



Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest

Weekly trade news from a sustainable development perspective

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LEAD STORIES

Lamy Calls for Two-Track Approach to Wrap up Doha

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy has called for a new approach to bringing the nearly eight-year-old Doha Round of world trade talks to a close. The two-track negotiations that Lamy outlined at a meeting of the WTO's General Council on Tuesday appear to represent a compromise between two competing views of how the talks should proceed.

"My own sense is that there is scope to work on these two areas along two simultaneous tracks. One would see technical engagement in the negotiating groups move to a higher gear to cover a number of technical issues as mentioned previously," Lamy told the meeting.

"Simultaneously, Members would start some sort of 'outcome testing', through bilateral or plurilateral discussions, where they would provide each other with greater clarity on the use of flexibilities and through it, on the value of the deal," he added.

Lamy called the new approach 'doable', but cautioned that it would require 'serious political engagement' from trade officials at the highest level.

"The 'stress test' of the multilateral trading system is still to come," the director-general said as he urged Members to push forward in the Doha talks and to continue monitoring any slides toward protectionism.

Lamy's proposed approach seems to accommodate both sides of a recent informal debate over how the talks should proceed.

Some Members, including Canada and the United States, have informally advocated skipping the negotiation of modalities – the broad outlines of a deal to cut duties and subsidies in a range of sectors – and moving straight into scheduling tariffs (see Bridges Weekly, 6 May 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/46289/>). Washington had argued that such an approach would allow it to gain a better understanding of what it might gain from a deal before it offered up any further concessions in the talks.

But the notion of skipping modalities drew strong criticism from several developing country Members, who argued that omitting that stage could undermine their position in the talks. Such countries made their opposition clear to Washington's top trade official, Ron Kirk, when he visited Geneva earlier this month (see Bridges Weekly, 13 May 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/bridgesweekly/46571/>). At the time, Kirk acknowledged their concerns and indicated that trade officials would have to find 'a third way' forward in the negotiations.

Although no official Doha-centred ministerial summit is in the works, Lamy indicated that several upcoming international meetings could provide trade ministers an opportunity to engage on Doha issues. Ministers from the Cairns group of agricultural exporters will be meeting in early June, the Director-General noted, and OECD ministers will gather in Paris later that month. Subsequent meetings of the G8, the G8+ and the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation group could also serve as venues for Doha discussions, Lamy said.

Additional information

To read the full text of Pascal Lamy's speech to the General Council, please click here http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news09_e/tnc_chair_report_26may09_e.htm

ICTSD reporting.

EU-Andean Talks Inch forward, but Ecuador Threatens to Pull out

Negotiations toward a trade-opening deal between the EU and a group of Andean countries hit another snag this week when Ecuador's president publicly denounced the talks, calling them 'biased'.

The comment came just over two weeks after negotiators from both sides met in Brussels for the third round of negotiations towards an 'Association Agreement' between the 27-member EU on one hand and Colombia, Ecuador and Peru on the other. While officials have been careful to point out that the potential agreement does not begin and end with trade (it also addresses cooperation and political dialogue), the trade aspects of the deal have caught the attention of its critics.

The EU is the Andean region's biggest foreign investor and second-largest trading partner, after the United States.

The meeting in Brussels earlier this month drew mixed results. The negotiations with Peru are moving ahead smoothly, officials say, but difficulties have arisen in the talks with Colombia and Ecuador. Bolivia, an original party to the talks, has boycotted the negotiations since 2007, when its leftist leader Evo Morales withdrew in protest over the EU's stance on intellectual property rules and the privatisation of services.

Ecuador may now be following a similar path.

"The European Union can give [the deal] whatever pretty name it wants, but we are headed toward a free trade agreement, and we will not accept that," Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa said in a weekly radio address on Saturday.

"We are very concerned about the bias, the direction being taken by the negotiations," he added.

It is still unclear whether President Correa's strongly-worded comment will precede official action by Quito to pull out of the talks, but such action is possible. Correa's denunciation of the EU deal is in keeping with Ecuador's recent step

back from market opening amid the ongoing economic crisis. In January, Correa, a populist who was elected to a second presidential term last month, introduced far-reaching import restrictions intended to protect domestic producers. The safeguards will apply to imports from all countries – including those that had previously struck free trade deals or preferential trade agreements with Quito – for one full calendar year.

Peruvian trade minister Mercedes Aráoz, whose country is pushing ahead in its talks with the EU, expressed regret at Ecuador's hesitance to move forward. Peru has yet to receive a response to its request for Quito to lift its trade restrictions, Aráoz also noted. Lima estimates that Ecuador's recently enacted safeguards have cost the Peruvian economy between US\$ 50 million and US\$ 80 million.

Like Peru, Colombia still seems ready to push forward in the talks, but progress could be frustrated by European concerns over labour and human rights abuses in the country.

"There is no disagreement on the objectives. We all want better judicial procedures, fewer killings and a government with clean hands," said Rupert Schlegelmilch, the EU's chief negotiator for the Andean nations. "The Colombian government is taking on board [our] recommendations," he added. "It is certainly still a bad situation, but it is improving."

The US Congress has yet to ratify a similar free trade deal with Colombia due to concerns over the country's laws on labour and human rights.

Questions on intellectual property

Representatives from the Latin American pharmaceutical industry have expressed concern over what they consider an 'aggressive' EU stance on intellectual property, or IP, issues during the talks. In its negotiations with Colombia and Peru, Brussels is fighting for 'data exclusivity' – the right to prevent national health authorities from accepting applications for generic versions of patent-protected medicines – for up to 11 years.

This issue of 'data exclusivity' has also caused concern in civil society. NGO Health Action International claims that the EU's demands for

stronger IP protections "could constitute a serious barrier to access to essential medicines" in the Andean region.

The parties had hoped to wrap up the negotiations at the next round of talks, which is set to take place in Bogota in mid-June, but it now appears likely that a deal will not be reached before September.

Additional information

To read an open letter from Health Action International to the European officials, please click here:

<http://www.haiweb.org/03052009/9%20Feb%202009%20Open%20Letter%20to%20the%20European%20Commission%20from%20EU-CAN%20Alliance.pdf>

ICTSD reporting; "Human rights no block to EU-Colombia talks," EUOBSERVER.COM, 4 May 2009; "Correa rechaza 'TLC' en negociación con UE," LOS TIEMPOS, 26 May 2009; "Tariffs are Ecuador's response to crisis," WASHINGTON POST, 30 March 2009.

WHO Tackles Intellectual Property, R&D Treaty

Members of the World Health Organization gathered for their 62nd annual assembly at WHO headquarters in Geneva last week. The meeting was held from 18-22 May, but did not extend into a second week as originally planned, due to the recent outbreak of the H1N1 flu virus. But members still found time for intense discussions on intellectual property, innovation and public health, particularly with respect to the fine-tuning of the 2008 Global Strategy on Public Health, innovation and Intellectual Property. A proposal for a treaty on biomedical research and development emerged as a particularly controversial issue.

Members Reach Resolution on IP, Innovation and Public Health

After intense debate, Member States adopted a final plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property that includes an agreed list of stakeholders who will be involved in the process of implementation, as well as a time frame and progress indicators by which to monitor progress in this respect. Member states approved the final plan following three years of work by the WHO Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (IGWG). Established by the World Health Assembly, or WHA, the IGWG was asked to draw up a global strategy and plan of action on ways to bring new thinking on innovation and access to medicines and to provide a framework for essential health research and development relevant to diseases which disproportionately affect developing countries.

But the final approval was not without contention. Several member states expressed concern over the process by which negotiating text, “Open paragraphs on Stakeholders,” was presented to the Assembly. The document contains proposals for the remaining stakeholders of the Global Strategy and Plan of Action. Several developing countries argued that the process of consultation was not sufficiently inclusive. In a joint intervention, Barbados, Bangladesh, Bolivia, and Suriname noted that “only a limited number of countries were invited to negotiate on the remaining bracketed text of the WHO plan of Action leaving the majority of states with no real recourse or fora to engage in meaningful negotiations prior to the convening of the 62nd Assembly.”

Faiyaz Murshid Kazi, the Bangladesh representative, told ICTSD that his delegation was unsatisfied with the process by which the consensus text was reached, adding that such a process should have been more participatory.

Mixed Reactions to possible treaty on Research and Development

Discussions focused extensively on a possible treaty in biomedical research and development (R&D). This treaty, which has been strongly supported by groups from civil society and

countries such as Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia and Suriname, stems from a recommendation included in the Global Strategy that calls for “further exploratory discussions on the utility of possible instruments or mechanisms for essential health and biomedical R&D, including inter alia, an essential health and biomedical R&D treaty.”

Although the sponsors believe that such a treaty would considerably “transform the landscape of biomedical innovation to incorporate needs driven health R&D,” several developed country members, primarily the US and the EU, said that the WHO was not an appropriate forum for the discussions on the treaty.

The issue of WHO acting as a main stakeholder was controversial. However, after informal negotiations, the WHO’s status as a stakeholder was dropped. This change triggered concerns among several non-governmental organisations and developing country members. Barbados stated that such an omission could leave the proposal without a forum for discussion or advancement once the Expert Group on R&D Financing concludes its time limited mandate. Bolivia also added that “much time, effort, and hope may be lost if WHO, which is in a position to support the needs of developing countries, is not allowed to participate in bringing it to fruition.”

Several NGOs, including Essential Action, Health Action International, Knowledge Ecology International, and Medecins Sans Frontieres, also expressed concern on the matter. In an open letter to WHO member states, the NGOs noted their surprise that the WHO had been removed as a stakeholder.

“WHO is the UN agency with the mandate for global health [and] it is unacceptable that there would be any opposition the WHO having a role in taking forward discussions on what global norms should be contained in a proposal for a biomedical treaty,” the groups wrote.

For its part, the WHO secretariat assured Members that the organisation could consider the proposal, even though it would not be a formal stakeholder in the process. The WHO’s legal counsel reaffirmed that position. The “[d]ecision undertaken on agenda item 12.8 shall not

prejudice the future consideration of a biomedical R&D treaty by the WHO Executive Board and the World Health Assembly,” the counsel said. Agreement was subsequently reached following the assurance from the WHO legal counsel that the proposal for an R&D treaty could be legitimately considered by the Executive Board.

Counterfeit Issues Still Surfaced Despite being cut from WHA Agenda

During discussions on WHO’s Mid-term Strategy Plan 2008-2019, some member states objected to the use of the term ‘counterfeit’ in the organisation’s work. Many countries are opposed to the use of this term since it is associated with the definition provided in the WTO’s Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property. Such countries worry that the use of the term in the context of the WHO’s work could cause the organisation to consider public health issues through the lens of IP enforcement.

Specifically, the medium term plan allows the WHO to assist countries in implementing the International Medical Products Anti-counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT) strategy. The composition of this taskforce was met with much apprehension during the January meeting of the WHO Executive Board meeting, as many developing countries raised concerns over the legitimacy of the body, arguing that it was not representative of all relevant stakeholders and perspectives on this issue. In light of these concerns by member states, the WHO’s Director General, Dr. Margaret Chan, agreed to replace the term ‘counterfeit’ in favour of other terms such as ‘sub-standard’.

Although initially on the agenda for this year’s Assembly, the controversial issue was subsequently dropped as the WHA was curtailed due to the recent H1N1 influenza outbreak.

ICTSD reporting; IP-Watch reporting; “WHO members near deal on IP, Innovation and Public Health, with Key Question,” 21 May 2009.; IP-Watch reporting; “Off the Agenda, Counterfeits Still Draw attention at the health Assembly;,” 23 May 2009; IP-Watch reporting, “Broad Plan on IP, Innovation in Developing Countries Approved at the WHO, 22 May 2009; Indian

Express reporting, “WHO gets what role?,” May 22 2009.

IN BRIEF

India, Mercosur Deepen Economic Ties

A preferential trading agreement between India and the Mercosur countries Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay is set to take effect on 1 June. The pact, which will lower tariffs on a wide range of goods, is intended to serve as a stepping stone toward the establishment of a full-fledged free trade area among the signatories.

Under the terms of the deal, India will give preferential access to 450 goods from Mercosur countries, including chemicals, petrochemicals and electronic equipment. In exchange, Mercosur will open its markets to some 452 Indian products, including air conditioning systems, refrigerators, silk and glass.

Trade between India and Mercosur, whose four member countries are home to 200 million people, totalled US\$3.9 billion in 2008.

In a recent meeting organised by India’s Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, high-level officials from the Mercosur region set out the main strengths that their countries can offer India in trade matters. The Argentinean representative stressed that its market is the third-largest in Latin America, after Brazil and Mexico. Uruguay called attention to its focus transparency and predictability in its government policies, while Paraguay emphasised the possibility of synergies with India in the field of agribusiness.

“Very soon we will have to sit down again to look into the possibility of widening the scope of the agreement to give rise to a new wave of economic and business cooperation with India,” Jose Carlos Fonseca, the Minister-Counsellor of Brazil in India, told the meeting, according to India’s Financial Express.

India and Mercosur struck a framework agreement in June 2003; the PTA was subsequently signed in January 2004.

The trade deal is India's second major agreement in Latin America. New Delhi signed a similar PTA with Chile in 2005. Earlier this month, Santiago indicated that the two countries will soon begin negotiations to expand the deal into a broader free trade agreement.

ICTSD reporting; "India-Mercosur pact to boost bilateral trade," THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS, 13 May 2009; "Chile to sign trade agreement with India," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 11 May 2009.

EU Ministers Support Radical Fisheries Reform

European fisheries ministers have reached a consensus on the need for radical reform of the EU's controversial Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Those attending the European Commission's Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on Monday acknowledged that the rules governing the EU fisheries sector are flawed and should be decentralised to give member states and the fishing industry more power over how the sector operates.

The purpose of the 25 May meeting was to discuss several points raised by a 22 April 2009 Green Paper on CFP reform (see Bridges Trade BioRes, 22 April 2009, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/45961/>). The Green Paper says that 88 percent of EU commercial fish stocks are overfished and points to five structural failings that have led to the current situation: overcapacity, imprecise objectives, short-term decision-making, lack of responsibility of the industry, and overall lack of compliance.

The meeting, chaired by Czech Minister for Agriculture Jakub Šebesta, invited ministers to express their views on prioritising the elements of the CFP that they feel are in need of reform and to suggest additional issues of concern that may have been overlooked by the Green Paper.

Environmentalists and the fisheries industry have long argued that the current rules are ineffective and wasteful. Because rules governing quotas are based on quantities at the point of landing, less profitable fish and fish caught over-quota are often dumped back into the sea – even if they are dead.

Danish Fisheries Minister Eva Kjer Hansen suggested the EU could enforce so-called catch quotas by taking steps such as installing cameras on fishing boats. Ministers ultimately agreed to support the Commission's plans for a 'step by step' approach to eliminating wasteful discards.

The EU fisheries sector has been plagued by problems in recent years. The BBC reports that the number of people employed in the industry has contracted by a third in the UK alone. Fishermen welcomed the news that they may have a greater input on how fisheries rules are drafted and implemented.

"We've proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the present framework – which is tightly controlled by the Commission – isn't working at all and needs to be decentralised," said Bertie Armstrong of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation. "The outcome of this council seems to be that that's been accepted by all. We weren't absolutely sure that the Commission would be ready to let go and decentralise, but certainly that seems to be the theme. And that's highly welcome."

All interested EU citizens are invited to comment on the questions set out in the Green Paper by 31 December 2009. Results of the consultation process will be published next year and will be followed by a legislative proposal to the Council and the European Parliament.

Since its creation in 1983, the CFP has been reviewed every 10 years (for information on the 2002 CFP reform see Bridges Trade BioRes, 23 January 2003, <http://ictsd.net/i/news/biores/8750/>). The next review is scheduled for 2012.

Additional information

The Green Paper can be accessed here:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0163:FIN:EN:PDF>.

Reaction to the Green Paper can be submitted here:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/consultation_en.htm.

ICTSD Reporting; "Denmark suggests cameras to stop EU's overfishing," REUTERS, 25 May 2009; "'Delight' at EU fish quota moves," BBC, 25 May 2009.

WTO IN BRIEF

Lamy Retains WTO's 4 Deputy DGs

The WTO's four deputy director-generals will retain their positions for new terms of office, Pascal Lamy, the head of the global trade body, told WTO Members on Tuesday.

Alejandro Jara of Chile, Valentine Rugwabiza of Rwanda, Harsha Singh of India, and Rufus Yerxa of the United States will begin their new terms on 1 October, Lamy said.

"During the last four years this strong team has served the organisation and its Members with dedication and vision," Lamy told a meeting of the WTO's General Council. "Together we have worked to advance the interests of the multilateral trading system. As we prepare to move into the last miles in the Doha Round, I believe I must privilege experience and safeguard continuity. I look forward to working with my team and with Members in the months and years to come," Lamy said.

ICTSD reporting.

TRIPS Council Debates Way Forward

An informal meeting of the WTO committee on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) was urged to move on from broad discussions to tackle the 'substantive' issues at issue in the talks. The chair of the talks, Ambassador Trevor Clarke of Barbados, warned delegates that they should not be complacent in the talks.

The issue at hand is the establishment of a multilateral register for geographical indications for wines and spirits, a matter that delegates have been debating for more than a decade.

Geographical indications, or GIs, as defined in the WTO TRIPs Agreement, are place names that are used to identify products that originate in those places and whose quality, reputation or some other characteristic is essentially attributable to that region. (Examples include Champagne, Parma ham, and Gruyère cheese.) In the debates over the establishment of a multilateral register for GIs, delegates have clashed over a number of issues, including whether participation in the system should be mandatory, and whether Members should be allowed to challenge proposed registrations.

Last summer, a coalition of more than 100 Members, including the EU, India, Brazil and Switzerland, put forward a set of 'draft modalities' – the broad outlines of a deal – for the TRIPS discussions, including the multilateral register (see Bridges Weekly, 23 July 2008, <http://ictsd.net/i/ip/13903/>). That proposal has been the subject of much discussion in the group since then.

With many the questions on that proposal now answered, delegates at last week's meeting turned to how the talks should move forward from here. Opponents of the 'draft modalities' paper, which include Argentina, Australia, Canada, and the United States, maintained that the TRIPS group should spend its next formal meeting, which is scheduled for 10 June, conducting a question-and-answer session on their competing 'Joint Proposal'.

But the EU opposed that suggestion, arguing that the 'Joint Proposal' has remained largely unchanged since it was first put forward in 2002, and that delegates have had plenty of time to discuss it.

Clarke, the chair, urged the delegates to focus on the issues at hand. If the pace of the negotiations does not pick up soon, the TRIPS issues could be the limiting factor impeding the conclusion of the Doha Round, Clarke warned.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO's Lamy continues engagement on intellectual property issues," IP-WATCH, 14 May 2009.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

If you would like to submit an event, please email bridges_weekly@ictsd.ch.

Coming up: 28 May – 3 June

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.

29-30 May, Berne, Switzerland. THE DIPLOMACY OF WTO ACCESSION: RECONCILING EXISTING TENSIONS AND ADDRESSING NEW CHALLENGES. One of the most remarkable successes of the World Trade Organization in recent years has been the expansion of WTO Membership and the continued stream of applications of countries to accede to the WTO. The March 2009 Hague Journal of Diplomacy's Special Issue on the Diplomacy of WTO Accession highlighted the dramatic changes in the process of accession to the WTO from that of its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and its implications for the global trading system. This two-day workshop will provide an opportunity for contributors to the Hague Journal of Diplomacy's Special Issue and a distinguished group of experts to present and discuss recent work with senior trade and development officials drawn from the ranks of the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, UNCTAD and the European Commission, chief accession negotiators, and academic experts. For more information, please click here <http://ictsd.net/downloads/2009/05/wti-diplomacy-of-accession-workshop-programme-final-2.pdf>.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted

http://www.wto.org/meets_public/meets_e.pdf.

Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

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| 1 June: | Whit Monday (WTO non-working day) |
| 3 June: | Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions |
| 8-9 June: | TRIPS Council – Special Session |

Other upcoming events

5 June, Paris, France. 9TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM ON AFRICA. At this event, politicians will engage with more than 500 journalists, business people, development cooperation professionals, researchers, civil society representatives and students to debate the findings of the latest edition of the African Economic Outlook (AEO). At the 9th Forum, OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría, African Development Bank President, Donald Kaberuka and UNECA Executive Secretary, Abdoulaye Jannet will welcome key African Ministers and CEOs of global companies to debate on African strategies in times of crises, as well as the successes and challenges of the information and communication technologies on the continent. For more information, please visit http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_38469764_1_1_1_1,00.html.

12 June, Geneva, Switzerland. LINKING ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND WTO LAW: THE ROLE OF THE WTO IN THE ENERGY AND CLIMATE DEBATE. This one-day workshop, which is sponsored jointly by the World Trade Institute and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, will address the links between climate change and trade liberalisation, competitiveness & leakage, and energy. Trade regimes have the potential to significantly help or hinder progress towards climate change goals. The need to incorporate climate change considerations into the trade regime asks serious questions of what can be achieved within present agreements and structures and what changes may be required. The central role that energy plays in both climate change and trade has led to suggestions that the next WTO round should be an 'energy round'. Both WTI and IISD have been working at the cutting edge of trade and climate change linkages and are completing major programmes on those issues. Results from these programmes will inform the Copenhagen negotiations and form the basis for the 12 June workshop, which will include speakers from the WTO. If you would like to register, please send an email to Olga Nartova, olga.nartova@wti.org. For more information,

please click here: <http://ictsd.net/downloads/2009/05/wti-iisd-programme-12-june-2009.pdf>.

7-19 June, Venice, Italy. 2009 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY WORKSHOP. This workshop, jointly sponsored by the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (CMCC) and the International Centre for Climate Governance, represents an informal network of analysts actively working on international energy issues. The IEW provides a venue for scholars and researchers to compare quantitative energy projections and to understand the reasons for diverging views of future developments. The workshop is structured with one plenary session per day, each one hosting two key-note speeches of international experts of the research field. Then, three parallel sessions will be held at each time slot with 3 or 4 presentations each. The aim is to select about 85 papers out of the applications. For more information please visit <http://www.iccgov.org/iew2009/2-0.htm>.

16-17 June, Belfast, Ireland. SUSTAINABLE OCEAN SUMMIT: REDUCING RISK, INCREASING SUSTAINABILITY: SOLUTIONS THROUGH COLLABORATION. The Sustainable Ocean Summit (SOS) is the only international, cross-sectoral industry conference on business leadership and sustainable development of the marine environment. The meeting will bring together participants from the shipping, oil and gas, fisheries, aquaculture, mining, and maritime salvage sectors to define the global business agenda on oceans and to develop proactive policies and programmes to address the ocean sustainability challenges confronting the private sector. The conference, which is being organised by the World Ocean Council, stresses that as activity in the ocean increases more collaborative efforts will be needed to achieve sustainable management of the sea. For further information, visit <http://www.oceancouncil.org/site/events.php>.

22-24 June, Vienna, Austria. INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONFERENCE 2009: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED ENERGY AGENDA BEYOND 2020: SECURING SUSTAINABLE POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS. Now in its

tenth year, this conference aims to provide a platform for policy makers and representatives from the private and public sectors to discuss energy issues in the context of the global financial crisis. Co-organized by UNIDO, IIASA, the Austrian Development Cooperation and the Austrian Energy Agency, this event will stress the need for increased international cooperation and highlight the role the UN system and development partners can play in this agenda. For more information refer to: internet: <http://www.viennaenergyconference.org/>

Resources

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC. UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, April 2009. The study examines the environmental, economic and social challenges that are the roots of the Asia Pacific region's food insecurity and suggests a regional framework of action to be taken by governments and the international community in order to create greater food security. In the short term, governments need to develop and strengthen social protection programmes and to improve the availability of food at the national and local levels. In the medium term, it is critical to support the revitalisation of small-scale sustainable food production. Predictions concerning food production vary. However, even if overall production were to remain high, declines in certain parts of the Asia-Pacific region may be expected. Over the long term, adapting and mitigating impacts from climate change will have to be a top priority for all countries in the region. To download the report, click here <http://unescap.org/65/documents/Theme-Study/st-escap-2535.pdf>.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN TEXTILE AND APPAREL INPUTS: POTENTIAL FOR COMPETITIVE PRODUCTION. US International Trade Commission, May 2009. Sub-Saharan African countries have the greatest potential to be competitive in the production of cotton yarn, fabric, and other textile and apparel inputs, but they face numerous challenges, this

report concludes. Cotton is the primary fibre currently used in the production of yarn and fabric in the subject countries, and it is grown in large quantities in the region. SSA countries also have the potential to competitively produce certain niche textile items, the authors found. As a whole, SSA countries have an insufficient apparel base through which to develop and sustain upstream production in yarn, fabric, and other inputs. SSA countries also face severe challenges with their infrastructure, such as inadequate power and water supplies, and inadequate transportation networks. These infrastructure challenges not only raise the cost of existing production, but also deter significant new investment in the capital-intensive textile industry. To download the report, please visit

<http://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub4078.pdf>

IISD-GSI: CALL FOR PROPOSALS EXAMINING THE REFORM OF FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and its Global Subsidies Initiative (GSI) are commissioning three case studies to examine cases of fossil-fuel subsidy reform in developing countries. The studies, undertaken by in-country researchers, would focus on the experience of reform and the lessons learnt from the process. The cases do not necessarily need to be limited to examples of successful reform. Initially, only 1 to 2 page proposals outlining the case study to be examined are being requested. Deadline for proposals is June 5th 2009. For more information on the Terms of Reference for the study please contact Chris Charles at the following email address: ccharles@iisd.org. To download the full project outline, please visit: http://www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net/pdf/tor_successful_reform_fossil_fuel_subsidies.pdf