



# Bridges Trade BioRes

*Biweekly news, events and resources at the intersection of trade and biodiversity*

Volume 9 · Number 3, 20 February 2009

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Bridges Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at International Environment House II, Chemin de Balexert 7, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (+41) 22-917-8492; fax: (+41) 22-917-8093.

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ISSN 1682-0843

## BIOTECHNOLOGY

### EC Fails to Lift GM Maize Bans in France, Greece

French and Grecian fields will remain free of genetically modified (GM) crops for the time being after the European Commission (EC) failed in its bid to force the two countries to lift their controversial bans. The bans targets MON810, an insect-resistant strain of maize manufactured by GM heavyweight Monsanto. It is currently the only GM crop approved for planting in the EU.

Despite being deemed safe by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Greece invoked a 'safeguard clause' in 2006 to keep MON810 seeds out of the country and France followed suit last year (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 25 January, 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/9357/>). Because the safeguard clause is designed to be a temporary measure, the bans must be perpetually extended.

The EC has been under pressure by the WTO to address the non-compliance of these countries on the issue. The WTO argues that the national bans are effectively denying market access allowed under trade rules to countries that use biotechnology in agriculture.

### Qualified majority elusive

In April 2008 the EC asked the EFSA to advise them on the scientific grounding of the ban imposed by Greece. The body responded three months later, saying that scientific evidence does not support Greece's argument that MON810 has any adverse effect on human and animal health and the environment.

The EC asked the EFSA to consider the French case on the same grounds. On 29 October 2008 the Authority returned its decision, saying that no new data had arisen since its previous evaluation

of MON810 and that the results of its previous risk assessment would stand.

In light of this, the Commission had presented the EFSA decisions to the Standing Committee requesting Greece and France to repeal their national prohibitions.

The issue came to a head when the EC presented the EFSA evidence to the Standing Committee on food chain and animal health representing all 27 EU member states. On 16 February the committee announced that it was unable to establish the qualified majority – 62 percent or more of the EU population – needed to lift or uphold the bans. In the vote, 9 of the 27 EU member states supported the call to lift the bans, while 16 countries abstained. Germany and Malta did not take part in the vote, Agence France-Press reported.

### Background

The current EU system of approval for agricultural biotechnology was established after several member states pushed back against an EU decision to approve the Monsanto maize in question in 1998. This friction led the EC to develop a new legal framework aimed at ensuring rigorous safety controls developed from a transparent risk-assessment analysis.

The framework that arose from the 1998 squabble came into force in 2004. The system allows the EU to approve GM crops for all EU member states if there is no scientific evidence showing health or environmental dangers. Approvals, handled under the auspices of the EFSA, can also be revisited if new evidence calls the safety of a given crop into question. France seized on this provision when it banned the maize in January of last year after a national report revealed concerns. However, the EFSA said that the newly proposed evidence did not “invalidate the previous risk assessments of maize MON810.”

While the Monsanto maize is now approved for use in all but the four countries that have imposed national bans, only seven countries currently harvest it.

### France defiant

The French case, in particular, has drawn criticism by some GM proponents, who argue that the country's decision is politically motivated, rather than scientifically. Prior to the country's decision to ban MON810 in 2008, it had been a major cultivator of the GM crop. However, the government implemented the ban after an internal expert report revealed concerns that MON810 had an effect on insects, a species of earthworm, and micro-organisms. It also concluded that wind-blown pollen from MON810 crops could contaminate non-GM crops as far as hundreds of kilometres away.

However, the validity of the report was subsequently called into question after 12 of the 15 scientists who compiled it said that their findings had been misrepresented.

A new report by France's food and safety committee now contradicts the findings of the controversial report upon which the initial ban was based. The 23 January report had been suppressed until a copy was leaked to French newspaper *Le Figaro* on 5 February.

Following the leak, French Prime Minister Francois Fillon quickly announced that his country's ban would stay in place regardless of what the EU decided.

### What's next?

The next several months will likely see heated debate on the issue across Europe. However, recent polls suggest that European opposition to GM crops may be softening. Indeed, a recent move by UK supermarket giant Tesco to revisit their decision on GM products suggests that consumers may be more likely to accept such goods than they have been in the past.

Nevertheless, the MON810 issue shows that Europeans and their governments remain deeply divided on the issue. Because the Standing Committee was unable to reach a qualified majority, a decision on the French and Grecian bans now falls on European environment ministers. They have three months in which to consider the cases.

Meanwhile, the Austrian and Hungarian bans on MON810 will come before the environment ministers at a 2 March council meeting. If the ministers are unable to reach the qualified majority needed to make a decision in either decision, the task will fall upon the Commission itself.

The EFSA has now approved two additional GM varieties of maize – Pioneer and Dow Agrosciences' BT1507 and Syngenta's BT11 – for European cultivation. These crops are scheduled for discussion by the regulatory committee on 25 February.

In December, the EU adopted a series of measures aimed at overcoming differences among members and helping to facilitate the decision-making process. Perhaps most notable of these recommendations is the suggestion that the EFSA become the union's final arbiter on the safety of GM crops after taking national concerns into consideration.

ICTSD Reporting; "EU foiled in bid to force France, Greece to allow GM crop," AFP, 17 February 2009; "European disarray on transgenic crops," NATURE NEWS, 17 February 2009; "Tesco boss prepares for GM u-turn," FOOD MANUFACTURE, 2 February 2009; "French agency says Monsanto GMO maize safe: report," REUTERS, 11 February 2009.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### EC to let Market Decide on Carbon Prices

The European Commission (EC) says it will not prop up Europe's carbon market, despite continued plummeting prices. New lows for emissions permits are primarily linked to the global financial crisis of the past six months. The contraction of European industrial production – and associated carbon dioxide reductions – resulting from the economic downturn and speculation that carbon levels will remain low over the next year has triggered a flood of emissions permits on the market, which has caused prices to drop precipitously.

The EU's Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) allots an annual quota of emissions permits called EU Allowances (EUAs) to electricity generation and heavy industry. If companies happen to emit more carbon dioxide than their allotment, they are forced to purchase more EUAs, typically over carbon exchanges. But with falling demand for EUAs, critics argue that the incentive for industry to cut emissions is lost. The EU ETS is currently the largest multinational emissions trading, or 'cap-and-trade', system in the world.

Expectations that European industry will remain in a suppressed state in the foreseeable future has many permit holders – in sectors such as power generation and steel making – dumping their 2008 EUAs with the intention of borrowing from their 2009 allotment when their 2008 permits have to be submitted in April. Moreover, poor economic performance has pushed many cash-strapped companies to liquidate assets, including emissions permits.

### As EU ETS Phase 2 hits record low, some call for intervention

The abundance of supply and reduction in EUA demand on the European market has pushed prices to a record low for this phase of the trading scheme, which began in January 2008. Alarm bells sounded on 12 February, when prices dipped to €8.20 – a more than 70 percent drop from last summer when prices reached as high as €30.

Another drop on 16 February, brought on by new data suggesting that 2008 European carbon dioxide levels had shrunk by 3 percent over the previous year, had some investors calling on the EU to intervene. This call, however, was promptly dismissed by Artur Runge-Metzger, the EC's chief climate change negotiator.

"If you look at the legislation, there is no way the Commission can intervene in the market to support prices or set any kind of floor price," Runge-Metzger told reporters after a meeting in Tokyo. "That is something we leave to market forces, otherwise we will not have a market."

But some analysts disagree, saying that the extraordinary global financial situation requires assistance from government.

“A price floor would at least solve part of the problem by giving more certainty, at least on the downside,” Royal Bank of Scotland analyst Gerhard Mulder told Point Carbon, a carbon market media outlet, recently. “If we don’t get it right now the whole thing risks getting discredited and we will end up doing away with it entirely and throwing away 20 years of development.”

China, the largest recipient of CDM projects, imposed a primary market CERs price floor of €8 in 2008. Some developers are hoping the government will consider the depressed market and bring minimum prices down to €6, but others are skeptical that the government will act unless there is a sustained period of depression in prices.

Current predictions by analysts are that EUA prices will continue to fall, taking Certified Emissions Reductions (CERs) – carbon credit generated under the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) for industrialised countries to reduce emissions through projects undertaken in developing countries – with them.

“What we observe at the present in the carbon market is a sliding price for the tonnes of allowances that are in the market,” Runge-Metzger told reporters. “We think this follows the economic recession – there is much less demand.”

In addition to the primary concerns of the failing European carbon market, many observers are concerned over what the impact falling prices will be on CDM projects. Some fear that low prices discourage developers from generating new projects, which may significantly hamper prospects for the CDM to contribute to emissions reduction and clean technology transfer in the developing world over the next year or two.

### **Australia unsure in face of new lows**

Australia’s plan to develop a functioning carbon market appeared to have derailed on 15 February, when the government launched a parliamentary inquiry into the efficacy of the plan, in light of the recent drop in European prices.

The proposed carbon pollution reduction scheme (CPRS) would allow Australian polluters to offset

emissions by purchasing an unlimited number of CER credits generated by CDM projects. The government had hoped that permit auctions could raise an estimated A\$11.5 billion (US\$7.5 billion) to help fund clean energy development and to help offset the national costs associated with placing a price on carbon. But with the bottom falling out of the EU market, Canberra announced that it was necessary to review the scheme.

“This European market is falling like a stone,” Gary Cox of Australian trading firm Newedge told Reuters recently. “It does raise some considerable issues over just how effective the government’s plans are.”

Nevertheless, on 19 February Australian officials did an abrupt about face on their plans to review the CPRS triggering confusion over the issue. Many observers are now blaming these mixed signals on domestic political pressure.

### **US moving ahead with cap-and-trade despite some calls for taxes**

The Australian issue underscores the potential problems associated with a market-based mechanism for combating climate change. Indeed, this is not the first time carbon prices have crumbled in Europe. Near the end of Phase 1 of the EU ETS (2005-2007), over distribution of permits combined with generous emissions caps among some countries caused the market to collapse, with prices bottoming out at €0.10.

Steep declines in both phases of Europe’s cap-and-trade scheme have some critics pushing for a carbon tax system instead of emissions trading. Advocates of tax system argue that the simplicity and flexibility would be more effective and dependable than a complex market-based system.

Debate on the issue is particularly strong in the US, where the Obama administration is expected to usher in its own cap-and-trade system this year. The impact of the current European market on US carbon policy is not yet clear. However, critics have been quick to latch onto the issue as proof that the system is inherently flawed.

ICTSD Reporting, “EU carbon prices plummet as emissions fall,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 16

February 2009; “EU won't save carbon,” REUTERS, 14, February 2009; “Australia's Emissions Plan Wavers As Carbon Price Falls,” REUTERS, 16 February 2009; “Australia backs carbon trade plan, abandons inquiry,” REUTERS, 19 February 2009.

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## **IMO, UNFCCC Must Work Together to Tackle Maritime Transport Emissions: Experts**

Because of its unique global structure, reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the maritime transportation sector will require close cooperation between the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), according to experts and delegates meeting from 16-18 February in Geneva.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development meeting on the topic brought together developed and developing country delegates, scientists, IGOs, NGOs, and private sector representatives with an aim to discuss and explore the links between climate change and maritime transport. The conference placed a special emphasis on the potential implications for Least-Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Islands Developing Countries (SIDS).

Maritime transport is a major conduit for global trade. Despite the current unfavourable economic conditions, however, projected growth in international trade suggests that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping would also continue to increase, unless radical regulatory, technical and operational measures are implemented.

Experts say that if the industry continues to work on a business-as-usual basis, carbon dioxide emissions would increase between 125 to 220 percent by 2050. Moreover, forecasted climate change threats – such as rising sea levels, changes in ocean currents, and weather patterns – are likely to negatively impact maritime transport and infrastructure. Thus, both mitigation and adaptation measures will need to be taken.

## **IMO proposes fuel levy**

Experts at the transport and trade facilitation meeting underscored the point that governments and other relevant stakeholders need to conduct a cost benefit analysis in order to determine whether mitigation and adaptation solutions should come either from market-based or standards-based (voluntary and/or mandatory) mechanisms, or a combination of both. In this context, the IMO presented a market-based instrument called the International Maritime Emission Reduction Scheme (IMERS).

The IMERS consists of a potential levy imposed on fuel sold for international shipping. According to IMO members, the proposed scheme would reconcile the ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ principle under the UNFCCC with the global uniform application of instruments adopted under the IMO. Indeed, the IMO proposal suggests that financial resources obtained from the levy could potentially be directed to LDCs and SIDS.

## **Regional scientific data needed**

Discussions stressed the importance of planning and integrating climate change considerations in transportation design and planning as part of broader economic and development policies. A study conducted by the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure in the Gulf Coast of the United States revealed that a risk assessment-based approach should be used as an integrated tool for adaptation measures to effectively generate greater resilience in transport infrastructure.

However, given that the level of vulnerability and adaptation requirements will vary from region to region, results obtained in these and similar studies cannot be extrapolated. Thus, experts say, local and regional scientific data analysis will be key. Moreover, the link between science and policy-making should be strengthened, they say.

Experts agreed that the high costs and technological barriers involved in the development of more resilient maritime infrastructure must be addressed if LDCs and SIDS, in particular, are to meet the challenges associated with climate

change. They say there is a need for effective technology transfer mechanisms and additional financial resources for adaptation purposes.

With regard to finance, concerns were raised on the potential impacts of the current financial crisis on present and future overseas development assistance. Indeed, financing gaps for climate change mitigation and adaptation are already quite significant. According to the World Bank, however, its climate change assistance facility and disaster relief mechanism may have the potential to address some of those gaps.

ICTSD Reporting.

## IN BRIEF

### FAO Warns against Overfishing of Shrimp

Overfishing is putting heavy pressure on the world's shrimp stocks, an important source of food for many of the world's poor, and causing significant environmental harm, a report from the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization warned on Tuesday.

"For millions of poor vulnerable households, shrimp fishing is an important source of cash and employment," said Jeremy Turner, Chief of the FAO Fishing Technology Service. "But shrimp fishing is also associated with overfishing, capture of juveniles of ecologically important and economically valuable species, coastal habitat degradation, illegal trawling, the destruction of seagrass beds and conflicts between artisanal and industrial fisheries."

The world shrimp catch, which is concentrated in Asia, amounts to roughly 3.4 million tonnes per year, making shrimp one of the most important internationally traded fisheries products.

But the FAO says that the current pace of the shrimp harvest is putting heavy pressure on shrimp stocks and causing harm to other fish species that become bycatch – marine animals that are inadvertently caught in trawling nets. The

report warns that bycatch wastes resources and can threaten endangered or commercially important fish species such as cod, king mackerel and red snapper.

The report blames weak government agencies, inadequate laws, and a lack of political will in many countries for failures in the management of shrimp fisheries.

"These factors, which can be encountered in all fisheries across the world, are largely responsible for the lack of success, rather than any inherent unmanageable qualities of shrimp fishing gear or practices," Turner said.

The report stresses that taking a "precautionary and ecosystem approach" to managing shrimp fisheries can help mitigate many of the problems associated with the sector.

The report analyses shrimp fisheries in 10 countries: Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Madagascar, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Trinidad and Tobago and the US.

The FAO report can be downloaded at <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0300e/i0300e.pdf>.

ICTSD reporting.

### US Calls for Binding Treaty on Mercury

After nearly seven years of discussion, the US has joined the call for a legally binding treaty to phase out mercury use. At the 16 February UN Environment Program (UNEP) meeting of environmental ministers in Nairobi, Kenya, the council met to start setting the framework for a strategy to begin dealing with mercury, a toxic heavy metal still found in some commercially traded goods.

The strategy aims to reduce international demand for industrial products that incorporate mercury and processes – such as mercury mining operations – while also seeking to cut atmospheric



emissions and clean up programs for contaminated sites.

Daniel Reifsnyder, the US deputy assistant secretary of state for environment and sustainable development, unveiled the agreement urging the launch of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international agreement on mercury.

"Neither the United States, nor any other country, can achieve sufficient reductions of mercury risks to protect the health of its citizens without serious cooperation internationally to reduce global mercury emissions," says Reifsnyder.

The US joins the call with the EU in pressing for an international, legally binding treaty. Some other states are instead pushing for a more voluntary system. The EU has legislated a mercury ban which is expected to come into place in 2011. The US has a similar ban scheduled for 2013.

Experts say that about 6,000 tonnes of mercury are released each year into the environment and can travel thousands of miles from the point of origin. Studies show that this dangerous metal, which is especially lethal to fetuses and children, can cause impaired thyroid and liver function, irritability, tremors, disturbances to vision and memory loss and perhaps cardiovascular problems. UNEP says that one third of total mercury emissions are caused by coal burned in power stations and homes.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP says that every kilogram of mercury taken out of the environment can trigger nearly US\$12,500 worth of social, environmental and human health benefits. He stressed that a major shift needs to take place to deal with the toxic metal.

"A clear and unequivocal vision of a low mercury future needs to be set," Steiner said at the meeting. "This will trigger innovation and an ever greater array of cost effective alternatives."

In cooperation with UNEP, governments have highlighted products and processes that were once dependent on mercury and are now comprised of cost effective and safer alternatives. Substitutes for almost all industrial processes that require

mercury have been developed, but because many nations still rely on coal for power regulation can be difficult.

Moreover, as industrialised countries cut back on their use of mercury, a surplus of inexpensive mercury is flooding global marketplace. This can make curbing mercury use in the developing world difficult. According to the European Commission nearly 3,700 tonnes of mercury continues to be purchased around the world each year for industrial purposes.

Thus, regulators are calling for a regulatory approach that takes various countries' needs into consideration. "We should seek to ensure broad participation among governments in a mercury agreement by including flexibility such as transition periods and phased implementation," Reifsnyder said in a statement to delegates in Nairobi. "We need to be creative and flexible in our approaches, while at the same time ensuring that we make significant progress."

"U.S. backs call for global treaty on mercury use," REUTERS, 17 February 2009; "UN urges leaders to stop mercury threat," Redorbit, 16 February 2009; "Golden opportunity to deal with poisonous quicksilver pollution," Media-wire, 16 February 2009; "Toxic Trade: The Global Metallic Mercury Market," Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), 22 July 2008.

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## WIPO Chooses Green Innovation as Theme of World IP Day

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) has announced that its annual World Intellectual Property Day will have a 'green' theme to promote environmental friendliness. This event, organised to bring awareness to Intellectual Property (IP), will be held on 26 April.

Every year WIPO and its member states recognise World Intellectual Property Day by hosting activities, events and promoting IP campaigns. These programmes aim to spark public interest and understanding of IP, particularly relating to music, arts, and entertainment and technical innovations.

Organisers say the main goal of the event is to raise demonstrate how patents, trademark copyrights and designs impact on daily life and to increase understanding of how defending IP rights can promote creativity and innovation. In addition, the occasion aims to encourage respect for IP, while commemorating the creativity and contribution made by creators and innovators to the growth of societies around the world.

The green innovation theme was chosen as a result of environmentally friendly processes being the 'key to a secure future', WIPO Assistant Director General Geoffrey Onyeama said in his letter announcing the initiative. WIPO says it is trying to continue its efforts of becoming 'carbon-neutral' by not sending out mass-mailings of promotional kids as in years past.

As an alternative, member states and observers are encouraged to download the material from the WIPO website which features a message from Director General Francis Gurry as well as various promotional items for World Intellectual Property Day. WIPO has given permission to all coordinators of events celebrating World Intellectual Property Day to use their promotional material or to expand upon the given material to create their own.

The April issue of WIPO Magazine will be a special issue concentrating on Climate Change and Green Innovation. This issue will be sent out to all WIPO member states, observers and subscribers and will be available for download on the WIPO website.

ICTSD Reporting.

## EVENTS AND RESOURCES

### Events

#### Coming up in the next two weeks (20 February-6 March)

21-25 February 2009, Sienna, Italy. IWM WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CETACEANS. This workshop will be held within the context of the 5<sup>th</sup> IPCC report which

provides both conclusive evidence of climate change and analyses at temporal and spatial scales of relevance to cetaceans. Experts say that climate change may already be effecting cetaceans. The central focus of this workshop is to review current understanding and seek to improve conservation outcomes for cetaceans under climate change scenarios. For further information, contact IWC Secretariat: tel. +44-1223-233-971; fax +44-1223-232-876; internet: <http://www.sdgateway.net/events/default.asp?EventID=6043>.

23-27 February 2009, New York, US. INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. This meeting, in preparation for the May 2009 meeting of CSD-17, will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Sustainable development has remained elusive for many African countries and poverty is still a major challenge. Delegates will get a chance to discuss policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation on issues affecting sustainable development. <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/ipm17/index.html>.

5-6 March 2009, Chatham House, London, UK. AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT FUTURE. This conference will examine the elusive balance between the soaring demand for transport, the environment and the needs of the society. It will look at how priorities in transport and climate change can be implemented in policy and practice by looking at examples throughout the world to identify best practice. The conference also highlights the roles of policymakers, the transport industry and the investment community to resolve these conflicts. For more information and to register please visit [http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/alternative\\_transport\\_future/](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/alternative_transport_future/).

3-5 March 2009, Manila, Philippines. ADB-DMC SANITATION DIALOGUE. The Asian Development Bank has committed itself to pushing the sanitation agenda forward through its Water Financing Program (WFP) aimed to double investments in the sector between 2006 and 2010. Focusing discussion on sanitation needs, barriers,



options, and actions, this conference intends to further the sanitation agenda by raising awareness and facilitating sanitation's inclusion in cities' and government's investment planning. For further information, visit

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2009/ADB-DMC-Dialogue/default.asp>.

### Other Upcoming Events

12-13 March 2009, Brussels, Belgium. CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND WATER. Many studies say that climate change is already showing effect on water sources in European basins. A conference organized by the European Water Partnership (EWP), the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the World Water Council and the Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate will demonstrate and promote good practices in Europe in areas of adaptation to climate change. Many challenges in development and implementation of adaptation strategies still exist; Europe-wide cooperation and exchange of experience ensure that countries benefit from numerous existing activities to help them achieve their objective on Climate Change Adaptation and Water (CCAW). For Further information, contact Sandra Borst at the European Water Partnership: tel: +31 70 3043711 to register, visit [www.ewp.eu](http://www.ewp.eu)

16-17 June 2009, Manila, Philippines. HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE: CLIMATE CHANGE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC A DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE. Put on by the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) Dr. R.K. Pachauri, Director-General of TERI, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on the Climate Change will lead the dialogue on latest thinking on various aspects of climate change. This event will provide a venue for an exchange of knowledge on policies, technologies, partnerships, and other measures that can help the region tackle these challenges. Nearly 700 participants drawn from the business community, civil society, governments, development agencies, and academia are expected to attend. On-line registration is required and limited seating for further information please refer to <http://www.adb.org/Clean-Energy/default.asp>

## Resources

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy for review by the BioRes staff to Andrew Aziz at [aaziz@ictsd.ch](mailto:aaziz@ictsd.ch).

DEVELOPED COUNTRY CLIMATE FINANCING INITIATIVES WEAKEN THE UNFCCC. South Center, January 2009. Issues of financing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for developing countries are based on lack of fiscal support from developed countries, the Parties listed in Annex 1 of the convention. The paper notes that Parties with their official development assistance (ODA) and climate financing commitments prefer to use non-UNFCCC vehicles for providing financial assistance to developing countries. In conclusion the paper discusses the importance of making the UNFCCC financial mechanism the primary vehicle for which public financing would be channelled to developing countries. [http://www.southcentre.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=909&Itemid=1](http://www.southcentre.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=909&Itemid=1)

BIOSAFETY DECISIONS AND PERCEIVED COMMERCIAL RISKS: THE ROLE OF GM-FREE PRIVATE STANDARDS. By Guillaume Gruère and Debdatta Sengupta, 2009 February. This paper observes the discrepancy of real and perceived commercial risks associated with GM-products in developing countries. Based on field visits to South Africa, Namibia, and Kenya in June 2007 and secondary information from other publications the authors conclude that there are three types of relevant commercial risks: real risks, potential risks, and unproven risks. Suggesting a simple framework to separate real commercial risks from others, the authors argue, will helping decision makers identify the difference between real commercial risks when they face pressures to reject GM crop testing, application, consumption, or use for fear of alleged export losses. <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/dp/ifpridp00847.asp>

SHOULD ASIAN COUNTRIES ADOPT GM CROPS DESPITE TRADE REGULATIONS? A POLICY SIMULATION IN INDIA,

BANGLADESH, INDONESIA, AND THE PHILIPPINES. By Guillaume Gruère, 2009 January. The fear of export loss has discouraged many Asian countries to test and/or approve new GM food crops despite their productivity potential. The purpose of this brief is to provide an economic assessment of introducing genetically modified (GM) food crops by considering four populous and growing countries of Asia: India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines. <http://www.ifpri.org/pbs/pdf/pbsbrief13.pdf>

Sub-Saharan Africa's involvement and constraints in carbon markets and opportunities for expanding Sub-Saharan Africa's market share. [http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/rb15/rb15\\_13.pdf](http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/rb15/rb15_13.pdf).

ASSESSING VULNERABILITY TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE MAKING RESEARCH USEFUL FOR ADAPTATION DECISION MAKING AND POLICY. By Anthony G. Patt, Dagmar Schröter, Richard J. T. Klein and Anne Cristina de la Vega-Leinert with forewords by Hans Joachim Schellnhuber and Rik Leemans, 2008 November. The authors consider assessing the vulnerability of human populations to global environmental change, particularly climate change, as essential to research and international action. This book focuses on several different case studies dealing with issues like sea level rise, vulnerability to changes in ecosystem services, assessing the vulnerability of human health and 'double exposure' to climate change and trade liberalization amongst other issues. The book concludes with a structural guide on evaluating vulnerability assessment and guiding research and policy can be linked to reduced vulnerability. Available for purchase at the online Earthscan bookstore. <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?tabid=42777>.

GLOBAL CARBON MARKETS: ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA? By Elizabeth Bryan, Wisdom Akpalu, Claudia Ringler, and Mahmud Yesuf. To reduce global emissions and curb the threat of climate change, many countries are participating in carbon trading; imposing national caps on emissions and allowing participant countries to engage in emission trading as well as project-based transactions. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) allows developed countries with greenhouse gas reduction commitments to invest in projects focused on reducing emissions in developing countries, as an alternative to generally more costly emission reductions in their own countries. This brief is based on a paper inspecting