



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Landmark US Climate Bill Set to Pass Key Committee Vote

A major US climate change bill will pass its first hurdle on the way to becoming law by 22 May, according to the House Democrat who helped introduce the proposed legislation. "We will have the votes for passage of this bill next week," Henry Waxman, Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee told reporters on 12 May.

But while the House Energy and Commerce Committee has enough Democrats on board to push one of the most significant US environment bills in decades through, Republicans say they will fight hard for amendments to mitigate the adverse economic impacts they say will likely arise from the bill.

The 648-page American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, introduced by Waxman and Edward Markey, who chairs the Energy and Environment Subcommittee, was praised by environmentalists for its aggressiveness when it was introduced on 31 March (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 3 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/44634/>). But after weeks of wrangling, the targets for renewable energy and cap-and-trade that exceeded President Barack Obama's stated goals have been scaled back somewhat.

Initial draft scaled back

Initially, the Waxman-Markey bill aimed to reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by three percent below 2005 levels by 2012, 20 percent by 2020, 42 percent by 2030, and 83 percent by 2050. But domestic industry, such as the steel sector, has been outspoken on the issue, saying that their products would be undercut by foreign

competitors who may not be subjected to the same environmental standards.

Initially, comments from Energy Secretary Stephen Chu at a House hearing in early March suggested that industry could be protected by a border tax or tariff on goods from countries such as China. But US Trade Representative Ron Kirk later downplayed this possibility in a letter to Republican Congressman Joe Barton (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/45217/>).

The draft bill also called for a national renewable portfolio standard, or RPS, which would have required electricity suppliers to generate six percent of their energy from clean sources by 2012, gradually increasing to 17.5 percent by 2020 and 25 percent by 2025. But the numbers met resistance from lobbyists and some politicians, who argued that certain states would have trouble conforming.

The plan primarily targets electric utilities, oil companies, and factories that together are responsible for 85 percent of US greenhouse gas emissions. Industry has been investing heavily in efforts to 'green' their image in the face of the pending legislation. The Guardian reports that the oil, gas, and coal industries boosted their lobbying budgets by as much as 50 percent, spending some US\$44.5 million in the first quarter of 2009 alone.

This week, House Democrats reached a tentative agreement on both the greenhouse gas and renewable energy issues. New numbers call for a 17 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2020 - down from 20 percent, but still higher than Obama's initial target of some 15 percent.

Renewable energy targets have dropped from 17.5 percent by 2020 to 15 percent. The 15 percent target will be combined with a requirement to boost energy efficiency by 5 percent, for a total of 20 percent. If certain states are able to show they lack access to renewable energy sources, they could be responsible for a target of only 12 percent with 8 percent efficiency gains for a total of 20 percent.

Republicans seek further amendments

But despite the scaled back numbers, Republicans are demanding further revisions. A chief opponent in the process has been senior Republican on the House panel Joe Barton, who claims that despite the fact that the House Energy and Commerce Committee is dominated by Democrats, not all of them fully support the Waxman-Markey plan.

Barton argues that the bill would be a bad move for the US economy as industry would be held back by higher operating costs. "We are not prepared to accept unilateral economic disarmament of the US economy, and cap-and-trade does that," Barton told the Washington Post.

Waxman counters that because half of the carbon offset permits will initially be provided for free to sensitive industries, increased energy costs will be substantially offset.

Barton says he would like to see nuclear power and 'clean coal' included as acceptable alternative energy sources for electric utilities, rather than more traditional renewables like solar and wind energy. Republicans say they also plan to renew attempts to vastly expand offshore oil drilling and other domestic energy production initiative.

Republican Congressman Fred Upton says his party plans to target Democrat fence sitters as the vote approaches. "We'll give swing Democrats lots of opportunities to improve the bill," Upton said.

Still, if the tentative deal holds, passage of the bill through the Committee is likely and could take place before the country's Memorial Day Weekend kicks off on 23 May. This would set the stage for a full House vote by early August, which is also likely to pass.

Nevertheless, more amendments are likely down the road as many observers have cautioned that Senate approval of the bill in its current state is unlikely.

World watching

Climate change negotiators around the world are watching US climate policy closely this year as they prepare for the December's UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Many countries, particularly in the developing world, have explicitly said they are waiting to see the Obama Administration's cards before formulating their own position on a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, which is set to expire in 2012.

ICTSD Reporting; "US House Democrats Near Agreement On Climate Bill," REUTERS, 14 May 2009; "Republicans push changes to U.S. climate bill," WASHINGTON POST, 13 May 2009; "House Dems settle on 15% renewable energy target," NEW YORK TIMES, 13 May 2009; "Round #1 Compromise on Climate Bill: Cut Clean Energy Requirements," REUTERS, 13 May 2009; "Waxman Confident 'Cap and Trade' Will Pass Energy Committee by Memorial Day," FOX NEWS, 12 May 2009.

Climate Change Threatens Southeast Asian Economy: ADB

Countries in Southeast Asia could lose as much as 6.7 percent of their combined gross domestic product (GDP) annually by 2100, according to a new report released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Bank calls the region one of the world's most vulnerable, and predicts an economic contraction more than twice the global average due to poor rice yields, lack of access to water, and high economic costs.

The report, entitled *The Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review*, examined climate, economic, and geographic models in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam to gain a better understanding of the policies needed to avert the economic consequences of climate change in the region.

The study highlighted a number of factors that are likely to contribute to economic contraction in the medium and long term. Probably the most

important of these factors is the combination of rapid economic growth and rapid unplanned urbanisation. Since the 1990s, the increase of GDP in the region has remained around 5.5 per cent, compared with a world average of 2.9 per cent.

This economic growth has changed traditional settlement patterns and the functioning of economies. The concentration of economic activities will continue to grow in urban centres resulting in increased wages and changes in consumption patterns. This, in turn, will result in a large boost in demand for agricultural and industrial inputs, which will be more damaging to the environment, the report says.

Environmental pressures

The ADB estimates that in order to supply domestic and foreign markets, the region must increase rice production by an average of 2.5 percent per year and double palm oil production. The report says that this intensification of agricultural production will lead to both the conversion of land for cultivation and competition with industry and urban areas in the expansion stage. Moreover, as fires are often used in the early stage of any land settlement, emissions of gases such as nitrous oxide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides will intensify. All these elements lead in varying degrees to the destruction of local ecosystems, the report says.

The study also suggests that the massive use of fertilisers also affects the environment significantly, because poor regulation leads to high nitrous oxide emissions which can contaminate aquifers. Such problems are exacerbated by the growth of animal populations meant for human consumption.

Another important aspect of environmental pressures on the economy is the supply and provision of water in the region. In the past decade, the quality and quantity of water has been in decline, mainly due to deforestation and climate change. This has led to extended periods of drought, which has hampered the recovery of deforested and degraded areas and threatened local biodiversity.

Experts now predict that these factors make the region particularly susceptible to serious conflicts over food and water.

Protecting oceans essential

The vulnerability of the marine biome is a central theme in the report. Because climate change will likely contribute to the gradual destruction of mangrove vegetation, coastal sea life, and a contraction of sand in tourism destinations, major economic activities are under threat.

The report highlights the importance of tourism as a relatively low-impact industry with great potential to boost economies in coastal regions. In Indonesia, for example, tourism accounts for 25-30 percent of GDP and employs some 20 million workers. The study also underscores the importance of aquaculture and other related activities for countries such as Thailand, which is one of the largest shrimp exporters in the world.

Challenges and recommendations

If nothing is done to mitigate the damage caused climate change and deterioration of environment, the report says, the region's economy will contract significantly. In general, the study warns that it can expect an intense decline in exports and tourism as a result of the drop in productivity, increased temperatures, and the intensification of pollution.

In view of this, the ADB recommends the adoption of a series of measures to prevent and control environmental damage. Suggestions include integrated systems to monitor and manage water resources in the marine and forest biomes. The study says these systems can serve as information networks to monitor the progress of economic activities.

Furthermore, the report suggests that local governments seek to promote the use of agricultural varieties that more resistant to warmer temperatures and implement more efficient irrigation systems to combat fire.

The ADB says that the burden of responsibility for the negative implications of climate change should be equally divided between developed and developing countries. The Bank invites developed

countries to participate in the implementation of clean development mechanism (CDM) projects, inject financial resources, and help transfer clean technologies to the developing world. It further suggests that its recommendations be incorporated into debates prior to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen, Denmark this December.

More information

The full report can be accessed here: <http://www.adb.org/documents/books/economics-climate-change-sea/default.asp>

Adapted from Pontes Quinzenal

ICTSD Reporting; "Global warming threatens economic chaos in SE Asia: ADB," REUTERS, 27 April 2009; "Southeast Asia Faces Soaring Economic Costs If Climate Change Action Delayed - New Study," ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, 27 April 2009.

ENVIRONMENT AT THE WTO

EU, US Strike Provisional Deal to End Beef Dispute

Trade officials from the US and the EU arrived at a provisional agreement last week that could mark the beginning of the end of a trade dispute over hormone-treated beef that dates back to 1996. The deal, which was announced on 6 May, would allow the EU to maintain its ban on imports of hormone-treated beef from the US; in exchange, US beef that is free of hormones would be granted much greater access to the European market.

"Following a very good discussion today, we have reached an understanding that provides a pragmatic way forward in the long-running beef dispute," EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton and US Trade

Representative Ron Kirk said in a joint statement.

But to the frustration of some in the US meat industry, the provisional deal effectively sidesteps the controversial question of whether, as the EU has long claimed, the ingestion of beef treated with the growth-promoting hormone oestradiol-17 is harmful to human health.

Outlines of the new deal

Under the terms of the provisional agreement, the US will refrain from imposing additional retaliatory measures that the outgoing Bush administration had threatened to slap on EU exports at the beginning of this year (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 23 January 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/38544/>).

Statements from Washington at the time seemed to indicate that the announcement of the proposed measures - dubbed 'carousel sanctions' because Washington planned to change the list of products subject to the duties every six months - was meant to force a conclusion to the 13-year-old dispute. The revolving nature of the new tariffs, which would have amounted to an additional US\$ 79 million worth of duties on EU goods, would have exacted a harsh penalty on European exporters, who would have had no way of knowing which products Washington would target next.

But the carousel sanctions, which were due to come into force just days after the provisional agreement was struck, have been eliminated under the new deal. Instead, Washington will maintain the existing level of sanctions against European products, which are valued at US\$ 37.8 million, for three years, then eliminate the sanctions altogether in the fourth year after the deal takes effect. In return, Brussels has said it would allow additional duty-free access for US beef that has not been treated with growth-promoting hormones. The EU

currently allows 11,500 metric tons of hormone-free US beef to enter its market each year. The provisional deal would increase that quota by 20,000 metric tons each year for three consecutive years; in the fourth year after the agreement takes effect, the quota would jump by another 45,000 metric tons.

The two parties also agreed to work to find a longer term resolution to the matter before the four years are up. For the next 18 months, both sides have agreed to refrain from pursuing further WTO litigation on the matter.

But the deal is still tentative, and has yet to be signed by either of the trade reps, who said they would discuss the proposed agreement "with our respective stakeholders and constituencies in an effort to finalise it as soon as possible."

Question of hormone danger left unanswered

Reactions to the proposed agreement were mixed on both sides of the Atlantic.

US Senator Chuck Grassley, who hails from the farm-heavy state of Iowa, said he was happy that US beef would get greater access to the EU market, but called the evasion of the hormone issue "disappointing." "The European Union should reopen its market to all US beef, which is entirely safe," Grassley said.

But some in the US meat industry were more optimistic. The American Meat Institute called the deal "an encouraging positive step" and commended Kirk for his work in the negotiations. Gregg Doud, the chief economist of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a US industry group, noted that the proposed deal "conceded nothing in terms of the science; it is simply changing the terms of the payment plan."

Meanwhile, a major EU farm group criticised the tentative deal as ‘unbalanced’. The proposed resolution “strikes another blow for EU farmers who are already struggling to survive in a market hit by the economic crisis,” said Pekka Pesonen, the Secretary General of Copa-Cogeca, which represents European farmers. “The EU is granting the US very substantial market access from year one but the US would be maintaining its sanctions on EU exports for another three years,” he said.

But Pesonen stressed that “consumer protection must remain our key objective,” and said that the European Commission “must be ready to act” if any US beef shipments to the EU are suspected of containing growth hormones.

Background of the case

The foundations of the dispute were laid in 1988, when Europe introduced import restrictions on meats treated with six different growth-promoting hormones. At the same time, Brussels also banned the use of the hormones.

The US and Canada challenged those embargoes at the WTO in 1996. Two years later, the WTO’s Dispute Settlement Body ruled that Brussels had failed to provide adequate evidence that consumption of the banned hormones poses a danger to human health. The WTO’s Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement), which the EU was found to violate, requires that bans based on health concerns be backed up by ‘scientific justification’ and risk assessment studies.

Despite the ruling against it, Brussels did not revoke the ban, but instead launched a series of studies intended to prove that the growth-promoting hormones subject to its embargoes do in fact threaten human health. Meanwhile, the two complainants began imposing

retaliatory trade sanctions against European products. The measures are still in force today.

The plot thickened in 2003, when the EU informed the WTO that it had imposed a permanent embargo on imports of meat products treated with oestradiol-17 and that it had extended its provisional ban on imports of the other five hormones, citing the ‘precautionary principle’. Brussels maintained that it had amassed a sufficient amount of scientific evidence to justify the continued restrictions, and called on the US and Canada to lift their retaliatory trade sanctions.

But when the US failed to do so, the EU brought the case back to the WTO in 2004. The resulting ruling of the DSB’s panel, which was made public in March 2008, concluded that Brussels still had not provided sufficient evidence to justify the ban. However, the panel did fault the US for failing to get the WTO’s approval for continuing its retaliatory measures.

Canada’s trade sanctions against certain EU imports, which were put in place in August 1999, remain in effect in today, although Me’shel Gulliver Bélanger, a spokesperson for Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, says the two parties are “holding discussions on possible elements that could be included in a negotiated settlement.”

Additional information

To read the joint statement from Kirk and Ashton, please click [here](#).

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

EU Signs Timber Agreement with Republic of Congo

The Republic of Congo has become the second country to sign a legally binding agreement with the EU to ensure timber exports are legally harvested. The Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), announced on 9 May, will require all timber products from the Central African country – also known as Congo-Brazzaville – to carry a licence in order to gain access to the EU market.

The VPA establishes a system for collecting timber taxes and lays out procedures to ensure that harvests and sales are legal, and that they have been obtained in a manner that maintains the health of the country's forests, and that they provide benefits to local forest communities. The target date of implementation is 2011.

VPAs lie at the core of the European Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, the EU's response to a call for action at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. Beyond VPAs, Brussels promised to require EU member states to purchase sustainable forest products, and to introduce a legislative measure discouraging the importation of wood from unknown – and thus, potentially illegal — sources.

There is currently no EU law preventing illegally harvested wood from entering the European market.

In addition to the Congo Agreement, the EU is currently engaged in VPA negotiations with Cameroon, Indonesia, and Malaysia and informal discussions have also begun with Central African Republic, Côte D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Gabon, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, and Vietnam. The first VPA, between the EU and Ghana, was inked in September 2008 (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 19 September 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/29586/>).

The Republic of Congo exports some US\$330 million worth of timber annually. About half of

these exports go to European countries, including Italy, France, and Germany. Congo says the sustainable forestry initiative will help increase trade flows and the EU's commitment to help establish enforcement and auditing systems will help build governance capacity.

"With a total of 4,674,320 acres of certified forests as of March 2009, Congo has reached the highest echelon of tropical wood producing countries and is becoming a laboratory for sustainable forest management," said Henri Djombo, Congo's Minister of Forest Economy. "The conclusion of this agreement will guarantee our country new opportunities in timber markets while participating in reinforcing governance in that sector and illustrating Congo's political commitment to work in that direction."

Environmentalists have long complained that the legality of timber harvested in resource rich, but cash poor countries is difficult to assess. And while the VPA represents a move forward in this way, critics caution that VPAs will likely stop only 10 percent of illegal imports to the EU, and that more efforts should be made to stop illegal loggers from circumventing the system through a third party country. But the EU maintains that this 'transshipment' issue has been overstated.

The EU and Malaysia are in the final phase of VPA negotiations. Last year Vincent Piket, the head of the European Commission's delegation to Malaysia, suggested an agreement would be struck in the first three or four months of 2009. Observers now say a deal could be reached this summer.

ICTSD Reporting; "EU to conclude deal to stop illegal timber extraction from Republic of Congo," EUREKALERT, 9 May 2009; "EU clinches Deal with Republic of Congo to Trade Only in Legal Timber," ASNS NEWS, 12 May 2009; "Congo latest to sign VPA," TIMBER INDUSTRY MAGAZINE, 11 May 2009; "Malaysia near to signing VPA," TIMBER INDUSTRY MAGAZINE, 4 May 2009.

Stockholm Convention COP4 Adds Nine More to Dirty Dozen

Parties to the Stockholm Convention have agreed to add nine more persistent organic pollutants (POPs) used in farming and industry to its list of 12 substances, sometimes called 'the dirty dozen', targeted for elimination. This is the first time new chemicals were added to the list of POPs since the Convention took effect in 2004.

The fourth Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, or COP4, was scheduled to take place from 4-8 May. But wrangling over the details of an agreement pushed the Geneva meeting into overtime, finally wrapping up in the early morning hours on Saturday. In the end, more than 160 governments agreed that the chemicals in question are so dangerous that alternatives must be found.

The substances scheduled for elimination include industrial chemicals, pesticides, a fungicide, flame-retardants used in polyurethane foam and electronic equipment, and lindane – a chemical used to control head lice.

Donald Cooper, executive secretary of the Stockholm Convention, said the nine chemicals were singled out because of their global pervasiveness, slow degradation time, and their negative effect on human health, including reproduction damage, impairment of mental capacity and growth, and their potential to cause cancer.

Achim Steiner, executive director of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) explained that the direct link between health issues and exposure to the chemicals is not always obvious.

"Some of these chemicals, on their own, may not show up on the radar of public health," Steiner said. "But, in their cumulative and interactive nature in the way that they are absorbed by living organisms, be they plants, animals or human beings, they can develop far-reaching consequences."

Trade in some of the chemicals targeted for elimination is worth billions of dollars annually.

But Steiner insists that the search for alternatives will provide new opportunities that will offset the expected trade contraction.

"This is not an economic disruption, it is rather an investment in public health with perfectly compatible economic opportunities, but we have to give the right incentives," Steiner said.

The Stockholm Convention entered into force on 17 May 2004, and currently has 163 parties, including the EU. The Convention is an international agreement aimed at identifying, evaluating, and eliminating POPs from the environment.

Chemicals in the Convention are categorised in three ways: chemicals to be eliminated; chemicals to be restricted; and unintentionally produced chemicals in need of minimisation.

So far, DDT remains the only restricted chemical, as it remains a key weapon in the fight against malaria. However, on 6 May, UNEP and the World Health Organisation announced a plan to develop environmentally friendly ways of battling malaria that could eliminate the use of DDT globally by 2010.

In addition to the incorporating the nine new chemicals, Parties also renewed their commitment to provide financial resources and technical assistance, including endorsement of regional coordinating centres, to developing countries. Attempts to agree on the details of a non-compliance mechanism were scupperd and work on this was deferred to COP5.

Parties also agreed to work more closely with the Basel Convention on transporting hazardous waste and the Rotterdam Convention on trade in hazardous chemicals. All three will participate in a joint extraordinary conference of the parties, or Ex-COP, in February 2010.

ICTSD Reporting; "Summary of the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants" EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 11 May 2009; "UN-sponsored meeting bans nine chemicals – but not DDT," CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 11 May 2009; "Nine

Dangerous Chemicals Added To Global Banned List," REUTERS, 11 May 2009; "UN Stockholm Convention Concludes that only Certain Lower Brominated Diphenylethers are POPs," AZOM NEWS, 15 May 2009.

Canada Promises WTO Suit over EU Seal Ban

The European Parliament has voted overwhelmingly to ban imports of seal products into the 27-nation bloc, a move that quickly prompted Canada to go forward with a lawsuit against the embargo at the WTO.

"We're moving ahead with an appeal," Canadian Trade Minister Stockwell Day told Canwest News Service on 5 May. "We'll go to the WTO because it's clear in WTO regulations that if one country wants to ban the products of another, it has to have clear scientific, medically acceptable reasons for doing so, and this EU ban is not based on hard science," Day said.

In a 550-49 vote taken on 5 May, the European Parliament banned all imports of seal products to the 27-nation bloc. The proposed ban still has to win the endorsement of each of the EU's national governments, but could take effect before the start of next year's hunting season if it is approved.

The proposed embargo includes an exemption for seals taken by Canada's Inuit communities, which consider the seal hunt vital to their cultural heritage. But the Inuit leader Mary Simon said that she was not satisfied with the exception.

"Inuit are devastated at today's vote," Simon said in a statement on 5 May. "The stated exemption in the legislation will not help us as the markets will once again be effectively destroyed. As Inuit leaders have stated across the Arctic, once you destroy a market for one group, it is destroyed for all."

Danny Williams, the premier of Newfoundland, an eastern province that is home to the bulk of the country's roughly 7,000 sealers, called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to press the seal issue in ongoing talks toward a trade agreement with the

EU. Harper responded that he would raise the matter, but added that he did not want the seal controversy to 'contaminate' the negotiations.

Norway, another major player in the seal trade, has also threatened to bring a WTO challenge to the EU's ban (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 1 May 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/45941/>).

Animal rights activists, who lobbied hard on behalf of the ban, welcomed the results of the vote.

"I hope that the ban on the trade in seal products will save save hundreds of thousands of seals from being clubbed and shot under cruel conditions in Canada and elsewhere," said Carl Schlyter, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament intergroup on animal protection.

"The EU is making history by closing its borders to the products of cruel commercial seal slaughters," said Rebecca Aldworth, the director of Humane Society International, Canada. "Tuesday's historic vote will spell the beginning of the end of commercial sealing in Canada."

The Canadian seal hunt, one of the biggest in the world, is worth an estimated US\$ 7 million. The seals are valued for their pelts, as well as their meat, oil blubber, and organs.

ICTSD reporting; "Canada vows to take seal ban fight to WTO," CANWEST, 5 May 2009; "Seal products banned in Europe," TELEGRAPH.CO.UK, 5 May 2009; "Williams reignites war of words with Harper over seal hunt," CBC NEWS, 6 May 2009.

WWF to Rate Palm Oil Purchasers on Sustainability

The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) says it will begin a campaign to rate major palm oil purchasers on their sustainability after figures show only a fraction of certified palm oil on the market has been purchased.

The WWF says that despite the fact that 1.3 million tonnes of sustainable palm oil has been on

the market since November 2008, only 15,000 tonnes has been bought.

The oil is found in a variety of foods, including margarine, cooking oil, potato chips, cakes, and cookies. It is also an ingredient in many cosmetics, soaps, shampoos and detergents. Major buyers include multinational corporations, such as Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive, L'Oreal and Cadbury.

Sustainable palm oil is certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), a non-profit, multi-stakeholders forum spearheaded by WWF in 2001. Shipments of sustainable palm oil first hit global markets in November last year (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 4 November 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/33649/>).

But while certification is meant to offer consumers reassurance that environmental and social safeguards have been met during production, wholesale costs can increase by as much 6 percent. The RSPO blames the economic crisis for the slow start.

“In a bid to speed up this ‘sluggish performance’, WWF will assess the world’s major users of palm oil over the next six months and publish a Palm Oil Buyer’s Scorecard highlighting companies that support sustainable palm oil and exposing those who have not fulfilled their commitments to buy it,” the WWF said in a statement.

The proposed ‘scorecard’ will rank the commitments and actions of major global retailers, manufacturers and traders that buy palm oil. The WWF will rate companies on their perceived commitments to, and actions on, sustainable palm oil. The green group says it hopes to allow consumers to evaluate a given company on their environmental performance and encourage companies themselves to better support the use of sustainable palm oil.

According to the RSPO, more than 28 million tonnes of palm oil are produced around the world each year - almost one third of the world’s vegetable oil production. Over the past two decades, areas undergoing palm oil cultivation have grown by about 43 percent, according to RSPO - mostly in Malaysia and Indonesia, where

deforestation pressures are already high. The RSPO certified the first Indonesian palm oil producer last month (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 17 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/45209/>).

ICTSD Reporting; “Palm Oil Buyers Face Green Scorecard, WWF Says,” REUTERS, 13 May 2009.

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Events

Coming up in the next two weeks (15-29 May)

18-21 May 2009, Seoul, Korea. May 2009. C40 LARGE CITIES CLIMATE SUMMIT – SEOUL 2009. The C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group brings together leaders of the world's largest cities committed to taking action on climate change. This year's summit, hosted in Seoul and featuring keynote speaker William Jefferson Clinton, will include discussions on a number of issues such as the wider use of green energy, energy efficiency measures, sustainable transport, and sustainable city development. Throughout the four-day event, delegates will share best practices, build networks, identify collaborative projects and chart future actions relative to tackling climate change. For more information contact: Mr. Chul-woong CHOI; tel: 82-2-2115-7796; e-mail: c40seoul@seoul.go.kr; Internet: <http://www.c40seoulsummit.com/>

24-29 May, Copenhagen, Denmark. WORLD BUSINESS SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE. At this event, CEOs will discuss how their firms can help solve the climate crisis through innovative business models, new partnerships, and the development of low-carbon technologies. They will send a strong message to the negotiating governments on how to remove barriers and create incentives for implementation of new solutions in a post-Kyoto framework. The results of the meeting will be presented to the Danish government, host of COP15, and to world leaders negotiating the terms of the next international climate treaty. For more information, please visit

<http://www.copenhagenclimatecouncil.com/world-business-summit.html>.

25 May - 6 September, Geneva, Switzerland. UNEP/UNIGE/GRADUATE INSTITUTE TRAINING COURSE IN ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY. This training course aims to provide diplomats, negotiators, policy-makers and decision-makers with the skills they need to understand the nature of specific environment concerns, to participate in global negotiations related to the environment, sustainable development, and other related fields. For further information, contact Céline Germond-Duret: email: celine.duret@unige.ch; internet: www.unige.ch/formcont/environmentaldiplomacy.

26-29 May, Leipzig, Germany. INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM. The International Transport Forum is a global inter-governmental platform that currently includes 52 Ministries. Together with senior representatives from government, industry and the scientific community, the 2009 Forum is an opportunity to review some of the most pressing questions posed by volatile global developments. More efficient transport can create a significant boost to support economic growth and create new confidence in the economic future. Yet protectionist and purely national responses risk accentuating the problem in the medium-term, and solutions need to be found at an international level. The 2009 Forum in Leipzig is an opportunity to be part of this cooperative impetus for change. For more information, please visit <http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/>.

27-29 May, Barcelona, Spain. GLOBAL CARBON MARKET FAIR & CONFERENCE. This event, jointly organised by the International Emissions Trading Association, The World Bank, Fira Barcelona, and Koelnmesse, will feature debates, in-depth case studies and leadership sessions with an in-depth overview of the status of the carbon market and international climate change negotiations. For further information, contact Lisa Spafford: tel: +41 (0) 22-737-0502; fax: +41 (0) 22-737-0508; email: spafford@carbonexpo.org; internet: www.carbonexpo.com.

28-29 May, Montreal, Canada. TREATY REGIMES IN PRACTICE: DOMESTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Sponsored by the CISDL with the McGill University's Faculty of Law, Hydro Quebec and Oppenheimer Research Chairs and the International Law Association, this event will focus on recent trends and best practices in domestic laws to implement the sustainable development objectives of international treaty regimes. Dialogue in this event will also focus on how these experiences are shaping new rules and institutions in the treaty regimes themselves. Individuals from international environment, development, human rights and law experts, academics, professionals and students are encouraged to register. This symposium features a wide range of keynote speakers. For more information please visit http://www.cisdl.org/pdf/poster_symposium2009_screen.pdf.

Other Upcoming Events

5 June, Earth. WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY. This annual global event, organised by the UN Environment Program, aims to give a human face to environmental issues, empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development, promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues, and advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. The theme for 2009 is 'Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change' and the host country is Mexico. For further information, visit <http://www.unep.org/wed/2009/english/>.

5 June, Hamburg, Germany. EUROPEAN CLIMATE TEACH-IN DAY 2009. This event, organised by the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, will consist of lectures on different aspects of climate change prepared by some of the leading experts in the field. The lectures will be prepared in a way that allows the contents to be understood by university students attending a variety of degree courses. Organisers aim to disseminate not only scientific information, but

also approaches, methods, strategies, and other types of action taking place around Europe, in order to cope with the challenge of climate change. For further information, visit <http://www.climateday.eu/en>.

12-14 June, Basel, Switzerland. FOREST MOVEMENT EUROPE MEETING 2009. This meeting, jointly organised by the Bruno Manser Fund and FERN, will focus on the theme "Forests and Climate." With the December 2009 Copenhagen Climate Conference in mind, participants will focus their discussions on pertinent topics such as UN-REDD and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Other sessions will look at other relevant issues, including illegal logging, reducing paper consumption, agrofuels, and the reform of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). For further information, contact Lukas Straumann – tel: +41 (0)61-261-9474; email: info@bmf.ch; internet: <http://www.bmf.ch/en/news/?show=149>

20-24 July, Vancouver, Canada. SUMMER INSTITUTE IN SUSTAINABILITY. This one-week intensive professional development programme, organised by the University of British Columbia and the University of Washington, aims to help move the sustainability agenda of a given organisation to a whole new level. The programme consists of seminars by sustainability experts and practitioners, applied case studies and guided field excursions to sustainability projects. Also, applied workshops focusing on sustainability planning and open space sessions will allow participants to address their own issues and ideas, and present opportunities for networking. For further information, visit <http://www.cstudies.ubc.ca/sustainability/summerinstitute/index.html>.

Resources

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

CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT. By Richard J.T. Klein, 2009. This new academic journal the first that is dedicated specifically to the wide range of issues surrounding climate variability, climate change, and climate policy in the context of development needs. It presents conceptual, methodological and empirical analysis of climate impacts, adaptation mechanisms, mitigation, and development at local, national, and regional levels. Of relevance to academics, policy analysts, and those working in industrial, government and non-governmental organisations the journal is cross-disciplinary, publishing research results, reviews and commentaries that provide a crucial link between climate and development issues. The journal is part of a larger effort to build capacity on climate and development. This effort includes a series of write-shops to support scholars from developing countries to 'upgrade' their paper submissions to peer-review quality. A sample copy of the first issue can be accessed here: <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/?tabid=29957>.

THE 3RD UNITED NATIONS WORLD WATER DEVELOPMENT REPORT: WATER IN A CHANGING WORLD (WWDR-3). By the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2009. The third edition of the United Nations World Water Development Report highlights the point that that urgent action is needed to avoid a global water crisis. The Report provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of the world's freshwater resources. It also, for the first time, shows how changes in water demand and supply are affected by and affect other global dynamics. It represents a considerable collaborative achievement for the 26 UN agencies that make up UN-Water and are engaged in the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), which leads the monitoring and evaluation behind the Report. The Report can be accessed here: <http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr3/tableofcontents.shtml>.

BUILDING THE GREEN ECONOMY: A GUIDE TO THE PRACTICE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. By Nikhil Chandavarkar, December 2008. This book aims to serve as a guide to those who shape and make policy in business, civil society, and government on how to promote equitable growth and development today while safeguarding the

livelihoods, natural resources and well-being of future generations. The book synthesises the concepts and analytical tools of sustainable development, and proposes how to build national consensus on sustainable development as the framework for national development strategies. The book also explains how sustainable national development strategies can be implemented and how sustainable development goals can be promoted in international negotiations. In this era of planetary interconnectedness and accelerating climate change, ensuring national interests in sustainable development requires action at all levels. The author hopes the book will act as a guide for action at the local, national, regional, and international levels. The book can be purchased from various booksellers.