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LEAD STORIES

G-7 TALKS CONTINUE; LAMY COULD SUMMON MINISTERS 'WITHIN WEEKS'

High-level officials from the G-7 group of major trading nations met in Geneva last Wednesday in a renewed push to conclude a world trade deal. While acknowledging that difficult compromises would be necessary to achieve an agreement, those close to the negotiations appeared unusually up-beat about the potential for progress.

A "pragmatic mood" characterised the talks, a G-7 trade official present at the meeting told Bridges.

WTO Director General Pascal Lamy expressed similar optimism: "I am convinced that a deal is still possible," he said in an address to an UNCTAD meeting on 16 September. "I still believe that with yet another push we could still reach our target."

The G-7, comprising Australia, Brazil, China, the EU, India, Japan and the US, reportedly spent most of the meeting trying to find a way out of the impasse on the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), a tool that would allow countries to protect domestic producers from sudden import surges or price declines. Deadlock over the SSM was at least the proximate trigger of the failure of world trade talks, which collapsed after nine days of intense negotiations at the end of July.

According to some members of the group, no specific proposals were tabled and discussions were largely informal, although the chair of WTO farm talks, Ambassador Crawford Falconer of New Zealand, attended the session. The group, which has been meeting at the office of the US mission to the WTO in Geneva, will work through the weekend in an attempt to reach a compromise that could jump start a conclusion to the stalled Doha Round negotiations.

The SSM deadlock that scuppered the talks in July largely revolved around a debate over when, and to what extent, developing countries should be allowed to temporarily impose protective tariffs that exceed current legal limits in the event of an import surge or price decline. India and China were firm in their demands that the SSM be simple and easy to implement, while the US fought hard to ensure predictable market access for its farm exporters.

A G-7 member commented that last week's meeting was "productive" and a welcome forum to "test the waters" for new ideas. Though members of the group are aware that they have yet to address several key issues, such as tariff rate quota creation, tariff simplification, and potential reductions in US cotton subsidies -- a key sticking point for four cotton-producing African nations -- they are eager to resolve the issue of the SSM as a starting point.

The G-7 meeting reportedly focused almost entirely on the SSM. Led by the US, the countries present used the opportunity to discuss the factors surrounding the mechanism: its scope, cross-checking and surveillance, duration, the possible remedies, frequency of use and price or volume-based triggers.

Some members -- Australia, Brazil, and Japan, in particular -- introduced new ideas on the safeguard mechanism. The official from Australia recommended that those critical of the SSM, such as the US, consider a 10-year moving average of import growth as a trigger. Such a threshold, it is believed, would allow gradual increases in imports rather than sudden surges while allowing for a sustained growth in imports. The US has opposed any measures that would accommodate triggers at or below 120 percent of volume of imports, arguing that anything below that level would end up restricting normal trade.

Because the G-7 talks are not open to all WTO Members, several developing-country coalitions -- the G-20, the Cairns Group, and the G-33 -- have held separate meetings over the past week to be briefed on the content of the G-7 talks.

The G-33, a group of agriculture importing developing countries, is particularly concerned with negotiations on the SSM since the coordinator of the group, Indonesia, was not invited to the G-7 talks. At the G-33 briefing held on Friday, members focused on providing clearer insight into the ideas that have been put forth. Since there is no formal mechanism to inform the WTO membership about the deliberations of the G-7 meeting, members of the G-33 group have been critical of the lack of transparency in the process. According to some, a G-7 consensus that is reached outside of the WTO may not be the most constructive means of addressing the failure of the July mini-Ministerial.

India and China, the only countries to take part in both the G-7 and G-33 meetings, questioned the priority being given to the SSM in the negotiating process.

At the meeting today of the G-20 group of developing country agricultural exporters, delegates reiterated the shared sentiment that the "multilateral process cannot be replaced" by the G-7 meetings. Noting the demands from the US, another commented that the the compromises reached should be "equally discomforting" for all members.

Lamy is optimistic, but time is running short

The outcome of the ongoing G-7 talks will largely determine whether progress can be made toward a resolution of the seven-year-old Doha Round of trade

negotiations before US elections on 4 November. Trade observers cite that date as a critical political deadline for the resolution of outstanding issues in the talks.

With time running short, WTO Director General Pascal Lamy has indicated that he is prepared to help push the process forward. "In the weeks to come, and depending on progress made by the negotiators, I am ready to call ministers to Geneva to try and close the issues which remain open," he said in an address to an UNCTAD meeting on 16 September.

But while the negotiations are still alive, Lamy indicated last week that the timetable for the round -- which officials had hoped to wrap up by the end of 2008 -- has shifted. "While it has become clear that we cannot complete the Doha round by the end of this year, let us at least aim to complete the modalities in 2008, so as to conclude the round in 2009," Lamy said in a speech to parliamentarians in Geneva last week.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson expressed similar guarded optimism in an address to the European Parliament INTA Committee on 15 September, noting that "some cautiously encouraging signals of flexibility" had emerged from the G-7 meeting in Geneva. "I believe a further meeting of key negotiators at ministerial level will be desirable if we are going to succeed in pulling things round before domestic politics and elections in a number of countries takes over completely," Mandelson said.

But he warned that substantial progress was in no way guaranteed. "It is still early days and we will need to see if senior officials are given the leeway they will certainly need to tease out a technical solution which satisfies all parties," he said.

A stronger note of scepticism was sounded by India, whose junior minister of industry expressed doubt that a deal could be concluded before the US presidential election, now less than seven weeks away.

"Unfortunately the November timetable, I don't see how any one party can set any timetable because everybody will have to make concessions," Ashwani Kumar told Reuters on 16 September. "In an election year we all know that governments do not make concessions," he said.

And while Kumar indicated that India was ready to engage in the talks, he said other countries would have to as well. "Any further concessions from India, if at all, will have to await further concessions from the rest of the world," he said.

ICTSD reporting. "Doha breakthrough before November unlikely - Govt," REUTERS, 17 September 2008; "The G-33 and the SSM," WASHINGTON TRADE DAILY, 15 September 2008.

OTHER NEWS

UN EXPERT: INCREASED AGROFUELS PRODUCTION HAS HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

A UN expert says the production of agrofuels has intensified the global food crisis and could thus infringe upon human rights. The expert's report, which was released last week, says governments should refrain from investing further in bioethanol and biodiesel until a system is put in place to ensure that agrofuels that do not meet environmental and human rights standards can be banned from international trade.

"The current path in the development of agrofuels for transport is not sustainable...if such development goes unchecked, further violations of the right to food will result," UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter, said in the report.

De Schutter presented his conclusions to the UN's Human Rights Council in Geneva on 10 September. The report, which was commissioned at the UN Special Session on the Global Food Crisis in May, concluded that the world's poor are not going hungry because there is not enough food to go around; rather, they are left empty-handed because the food that is available is too expensive for them to buy.

Several factors, such as population growth, speculation in commodities markets and changing dietary habits worldwide, have contributed to the recent rise in prices, De Schutter said. But he also noted that increased production of plant-derived transport fuels has helped make food more expensive by causing a significant amount of arable land to be shifted from food production to the production of bioethanol and biodiesel.

While a successful conclusion to the Doha Round of trade talks at the WTO could help ensure food access for the world's poor, De Schutter cautioned that "not any agreement will do."

"The international trade system needs to be equitable if it is to contribute to the objective of food security," he said. "There is a real risk that export-led agricultural development will further marginalise the position of

smallholders, worsening their food security instead of improving it."

Focussing on the issue of agrofuels, De Schutter said that increased production of bioethanol and biodiesel could have serious human rights implications beyond the negative impact on access to food. The shift in production away from food crops has also driven up the price of farmland, in some cases so much so as to make it unaffordable for small-scale producers. In extreme cases, De Schutter said, the push to create of new mega-plantations could drive indigenous people off their land and erode agricultural working conditions in the developing world.

Moreover, agrofuels production could widen the gap between rich and poor, De Schutter found. "When produced in developing countries in order to satisfy the growth of demand in industrialised countries, agrofuels may lead to distorted development, benefiting only a minority, and worsening the lot of many others," he said in the report.

From an environmental standpoint, the report cited growing evidence that many agrofuels use up vast amounts of water, energy and fertile cropland, thus making them unsustainable in the long run.

Sustainability standards for biofuels?

De Schutter recommended that the Human Rights Council begin looking at the food crisis - and agrofuels production - from a human rights perspective, a framework which he said would allow a consideration of the trade-offs between the consumer costs and producer gains associated with high food prices.

He cited a "need to strengthen the protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable groups including land-users whose land tenure is insecure, landless labourers, women, the displaced, indigenous people, minorities, the disabled and the rural and urban poor."

De Schutter also said that the Council should work to build an international consensus on agrofuels, so as to avoid "the negative impact of its development on the international price of staple food commodities." He also stressed the importance of ensuring "that the production of agrofuels respects the full range of human rights and does not result in distorted development in producer countries."

To that end, De Schutter said that countries should be allowed to refuse imports of agrofuels from states that fail to meet sustainability and human rights standards, which could include labour conditions. He said that a

waiver from the WTO could allow states to discriminate in such a way - a practise that would normally be illegal under world trade rules.

But the Rapporteur's criticism of agrofuels was not uniform across the board. While De Schutter says that corn-derived biofuels have clearly had a negative impact on food security, he was less pessimistic about biofuels produced from sugarcane - the prime source of Brazilian agrofuel. Production from sugarcane "may lead to increased welfare and reduced poverty, due to income-earning opportunities, with positive implications for food security," he said.

Biofuels not to blame: Critics

A Brazilian representative who attended De Schutter's presentation responded by emphasising that biofuels were "not the villain" in the global food crisis, and that increased biofuels production could in fact make an important contribution to economic and social development.

The US agrofuels industry responded forcefully to de Schutter's findings: "The latest attempt to scapegoat the biofuel industry is little more than a recitation of other baseless attacks," National Biodiesel Board CEO Joe Jobe said in a statement. "Biofuels have a marginal effect on the increase in food prices and the major driving force behind food price increases is the skyrocketing price of petroleum," the statement said.

A confidential World Bank document that concluded that biofuels have caused world food prices to increase by 75 percent caused a similar stir when it was reported on by the UK's The Guardian newspaper in July.

NGO report takes aim at Latin biofuels

In related news, a recent report by Amsterdam-based NGO Friends of the Earth International slammed agrofuels production in Latin America, concluding that rapid development of plant-derived fuels is threatening biodiversity, accelerating deforestation and spreading poor labour conditions in the region.

"More agrofuels means that agribusiness companies, financial speculators and big landowners will make vast profits at the expense of people and the environment," Paul de Clerck, Corporate Campaigner for Friends of the Earth International, said.

While the report, titled "Fuelling destruction in Latin America," targeted several Latin American countries, it singled out Brazil, the region's biggest ethanol producer, for especially harsh labour conditions for its

sugarcane cutters, as well as its extensive use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in agrofuels production.

The Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association (ÚNICA) issued a statement rebutting the NGO report, claiming that the information it provided was "out of context, inaccurate and generally outdated."

ÚNICA President Marcos Jank said that Brazil had made significant strides towards increasing the sustainability of its agrofuels production by reducing associated carbon dioxide emissions, creating jobs and developing new technologies. "The Brazilian experience is the longest and most successful effort at large-scale, sustainable production and use of a biofuels in the world to date," Jank said in the statement.

ICTSD reporting; "Unchecked biofuels could lead to food shortages: UN expert," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 9 September 2008; "UN report: biofuels adding to food crisis," VOICE OF AMERICA NEWS, 10 September 2008; "Skyrocketing prices continue to threaten the right to food, UN expert says," UN NEWS SERVICE, 10 September 2008.

13 CARIBBEAN NATIONS SET TO SIGN EPA WITH EU IN OCTOBER

A group of Caribbean states agreed last week to sign an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU by the end of October. The new deadline represents yet another delay to the conclusion of the agreement, which trade officials originally hoped to finalise in June. An early September deadline has also been missed.

The agreement, one of a series of EPAs that Brussels hopes to negotiate with groups of former European colonies, is meant to serve as a continuation of the Cotonou Agreement, a nonreciprocal scheme under which the EU provided duty-free access to most exports from African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries. That agreement expired at the end of last year.

In a statement released on 11 September, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat clarified that, although the date to ink the trade deal can only be finalised after further discussions with the EU, the agreement should be concluded in time to ensure provisional application of the EPA by the end of October.

The deal between the 15-member Caribbean Forum of African Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM) and the EU was the focus of two high-level meetings in

Barbados last week that were billed as 'consensus building' sessions for the EPA.

However, the recent spate of hurricanes that have caused widespread devastation in the Caribbean region prevented heads of governments from Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, The Bahamas, Haiti, Cuba and the Dominican Republic were not present at the meeting.

Only two of the CARIFORUM member states -- Haiti and Guyana -- indicated at the meeting that they were not ready to sign the EPA.

The Haitian representative noted some reservations, including the fact that the text of the final agreement varied from what was sent to the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery. This and other concerns would require approval at the presidential level before any commitment of a signature could be given, the representative said. Guyana also said it was unwilling to sign the EPA, a position that it has long held.

Guyana against EPA, but willing to do 'goods-only' deal

Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo remains the chief opponent of the EPA in its present form. Jagdeo has stated that he will only sign the deal if the EU coerces him into doing so by threatening to revert to the generalised system of preferences (GSP), which would subject Guyanese goods to significant tariffs.

"The only reason I'm going to sign this agreement is if Europe imposes GSP on my country because I don't have a choice; my exports are vulnerable. But outside of that I will never subscribe to an agreement" Jagdeo told reporters at the meeting.

Guyana is not alone in its criticism of the deal. In fact, several of the EU's potential EPA partners have raised concerns over the development implications of trade agreements with reciprocal market access commitments, such as the possibility of EU products flooding their markets and harming domestic industries. They also worry about the costs of adjustment and implementation, promises of assistance notwithstanding.

The CARIFORUM EPA includes several issues that were taken off the WTO's agenda because of concerns from developing countries. Jagdeo insists that by adding these Trade Related Issues (TRIs) - such as investment, competition and government procurement - to the EPA, Europe will have a legitimate right to lobby the WTO for these contentious topics to be placed back on the agenda.

Furthermore, the Guyana President argued that the benefits and protection offered by regionalism are being undermined by the multilateral EPA. Specifically, Jagdeo referred to the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause, whereby any preferences the region extends to any of its other partners must also be extended to Europe. Jagdeo pointed out Guyana has a special trade relationship with neighbour Brazil, with whom they may want to negotiate a more favourable trade deal, but, by doing so they will be obliged to extend the privileges to Europe.

Instead of the EPA now on the table, Jagdeo has lobbied for a 'goods-only' deal, which he claims is fully compatible with WTO requirements. Jagdeo has pointed out that other countries and regions are either still in negotiations or have initialled goods-only agreements with the EU; the Caribbean is the only region that has initialled a full EPA.

Yet this option was rejected by other CARIFORUM members at the Wednesday meeting, who said they did not want to renegotiate the deal at this late stage.

Prime Minister Bruce Golding of Jamaica, who has lead responsibility for CARICOM's external economic relations, stated that the EPA did not undermine the viability of the CARICOM single market and economy, but strengthened it by forcing the region to be more competitive. Golding said in a statement that not signing the EPA would damage the interests of the citizens.

"That is something that would have to be discussed with the European Commission, to the extent that the agreement was negotiated on the basis of a full EPA agreement involving not just goods, but services, investments, intellectual property and so on. To the extent that that was the context in which the negotiations were conducted, discussions would have to be pursued to determine whether Guyana would have the option of signing a limited agreement as they have indicated they would be prepared to do," Golding said on the topic of a goods-only agreement.

However, the European Commission has repeatedly expressed reservations at the idea of Guyana having a goods-only deal instead of a full EPA with the EU. Instead, the Commission maintains that full EPAs must be signed without delay, and further that it is in the interest of the Caribbean nations to do so, as trade liberalisation will facilitate development and the EPA will ensure that trade relations between the parties are in compliance with WTO rules.

The CARIFORUM pact is one of a series of EPA's the EU is currently negotiating with the ACP group (see

Trade Negotiations Insights, September 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/27844/>). But the progress in negotiations is uneven and no sub-region has yet endorsed an EPA or an interim agreement.

ICTSD reporting; "CARIFORUM agrees to sign EPA," BILATERALS, 16 September, 2008; "President Jagedo on EPA... CARICOM leaders could undermine key tools protecting regional interests," KAIETEURNWS, 12 September, 2008; "Guyana stakeholders 'roundly condemn' Cariforum EPA," BILATERALS, 5 September, 2008; "Guyana holds out as others agree to sign EPA," CARIBBEAN360.COM, 11 September, 2008; "EC: No to goods-only agreement," STABROEK NEWS, 10 September, 2008.

IN BRIEF

UNCTAD: AFRICAN NATIONS MISSING POTENTIAL GAINS OF LIBERALISATION

African nations are largely failing to enjoy many of the potential gains of more than two decades' worth of trade liberalisation, a recent UN report found. Despite governments' concerted efforts to dismantle import controls, re-value their currencies, cut regulatory barriers and eliminate other impediments to trade, the continent saw its market share drop from 6 percent of world exports in 1980 to 3 percent last year.

The report, which was released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on 15 September, recommended that African governments invest heavily in agriculture production, while also encouraging their economies to diversify into manufactured goods to improve upon their "modest" export performance.

UNCTAD identified a weak 'supply response' as a primary problem in African economies, meaning that the continent's producers are largely unable to churn out the quantity and quality of goods required to respond to global demand. While analysts had hoped that liberalisation policies would enable African economies to react quickly to market signals, in practise, "structural problems" continue to prevent producers from adjusting to fluctuations in demand.

The report also criticised African governments for under-investing in agriculture, pointing out that the continent's farm production has declined dramatically in recent decades. Indeed, over the course of the past half century, many African nations have gone from being net exporters of food to relying heavily on food imports.

Although their agriculture sectors remain weak, African economies have, as a whole, failed to diversify into manufactured goods, which leaves them especially vulnerable to the sudden changes that are relatively common in primary commodities markets, the report said. Manufactured goods account for roughly one quarter of total exports from Sub-Saharan Africa - the lowest of any region in the world.

But beyond diversification, infrastructure and human capital investments will also be needed to strengthen the continent's export performance. African nations "need such building blocks as well-trained workforces, reliable electricity supply, research and development skills, flexible investment and banking services, and efficient transportation" before they can truly take advantage of opportunities on the world market, UNCTAD said in a statement released in conjunction with the report.

Macroeconomic and political stability, as well as "policy predictability," are also critical to stronger economic performance, the report found.

The release of the report comes at the beginning of a two-week session of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board. The meeting, which will continue through 26 September, will focus on ways to help strengthen developing-country economies; participants will also discuss the global food crisis and the future of the multilateral trading system (see related story, this issue).

To download the UNCTAD report, [visit http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=10370&intltemID=1397&lang=1&mode=downloads](http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=10370&intltemID=1397&lang=1&mode=downloads).

ICTSD reporting.

UNCTAD BOARD TO ADDRESS PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

Helping developing country economies put more varied and sophisticated products on the world market is the focus of a two-week meeting of the governing board of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) that began on 15 September.

Other objectives of the Trade and Development Board session include assessing progress toward the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and spurring broad-based economic growth for creating jobs and reducing poverty.

UNCTAD Secretary General Supachai Panitchpakdi told meeting participants that the current global food and financial crises make these issues especially critical, and that a successful conclusion to the Doha Round of trade talks at the World Trade Organisation would be an important step forward.

"We are told that this is one of the most serious crises we've seen in the last 60 or 70 years," Supachai said. "There must be some better rules and regulations to help the financial system as rules help the trading system."

International aid experts say that recent attention has focussed increasingly on the social and health sectors. While these areas are important, the aid experts say, they do not typically contribute to stronger national economies. According to UNCTAD, greater attention and larger proportions of aid should go toward bolstering productivity, including through the expansion of industry. The organisation says that this type of economic growth offers a sustainable way out of poverty and can help prevent future crises.

The Trade and Development Board will also examine the economic status of 49 least developed countries (LDCs). Discussion will be based on the latest UNCTAD LDC Report, which gives a detailed evaluation of the state of these countries' essential exports, such as coffee, cotton, peanuts, horticulture, fish, textiles and their burgeoning tourism sectors.

On 22 September, the focus will turn to a pilot project that aims to enable Cape Verde to expand the productive capacity of its economy and increase national gains from exports.

The 55th session will close on 26 September and, as in years past, the Board will consider UNCTAD's contribution to major UN conferences and summits and it will survey the effectiveness of UNCTAD's many technical cooperation activities.

The UN Headquarters in New York will play host to a High-Level Event on the MDGs on 25 September. The current session will shape UNCTAD's contribution to the affair.

ICTSD reporting; "TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD TO HOLD 55TH SESSION: FOCUS IS ON PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES, MILLENNIUM GOALS", UNCTAD Press, 12 September, 2008; "TDB to zero in on productive capacity", South Asian Media Net, 14 September, 2008.

WTO IN BRIEF

EU PROPOSES CHANGES TO WTO IT AGREEMENT

The EU on Monday proposed an expansion to the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA) that could affect an ongoing dispute against European tariffs on IT products.

"The ITA remains a milestone duty-free agreement," EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said. "But it risks being left behind after 12 years of technological development. We need an ITA for the 21st century that will continue to benefit our consumers and businesses."

The EU has proposed several updates to the ITA: increasing the number of products covered, recruiting new signatories, and establishing mechanisms to keep the agreement up to date.

The proposal comes three months after the US and Japan filed a complaint at the WTO claiming that Brussels unfairly imposes import duties on a handful of goods that should be tariff free under the ITA (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 June 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/12303/>). Taiwan became another complainant in the dispute in June.

The dispute initially centred 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, Tokyo and Taipei claim that these products should be duty free, but Brussels maintains that the ITA does not apply when technology changes have given a product multiple functions.

Although the EU did not list the products that it hopes will be included under the expanded ITA, it did indicate that multifunctional products would be given priority.

International trade in the IT sector has more than doubled in the past 12 years; IT products now account for roughly 20 percent of world exports of manufactured goods.

The ITA, which has been in force for more than eleven years, is intended to expand trade in information technology and telecommunications products by reducing tariffs on those goods. The agreement has a total of 43 signatories, which represent more than 97 percent of global trade in IT products.

ICTSD reporting.

CHINA APPEALS WTO AUTO PARTS DECISION

China has appealed a WTO ruling that found in favour of Canada, the EU and the US in a dispute over auto part tariffs.

The Chinese appeal came on 15 September, just hours before the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) was to meet and formally adopt the ruling on its car imports.

The WTO ruling, which represented China's first legal defeat at the multinational trade body since its accession in 2001, found that Chinese measures "accord imported auto parts less favourable treatment than like domestic auto parts." The panel, which circulated its decision on 18 July, largely upheld the complainants' arguments that Chinese tax measures on imported auto parts resulted in unfair competition and violated international trade rules (see BRIDGES Weekly, 4 September 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/27666/>).

The Appellate Body, which has the authority to maintain or overthrow a verdict of the DSB, has up to 90 days to review and rule on the case.

In contention are the tariffs that China imposes on imported auto parts. Beijing has set a maximum tariff of 25 percent for whole vehicles and 10 percent for auto parts. These tariff rates are in accordance with the Chinese WTO accession package, which obliged the country to set a lower duty on imported auto parts than on finished vehicles.

However, since 2005 China has taxed auto parts at a 15 percent higher rate if the parts end up constituting 60 percent or more of the value of a finished vehicle. Beijing maintains that the higher duty is aimed at preventing tax evasion by companies that import whole cars as spare parts.

Canada, the EU and the US initiated the dispute in 2006 with concerns that the Chinese measure pressures foreign auto parts producers to relocate manufacturing facilities to China. The complainants also said that tariffs unfairly discouraged Chinese manufacturers from using foreign auto parts.

ICTSD reporting; "China appeals WTO car parts ruling: spokeswoman," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 15 September, 2008; "China appeals WTO ruling on auto parts," XINHUA, 15 September, 2008; "China appeals

auto parts ruling, first WTO loss," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 15 September, 2008.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

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.

Coming up: September 17-23

17 September. Renaissance Hotel, Brussels. AFTER THE G8, INDUSTRY FACING THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE. This discussion will be divided into three parts: implications of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on the electricity sector; implications of the EU ETS on energy intensive sectors; and implications of the EU Climate policy on non-ETS sectors. For further information please contact: Martine Breux; email: breux@ifri.org and Internet: http://www.ifri.org/frontDispatcher/ifri/manifestations/s_minaire_1033636016876/publi_P_energie_mar_s_br_1220277_356808

17- 20 September. Crans-Montana, Switzerland. GENEVA TRADE & DEVELOPMENT FORUM (GTDF): TRADE AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL - PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICIES. The first conference of the GTDF will connect about 250 thinkers, practitioners and decision makers from the trade and development fields from more than 40 developing, transition and OECD countries with the goal to foster a more inclusive globalisation by addressing some of the specific challenges and opportunities of developing countries in their quest to liberalise trade and integrate into the world economy to the benefit of all. The conference is expected to develop country-specific action plans/policy recommendations as well as policy principles on trade governance and new ideas and approaches to promote trade as a development tool. Participants will probe how entrepreneurship, food security, service development, labour mobility, intellectual property rights, commodities, climate change, livelihoods, export development, trade built on decent work, trade rules and governance can contribute to reducing poverty and enhancing integration into the world trading system. IDEAS Centre is organising the GTDF, backed by Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. For more information, visit www.gtforum.org.

18 - 19 September. Auckland, New Zealand. GEF SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR THE PACIFIC SIDS. The Sub-Regional Workshops are an annual opportunity for GEF Focal Points to meet with their counterparts from other countries in the region and GEF Partners to discuss and review policies and procedures and for peer to peer exchange of lessons and experiences from development and implementation of GEF projects and their integration within national policy frameworks. For more information contact: tel: +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240/3245; e-mail:

secretariat@thegef.org;
<http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=21630>

Internet:

18 - 20 September. Cracow, Poland. 12TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF EUROMEDITERRANEAN NETWORK OF EXPERIMENTAL AND REPRESENTATIVE BASINS. The conference will be organised around the theme "hydrological extremes in small basins". For more information contact: Jagiellonian University; tel: +48-12-664-5276; fax: +48-12-664-5385; e-mail: erb2008@geo.uj.edu.pl; Internet: <http://www.geo.uj.edu.pl/konferencja/erb2008/>

19 September. Kolkata, West Bengal. REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA WITH A FOCUS ON INDIA-BANGLADESH TRADE. Objectives of this stakeholders consultation are to engage the participation of Indian stakeholders in regional trade initiatives in South Asia and to promote policy responses that would be inclusive of stakeholder preferences. Furthermore its aim includes involving business representatives, farmer organisations, civil society representatives, academics, and government for creating an awareness and momentum towards regional economic cooperation in South Asia in a way that is expected to influence the future policy direction on trade and investment promotion within the country. For further information, please refer to <http://www.cuts-citee.org/events.htm>

21- 23 September. New Delhi, India. 14TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE. The International Sustainable Development Research Society (ISDRS) aims to foster and communicate the importance of sustainable development in a global society. The society builds upon the 12-year history of the International Sustainable Development Research Conference and its associated journals. For more information contact tel: +91-124-5013050-56; fax: +91-124-2346162; Internet: <http://www.avg.com/>.

22 September. GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT. UN headquarters, New York, United States of America. In its resolution (A.RES/L.29/Rev.1), the UN General Assembly (UNGA) decided that the high-level meeting will be held on 22 September 2008, prior to the general debate of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. It also decided that the meeting will be held at the highest possible political level, including the participation of Heads of State or Government, ministers, special representatives and other representatives, as appropriate. The UNGA decided that the meeting will result in a political declaration on Africa's development needs and requested the UNGA President to produce a draft text in consultation with member States and based on their inputs, and convene informals on the draft text. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to the meeting a comprehensive report, with recommendations, on "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward" in cooperation with relevant development agencies of the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant regional and international financial and trade institutions. Internet: <http://www.un.org/ga/62/meetings.shtml>

22- 24 September. Chicago, United States. CORPORATE CLIMATE RESPONSE - WHERE BUSINESS TACKLES CLIMATE CHANGE. Join leading companies this September to find out how they're responding to climate change and adapting for a low-carbon future. Over 1000 sustainability professionals have already participated in Corporate Climate Response events for the past four years. For more information please contact tel: +44 (0) 20 7801 6333; email: info@greenpowerconferences.com

22- 25 September. Limbé, Cameroon. CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL AFRICA ON NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS (NBSAPS) AND MAINSTREAMING OF BIODIVERSITY. This workshop intends on focusing on particular topics including: the Status of development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in the region. Updating and increasing the effectiveness of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Integrating biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies including strategies for poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and national and local planning processes. The way forward: discussion on next steps in implementing and updating NBSAPs and on mainstreaming of biodiversity. For further information, please refer to <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>.

24- 25 September. Geneva, Switzerland. WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2008: 'TRADING INTO THE FUTURE'. This year's Forum - "Trading into the Future" - will provide a platform for reflection on the multilateral trading system's six decades. In particular, input will be sought on the challenges and opportunities facing the WTO in each of its main functions, as well as on the challenges and opportunities facing the main actors and stakeholders of the system. This dialogue can contribute towards identifying practical and effective ways forward for the multilateral trading system. Civil society representatives interested in organizing a session during the 2008 Public Forum should fill out the Call for Proposals Form before Thursday 1 May 2008. For further information please refer to: http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum08_e/public_forum08_e.htm

25 September. UN headquarters, New York, United States of America. HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SEPTEMBER SUMMIT). The UN Secretary-General and the President of the UN General Assembly are organising the September High-Level Event on the MDGs. The September Summit will seek to be the central political development event of the year, setting the tone for the Doha Financing for Development Conference in late 2008. It will seek to mobilise world leaders including heads of state, major business leaders, civil society and religious leaders, the heads of foundations, and other stakeholders to agree on the practical steps that are needed to achieve the MDGs. The central objective of the summit is to gather commitments for concrete initiatives from all participants that will translate their promise to support the MDGs into action on the ground. For more information contact tel: +1 (212) 963 3125; e-mail: ngls@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel>

29 September - 1 October. Stavanger, Norway. AQUAVISION 2008-SIXTH WORLD BUSINESS CONFERENCE ON AQUACULTURE. AquaVision 2008 is organised around the theme "Know the Fundamentals - Create Your Future." This event aims to bring together executives and professionals, politicians and regulators, investors and customers - including retailers and processors. For more information contact: Blue Planet; tel: +47 5187 4740; Internet: <http://www.aquavision.org>

30 September- 1 October. Geneva, Switzerland. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES - CREATING GREENER LIVING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. The inaugural Sustainable Cities and Communities conference is jointly organised by the WWF and Green Power Conferences. The Conference will focus on the practical challenges and opportunities cities and communities will face in order to tackle rising greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and congestion. For more information contact: Simon Neil tel: +44 207 099 0600; email: simon.neill@greenpowerconferences.com; Internet: <http://www.greenpowerconferences.com/>

WTO EVENTS

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/meets_public/meets_e.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.

17 + 19 September: TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY – BARBADOS

18 September: COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

18 – 19 September: COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

23 September: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

24 – 25 September: WTO PUBLIC FORUM. For more information, see http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/ngo_e/forum08_background_e.htm

Other Upcoming Events

1 - 2 October. Mexico City, Mexico. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY- SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR LATIN AMERICA. The Sub-Regional Workshops are an annual opportunity for GEF Focal Points to meet with their counterparts from other countries in the region and GEF Partners to discuss and review policies and procedures and for peer to peer exchange of lessons and experiences from

development and implementation of GEF projects and their integration within national policy frameworks. For more information contact: tel: +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240/3245; e-mail: secretariat@thegef.org; Internet: <http://gefweb.org/interior.aspx?id=21630>

5 - 9 October. Bali, Indonesia. INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON TROPICAL RAINFORESTS AND AGROFORESTS UNDER GLOBAL CHANGE. This meeting aims to advance our understanding of human-induced global change processes, such as agricultural intensification and climate change, which threaten rainforests, by using an integrated scientific approach linking ecological, economic and social approaches at different scales. For more information contact: e-mail: info@globalchange-2008.org; Internet: <http://www.globalchange-2008.org>

6 - 7 October. Gainesville, Florida, US. WORKING FORESTS IN THE TROPICS: PARTNERING RESEARCH WITH PRACTISE FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT. This conference will explore how scientists from universities and research organisations have worked in partnership with government agencies, policy-makers, the private sector, social movements, and natural resource managers to advance conservation and development through applied research and capacity-building. For more information contact: Jhanna Gilber, University of Florida; tel: +1-352-392-5930; fax: +1-352-392-9734; e-mail: jhanna@ufl.edu; Internet: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/tropics/>

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

6 - 10 October. Nairobi, Kenya. SECOND MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON MERCURY. This meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held from 6-10 October 2008, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information contact: UNEP Chemicals Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics; tel: +41-22-917-8183; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: mercury@chemicals.unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/>

13 - 16 October. Accra, Ghana. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRADITIONAL FOREST-RELATED KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST

MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA. This conference will highlight the importance of traditional forest-related knowledge towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable forest management. It is organised by the Forestry Commission, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the University of Ghana in association with the International Union of Forest Research Organisations. For more information contact: Alfred Oteng-Yeboah; e-mail: otengyeboah@yahoo.co.uk; Internet: <http://www.iufro.org/download/file/2595/95/ghana08-tftfk-1st-announcemt-call-upd.doc>

13 - 17 October. Geneva, Switzerland. FOURTH MEETING OF THE PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANT REVIEW COMMITTEE. POPRC-4 will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13-17 October 2008. For more information contact: Stockholm Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-917-8098; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; Internet: <http://www.pops.int/>

14 - 17 October. Rome, Italy. FAO COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will host the 34th session of the Committee on World Food Security from 14-17 October 2008, at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. This Committee will assess the current global food situation and implications for the future. Special events will also be organised to consider the impact of high food prices on nutrition and the theme of high prices, food security issues and policy responses. For more information contact: Kostas Stamoulis; e-mail: FAO-CFS@fao.org; Internet: http://www.fao.org/UNFAO/Bodies/cfs/cfs34/index_en.htm

20 - 24 October. Europe. EUROPEAN FOREST WEEK. European Forest Week will be marked by events in Brussels, Rome and throughout Europe. The week highlights the contribution of European forests in mitigating the effects of climate change, providing wood and renewable energy, promoting fresh water supply and protecting the environment. For more information contact: e-mail: efw@unece.org; Internet: <http://www.europeanforestweek.org/home/en/>

20 -25 October. Rome, Italy. FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION (PIC COP-4). For more information contact: Rotterdam Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8296; fax: +41-22-917-8082; e-mail: pic@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int>

21- 23 October. Gwangju, Korea. SIXTH UNU & GIST JOINT PROGRAMME WORKSHOP ON SOUND MANAGEMENT OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY. The deadline for receiving applications is 30 June 2008. To further these goals of the UNU & GIST Joint Programme, the 2008 Workshop will facilitate discussion of emerging environmental and energy issues of among researchers from both developing, and developed, countries, focusing on new research trends in the sound management of hazardous chemicals and sustainable energy. Internet: <http://www.ists.unu.edu/>

1 November. Lahore, Pakistan. 20TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE. The dates

for Congress have not yet been set. For more information contact: Illahi B. Sheikh, Secretary, Pakistan National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (PNCI); tel: +92-51-920-1705; fax: +92-51-922-1806; e-mail: pakfloodcommission@hotmail.com; Internet: <http://www.icid.org/conf.html>

RESOURCES

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEMISPHERIC INTEGRATION: RESPONDING TO GLOBALISATION IN THE AMERICAS edited by Diego Sánchez-Ancochea and Kenneth C. Shadlen, Palgrave Macmillan. June 2008. The 1990s and the early years of the 21st century have witnessed the emergence and proliferation of regional and bilateral trade agreements (RBTA) between developed and developing countries in the Americas. The first and most prominent of these agreements is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which the US, Canada and Mexico signed in the early 1990s. The contributors to this book systematically evaluate the economics and politics of this new pattern of North-South integration in the Americas. The book begins by considering the developmental implications of this new pattern of integration. Such agreements provide Latin American and Caribbean countries with significantly improved access to the US market; yet purchasing such preferential access via negotiation of trade agreements with the US obliges countries to adopt US-style practices in areas such as the management of inward foreign investment and intellectual property. For more information please refer to http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/rp/PolitEcon_HemisInteg.html

THE ISIS AGREEMENT- HOW SUSTAINABILITY CAN IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD by Alan AtKisson. August 2008. This book is for leaders in business, organisations and government who are scrambling to get a grip on sustainability while improving performance in the era of climate change. Covering theory and practice, obstacles and opportunities, case studies and poignant personal anecdotes, The ISIS Agreement draws the reader into a global 'conspiracy of hope.' The core of the book is AtKisson's Accelerator, adopted for use in dozens of countries by business, governments, and organisations. A toolkit that helps integrate sustainability into organisations, initiatives and plans, it can be used by in many contexts. For more information please refer to <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?TabId=1157&v=416519>

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: AN EVALUATION OF THE WORLD BANK GROUP by The World Bank. August 2008. This evaluation assesses the Bank Group's support for environmental sustainability-in both the public and private sectors-over the past 15 years. It identifies several crucial constraints that need to be addressed, perhaps most importantly insufficient government commitment to environmental goals and weak institutional capacity to deal with them. But constraints within the Bank Group, including insufficient attention to longer-term sustainable development, must be reduced as well. The Bank Group needs improved systems in place-across the World Bank, IFC, and MIGA-to monitor environmental outcomes and to assess impacts.

Better coordination among the three parts of the Bank Group is also among the key challenges. For more information please refer to http://publications.worldbank.org/ecommerce/catalog/product?item_id=8704474

NATURAL GAS MARKET REVIEW 2008 -OPTIMISING INVESTMENTS AND ENSURING SECURITY IN A HIGH PRICED ENVIRONMENT by International Energy Agency. September 2008. The Natural Gas Market Review 2008 addresses major developments, assessing investment in natural gas projects (LNG, pipelines, upstream), escalating costs, the activities of international oil and gas companies, and gas demand in the power sector. In addition, the publication includes data and forecasts on OECD and non-OECD regions to 2015 and in-depth reviews of five OECD countries and regions including the EU. It also provides analysis of 34 non-OECD countries in South America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, including a detailed assessment of the outlook for gas in Russia, as well as insights on new technologies to deliver gas to markets. For more information please refer to <http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?K=5KZK0BMFSKHH&LANG=EN>

BIOFUEL SUPPORT POLICIES: AN ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT by OECD. September 2008. Governments in many OECD countries, as well as in a number of countries outside the OECD area, actively promote the production and use of alternative transport fuels made from agricultural commodities. This report, jointly produced by the OECD and the IEA and drawing on information from a number of other organisations, analyses the implications of this support from various perspectives. The report shows that the high level of policy support contributes little to reduced greenhouse-gas emissions and other policy objectives, while it adds to a range of factors that raise international prices for food commodities. It concludes that there are alternatives to current support policies for biofuels that would more effectively allow governments to achieve their objectives. For more information please refer to <http://www.oecdbookshop.org/>

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