



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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This edition of Bridges Trade BioRes was edited by Andrew Aziz, aaziz@ictsd.ch.

Contributors to this issue were Andrew Aziz, Paige McClanahan and Meredith Payton, and Camille Russell.

The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz.

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BIOTECHNOLOGY

EU Environment Ministers Uphold GM Bans in Austria, Hungary

The notion that independent European nations can decide for themselves on whether to allow genetically modified (GM) crop cultivation in their countries was given a boost on 2 March, when EU Environment Ministers voted to uphold national bans in Austria and Hungary.

This is the second time in as many months that national bans on GM cultivation have been upheld in the EU. Last month the European Commission – the legislative arm of the EU – failed in its bid to force France and Greece to lift their bans on Monsanto's MON810 maize, the only GM crop currently approved for cultivation in the EU (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 20 February 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/41093/>).

This vote took place under the first Environment Council under the Czech Presidency, which took the EU helm on 1 January. Ministers were given the task of deciding on an EC proposal to repeal Austrian and Hungarian safeguard clauses pertaining to two GM maize varieties. Hungary currently has a ban on MON810, while Austria's ban targets MON810 and Bayer's T25.

Greens pleased with decision

In the vote, 22 of the EU's 27 member states voted allow the two countries to maintain their bans, far more than the 62 percent qualified majority required to reach a consensus.

"Today's decision by EU environment ministers is great news for the environment, farmers and consumers – and sets a good precedent for future campaigns against genetically modified crops," British Green Member of European Parliament Caroline Lucas told the Environment News

Service. “For the many regions in the EU that have expressed doubts over GM technology, today's vote shows that it is still possible to be GM-free.”

However, the vote is likely to raise the ire of the US government, which has complained to the WTO in the past about the national bans that stand in the way of GM cultivation and distribution in Europe. The subsequent pressure from the WTO has resulted in several campaigns by the EC to force countries like Austria, Hungary, France, and Greece to drop their cultivation bans.

“This is the fourth time EU governments have rejected a commission proposal to force member states to act against the will of their citizens and to allow the cultivation of GM crops,” said Lucas. “It is deeply disturbing that the commission continues to try and bulldoze through its pro-GM agenda in spite of public opposition.”

On 5 March, European Green Party members Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Monica Frassoni wrote a letter to EC President José Manuel Barroso, condemning the Council's tactics on the matter.

“On two previous occasions (2006 and 2007), when asking for lifting of bans, you have received similar signals of caution from a majority of Member States based on qualified doubts about impacts of the cultivation of GMO varieties on public health, biodiversity and farming,” the letter reads. “Instead of taking these concerns seriously, you have chosen to increase pressure in order to promote the cultivation of GMOs in the EU – against clear opposition from the majority of citizens, against the objections of your own competent Commissioner colleagues and against serious doubts repeatedly expressed by a substantial number of ministers of environment of EU Member States.”

France, which has a similar ban on cultivating MON810, pointed to the decision as means to bolster its own position on the matter. French environment minister, Jean-Louis Borloo said that member states were ‘firm’ in their decision and the “commission should take a close reading of the result.”

Environment Ministers have until mid-May to vote on the French and Grecian bans.

EFSA rejects study findings

Hungary, one of Europe's largest grain producers, was the first country in Eastern Europe to implement a ban on MON810. The EC moved to lift the Hungarian ban in February 2007, but failed when the Council of Environment Ministers rejected the proposal.

Following the ruling in their favour, Hungary submitted four studies to the EC to further support their position on the matter. The Commission passed the studies on to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the EU's risk assessment body for food and feed safety, for assessment. However, the EFSA dismissed the studies in July 2008, saying that they contain no new data that justifies a prohibition on cultivating MON810.

Hungary continues to maintain that the Monsanto maize has adverse effects and is not fit for cultivation.

The EFSA made a similar ruling in December 2008 with regard to Austria, stating “the scientific evidence currently available does not sustain the arguments provided by Austria.”

Next Stop, WTO?

Europe's aversion to GM products motivated the US, Argentina, and Canada to bring a complaint to the WTO in 2003. In 2006, the WTO ruled that a de facto ban on GM food imports between 1984 and 2004 was a violation of trade rules. As a result, Austria was required to drop its ban on GM food imports (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 6 October 2006, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/9060/>).

The US has continually voiced its concern over continued European market barriers on GM products, such as drawn out authorisation processes for new products and continued bans on approved products in some member states. Under WTO rules, the US has the right to seek retaliatory measures on these issues and some

observers say this most recent decision could be the trigger.

“The risk has increased this morning that attention now will be thrown back to the WTO,” Willy De Greef, secretary general of Europabio, a Brussels-based biotech industry organisation, said following the 2 March decision.

“Austria and Hungary win right to ban GM maize,” BUSINESS REPORT, 3 March 2009; “EU Environment Ministers Keep Bans on Transgenic Maize,” ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 2 March 2009; “EU deadlocks on gene-altered corn,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 25 February 2009; “EU Upholds Austria, Hungary Right To Ban GM Crops,” REUTERS, 3 March 2009; “EU environment ministers vote to uphold ban on biotech crops,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 2 March 2009.

BIOFUELS

EU Slaps Duties on American Biodiesel

Looking to support their struggling biodiesel producers, European governments voted Tuesday to impose temporary anti-dumping and anti-subsidy tariffs on imports of US biodiesel. The vote follows repeated complaints from the European Biodiesel Board (EBB) over US subsidies for its domestic biodiesel producers, which the Board says unfairly undercut European competitors in their home market.

Inside US Trade reported that 20 of the 27 EU governments that took part in the informal vote on Tuesday supported the anti-subsidy duties, while 17 governments voted in favour of the anti-dumping tariffs. Only Belgium, Denmark and Sweden voted against the anti-subsidy duties; other countries abstained from the votes.

“It went through with no problem,” a source close to the meeting told Reuters.

Cheap imports flooding EU market: EBB

At the heart of the issue is a US subsidy that offers domestic producers a tax credit of US\$ 1 per gallon of biodiesel produced. The EBB argues that this support has triggered a flood of under-priced US imports into the EU and caused European producers to lose market share.

The European Commission appears to agree.

“The pressure exercised by the surge of low-priced dumped/subsidised imports on the [EU] market did not allow the [EU] industry to set its sales prices in line with market conditions and the increase in costs,” a Commission document obtained by Dow Jones Newswire says.

But the US biodiesel industry maintains that US exports are in fact doing no harm to European producers. In a 147-page report issued in September, the US-based National Biodiesel Board called the EBB’s injury claims ‘fatally deficient,’ and said that the imposition of retaliatory tariffs on US biodiesel would be at odds with the EU’s stated goal of increasing the consumption of biofuels in its 27 member nations.

Obama’s position on biofuels support unclear

US President Barack Obama promised in a speech to Congress on 24 February to “end direct payments to large agribusinesses that don’t need them,” but made no specific reference to biofuels producers.

Obama, a former farm-state senator, has signalled in the past that he wishes to continue to support domestic biofuels manufacturers. And the new administration’s economic stimulus package appears to support this position.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes several provisions to help the country’s struggling biofuels industry. Initiatives include extending the production tax credit for biomass energy to 2013 and the provision of as much as US\$ 18.5 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Biofuel projects using technologies that are in the ‘pilot’ or ‘demonstration’ stage would be eligible for the new initiative if these technologies are determined to be bound for commercial success

(see Bridges Trade BioRes, 6 February 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/40102/>).

Duties could become permanent after six month trial

Starting 13 March, imports of US biodiesel will be slapped with anti-dumping tariffs ranging from €26 to €41 per 100 kilograms.

'Dumping', in trade parlance, refers to the practice of exporting goods at artificially low prices. WTO rules allow Member governments to place retaliatory duties on dumped goods, so long as they can prove that dumping is indeed taking place and that it is injuring the competing domestic industry.

Once the duties have been in place for six months, the European Commission can propose that the tariffs be made permanent. Such a move would have to be approved by EU governments.

The approval of the import duties was welcomed by EU biodiesel producers, who claim that the support the US provides to its biofuels industry has made their products much less competitive in the European market.

"This will re-establish a level playing field and put an end to unacceptable and artificial prices created by US biodiesel producers," said EBB Secretary General Raffaello Garofalo. "Whatever the action of the United States will be – even in front of the WTO – our complaint and our case is well grounded."

The EU, by far the world's largest consumer of biodiesel, has imported more than 1 million tonnes of biodiesel from the United States over the past year, up from 50,000 tonnes in 2006.

ICTSD reporting; "EU slaps duties on US biodiesel imports – sources," REUTERS, 3 March 2009; "EU clears way for antidumping, antisubsidy duties on US biodiesel," INSIDE US TRADE, 3 March 2009; "EU backs plan to impose tariffs on US biodiesel," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 3 March 2009; "EU raises stakes in biodiesel battle with US," THE FINANCIAL TIMES, 21 February 2009; "EU exec eyes dumping duty on

US biodiesel: sources," REUTERS, 19 February 2009; "Europe considers a tariff on biofuels," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 24 February 2009; "EU to put temporary duties on US biodiesel imports – document," DOW JONES, 19 February 2009.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

India Moves to Protect Traditional Medicines

In an unorthodox move to protect citizens' access to traditional medicines, the Indian government has effectively licensed 200,000 local treatments as 'public property', making the local remedies free for everyone to use, but not to be branded for sale.

The initiative follows the disquieting discovery by scientists in Delhi of the extent of 'bio-prospecting' of natural remedies by foreign companies. The UK's Guardian newspaper reports that an investigation of government records revealed that 5,000 patents had been issued, at a cost of at least US\$ 150 million for "medical plants and traditional systems."

"More than 2,000 of these belong to the Indian systems of medicine," claims Vinod Kumar Gupta, head of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library. The discovery raised the question of why multinational companies are spending millions of dollars to patent treatments that they claimed were ineffective, Gupta said.

"The problem with traditional medicines is that, yes it is known about within, say, sometimes a very small community," legal expert Patricia Loughlan explained in an interview with Australia's ABC News. "So big pharma can go into, say, India...and engage in what is sometimes called 'bio-prospecting' or 'bio-piracy'," she said.

"They get this traditional knowledge and they patent it themselves and then start making monopoly profits from this patent for something that in effect they didn't invent. They got the

knowledge from someone who invented it say 500 years ago.”

Almost 300 patents already filed in Brussels

In Brussels alone there have been 285 patents for medicinal plants well known in Indian medical systems, principally ayurveda, unani and siddha, the investigation revealed. Ayurveda is a traditional medical treatment. Unani is believed to have come to India from ancient Greece, whilst siddha is one of the oldest medical systems originating from the southern India. In this regard, Gupta is requesting that the Belgian government lift these patents, as they have already shown the authorities the medicinal uses of these systems were known in India.

Indian researchers have spent the last eight years meticulously translating ancient Indian texts and compiling the information into a database that details the 200,000 treatments. The resulting Traditional Knowledge Digital Library will now be used by the European Patent Office to check against ‘bio-prospectors’ — parties interested in mining biological or genetic resources for scientific research or commercial development.

In the past India, has fought lengthy and costly legal battles to have patents revoked. Officials say that, in a legal battle that lasted almost 10 years, the Indian government spent in excess of US\$ 5 million to have patents lifted from medicines created from turmeric and neem, an Indian tree. In this case, India succeeded “because [it] proved these were part of traditional Indian knowledge. There was no innovation and therefore no patent should be granted,” Gupta said.

Yoga also in need of protection: India

Another major concern of the Indian government is the billion dollar industry of yoga, an ancient Indian practice that has recently gained a large following, particularly in the US. In India, though, yoga is considered a traditional medicine and as such the Indian government has asked the US to register yoga as a ‘well-known mark’.

“We want no one to appropriate the yoga brand for themselves,” Gupta said. “There are 1,500 asanas [yogic poses] and exercises given in our

ancient texts. We are transcribing these so they too cannot be appropriated by anyone. We have had instances where people have patented a yoga technique by describing a certain temperature. This is simply wrong.”

India presents an unusual case given its seven national medical systems, of which modern medicine is but one. According to newspaper reports, traditional medicine is used by approximately four-fifths of India’s population, and there are 430,000 ayurvedic medical practitioners registered by the Indian government. Ayush, the department responsible for India’s traditional medicine industry, has a budget of 10 billion rupees (US\$ 260 million).

This initiative by the Indian government to combat bio-piracy stems from the belief that the developing world’s rich biodiversity could be the source of a vast array of new drugs and crops. Gupta argues that while it “costs the West US\$ 15 billion and 15 years to produce a blockbuster drug...traditional medicine could herald a new age of cheap drugs,” particularly “if you can take a natural remedy and isolate the active ingredient then you just need to drug trials and marketing.”

Gupta is positive that the move toward developing cheap drugs that are based on traditional knowledge has already begun. Indian researches have begun collaborating with a US pharmaceutical company to make a drug that fights psoriasis, which will be tested in clinical trials this year. According to Gupta, if the drug is successful it will reduce the cost of treatment to US\$ 50. “This is a lot less than the US\$ 10,000 current medicine costs.”

Legal expert Loughlan is convinced that the Indian scheme will serve its intended purpose.

“Yes, it will work,” she said in the ABC interview. “It is not in any way defying the patent system...It is using what is in the patent system itself and that is what it is so clever and why it will work,” she said.

Traditional Knowledge at the WTO

The move to protect traditional medicines in India mirrors a push that New Delhi – supported by

countries such as Brazil, Cuba, Kenya, the EU, Pakistan, and Switzerland – has made at the WTO in recent years. Specifically, the countries have demanded that the protection of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge be integrated into the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, or TRIPS Agreement.

Support for such a move grew last summer, when more than one hundred WTO Members, including the EU, Brazil, China and several African countries, indicated their support for amending the TRIPS Agreement to include language ensuring the protection of traditional knowledge. Moreover, these countries insisted that a TRIPS amendment to check bio-piracy should be included in the overall Doha Round package at the WTO, instead of being relegated to the sidelines of global trade talks.

But the TRIPS amendment proposal had its opponents as well. The US, Japan, Singapore, Korea, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and Argentina, among others, argued that more technical discussions and empirical evidence were needed before moving forward with negotiations on an amendment.

Ultimately, there was no progress in addressing this issue in view of the deadlock in world trade talks at the end of July last year.

ICTSD reporting; "India moves to protect traditional medicines from foreign patents," THE GUARDIAN, 22 February 2009; "Indian government moves to protect its culture," ABC (Australia), 23 February 2009.

IN BRIEF

Canada Threatens WTO Suit as EU Edges toward Seal Ban

A committee of European lawmakers voted last week to ban all seal imports into the EU on the grounds that the hunt is inhumane, provoking a strong reaction from the Canadian government,

which maintains that such a ban would cripple a key domestic industry.

"We have told [the EU] repeatedly that we will exercise all our options, Canadian fisheries minister Gail Shea said in an interview with Embassy Magazine on Monday. "And if that means going to the WTO, so be it."

But the ban, which would prohibit the import, export, or even transport of any seal products in any of the EU's 27 member countries, still faces some hurdles to implementation. The full European Parliament is set to vote on the proposed embargo on 1 April; EU governments also have to approve the measure before it takes effect.

Draft legislation proposed by the European Commission in July 2008 allowed two exemptions, or 'derogations' in trade parlance, to the ban: one for seals hunted by Inuit communities, and the other for seals killed in countries that had proved to the EU that their hunts were conducted in a humane manner.

But EU officials voted down the second exemption this week on the grounds that commercial seal hunts are "inherently inhumane" and effective monitoring of the practice is "impossible."

The Inuit exemption was upheld, but only for products that are traded "as part of a non-commercial exchanges between Inuit communities for cultural, educational or ceremonial purposes," the draft legislation said.

Ottawa reacted harshly to the results of Monday's vote.

"It just exemplifies that despite our best efforts, the Europeans are still uninformed and they're being led by what amounts to politics and emotions on this issue — and not the facts,"

fisheries minister Shea said in an interview with The Chronicle Herald.

"The Europeans defined a problem, we addressed the problem, but they're still voting for the ban. What it tells me is that their voting was to stop the Canadian seal hunt. Period. That's why I think the Europeans are in an area that is outside their jurisdiction, here."

But animal rights activists welcomed the move.

"In our opinion, [the exemption] probably would have allowed Canada to continue trade with the EU in seal products," said Rebecca Aldworth, director of Humane Society International Canada. "We knew this would allow countries to sanitise their hunts on paper, while essentially the cruelty in the field would go unchecked."

Anticipating the EU's vote, a Canadian lawmaker, Liberal senator Mac Harb, introduced legislation on Tuesday to completely ban the seal hunt in Canada.

"In the face of disappearing markets for seal products and overwhelming international opposition, it is time for Canada to recognise that we can't resuscitate this dying industry any longer," Harb said in a statement.

But the draft legislations went nowhere, as not a single other senator supported it. Conservative Senator Fabian Manning called Harb's bill "appalling" and said it would "jeopardise the rights of our sealers to provide a livelihood for their families."

ICTSD reporting; "Canadian senator makes futile bid to ban seal hunt," AFP, 4 March 2009; "WTO retaliation threatened as EU seal ban draws closer," EMBASSY, 4 March 2009; "EU edges toward banning seal hunt products," CHRONICLE HERALD, 3 March 2009.

South African Climate Summit Yields Pessimism on Copenhagen

South African officials meeting at a major summit on climate change in Johannesburg say that a reaching comprehensive climate change deal in Copenhagen is unlikely, citing the continued developed-developing country divide on the issue and diverging interests within the two groups.

The conference, held from 3-6 March, was launched amid optimism with Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk reminding participants that they should not rule out the possibility of inking a successor to the Kyoto Protocol by the end of the year. "We want an agreement in Copenhagen, we want the agreement to be legally binding, we want decisions on finance and technology transfer to be binding – I believe it is still within our reach," van Schalkwyk said on Tuesday.

But negativity on the issue, driven in part by participants' concern over the lack of a clear US position on climate change, led to more attention being placed on a preference for a national approach to climate change.

When countries meet in Copenhagen in December, delegates will attempt to hammer out a comprehensive successor to the Kyoto Accord. However, many observers say that establishing commitments from larger developing countries and the United States could be difficult.

While the Kyoto Accord calls for no binding commitments from developing countries, the US has said in the past that its commitment to a climate deal would require participation from larger economies in the developing world, such as China and India. In turn, developing countries say they cannot commit to reducing emissions without significant technology transfer commitments from developed countries.

As Africa's largest economy and most significant carbon dioxide emitter, South Africa strongly opposes any climate change deal that would further categorise developing countries. Instead, the country says it would like to see absolute emission targets against a fixed base year for the developed world.

South Africa is often commended for its initiative as a leading developing country on fighting climate change. But officials meeting in Johannesburg say that they would like to continue in this direction on their own, rather than accepting an agenda that is forced upon them through a Copenhagen agreement.

“It is prudent to adjust our sails given our own energy needs to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly developmental path without compromising our immediate requirements for poverty alleviation and development,” Deputy Foreign Affairs Director General Sandea de Wet said at the conference.

Officials at the meeting suggested that the lack of a clear position on climate change from the Obama administration – despite early signals indicating a proactive American approach on the issue – is placing a Copenhagen deal in jeopardy because many countries are waiting to see the extent of US commitments before formulating their own positions.

Thus, South Africa is suggesting a compromise that would modify the current agreement. “If we can get away with an amendment to Kyoto, that would be the best that would happen, but I don't think the EU would agree to that without firm commitments from the US,” de Wet said.

“South Africa sees agreement at Copenhagen climate talks,” REUTURS, 3 March 2009; “South Africa doubts full-scale international climate deal,” REUTERS, 5 March 2009; “South Africa sees binding climate change policy in 3 years,” REUTERS, 3 March 2009.

Climate Change Triggers Surge in Brazilian GM Crop Testing

Brazilian scientists say 2009 will be big year for the expansion of genetically modified (GM) crops in the country as they search for ways to overcome the negative agricultural impacts related to climate change. As crops are increasingly pushed southward due to temperature increases and as the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts temperatures to increase two to four

degrees centigrade in the next 20 years scientists are looking for new ways to enhance crop durability.

New experiments focused on productivity of new GM soy crops will be conducted this year at a climate-controlled station in the state of Parana. Soy, the country's leading export product, has already given the scientists encouraging results as the crop performs well in a wide range of weather conditions.

By isolating genes from drought-resistant plants and joining them with traditional crops, scientists at Embrapa, Brazil's agricultural research agency, say they are able to identify a given crop's resilience in harsh climate conditions.

Eduardo Assad, a researcher for Embrapa, says he is concerned that Brazil's agriculture sector is threatened under the current situation. “What we are doing in Brazil is adapting, anticipating what is to come,” Assad told the Associated Press. “We've been working on this for two years, and we are going to need five or 10 years to be prepared.”

Bean and coffee varieties are among other crops that have been affected by recent temperature increases, but they have shown little success at adaptation. Nevertheless, experts are continuing to develop these crops to withstand higher temperatures and environmental changes in Brazil's advancing northeast desert.

Last year genetically modified crops grew by 9.4 percent worldwide totalling 10.7 million hectares. Brazil's biosafety commission has already approved newly modified varieties of corn, soybeans and cotton.

Brazil is already a heavyweight in global GM cultivation. It has signed the Cartagena Protocol – the 2007 international agreement on biosafety branching from the Convention on Biological Diversity – and is the world's third-largest producer of transgenic crops behind the US, planting six varieties of transgenic corn and three varieties of cotton while permitting the sale of 10 varieties of genetically-modified crops.

But despite the country's move to boost GM crop cultivation, some Brazilian farming groups say

they are still not convinced of the benefits of producing GM crops, which has been a source of friction between agribusiness and producers. Gabriel Fernández of Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa, a Brazilian organisation that opposes the use of GM crops, says the practice will undoubtedly have a negative effect on Brazilian agriculture.

“Instead of looking for a greater sustainability and agriculture that is more environmentally and economically viable, we’re going head-first into the project of these big corporations,” Fernández said in a recent interview.

“Transgenic production up,” LATIN AMERICA PRESS, 25 February 2009; “Brazil climate change threatens top coffee crop,” ASSOCIATED PRESS, 18 February 2009.

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Events

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

12-13 March, San José, Costa Rica. SIXTH MEETING OF THE LIAISON GROUP ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR BIOSAFETY. This meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Liaison Group on Capacity-building for Biosafety will provide advice to the Executive Secretary on a number of issues arising from previous decisions of the Parties on capacity-building and from the implementation of those decisions by Parties, other Governments and relevant organisations. It will provide initial advice on capacity-building issues and possible elements that may need to be considered in the next medium-term programme of work for the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the new strategic plan for the Protocol. For more information visit <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=BSLGCB-06>

18-20 March, Rotorua, New Zealand. INTERNATIONAL FOREST BIOSECURITY CONFERENCE. This conference is organised by

the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO). Experts have concluded that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) are critical to addressing climate change through stabilization of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere. This conference will explore the latest developments in forest bio security and discuss issues relating to the exclusion, eradication and management of pests for the protection of the diverse benefits offered by forests. For more information contact: Amanda Davies; e-mail: amanda.davies@innovatek.co.nz; internet: <http://www.forestbiosecurity.com>

19-21 March, Taj Chandigarh, India. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT. This conference, conducted by the National Institute of Technology, aims to address the challenges in the emerging areas of energy and environment to achieve sustainable development. The Conference, EnviroEnergy 2009, shall provide a useful forum to academicians, technologists, entrepreneurs and policy makers worldwide for exchange of concepts and emerging technologies in the fields of energy and environment. It shall include a highly focussed technical program consisting of presentations on regular and specialized tracks at the intersection of business and technology; exhibits of new products, technologies and solutions from academia and industry. For more information visit <http://www.enviroenergy2009.org/>.

Other Upcoming Events

24-25 March 2009, Singapore. POLICIES THAT PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN TRANSPORT. The event, sponsored by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), will bring together policy makers and experts within the transportation, environment, energy and related fields from the 21 APEC member economies. The workshop’s objective is to provide a forum to discuss best practices and lessons learned in all APEC economies, with the aim of informing future policy for promoting energy-efficient and sustainable transport throughout the APEC region. For more information contact Sally Larsen email: slarsen@ase.org; internet: ase.org/uploaded_files/WPPEET_Agenda.pdf

31 March 2009, Washington, US. FOREST CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT. The IPCC found that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) are critical to addressing climate change through stabilization of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere. Sponsored by the Global Environment Facility-Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, this workshop brings forestry based organizations together to discuss reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), forest conservation, and sustainable forest management. For more information visit http://stapgef.unep.org/activities/technicalworksops/SFM_REDD.

7 April 2009, London, England. HUNGER AND CLIMATE CHANGE: SOME PRACTICAL ANSWERS? Experts and scientists will gather at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers to debate and analysis some of issues plaguing the international community. This conference will also discuss the rapid world population growth, expected to stabilize at nine billion in the middle of this century, in correlation with our food systems which then will need to feed 50% more people than they do today. The likely impact of climate change on agriculture will make the challenge even greater. For more information on this event visit http://www.practicalaction.org/?id=hunger_climatechange&utm_campaign=Hunger+and+climate+change

23-24 April 2009, Brussels, Belgium. SUPPORT TO REGULATORY ACTIVITIES FOR CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE-CCS REGULATION WORKSHOP. The workshop will discuss the opportunities and challenges to CCS Regulation in the European Union and possibilities of future cooperation between the EU and China on this issue. Funded by the EU under the 7th Framework Programme, this conference will also provide recommendations for policy development regarding site qualification, cross-cutting issues, financing and incentivisation, and safety and liability. This event is by invitation only, for more information please visit <http://www.euchina-ccs.org/>

27-29 April 2009, Geneva, Switzerland. TRADE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND

CHALLENGES UNDER THE CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM (CDM). Providing the framework for this conference The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol have lead a collaborative and multilateral effort to combat climate change, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities among their parties. The CDM – one of the three “flexibility mechanisms” identified in the Kyoto Protocol that participating countries can use to meet their greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets – is the only mechanism that involves developing countries. The Expert Meeting is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the CDM, of how this mechanism functions and how its contribution to sustainable development in developing countries might be enhanced. For more information on this conference visit <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?m=15861&intItemID=1942&lang=1>

Resources

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CHINA: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FORESTRY, COTTON AND E-PRODUCTS SECTORS. 2009 By Jason Potts, and David Runnalls, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). This report, which summarises the results of the first phase of the Global Markets Project, provides an overview of the social and environmental impacts associated with the Chinese forestry, cotton and E-product supply chains, as well as a corresponding set of recommendations to the Chinese government as it moves towards its objective of attaining He Xie She Hui ("harmonious society"). The report's conclusions suggest a series of concrete actions available to the Chinese government as it seeks to leverage the forces of the market as a vehicle for stimulating sustainable production, consumption and trade. To access this report visit <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1065>

WTO CHAIRS PROGRAMME. The WTO Chairs Programme (WCP) seeks to enhance knowledge and understanding of the trading

system among academics, citizens and policy makers in developing countries by stimulating teaching, research and public debate on international trade and trade cooperation at the level of tertiary education and research institutions. The WCP contemplates the establishment of WTO Chairs to support academic institutions and associated individual scholars from developing countries in the following areas: course preparation, teaching, research and information. The WCP will provide funding to the Chairs for four years, up to a maximum of Swiss Francs fifty thousand (CHF 50'000.00) per annum. The Chairs will be allocated on the basis of a competitive bidding process. For more information, please see <http://ictsd.net/downloads/2009/03/call-for-tender-wtc-programme1.pdf>.

STEM NEWSLETTER. The STEM Newsletter is published biannually by the Society for Technology Management, an Asian technology transfer forum that provides a platform to facilitate successful intellectual property creation, licensing and technology transfer processes and helps promote best practices in technology management in Asia. The newsletter features relevant, original articles by technology transfer leaders from across the globe. These articles are designed to be of interest to beginners and senior professionals engaged in technology management, and technology transfer. The July 2009 issue of the STEM Newsletter will be a special edition dedicated to successful case studies and best practices in technology transfer from Asia. STEM is inviting articles on unique technology transfer models, specific case studies in technology commercialisation, and identified best practices for the issue. The organisation asks that submissions be 1200 words and in Microsoft Word format. In addition, STEM requests that submissions be accompanied by a short bio, author photograph, and author contact info (including e-mail address, phone number, and fax number). If you are a technology transfer professional or entrepreneur with an exciting story to share, contact the STEM Newsletter's Prabhu Ram at prabhur@sathguru.com.

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION ON FOOD PRODUCTION IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES: EVIDENCE

FROM THE NILE BASIN, ETHIOPIA. By Mahmud Yesuf, Salvatore Di Falco, Temesgen Deressa, Claudia Ringler, and Gunnar Kohlin, 2009. This brief, authored by Mahmud Yesuf, Salvatore Di Falco, Temesgen Deressa, Claudia Ringler and Gunnar Kohlin, addresses the factors influencing adaptation and the implications of various adaptation strategies for farm productivity. The authors found that farmers' decisions to adopt yield-enhancing adaptation strategies are influenced by, among other factors, available information on future climate change, seasonal rainfall, the agro-ecological setting, and several specific characteristics of households. This study also examined the facts of influencing adaptation and the implications of various adaptation strategies for farm productivity. They suggest improving farmers' access to timely information about climate change, access to credit markets and farmer-to-farmer extension to encourage adoption of yield-related adaptation strategies. To access the brief please refer to http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/rb15/rb15_11.pdf

TROUBLED WATERS: CLIMATE CHANGE, HYDROPOLITICS, AND TRANSBOUNDARY RESOURCES. By The Henry L. Stimson Center. This publication examines the multiple challenges that global climate change raises for the management of shared freshwater resources. The content of this publication is drawn substantially on a two-day cross-regional workshop September of 2008 co-hosted by Stimson and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The workshop focused on the impacts of climate change on major transnational river basins and gathered experts from academia, think tanks, NGOs, public service and the private sector. Stimson analysts and experts from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East assess the prospective risks to human security, evaluate the possibilities for cooperative responses, and explore how policies and institutions can evolve to ensure sustainable water supplies in a warming world. To access the publication visit http://www.stimson.org/rv/pdf/Troubled_Waters-Troubled_Waters-Introduction.pdf.