what'" and did not represent "an iota" of progress in moving the negotiations forward.

Japan's chief trade official, Akira Amari, was equally unenthusiastic about the paper. "There is still a large gap between this new document and a possible revised text that will adequately reflect actual negotiations and balance of Members," he said. "I am obliged to say that I am disappointed with his document."

But other delegations feel the working document nevertheless does add value to the negotiation process. While the document is unlikely to change any Members positions, it has provided greater clarity to otherwise undocumented proceedings. The document gives a fair reflection of the range of views expressed regarding the draft text and issues since put forward.

Progress in the rules negotiations hinges in part on advancements in talks on tariff reductions on agricultural and industrial goods, delegates have indicated. Any advancement in these areas would provide momentum to finalising an agreement on rules. However, delegates have indicated that they do not want the rules negotiations to be rolled into the initial set of 'horizontal negotiations' on tariff-reduction trade-offs between the agricultural and industrial sectors.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

APEC TRADE MINISTERS PUSH FOR DOHA DEAL

Trade ministers gathering at a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum issued a strongly worded statement on 31 May calling for an "urgent" conclusion to the Doha round of global trade talks, and appealing to delegates "to show strong leadership and willingness to compromise" in the negotiations.

"The current food-price escalation has increased the urgency to achieve substantial improvements in market access and reductions in market-distorting measures in global agricultural trade," the statement said.

The upcoming weeks represent a crucial period as WTO negotiators seek middle ground in talks on to reduce barriers world trade before an expected meeting of ministers in Geneva this summer.

While urging WTO Members to act quickly, the APEC ministers also stressed that "all key issues must be addressed in a decisive and balanced way that takes into account the interests of all parties" and that recognises the importance of "the development dimension" of the negotiations.

There is an added sense of urgency to make tangible progress in the Doha round ahead of the US presidential election, which could further delay negotiations.

The statement was issued at the end of a two-day meeting of APEC trade ministers in Peru's southern city of Arequipa. The 21-member group includes countries such as Australia, China, Japan and the US and accounts for close to 49 percent of world trade. APEC has consistently promoted multilateral trading as a way to achieve free trade and investment liberalisation.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said in Brussels this week that the chances of a successful conclusion to the Doha round, now in its seventh year, were 60 percent.

The official statement is available on the APEC website at: <http://www.apec.org/>.

ICTSD reporting.

"Statement on Doha Development Agenda," APEC, 1 June, 2008; "APEC Ministers Determined to Bring a Conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda," APEC

News Release, 31 May, 2008; "APEC trade ministers make Doha round push," Reuters, 1 June, 2008; "APEC Trade Ministers Take on Farm Subsidies, Doha," Bloomberg, 31 May, 2008.

PERU SIGNS FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH SINGAPORE AND CANADA

Peru, one of the world's fastest-growing economies, has signed free trade agreements with Canada and Singapore, in a move expected to bring the South American country, which chiefly exports metal and specialty agricultural products, cheaper prices for manufactured goods such as cars and electronics.

Trade officials from Peru and Singapore signed a bilateral deal in Lima on 29 May, making official a text that took three years to negotiate.

Issues such as trade in goods, rules of origin, competition policy and dispute settlement are a few of the topics covered in what the government of Singapore has described as a "broad-based and comprehensive agreement." Immediately upon entry into force, over 87 percent of Singapore's exports to Peru will benefit from duty-free treatment, with the remaining tariffs to be phased out over a 10-year period. All Peruvian exports will be given instant tariff-free status to Singapore.

Trade between the two countries totaled US\$37.2 million in 2007. Trade officials hope that the pact will broaden Peru's trade reach in Southeast Asia, an area that is an increasingly significant consumer of natural resources.

On the same day that the Singapore deal was signed, Peru inked a separate bilateral pact with Canada. Upon implementation of the Canadian deal, Peru will abolish tariffs on 95 percent of Canadian exports; the remainder will be eliminated over the following five to ten years. Products such as wheat, barley, lentils and a variety of paper products are among those earmarked for immediate duty-free access. For its part, Canada will immediately remove 97 percent of its tariffs on Peruvian imports, with the rest phased out over a three- or seven-year period. However, exceptions to tariff reductions are provided to over-quota tariffs on dairy, poultry, eggs and refined sugar.

Canada, Peru's second-largest foreign investor after Spain, has a large interest in the country's mining industry. Peru views Canada as an important market for gold, metals, textiles, as well as cheaper cereals at a time of rising food prices. Two-way commerce between the countries totaled US\$2.45 billion last year.

Peruvian President Alan Garcia has set an aggressive agenda for free trade after reaching a landmark deal with the US last year. The Garcia administration is also interested in similar agreements with China and the EU. However, Peru's unilateral pursuit of its own trade agreements has reportedly irritated some of its partners in the Andean Community regional trade group, made up of Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru.

ICTSD reporting.

"Singapore, Peru sign free trade agreement," Xinhua, 30 May 2008; "Canada signs free trade deal with Peru," The Associated Press, 30 May, 2008; "Singapore and Peru sign free trade agreement," Xinhua; "Canada Signs Free Trade, Labour Cooperation and Environment Cooperation Agreements with Peru," News Release, 29 May, 2008; "Peru, Singapore and Canada set to sign free trade agreement," Mercopress, 27 May, 2008.

WTO IN BRIEF

US AND JAPAN FILE WTO COMPLAINT OVER EU TECH TARIFFS

The US and Japan filed a joint complaint at the WTO on 28 May against EU tariffs on certain high-tech products, claiming that the EU unfairly imposes import duties on a handful of goods that should be tariff free.

The official complaint centres on three products: cable or satellite boxes with internet capability; flat panel displays for computers; and computer printers that also have the capacity to scan, copy or fax.

Washington and Tokyo claim that these products should be duty free under the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA), which prohibits tariffs on high-tech products among the agreement's signatories.

But Brussels maintains that the ITA does not apply when technology changes have given a product multiple functions. For example, from the EU perspective, cable boxes with internet capability should properly be classified as video recorders because they can record live television, and thus should fall outside the scope of the ITA.

According to a statement by the European Commission "both the spirit and explicit provisions in the ITA make it clear that extension to new products to reflect technological change would not be automatic, but based on periodic review by signatories."

Indeed, Brussels has on several occasions called for a renegotiation of the ITA, but the US has objected, arguing that technological developments of the products covered by the agreement were foreseeable and that new products should therefore be automatically included under its rules.

Global exports of the products targeted in the complaint amounted to an estimated US\$70 billion in 2007. US Trade Representative Susan Schwab has said that EU duties reach 14 percent on some items.

Under WTO rules, the countries involved will now engage in consultations for 60 days. If no resolution has been reached at the end of that period, the US and Japan can ask a WTO panel to determine whether the EU is meeting its trade obligations.

ICTSD reporting.

"EU-US trade row erupts over IT products," EurActiv, 30 May 2008; "U.S. files WTO case vs EU over tech tariffs," Reuters, 28 May 2008; "Remarks by Ambassador Susan Schwab United States Trade Representative," 28 May, 2008; "EU rejects claims over technology tariffs," European Commission Trade Issues, 28 May, 2008.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

VACANCIES

The Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group), an international civil society leader in researching, writing, and advocating on issues of concern to marginalised peoples, has posted two new job opportunities. ETC Group will hire a full-time English-language editor and a full-time programme manager to begin work in or around October 2008. All positions with ETC Group begin with a one-year mutual probation period. Following that year and subject to adequate funding, new positions become permanent. All applications will be treated as confidential and references will not be pursued without the express permission of the applicant. Applications will be accepted until June 6, 2008. Details on the positions and the application process are available on the ETC Group website at http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub_id=686.

The Bretton Woods Project is seeking a new coordinator to run a key international network which monitors and advocates for reform of the IFIs. Responsibilities include managing a small team, networking with decision makers, technical experts and campaigners, facilitating research and lobbying by UK and international network members, preparing written analyses and making public presentations. The successful candidate will have a thorough knowledge of global development issues, a passion for creating change, excellent

management skills and an ability to think strategically and influence diplomatically. Please send your current CV plus a cover letter. The letter should answer these questions: Give an example of a major strategic dilemma you have faced in your work (ideally one on a global policy issue), describe how you dealt with it and what lessons you learned; Why do you consider your management experience and style would enable you to run the Bretton Woods Project? Send either by post to: Job Application, Bretton Woods Project, c/o Action Aid, Hamlyn House, Macdonald Road, London N19 5PG, UK. Or by e-mail to: jobs@brettonwoodsproject.org, marked "Application Coordinator" in the subject line. For full details please refer to <http://brettonwoodsproject.org/jobs>.

The Development Centre is looking for two Economists, one to contribute to the Global Development Outlook Division, and one to the work of the Africa desk. The selected persons will work under the supervision of the Head of the respective unit. The Development Centre is a unique institution within the OECD and the international community, where the governments of Member and partner countries, enterprises and civil society organisations discuss questions of common interest in an informal framework. Its Governing Board includes most of the OECD countries but also emerging countries such as Brazil, India and South Africa. The Centre uses independent analyses to inform the debate so as to help decision-makers find solutions to stimulate growth and improve living conditions worldwide, but especially in developing countries. Applications will be accepted until 16 June. For more information, please see http://erecruit1.oecd.org/psc/ERECRUIT/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRS_HRAM.HRS_CE.GBL.

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email events@ictsd.ch.

Upcoming Events: 5 - 11 June

5 June, worldwide: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2008. Recognising that climate change is becoming the defining issue of our era, UNEP is asking countries, companies and communities to focus on greenhouse gas emissions and how to reduce them. The World Environment Day will highlight resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption. The main international celebrations of World Environment Day 2008 will be held in New Zealand. UNEP is honoured that the city of Wellington will be hosting this United Nations day. The World Environment Day slogan for 2008 is Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy. For further information, please refer to the website at <http://www.unep.org/wed/2008/english/>.

7-8 June, Aomori, Japan. G8 + 5 ENERGY MINISTERS' MEETING. In January this year, the Japanese government proposed to "set a global target of 30 percent improvement of energy efficiency by 2020" in the Davos Forum (the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2008). Interest at the G8 +

5 meeting is expected to centre on whether results along lines of this Japanese proposal will be yielded. Additionally, since the East Asia Summit in January 2007, the Japanese government has been calling for China and India to participate in emission reduction activities through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and other multilateral schemes and bilateral talks. In APEC, the member states reached a non-binding agreement to "improve the energy efficiency by at least 25 percent compared to 2005 by 2030" in September last year. Since the responsible ministers from "G8 plus 3" (China, South Korea and India) will be participating in the G8 + 5 Energy Ministers' Meeting as well, the focus will likely be on to what degree the new major emitters, China and India, can be persuaded to engage in the ensuing framework. For further information, please refer to <http://www.shimbun.denki.or.jp/english/g8summit/aomori.shtm> l.

7-12 June, Johannesburg, South Africa. 12TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) is a permanent forum where African ministers of the environment discuss mainly matters of relevance to the environment of the continent. The 12th AMCEN session will entail, inter alia, a ministerial policy dialogue; consideration of matters related to the AMCEN process, including amendments to the constitution and status of the general trust fund; and deliberation on some matters related to the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. For more information please contact the AMECEN Secretary: tel: +254-207-624-289; e-mail: amcensec@unep.org; internet: http://www.unep.org/roa/Amcen/Amcen_Events/12th_Session_AMCEN/index.asp.

7-11 June, Muscat, Oman. 12TH SESSION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION. The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) is an intergovernmental organisation mandated to manage tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas. Its objective is to promote cooperation among its Members with a view to ensuring, through appropriate management, the conservation and optimum utilisation of stocks and encouraging sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks. Among the issues to be considered at the meeting is the future relationship between the IOTC and UN Food and Agricultural Organisation. For more information contact the IOTC Secretariat; tel: +248-225-494; e-mail: iotc.secretary@iotc.org; internet: <http://www.iotc.org/>.

9-10 June, Cape Town, South Africa. BI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GLOBAL FACILITATION PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE. Some time will be devoted to the important issue of improving transit operations at this meeting sponsored by the World Bank. The Bank will also present some initial findings of a major global transit project it has recently commissioned. These should act as catalysts for further discussion. For further information please contact Monica Alina Mustra at mmustra@worldbank.org; or refer to the website <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21751326~menuPK:34482~pagePK:2524753~piPK:51421526~theSitePK:4607,00.html>.

9-11 June, Cape Town, South Africa. THE ANNUAL BANK CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS (ABCDE). The 2008 Conference titled People, Politics and Globalisation is jointly organised by the World Bank and the National Treasury of South Africa. It is a platform for the presentation and discussion of new knowledge on development. After four years of organising a separate regional and global ABCDE, both events will be merged to combine the regional and the global focus in one single ABCDE. The ABCDE 2008 will focus on three broad themes: globalisation, investment and growth; human development for equitable growth; and the political economy of shared growth. For further information, please refer to the website <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTABCDE/0,,contentMDK:21508102~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:4277148,00.html>.

9-11 June, Manila, Philippines. 13TH POVERTY AND ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP MEETING. Established in 2001, the Poverty and Environment Partnership (PEP) is an informal network of development agencies and international environmental non-governmental organisations. PEP aims to improve the coordination of work linking poverty reduction and environmental management within the framework of internationally agreed principles and processes for sustainable development. The 13th PEP meeting aims to highlight experience from Asia and the Pacific with various types of interventions meant to simultaneously reduce poverty and improve environmental management. It will explore emerging thinking with respect to the most appropriate point of intervention and particularly the use of programme versus project interventions. Special attention also will be given to the interface of PEP interests with the ongoing adjustments to low-carbon growth and climate change adaptation in Asia and around the world, including new developments concerning environment and development financing. For further information please refer to the website at <http://www.adb.org/documents/events/2008/13th-PEP-Meeting/default.asp> or contact the meeting coordinator at pleano@abd.org.

9-12 June, Accra, Ghana. MEETING ON OPERATIONAL MODALITIES OF FUTURE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANISATION. This high-level meeting of members of the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) will address modalities of its Council's future work, including clarification of the operational issues needed to be considered on the entry into force of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006. Arrangements will be made to approve and fund projects submitted to ITTO under the current six-month project cycle. The meeting will also include a one-day conference for ITTO African member countries focusing on regional challenges. For more information contact: Collins E. Ahadome, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; e-mail: ahadome@itto.or.jp; internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=223&id=3915>.

9-12 June, Montreal, Canada. THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM OF THE AMERICAS. As outlined by chairman of the foremost economic forum in the Americas, Gil Rémillard, "we are living in changing times, with many factors influencing us to think and act differently. In every area, be it

finance and the economy, sustainable development or trade, it is vital to properly master these changes." This year, under the central theme, *Mastering Change: The Great Transition*, the International Economic Forum of the Americas/Conference of Montreal will focus on how some of these important changes are laying new foundations for strategic decision-making. For further information, please refer

to <http://www.conferencedemontreal.com/2.0.html?&L=1>.

9-12 June, San Juan, Puerto Rico. 24TH SESSION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION: The North American Forest Commission is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. For more information contact Gail Kimbell; tel: +1-202-205-1661; internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/30129/en/>.

9-13 June, Johannesburg, South Africa. INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS. Improving infrastructure is a key priority imposing large challenges in many countries. It is more so in Africa, where countries strive to meet increasing demands for fundamental infrastructure services, while at the same time, stabilise fiscal conditions and enhance efficiency. Many countries are mobilising private participation for infrastructure projects, as successful projects have displayed economic and financial advantages. Successfully bringing projects to financial closure requires optimising outcomes for the host-government, project promoters, and creditors. The programme aims to provide hands-on knowledge and skills training for: planning, implementing, and financing public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects. Sessions will also integrate global experience and local market conditions. The programme will follow the project cycle from planning to implementation by examining how infrastructure projects are analysed, appraised, financed, and managed. For further information please refer to the website <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21748201~menuPK:34482~pagePK:2524753~piPK:51421526~theSitePK:4607,00.html>.

9-13 June. TRADE FACILITATION FOR EXPORT DIVERSIFICATION IN SMALL OR MEDIUM SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES. This internet-based course aims at providing trade policy makers, advisors, researchers, private sector operators (representatives of agriculture, industry, and services), and export support institutions in small or medium South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, Pakistan, and Maldives) with useful insights and better understanding of trade facilitation, transit, and logistics constraints preventing optimal export diversification in small or medium South Asian Countries. The course focuses on trade facilitation, transit, and logistics constraints and their implication for export performance of small or medium South Asian countries. For further information, please contact Course Director, Salomon Samen, Ssamen@worldbank.org and refer to the website: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21772589~menuPK:34482~pagePK:2524753~piPK:51421526~theSitePK:4607,00.html>.

11-12 June, Cape Town, South Africa. OECD REGIONAL FORUM ON TRADE FACILITATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EAASSTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. The Forum aims to spur a constructive dialogue between key stakeholders (such as trade negotiators, customs officials, private sector representatives and donors) involved in trade facilitation in Eastern and Southern Africa, in view of helping countries better understand the issues under discussion in the ongoing WTO negotiations on trade facilitation and relate them to their domestic (and regional) policies, priorities and constraints; examining how best to reap the potential benefits of a future agreement on trade facilitation and match WTO commitments to countries' implementation capacities; and exchanging country experiences with the implementation of trade facilitation reforms and technical assistance and capacity building at national and regional levels. The Forum will be preceded by the bi-annual meeting of the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade on 9-10 June 2008. For further information, please refer to http://www.oecd.org/document/14/0,3343,en_21571361_4004_9777_40051214_1_1_1_1,00.html.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

9-11 June: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY – UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Other Upcoming Events

16-17 June, London, UK: A NEW GLOBAL CLIMATE DEAL? ACHIEVING REAL COLLABORATION FOR A LOW CARBON FUTURE. This will be the 11th Chatham House conference on climate change. Topics will include how to balance economic growth with the need for emissions reductions in developing countries, developing low carbon technologies, carbon markets and equity, and climate strategies that can be agreed to in Copenhagen 2009. For further information, please refer to <https://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/events/conferences/view/-/id/118/>.

17 June, worldwide. WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION. The theme for 2008 World Day to Combat Desertification, 'Combating Land Degradation for Sustainable Agriculture', corresponds with the thematic agenda items to be discussed during the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development: agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. For more information contact: tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>.

23-27 June, Bali, Indonesia. NINTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE BASEL CONVENTION. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (COP-9) on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste will convene in Bali, Indonesia. COP-9 will address, inter alia, the implementation of the Strategic Plan; Basel Convention Regional and Coordinating Centres; synergies and cooperation with other chemicals conventions; e-waste and end-of-life equipment; and ship dismantling. For more information contact Secretariat of the Basel Convention; tel: +41 22-917-8218; fax: +41-22-797-3454; e-mail: abc@unep.ch; internet: <http://www.basel.int/meetings/meetings.html>.

17-18 June, Seoul, Korea. OECD MINISTERIAL MEETING ON 'FUTURE OF THE INTERNET ECONOMY'. Ministers from more than 40 countries will meet with global business leaders, technical experts and academics in order to agree new ways to improve global co-ordination and co-operation at the OECD Ministerial meeting on 'Future of the Internet Economy.' This conference is open to the media. For further information, please refer to the website at http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3343,en_2649_201185_4_0618809_1_1_1_1,00.html.

15-17 July, Geneva, Switzerland. INAUGURAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW (SIEL). The Society of International Economic Law (SIEL) is a new organisation with a global scope for academics and academic-minded practitioners. It will be holding its inaugural conference on 15-17 July 2008 at the Centre on Trade and Economic Integration, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, at which Professor John H Jackson will give the keynote Robert Hudec Lecture. Internet: www.sielnet.org.

RESOURCES

ENERGY TECHNOLOGY PERSPECTIVES 2008: SCENARIOS AND STRATEGIES TO 2050. International Energy Agency, 6 June 2008. The world needs ever increasing energy supplies to sustain economic growth and development. But energy resources are under pressure and CO2 emissions from today's energy use already threaten our climate. What options do we have for switching to a cleaner and more efficient energy future? How much will it cost? And what policies do we need? This second edition of *Energy Technology Perspectives* addresses these questions, drawing on the renowned expertise of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and its energy technology network. This publication responds to the G8 call on the IEA to provide guidance for decision makers on how to bridge the gap between what is happening and what needs to be done in order to build a clean, clever and competitive energy future. The IEA analysis demonstrates that a more sustainable energy future is within our reach, and that technology is the key. Increased energy efficiency, CO2 capture and storage, renewables, and nuclear power will all be important. We must act now if we are to unlock the potential of current and emerging technologies and reduce the dependency on fossil fuels with its consequent effects on energy security and the environment. *Energy Technology Perspectives 2008* provides detailed technology

and policy insights to help focus the discussion and debate in energy circles. For further information, please refer to http://www.iea.org/Textbase/publications/free_new_Desc.asp?PUBS_ID=2012.

THE OECD-FAO AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK 2008-2017. OECD-FAO, 29 May 2008. The Agricultural Outlook 2008-2017 presents the latest forecasts of trends and prices of farm products and assesses the challenges and uncertainties ahead. It looks at how the recent sharp rises in commodity prices will affect the world's poorest countries and investigates such issues as the increased demand for biofuels and how the major developing countries are shaping the future of world agricultural trade. This Outlook was prepared in a period when agricultural and food prices have risen to record-high levels, at least in nominal terms. The report discusses the reasons for these price hikes and finds that some are of a temporary nature, notably adverse weather conditions in some key producing countries and regions, while others are likely to prove more durable. The Outlook concludes that prices are unlikely to be sustained at current high levels and that farmers around the world will respond by boosting plantings and increasing supplies, with a return to more normal growing conditions in the main producing regions. For further information, please refer to http://www.oecd.org/document/32/0,3343,en_36774715_36775671_40444896_1_1_1_1,00.html.

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BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest® is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), <http://www.ictsd.org/>.

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Contributors to this issue of *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*® are Ammad Bahalim, Trineesh Biswas, Simon Jos Tans, Paige McClanahan, and Jessica Thorn. Editors: Paige McClanahan and Trineesh Biswas. Director: Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz. ICTSD is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at: 7, ch. de Ballexert, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (+41-22) 917-8492; fax: 917-8093. Excerpts from *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*® may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editor or the Director.

BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest is made possible through the generous support of the Government of the United Kingdom (DFID) and ICTSD's core donors including the Governments of Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden; Christian Aid (UK) and NOVIB (NL). *BRIDGES Weekly* also benefits from support for the *BRIDGES* series of publications from donors including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. ISSN 1563-003X

