



Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest

Weekly trade news from a sustainable development perspective

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Contributors to this issue of Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest© are Trineesh Biswas, Jonathan Hepburn, Ana Maria Kleymeyer and Paige McClanahan. Editor: Paige McClanahan. Director: Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz.

LEAD STORIES

EU, Latin Americans Call Truce in Long-Running Banana War

The European Union and a group of Latin American countries have reached an agreement to end tensions over the EU's tariffs on banana imports, bringing to a close the longest international trade dispute in memory.

At issue is the EU's current banana import regime, which allows 775,000 tonnes of the fruit from African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries – many of which are former European colonies – to enter the bloc duty-free each year. Meanwhile, Brussels places a €176 per tonne tariff on bananas from all other exporters.

Many Latin American countries, which include some of the world's biggest banana exporters, have long insisted that this import regime illegally discriminates in favour of bananas from ACP countries and violates WTO rules on quantitative restrictions. The WTO's Dispute Settlement Body has supported such claims, and Brussels has been under pressure to revise its policies.

The United States also has an interest in the agreement, as several major banana companies – namely Chiquita, Del Monte and Dole – operate in Latin America but are headquartered in the US. Washington has joined the Latin American countries in challenging the European banana tariff regime at the WTO.

But the deal initialled on Tuesday brings all of those tensions to a close, nearly 19 years after Costa Rica first raised concerns about the EU import duties under the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the WTO's predecessor.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy warmly welcomed the end of “one of the most technically complex, politically sensitive and commercially meaningful legal disputes ever brought to the WTO.”

“I hope that the same pragmatism, creativity and diplomacy will help move forward the Doha Round negotiations,” he added.

Outline of the pact

The deal, which was initialled at the WTO’s Geneva headquarters on Tuesday, will gradually cut the EU’s tariffs on Latin American banana exports from the current level of €176 per tonne to €114 per tonne by 2017, beginning with a ‘down payment’ cut of €28 per tonne that took effect on 15 December. From here on, the tariff will drop by between €3 and €7 per tonne each year from 2011 to 2017, when it will reach its final level of €114.

If a Doha Round deal has not been finalised by the end of 2013, further tariff cuts after that date “will be delayed until Doha modalities are established,” according to the text of the deal initialled on Tuesday. But delegates added the caveat that “under no circumstances” will that delay extend beyond 31 December 2015.

The two sides have reportedly agreed to a truce on any ongoing or future WTO disputes on the matter. In a parallel agreement signed by the EU and the US, Washington also agreed to drop its WTO suit against European banana tariffs.

The pact is accompanied by a guarantee of “up to €200 million” in compensation for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, who claim that the new deal to open up the European market to Latin American bananas will undermine their less-competitive domestic producers.

“This is the best possible deal we could achieve,” said Karel De Gucht, who will soon take over as EU Trade Commissioner. “I know ACP producers will face challenges in adjusting to the new situation. But the EU will do its best to help.”

According to a study by Giovanni Anania of the University of Calabria, ACP exports to the EU

will drop by 14 percent under the new deal, while exports from other banana producing countries – largely in Latin America – will jump by 17 percent. Overall, EU banana imports will increase by 6 percent. (The study was commissioned by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, the publisher of Bridges Weekly.)
Links to tropical products, preference erosion

At a political level, the EU has been linking the banana debate to progress on some issues in the WTO’s Doha Round trade talks, particularly the agriculture negotiations on ‘preference erosion’ and tariff reductions for ‘tropical products’ – two topics of particular interest to ACP countries.

The European Trade Commission said in a statement released on Tuesday that the EU, ACP countries, and Latin American countries had reached agreement on how they will approach the two sensitive areas of the Doha talks.

“‘Tropical products’ will be subject to deeper tariff cuts, while tariff cuts for ‘preference erosion’ products of interest to ACP countries will be conducted over a relatively longer period,” the statement said.

Negotiating mandates to liberalise trade in tropical products while addressing the effects of preference erosion have long pitted Latin American liberalisation proponents against countries in the ACP group, which benefit from preferential access to major markets, for bananas as well as other products such as sugar and rum. If non-ACP developing countries gain easier access to the European and other major markets, the group of former colonies’ trade preferences will be ‘eroded’, and they fear that their producers may struggle to compete.

This issue has been central to the banana dispute, and has linked it intrinsically with the Doha Round farm talks. But now those tensions appear to have been resolved.

For real this time?

European and Latin American officials came close to striking a deal on bananas during the WTO’s ‘mini-ministerial’ conference in July 2008. But

those talks broke down over other issues and a banana agreement was never finalised.

But this month's deal appears to be on more solid footing. The deal was initialled on Tuesday by representatives from the EU, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.

The pact will be presented to the WTO membership for review at a meeting of the organisation's General Council on Thursday. Members will then have 90 days to raise any objections to the EU's proposed new tariff structure.

More information

The ICTSD study is available here: <http://ictsd.org/i/publications/50782/>

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER NEWS

Copenhagen Update: Draft Climate Texts Move toward Final Decision

In the wee hours of Wednesday morning, the chair of the ad-hoc working group for long-term cooperative action (LCA) gavelled a decision to conclude work on texts that are a basis for a new global accord on climate change, which parties have been negotiating over the last two years. The texts will now be considered, refined, and eventually adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at the Copenhagen climate talks.

This is the official process by which this year's negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change advance towards their grand finale at the end of this week: a political agreement on enhanced cooperative action on climate change.

The process was intended, initially, to generate a new international agreement to address climate change – an outcome that island states and many

least developed countries had been strongly urging. But two weeks of intense negotiations have revealed what many expected: that the countries of the world cannot agree on how to proceed.

At this point, both the Kyoto Protocol and the LCA negotiating tracks have concluded their initial phases of work. The Parties will now consider how to proceed and may return the heavily bracketed texts to negotiators with some instructions on how to continue cleaning them up.

Although there are few paragraphs without brackets in the latest draft texts that are now under consideration, it is possible to give a quick rundown of the state-of-play of the trade-related aspects of the text. That said, the final outcome of the Copenhagen talks of course remains uncertain.

Trade issues in the latest draft texts

The chair of the LCA group has prepared a conclusion to the work of the group that indicates that the COP should decide on a set of 'draft decision documents'. Each of those documents relates to a separate section of the Bali Action Plan, the roadmap for the negotiations that officials agreed two years ago.

On adaptation, the text includes bracketed proposal for the establishment of a Copenhagen Adaptation Framework (or Programme). It also includes language on building economic resilience in developing countries. To this end, trade is expected to play a role insofar as it can strengthen export and supply-side capacity in developing countries. The language on increased financial, technology and capacity building support for adaptation also presents significant synergies with national and international efforts to strengthen trade capacity, such as through the WTO's Aid for Trade initiative and the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Least Developed Countries.

The draft conclusions on technology development and transfer envisage the establishment of a 'Technology Mechanism' with an executive committee and a climate technology centre. Notably, this proposal is not in brackets, meaning that no delegation has opposed it. The mechanism would support a list of activities; only one of those

activities remains in brackets: the removal of barriers to technology development and transfer and enhancing means to promote technology transfer. The text on technology further proposes the establishment or strengthening of technology centres and networks, an initiative that would aim to help developing countries make use of new low-carbon technologies, while strengthening their ability to develop their own.

Notably, a section on intellectual property rights (IPRs), which is still in brackets, would create a global pool for IPRs on climate-related technologies, promote the removal of barriers to technology development and transfer, and possibly revoke IPR protection in developing and least developed countries. The technology text includes language that would continue deliberation on the issues under consideration, with a view to having a decision finalised next year.

The negotiations on cooperative sectoral approaches have led to an agriculture-focused text that emphasises the relationship between climate change and food security and that recognises the interests of small and marginal farmers and indigenous peoples. The text also places an emphasis on the importance of traditional knowledge and calls for the establishment of a special work programme on the topic. In brackets, the text stresses that international action in this sector should not lead to disguised restrictions of international trade.

The text on the potential economic and social consequences of response measures taken in response to climate change now includes three options on how to address the question of border carbon measures. The first option is strong language prohibiting their use. The second is simple language referring to the principles of the climate convention.

The third option – considered the compromise alternative – emphasises the specific language in the Convention so as to create a level of comfort for countries concerned with unilateral measures that the United States is contemplating in their national legislation. Finally, this text also includes a bracketed paragraph that would establish a forum with an array of functions, including identifying and evaluating the effects of response

measures, both positive and negative. The power and extent of this forum has yet to be defined, but has been the subject of much debate in the negotiations.

Heads of state and government gave speeches throughout the day on Wednesday and those who showed up will all likely participate in the closing of this year's COP on Friday. Notably, the level of security and size of national delegations is so high that the participation of observer organisations has been restricted to just 90 people (out of 15,000) during Friday's closing event. This new development has led many organisations to criticise the unusual lack of transparency and democratic process exercised this year. A number of heads of state have cancelled their participation, while others have already given their statements today.

Rumour has it that the elephant in the room, whose president has already confirmed his participation, may not actually show up on the 18th as expected. To officials in Copenhagen, this wavering on the part of the United States speaks volumes about the level of commitment and the strength of the Copenhagen outcome.

ICTSD will report on 21 December on the advances on trade issues and final outcome, as well as the perspective on the future, as it is accepted that negotiations on many details will continue past Copenhagen towards the 16th COP, which will be held in Mexico next December.

ICTSD reporting.

NAMA Talks Make Progress on NTBs

WTO members took an “important step” forward in talks on preventing non-tariff measures such as health and safety standards from unduly restricting trade in manufactured goods, the chair of the Doha Round negotiating committee on industrial products said last week.

Luzius Wasescha, the Swiss ambassador to the WTO who chairs the negotiating group on non-agricultural market access (NAMA), praised delegations on 10 December for preparing well

and engaging constructively during the four days of fairly technical discussions.

Over the course of the negotiations on ‘non-tariff barriers’ (NTBs, in negotiators’ parlance), countries have submitted a range of proposals pertaining to individual industrial sectors such as textiles, footwear, and electronics. The proposals aim to establish rules to ensure that government policies like technical regulations, health and safety standards, product certification procedures, and labelling requirements do not restrict trade more than necessary.

Other proposals have been more general, such as one for a ‘horizontal mechanism’ for quickly mediating trade irritants arising from non-tariff measures without going through the WTO’s time-consuming and expensive formal dispute settlement process.

Last week’s talks focused primarily on NTB issues in the automotive and electronics sectors.

Both the EU and the US have tabled proposals setting out potential rules for standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures for the two sectors.

The principal difference between the two commercial giants is the role given to international standards. The EU wants WTO members to harmonise their national regulations with international standards. The US proposal focuses more narrowly on “non-tariff barriers pertaining to the electrical safety and electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) of electronic goods,” and favours an approach based on transparency about the way regulations are developed and made public.

The difference is similar with regard to the automotive sector. The EU proposal (TN/MA/W/118) references the World Forum for the Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations, a body that exists within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, calling for it to be recognised as the “main relevant international standard-setting body” for a list of vehicles and auto parts. Brussels wants ‘regulatory convergence and harmonisation’, calling for “harmonising technical regulations and

conformity assessment procedures on as wide a basis as possible.” The US proposal (TN/MA/W/120) would recognise as an “appropriate international standardising body” any organisation that agreed to abide by a set of regulatory-related decisions already adopted by WTO members. While Washington urges countries to participate in international standard-setting, and to consider using each other’s regulations, it places more emphasis on ‘good regulatory practice’, particularly transparency.

However arcane the discussions on non-tariff barriers, they are one of the principal obstacles keeping goods out of potential export markets, especially with industrial tariff levels relatively low in most major economies.

Wasescha said that participants in small-group consultations on the proposals eschewed a divisive either-or attitude to the proposals in favour of a more constructive approach, focusing on the many similarities – “where the differences were largely of drafting.” The EU and the US both pointed to the raised costs for industry arising from unnecessary confusion over standards. The two major economies called for transparency procedures such as consulting with interested parties before introducing new regulations that differ from global benchmarks, and considering the costs of compliance with proposed regulatory changes.

The chair of the negotiating group said that there was little divergence in members’ views on transparency, with the debate centring principally on whether sector-specific rules are necessary, or whether a common set of principles (with sector-specific comments) might suffice.

Wasescha also said that members had also been pragmatic about a separate issue: whether a declaration by a supplier that a product meets a specified standard or technical regulation or other specification (based on a conformity assessment evaluation) should suffice, or whether certification by an outside organisation should be necessary. He said that most countries, irrespective of the school of thought to which they subscribed, permitted ‘self-declaration of conformity’ for some products while requiring third-party certification for others. In the name of

transparency, he urged them to develop lists of which products were subject to which certification requirements.

He spoke favourably of the 'horizontal mechanism' for the mediation of NTB-related trade blockages favoured by a wide range of countries including the EU, India, South Africa, and his own Switzerland, calling it a mechanism for "dispute prevention." He suggested that fears about the mechanism's effects on regular WTO dispute settlement were overblown, since the mediation would be optional.

In a press conference following the committee meetings, Wasescha said he was pleased with delegations' engagement, saying that they had showed readiness to accept proposals that they had resisted only weeks before. He expressed hope that countries would soon be able to move to an NTB negotiation that is based on draft legal language for a future agreement (as opposed to a debate on underlying principles).

But trade diplomats report that no signs of movement are visible on what is now main stumbling block in the NAMA negotiations: whether large developing markets like China, Brazil, and India choose to participate in voluntary initiatives to cut deeply or even eliminate tariffs across entire industrial sectors, as the US and the EU demand.

Sources say that earlier in the week, Wasescha said that negotiators would need to "work, work, work" if they were to have a chance of concluding the Doha Round by the end of 2010, a goal widely shared during the WTO's recent ministerial conference.

The next NAMA week is tentatively scheduled for early February 2010.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

UNITAID Approves Patent Pool for AIDS Drugs

The executive board of the drug-purchasing facility UNITAID has given a green light to the implementation of a patent pool meant to make critical AIDS drugs more widely available, and at lower prices, in the developing world.

The board announced on 14 December that UNITAID will provide US\$ 4 million over the next year to get the new licensing agency up and running. The drug purchasing facility has also agreed to manage the initiative, which is to take effect around the middle of 2010.

"This is an historic day," said Philippe Douste-Blazy, Chair of UNITAID's Executive Board. "UNITAID has now put in place a mechanism that will make medical advances work for the poor, while compensating companies for sharing their technology."

The new pool will serve as a commons in which patent holders will be able to licence their technology in exchange for royalties. The pool will thus allow generic companies to gain relatively cheap access to the protected information they need to make lower-cost versions of patented drugs. So far, UNITAID has identified 19 products from nine companies that it hopes to include in the pool.

Critically from a public health perspective, the patent pool is expected to facilitate the production of more affordable versions of fixed-dose combination (FDC) pills, drugs made up of several medications that are often produced by different companies. FDCs have proven to be critical to the safe and effective treatment of HIV/AIDS, UNITAID said in a statement.

But whether the pool will be effective in making lower-cost AIDS drugs available in developing countries largely hinges on the patent holders themselves. The new mechanism is voluntary, and it is not yet clear how many manufacturers of

brand name drugs will choose to participate. But some observers are optimistic.

“We’ve had enormous interest from companies and political support from numerous constituencies around the globe,” said Ellen ‘t Hoen, who is in charge of the patent pool for UNITAID. “We’re now ready to move to the next phase – reaching agreements with companies to get the drugs out.”

Some in the public health community had feared that, under pressure from some major drug manufacturers, UNITAID would restrict the patent pool to only the poorest countries. But the drug purchasing facility made it clear in a statement released on Tuesday that the patent pool will be made available to “low- and middle-income countries” alike.

The notion of a patent pool has been in the works for more than seven years, according to James Love, Director of the NGO Knowledge Ecology International, an NGO that has participated actively in the patent pool discussions. The initiative has been debated within UNITAID since 2006.

“This is an important decision,” said Michelle Childs, Director of Policy and Advocacy at Médecins Sans Frontières, “but the pool will be judged on its outcome for patients.”

ICTSD reporting.

Obama Says US Ready to Join Asia-Pacific Trade Talks

The administration of US President Barack Obama notified Congress on Monday that it intends to negotiate a free trade agreement with a group of nations in the Asia-Pacific. It is the first bold trade-opening move of the Obama presidency.

In letters to two prominent members of the US Congress dated 14 December, US Trade Representative Ron Kirk said that Obama intends to enter into negotiations toward a Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP), an Asia-Pacific

trade deal that aims to liberalise markets and integrate economies across the region.

The TPP, which took effect in 2006, currently covers founding members Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore. Australia, Peru and Vietnam have also signalled an interest in joining the pact, and Kirk indicated that the current signatories hope to broaden the agreement’s scope even further.

In his letters to House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senator Robert Byrd, who is now President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Kirk stressed that US exporters could be pushed out of the Asia-Pacific market if Washington fails to liberalise trade with countries in the region.

“We have seen a proliferation of trade agreements in the Asia-Pacific region to which the United States is not a party,” Kirk wrote. “These agreements, as well as other economic developments, have led to a significant decline in the US share of key Asia-Pacific markets over the past decade.”

Kirk failed to note, however, that the United States already has bilateral free trade deals with four of the seven current or potential TPP members: Australia, Chile, Peru and Singapore. It is not clear whether the region-wide agreement would entail even greater market opening than what has already been implemented under those deals.

Obama gave vague signals of US interest in participating in the TPP talks in a speech in Tokyo last month. In the weeks since, USTR officials have been holding consultations with lawmakers and interest groups to weigh support for a deal. The Office of the USTR is now seeking comments from the public; Kirk promised in his letters to hold “regular and rigorous consultations” with lawmakers as the negotiations proceed.

And for good reason: the US Congress will have to approve any new trade deal before it can take effect. Kirk has suggested that his office will not hesitate to ask lawmakers to grant the White House ‘fast-track’ negotiating authority if and when an agreement is ready for approval. The

special authority, also known as Trade Promotion Authority, or TPA, would require lawmakers to vote simply Yes or No on a given trade agreement; they would have no opportunity to amend the negotiated deal.

The first round of the expanded TPP negotiations will be held in March in Australia.

ICTSD reporting.

WIPO Traditional Knowledge Committee Pushes Toward Text-Based Talks

After hard-fought negotiations during informal talks from 7 to 11 December, the committee of the World Intellectual Property Organization that deals with traditional knowledge came close to agreement on how its text-based negotiations should proceed.

Under the guidance of newly elected chair Juan José Gómez Camacho of Mexico, the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources (the IGC) came within “a centimetre” of agreeing on a framework for how its negotiations will proceed between now and September 2011, when the IGC is supposed to present the WIPO General Assembly with texts outlining a legal instrument (or instruments) on the protection of the three topics in its mandate.

Last week’s meetings were guided by a new mandate for WIPO that was agreed in October. That document calls on the eight-year-old IGC to move to “text-based negotiations” with the aim of “reaching agreement on a text of an international legal instrument (or instruments) which will ensure the effective protection of [genetic resources], [traditional knowledge], and [traditional cultural expressions].” The mandate also calls for the IGC to develop a “clearly defined work programme” for 2010 and 2011.

But despite some progress in substantive discussions during last week’s meetings, delegates continue to disagree on a couple of fronts, namely how the committee’s intersessional working groups should be composed, and in what order

the delegates should discuss each of its three issues.

A proposal put forward earlier this year by the African Group posits that the number of experts who participate in the working group sessions should be capped, but the Group B coalition of developed countries wants no limit to be put on the number of people who can participate in the meetings.

Delegates also disagree over whether the three issues under their mandate – genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions – should be discussed in separate sessions, or jointly. The African Group has argued in favour of the former option, while the Group B countries prefer the latter.

The committee agreed to take up such questions when it next meets. Three ‘intersessional’ working group meetings have already been scheduled: one in February or March 2010, another in October 2010, and a third in February or March 2011.

If, as planned, the IGC forwards texts to the General Assembly in September 2011, the members of the GA will then decide whether to convene a diplomatic conference to consider adopting the texts. “If and when a diplomatic conference is convened on these matters, any instrument(s) adopted would become legally binding on those states which choose to ratify it/them,” WIPO said in a statement on Friday.

Some of the issues under discussion in the IGC, such as genetic resources and traditional knowledge, are also being discussed in other international forums, most prominently the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The next CBD Conference of the Parties, which will be held in Japan in October next year, is expected to result in important decisions regarding the long-running negotiations on an international regime for access and benefit sharing. Many observers have begun speculating about how developed and developing countries may try to make the work of the IGC consistent with their desired outcomes in the CBD negotiations.

ICTSD reporting; “WIPO traditional knowledge negotiators dodging roadblocks,” IP-WATCH, 10 December 2009.

WTO IN BRIEF

Countries Exchange Technical Notes on SSM

At an informal small-group meeting last Thursday convened by the chair of the WTO agriculture negotiations, trade negotiators exchanged 'technical notes' simulating how the proposed special safeguard mechanism could work in practice.

The special safeguard mechanism, widely known as the SSM, is intended to allow developing countries to protect farmers in the event of import surges or price declines. The mechanism has been a source of significant controversy in the WTO farm talks: exporters allege that the SSM could be used to block normal trade, while developing country importers argue that the mechanism would be vital to helping them defend domestic producers from volatile markets.

Disagreement over the SSM was widely blamed for triggering the collapse of high-level WTO trade talks in July 2008. Last week's technical exchange does not seem to have eased the controversy.

Three exporting countries – Brazil, the US and Uruguay – made presentations on the safeguard mechanism. A fourth exporting country, Australia, has also prepared a technical note. That document was not presented at the meeting, but trade sources reported that it had been shared informally with a few delegations.

Delegates familiar with the discussion indicated that the presentation by Uruguay focused in particular on how often countries have used other safeguard instruments, such as the WTO's Agreement on Safeguards and Countervailing Measures, as a remedy, and also considered the extent to which countries already have room to manoeuvre between their actual 'applied' tariffs

and the maximum permitted 'bound' rates to which they have agreed at the WTO. Proponents of the special safeguard mechanism argued that the focus of discussions should be on how the safeguard should work, not on the agreed mandate for the instrument.

The US presentation considered the cases of India, Turkey, China and the Philippines, taking as examples soybeans, palm oil and apples, and looking primarily at the period from 2002 to 2007. The US sought to suggest that, if the safeguard were 'triggered' when average import levels increased by 10, 20 or even 40 percent above historical averages, normal trade in many years could be affected. However, sources reported that it remained unclear how the US had incorporated the three-year rolling average in its simulation.

The simulation by Brazil looked at one example only, that of soybeans, and examined the extent to which trade in the product was 'seasonal' and therefore subject to important increases and decreases in different months during the year.

The Australian paper, although not discussed at the meeting, was reportedly the most detailed and technical analysis conducted on the issue so far. The study simulated Chinese imports of swine offal and soybeans, Indonesian rice, coffee and capsicum imports, and Indian imports of apples. The study suggested that “intensive work in one or more blocks of time” would be needed “in the coming months.”

The G-33 group of developing country proponents of the special safeguard mechanism was reportedly also planning to prepare a technical study for discussion early next year. Exporting countries indicated that a technical response from the G-33 would be a welcome contribution to the discussion.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming up this week

7-18 December, Copenhagen, Denmark. **TRADE AND CLIMATE CHANGE EVENTS IN COPENHAGEN.** This series of events, organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), are taking place on the sidelines of the official negotiations at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties. Topics that will be covered include the diffusion of climate-friendly technology, competitiveness, agriculture, bunker fuels and developing countries' concerns. ICTSD's activities will be held at the official conference venue (the Bella Centre) and nearby facilities. Events are open to all who wish to participate; however, advance registration is required for some. For more information, please see <http://ictsd.org/climate-change/copenhagen-events/>.

7-18 December, Copenhagen, Denmark. **15TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE.** Under the agenda agreed at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007, this conference is expected to finalise an agreement on a framework for combating climate change after the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires at the end of 2012. The sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are open to Parties of the Convention and observer states (governments), the United Nations System and observer organisations duly admitted by the Conference of the Parties. In addition, accredited press is allowed to cover the proceedings of the Convention. For more information, please see <http://unfccc.int/meetings/items/4749.php>.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at http://www.wto.org/meets_public/meets_e.pdf. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO

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

17-18 December: General Council

21 December: Dispute Settlement Body

Other upcoming events

27-31 January, Davos, Switzerland. **WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING.** In response to new priorities, the organising theme for the 40th World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in 2010 is a call to action, "Improve the State of the World: Rethink, Redesign and Rebuild." Driving the rethink at the 40th Annual Meeting will be the Network of Global Agenda Councils comprised of over 1,000 experts active in over 70 Councils created to advance solutions to the most critical challenges facing the world. For more information, please see <http://www.weforum.org/en/events/AnnualMeeting2010/index.htm>

5-7 February, New Delhi, India. **DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (DSDS 2010): BEYOND COPENHAGEN: NEW PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.** This global forum will be one of the first major gatherings of leaders from various regions of the world after the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties in December 2009. DSDS 2010 will focus on the formulation and delineation of strategies to move the sustainable development agenda forward. Major themes include accelerating socio-economic development as a key to adaptation, role of technology, building institutions for effective climate governance, and financing opportunities post Copenhagen. For more information, contact the Summit Secretariat: tel: +91-11-2468-2100; fax: +91-11-2468-2144; email: dsds@teri.res.in; internet: <http://dsds.teriin.org/2010/index.php>

18-19 February, Paris, France. **9TH OECD GLOBAL FORUM ON COMPETITION.** This meeting will focus on state aids and subsidies and collusion and corruption in public procurement. Participants will also discuss a peer review of competition law and policy in Brazil. The GFC

provides an opportunity for policy dialogue between OECD member countries and non-members. The discussion benefits from the input of the Competition Committee, whose work has already generated substantial results in many countries, such as the voluntary adoption of 'best practices', substantial analytical convergence, the establishment of strong networks of enforcement authorities, and enhanced co-operation in international merger reviews, cartel investigations and other cases. For more information, please see http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_40382599_40393118_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

18 March, London, UK. GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES: THE IMPACT OF REGULATION ON COMPETITIVENESS. As the global financial crisis shows early signs of receding, this is a key moment to ask what will be the likely future shape and structure of financial services firms. If moves to regulate the industry more tightly are successful, what impact will this have on financial firms' ability to do business? At this event sponsored by Chatham House, policymakers and financial services industry leaders from the major economies will discuss the role, structure and regulation of the financial services industry, and which forums, mechanisms and institutions will be effective in restoring confidence in its activities. For more information, please see <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/gfs/>.

contains several export-led powerhouses. For more information, or to download the report, please visit <http://www.globaltradealert.org/gta-analysis/unrelenting-pressure-protectionism-3rd-gta-report>.

IS DEVELOPMENT BACK IN THE DOHA ROUND? By Kevin P. Gallagher and Timothy A. Wise. South Centre, November 2009. In this policy brief, the authors argue that the claims that developing countries will be the big winners from the WTO's Doha Round trade talks rest on shaky assumptions, controversial economic modelling, misleading representations of the benefits, and disregard for the high costs of Doha-style liberalisation for many developing countries. The authors conclude with a series of recommendations to put development back into the Doha Round. In particular, they call for a moratorium on North-South preferential trade agreements, which they say exploit the asymmetric nature of bargaining power between developed and developing nations, divert trade away from nations with true comparative advantages, and curtail the ability of developing countries to deploy effective policies for development. To download the publication, please see <http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/rp/SouthCt rPB18IsDevBackNov09.html>.

AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES IN THE WTO GREEN BOX: ENSURING COHERENCE WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. Edited by Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, Christophe Bellmann and Jonathan Hepburn, Cambridge University Press, December 2009. Do the World Trade Organization's rules on 'green box' farm subsidies allow both rich and poor countries to achieve important goals such as food security, or do they worsen poverty, distort trade and harm the environment? Current WTO requirements set no ceiling on the amount of green box subsidies that governments can provide, on the basis that these payments cause only minimal trade distortion. Governments are thus increasingly shifting their subsidy spending into this category, as they come under pressure to reduce subsidies that are more directly linked to production. However, growing evidence nonetheless suggests that green box payments can affect production and trade, harm farmers in developing countries and cause environmental

Resources

THE UNRELENTING PRESSURE OF PROTECTIONISM: THE 3RD GTA REPORT. By Simon Evenett. Global Trade Alert, 7 December 2009. At a time when more commentators are becoming cautiously optimistic about the prospects for 2010, this report from Global Trade Alert presents the latest data on the protectionist dynamics at work since the first G20 crisis-related Summit in November 2008 and highlights the many anti-trade measures that are in the pipeline. The report draws on a rich evidential base of over 600 completed investigations of state measures that could affect foreign commercial interests. It places a particular focus on developments in the Asia-Pacific region, which

damage. By bringing together new research and critical thinking, this book examines the relationship between green box subsidies and the achievement of sustainable development goals, and explores options for future reform. To learn more or purchase a copy of the book, please visit <http://www.cambridge.org/uk/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521519694>.

TRADE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: KEY ISSUES FOR SMALL STATES, LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND VULNERABLE ECONOMIES. Edited by Dr Moustapha Kamal Gueye, Malena Sell and Janet Strachan. The Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, December 2009. Responding to climate change is a global challenge with significant implications for small developing countries. Debate on how trade policy can mitigate the effects of climate change has so far centred on developed countries and the large emerging economies, especially China, Brazil and India, but what are the implications for small and vulnerable economies (SVEs), least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS)? This book is the result of a joint project between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, Geneva. It will be of interest to policy-makers and anyone who wants to gain a clear understanding of the implications of climate change on the economies of smaller developing states. To purchase a copy of the book, please visit <http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/trade--climate-change-and-sustainable-development-776-p.aspx>.