



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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Climate Change

India's Khullar says Trade and Environment
Should Not Mix 1

De Boer Steps Down as
UNFCCC Chief 3

Environment at the WTO

Environmental Goods attract
Renewed Engagement at WTO 4

In Brief

Chinese Forest Product Exports
Surge over Past Decade 6

Development Activists take Aim at
EU Renewable Energy Targets 7

Events and Resources

Events 8

Resources 10

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CLIMATE CHANGE

India's Khullar says Trade and Environment Should Not Mix

India's chief WTO negotiator has spoken out against the possibility of bringing border carbon adjustments (BCAs) into trade talks at the WTO. Without providing specifics, Rahul Khullar, India's commerce secretary, said that efforts are being made to bring environmental issues through a "back door" into multilateral trade talks and that India is against such a move.

BCAs are unilateral measures that a state imposes when a good is imported from an industry or firm in a country that has not 'comparably offset' the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the good's production. The BCA could be a flat tariff, a tax, or a requirement for the importer to purchase carbon credits that would compensate the country with more stringent regulations for the loss of competitiveness that it incurs because of its emissions standards.

While there is currently no legislation in place that would impose a tax or tariff on exports from countries with more lax environmental standards, the idea has been floated by the EU and the US, among others, as a means to prevent 'carbon leakage' – the movement of industry abroad to avoid complying with environmental standards in a given country.

New issues need further debate: Khullar

Speaking at the release of a new information package on the issue on 18 February in New Delhi, Khullar said that the imposition of BCAs was inevitable. “It is not possible to pretend any longer that this is not going to happen,” he told reporters.

The secretary said he believes that BCAs will be a reality in two to three years’ time, and that the new publication by the Centre for WTO Studies – a research body under the Indian Ministry of Commerce – is intended to stimulate “intellectual debates” on whether the proposed environmental laws would be WTO compatible.

Khullar stressed that India is opposed to the inclusion of environmental issues in trade liberalisation negotiations, adding that the WTO is not the proper venue for such talks. “There are other forums for framing global environmental laws,” he said.

Certain environmental issues have long been discussed at the WTO. Some, such as the liberalisation of trade in environmental goods and services, have even been the subject of formal negotiations at the body’s committee on trade and environment (see related article, this issue). However, Khullar says there are new issues emerging – such as BCAs – that are not being subject to proper international debate.

Despite Khullar’s objections to the mixture of trade and environment, recently the two issues have been regularly colliding. In fact, Brussels has suggested that environmental issues be included in the ongoing bilateral trade talks between the EU and India and trade issues such as BCAs featured prominently at last December’s UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

While developed economies – including the US and EU – are now contemplating how or whether these measures should be implemented, developing countries – especially India and China – say they are concerned that the measures could be used primarily to protect local markets, particularly given the continued slump in the global economy.

Report is a “starting point” for discussions

Khullar called the Centre for WTO Studies’ publication a “starting point” for discussion on the issue. The secretary said because the WTO has been unclear on how it stands on the issue thus far, India should be prepared once the need arises.

The report, entitled “Frequently Asked Questions: WTO Compatibility of Border Trade Measures for Environmental Protection,” outlines key issues regarding the WTO compatibility of BCAs and suggests the possible effects such measures would have on India and global trade relations in general.

The report outlines the various forms under which environmental taxes can be levied and the various ways in which they could be challenged at the WTO. It concludes that if proposed BCA measures fail to address the specific development conditions in developing countries and efforts made towards adopting nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), the taxes are likely to be considered “arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination.”

While India refrained from making any binding commitments at Copenhagen, it agreed to voluntarily bring down its carbon intensity – carbon dioxide emissions compared to each unit of economic output – by 20-25 percent by 2020.

Publication warns of “impending trade war”

The report suggests that several Indian products – including iron, steel, aluminium, pulp and paper products, cement, glass and chemicals – would immediately suffer if BCAs were implemented. It goes on to say that India and other developing countries will undoubtedly challenge the true impetus behind the measures.

“Such measures imposing restrictions on imports on the grounds of providing a ‘level playing field’, or maintaining the ‘competitiveness’ of the domestic industry, etc are likely to be viewed as mere protectionist measures by the developed world to block the exports of the poorer nations,” the report reads. “This is because, there is little empirical evidence that companies relocate to take advantage of lax pollution controls.”

The information package argues that such unilateral trade measures will inevitably lead to tit-for-tat trade restrictions that could spiral out of control. "This will spark trade war and will lead to massive, justified, WTO-legal retaliation by the affected countries," the report reads. Such projections have also been raised by China and several think tanks following the issue.

Speaking at the official release, Khullar was careful to clarify that the report did not represent official government policy, but was rather meant to act as a "pre-emptive strike" against mixing trade and non-trade issues at the WTO. "The idea is to make everybody understand what the issues are in simple terms and generate a debate," he said.

Khullar said that if BCAs were to be discussed at the WTO, he did not believe they would be included in the protracted Doha Round of negotiations.

More information

The Centre for WTO Studies report can be accessed [here:](http://wtocentre.iift.ac.in/FAQ/english/Environment_FAQ.pdf)
http://wtocentre.iift.ac.in/FAQ/english/Environment_FAQ.pdf

ICTSD Reporting; "Clubbing environment with trade wrong," REDIFF BUSINESS, 18 February 2010; "India gets ready to confront EU on 'impending' carbon tax," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 19 February 2010.

De Boer Steps Down as UNFCCC Chief

Yvo de Boer announced his intention to resign from his position as Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) last Thursday. His resignation will take effect on 1 July.

After leaving the UNFCCC, de Boer says he will continue working in his area of expertise, joining the Swiss consultancy group KPMG as Global Advisor on Climate and Sustainability. The role is not currently defined, but he is expected to

primarily act as an advisor to industry on how to react to existing and emerging climate policies.

"It was a difficult decision for me to make, but I believe the time is ripe for me to take on a new challenge, working on climate and sustainability with the private sector and academia," said de Boer in a press release.

Much speculation on timing of resignation

De Boer said that his disappointment in the outcome of the Copenhagen negotiations was not the reason for his resignation and that he believes significant progress has been made. "While Copenhagen did not deliver entirely the outcome we had all hoped for, I do believe it has laid the foundations for a truly global response," de Boer wrote in his official letter of resignation.

However, de Boer has been open about his frustrations with the progress of the climate talks in the past and some observers have speculated that the shortcomings of Copenhagen did, in fact, play a prominent role in his decision to step down. In a post-Copenhagen interview with the Associated Press, de Boer conceded that he thought climate talks should be conducted differently, calling the current method of formal negotiations between thousands of delegates "very much a stop-and-start affair."

In his remaining time at the UNFCCC, de Boer will assist in advancing negotiations for November's Climate Change Conference in Cancún, Mexico. Some observers have raised fears that the loss of de Boer's abilities and expertise will slow progress towards a successful outcome of the negotiations.

However, de Boer and others expressed hope that his successor would provide fresh energy to the negotiations, although de Boer was hesitant to express hopes that a successful agreement will be reached in Cancún, calling it a "very heavy lift."

No clear successor to de Boer's position exists as of yet. There are rumors that Marthinus van Schalkwyk, South Africa's former Minister of Environment and current Minister of Tourism who was quite active in the creation of the Bali Action Plan, has been approached.

Speculators say that regardless of whether it is van Schalkwyk who receives the baton when de Boer steps down, the Executive Secretary successor is likely to come from a developing country.

Yet another jolt for climate community

De Boer's announcement comes as the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is still reeling from scandal that has shaken public confidence in the organisation's scientists. The scandal, dubbed 'climategate' by the media, emerged after emails containing private discussions between climate scientists were stolen from a backup computer server used by the University of East Anglia.

The emails suggested that some IPCC scientists ignored certain data that ran counter to the Panel's position when compiling a 2007 report. Climate sceptics have been quick to present the emails as proof the science of climate change is inherently flawed.

At a 19 February meeting of the American Association for the Advancement Science, a panel of top US and European scientists reaffirmed the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community that the Earth is warming as a result of human activities. However, the panel acknowledged that their colleagues failed to react quickly enough when presented with news of an error in such a significant report.

De Boer was appointed as UNFCCC Executive Secretary by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 10 August 2006. Before coming to the UN, he worked as deputy director general of the environment ministry of the Netherlands.

More information

The UNFCCC press release on de Boer's resignation can be accessed here: http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/pr_20100218_ydboer.pdf

ICTSD reporting; "Top U.N. Climate Official Resigns," NEW YORK TIMES, 18 February 2010; "Departing climate chief pessimistic on

Cancún," FINANCIAL TIMES, 19 February 2010.

ENVIRONMENT AT THE WTO

Environmental Goods attract Renewed Engagement at WTO

Engagement on environmental goods at the WTO is at a three year high, according to a source with knowledge of the 18-19 February special session of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE-SS). The engagement was spurred by a flurry of new proposals that had been put forward previously by Argentina including on specific products by Saudi Arabia and Japan and a new informal submission of specific environmental products of interest by the Philippines.

While the contentious issues, including those of modalities and 'dual-use' have not yet been resolved, there was an indication of a willingness to engage in discussions in response to the Chair's request to members to start identifying products of trade interest. The nature of the discussions was as much an indicator of this as were the specific proposals themselves.

According to a trade delegate, climate change appeared to be very much at the centre of various proposals on goods and it would not be surprising if any final outcome of Paragraph 31 (iii) comprised mainly climate-friendly goods.

Philippines submission emphasises renewable energy products

The highlight of the meeting was, according to trade sources, the submission by the Philippines delegation which, by virtue of including specific product items – with their customs codes, marked a first for developing countries that did not fall within the 'Friends of Environmental Goods' group – such as Korea and Chinese Taipei. The 'friends of environmental goods' comprise Canada, the EU, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Chinese Taipei, Switzerland and the United States.

The informal submission (JOB/TE/2) placed particular emphasis on solar energy-related parts and components and in addressing the non-tariff barriers faced by them. The submission stated that it was without prejudice to the Philippines' position on the specific items that would be included in any final coverage of environmental goods and was contingent on the overall balance in the CTESS and the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations consistent with the principle of the single undertaking. Thus, the Philippines retained the right to add, withdraw or revise items in its submission or make appropriate proposals on other items of discussion under Para 31 (iii).

The items proposed by the Philippines fell under three categories: 'renewable energy', 'waste management, recycling and remediation', and 'others'. The renewable energy comprised 12 products relevant to solar, wind and hydro-electric energy and gas-turbines while the 'waste management' and 'others' category included 5 products.

Notable amongst the items were two examples of 'single-end' use products – products that did not have other 'non-environmental' end uses: wind-powered electric generating sets and photosensitive semiconductor devices (including photovoltaic cells and light emitting diodes). Another notable product group included were biodegradable mats and screens made from coconut fibre to prevent soil erosion.

The Philippines submission reportedly drew support from a number of members from the ASEAN region in particular on products such as solar-panels and wind turbines.

Japanese submission emphasises standards for energy-efficient products

Japan also contributed a new proposal (TN/TE/W/75/Add.1) that complements its preceding proposal (TN/TE/W/75), submitted to the CTESS on 27 November 2009, and identifies specific tariff lines coded by the six-digit Harmonised System (HS) 2002 and product description of energy efficient goods by describing the specific product classified under the broad sub-grouping.

The Japanese proposal contained a long list of goods related to electric, hydrogen, natural gas and clean-diesel vehicles as well as energy-efficient appliances. Interestingly the Japanese proposal lays out draft technological and functional standards and implementation method to identify energy efficient goods at custom authorities, in order to serve as a basis for future discussion to establish harmonised "Energy Efficient Standards" among Member countries. The submission states that "...in parallel with the debate on product coverage for environmental goods and services, Japan expects that elaborated works to create the Standard and implementation scheme to be undertaken in the CTESS would lead to the spread of energy efficient products certified under a single standard for energy efficiency, which would contribute to the mitigation of the climate change." Against many of the energy-efficient products listed in the submission, there is an acceptance of the certification of the standard-setting body in the importing country as to determination of the energy-efficient standard.

The proposal reportedly met with some criticism from both developing and developed country Members over the scope of the products and also whether the harmonisation of standards was an issue that could be dealt with by the WTO. Some Members wanted a discussion on standards to take place in the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) rather than the CTE special session. According to a developed country trade delegate it would be very difficult to agree on harmonised standards for energy-efficient products as country circumstances are variable. The difficulty of differentiating energy-efficient goods at customs was also pointed out. According to a developing country trade delegate, the Japanese proposal seemed driven by export considerations.

Argentina, Saudi proposals discussed

The meeting also witnessed a discussion of the submissions that had been tabled in November 2009: an informal one listing a number of environmental products by Saudi Arabia JOB (09)/169 and a formal submission by Argentina (TN/TE/W/74) proposing the liberalisation of products used in Clean Development Mechanism

(CDM) projects. The latter relates to goods that are a part of the CDM's 'Integrated Approach', whereby countries would identify and liberalise products for use in specified environmental projects on a 'time-bound' basis.

According to one delegate, the 'Friends' group's criticism of the project/integrated approach – that it fails to offer predictable and permanent liberalisation held true for Argentina's proposal as well. While Argentina did not submit any specific list of products it did mention in a footnote that possible products used in climate change projects might include wind turbines, solar water heaters, biogas production tanks, and methane collection liners.

Criticism was also aimed at the Saudi proposal for its inclusion of a large number of 'dual-use' products – particularly those related to natural gas derivatives and natural-gas related technologies. The Saudis however reportedly clarified their submission as a starting basis for discussions and that the products made sense from a 'value-chain' perspective.

According to trade sources, close to 60 products on the Saudi list converged with the 153 product list that had been proposed earlier in the negotiations by the 'Friends'. There was some concern expressed over the inclusion of a number of chemicals and plastics. Chemicals had figured in previous submissions before it was dropped from the 'Friends' list.

A trade source also said it appeared that Saudi Arabia's was making a case for its commitment to climate change mitigation efforts and environmental protection, contrary to their often-perceived obstructionist role in the climate change negotiations.

Singapore reportedly pointed out a select few environmental goods of interest to them though no formal submission was tabled and neither were any customs codes mentioned. These were industrial catalysers and industrial mufflers (under Solid Waste Management), engine catalysers/silencers (under Vehicular Emission Abatement) and Photosensitive semiconductor devices including photovoltaic cells used in solar diodes/cells (solar panels), Towers and lattice

masts and pneumatic power engines and motors used in wind turbines (under Renewable Resources). Kuwait is also expected to come out with a submission shortly. Turkey expressed its comfort with more than 50 percent of products contained in the 'Friends' list.

A number of delegations reportedly stressed the need for technical assistance, capacity-building and special and differential treatment. The Indian delegate reportedly also highlighted the problem of 'dual-use' environmental goods and the need to identify 'single environmental-end use' goods.

A compilation document containing the various products submitted so far by Members will reportedly be circulated for the forthcoming CTE special session in April. Specific dates have not yet been confirmed.

ICTSD Reporting.

IN BRIEF

Chinese Forest Product Exports Surge over Past Decade

China has moved from being a modest player in the world's forest products markets, to one of the leading exporters of manufactured forest products over the past ten years, according to a new joint study by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

According to the study, entitled "The Importance of China's Forest products Markets to the UNECE Region," the growth of China's forest sector has mirrored the spectacular growth of the country's GDP. In 2008, the country's forest sector accounted for some 4.8 percent of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The study found that as an exporter of some eight percent of the world's forest products exports, China is now the world's fifth largest exporter of overall forest products and the largest exporter of furniture – having overtaken Italy in 2005. Overwhelmingly, the most important markets for

China's forest products are Europe and North America.

The study also found that despite the primarily export-oriented nature of the furniture market, domestic consumption of manufactured wood products is likely to expand as China's wealth increases.

According to 2008 data, China boasts 195.5 million hectares of forest, making it the fifth largest country in the world in terms of forest reserves. But despite these large reserves and intensive public programmes aimed at planting of new forests over the past decade, demand for raw timber far exceeds the capacity of China's domestic forestry sector.

Thus, China's massive need for pulp and paper and industrial roundwood has made China the world's third largest importer of forest products.

According to the study, the expansion of Chinese production is likely to continue to increase in coming years and the country will continue to have a strong impact on the global forest products market. And while the country is expected to expand domestic timber harvesting to help feed the manufacturing industry, its heavy dependency on imported wood is likely to continue.

In the context of the forestry products sector, the report also looks at the role GDP and population, the appreciation of the yuan and its impact on trade, the global economic crisis and its impact on China's forestry sector, the role of the forestry sector in China's economy, forestry related government policy, corporate social responsibility (CSR), major forestry institutions in China, and Chinese education and training in the sector.

More information

The UNECE/FAO paper can be accessed here: <http://timber.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/publications/dp-57.pdf>

ICTSD Reporting

Development Activists take Aim at EU Renewable Energy Targets

The EU's ambitious goal of sourcing 10 percent of its transport fuel needs from renewable sources by 2020 could lead to widespread famine in the developing world, according to a new report by UK-based development organisation ActionAid.

The report accuses the EU of inadvertently incentivising biofuels companies to push food producers off of agricultural land in Africa, Central America, and Asia. The consequences of European biofuel targets, the report says, could be up to 100 million more hungry people, increased food prices and landlessness.

The EU target was established in December 2008, when leaders agreed that the use of renewables – including biofuels, hydrogen and green electricity – should be increased to help minimise the use of fossil fuels in transportation. But since then, concerns have been raised over the possibility that increased biofuel production could result in massive deforestation and have severe implications for food security, as energy crops replace other land uses.

"For every 1 percent rise in the price of food, 16 million more poor people are made hungry," the ActionAid report reads. The International Monetary Fund estimates that biofuels were responsible for 20-30 percent of the 2008 global food crisis, when 125 million tonnes of cereals were diverted into biofuel production.

Primary source crops for biofuels currently consist of maize, wheat, sugar cane, sugar beet, palm, soy, sunflowers, wheat, and rapeseed. The ActionAid report estimates that by 2020 these crops will divert increasing amounts of food away from the developing world as EU biofuel consumption quadruples, with two thirds of the product being sourced in poor countries.

"To meet the EU 10 percent target, the total land area directly required to grow industrial biofuels in developing countries could reach 17.5 million hectares, over half the size of Italy," the report says. "Additional land will also be required in developed nations, displacing food and animal

feed crops onto land in new areas, often in developing countries.”

The report says that EU biofuels companies have already acquired or requested over five million hectares – an area greater than the size of Denmark – in developing countries for cultivating biofuels crops.

For its part, the EU has acknowledged the negative impacts of so-called ‘indirect land-use change’ and, as such, the Renewable Energy Directive and the Fuel Quality Directive – revised in December 2009 – require the European Commission to produce a report the issue and to seek ways to minimise its impact.

In addition to the 2020 target, ActionAid points to generous European subsidies as a primary driver of increased biofuels use. The report estimates that the EU biofuel industry has already received €4.4 billion in incentives, subsidies and tax relief. It also forecasts that, in order to meet its 10 percent, these subsidies could triple more than €13.7 billion.

The report also takes aim at the impetus for establishing the 2020 target, arguing that because of the greenhouse gas and nitrous oxide emissions associated with land conversion for biofuels crops, many industrial biofuels do not, in fact, help to prevent climate change.

Some who defend the use of biofuels as a viable fuel option argue that land use problems in the developing world associated with biofuels are no different than those associated with other agricultural sectors. Others argue that while there are problems associated with biofuels, they should not be entirely abandoned as a source of fuel.

More information

The ActionAid report “Meals per gallon: The impact of industrial biofuels on people and global hunger” can be accessed here: http://www.actionaid.org/micrositeAssets/eu/assets/aa_biofuelsreportweb100210.pdf

ICTSD Reporting; “EU biofuels significantly harming food production in developing countries,” GUARDIAN, 15 February 2010; “EU

biofuels target could starve millions of people,” EURACTIVE, 15 February 2010; “Controversy mounts over EU biofuels fall-out,” REUTERS, 15 February 2010.

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Events

For a more comprehensive list of events for the trade and environment community visit the BioRes online calendar, <http://ictsd.net/news/biores/events/>.

Coming up in the next two weeks (19 February – 5 March)

21-27 February, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION. Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) recognises that communities already possess much of the knowledge and skills required to cope with the expected impacts of climate change. By building on their knowledge and skills, communities can increase their resilience to climate change. This conference aims to share and consolidate the latest developments in CBA planning and practice in different sectors and countries amongst practitioners, policymakers, researchers, funders and the communities at risk. It will disseminate lessons learnt both at the conference and through conference proceedings. Ultimately the aim is to share knowledge and experiences to help those most vulnerable to climate change. For more information contact: Saleemul Huq or Hannah Reid; e-mails: saleemul.huq@iied.org or hannah.reid@iied.org or visit <http://beta.worldbank.org/events/4th-international-conference-community-based-adaptation-dar-es-salaam-tanzania>.

23 February, Geneva, Switzerland. SUSTAINABLE BIOFUELS: EU POLICIES AND WTO RULES. This coffee and croissant meeting, organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, will be an open and informal dialogue on the EU approach to biofuels, sustainability, and WTO-compatibility issues. In addition to the presence of Geneva-

based trade negotiators, civil society, and the academic community, Fredrik Erixon, Director and co-founder of the European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE), will present his new paper on the topic. For further information, visit <http://ictsd.org/i/events/dialogues/70690/> or contact Malena Sell: tel: +41 (0)22 917-8319; fax: +41 (0)22 917-8093; email: msell@ictsd.ch.

23 February, New York, US. CSD-18 THEMATIC SEMINAR SERIES: CHEMICALS. The CSD Secretariat is launching a Thematic Seminar Series that will present scientific and technical information on the issues under review by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 18th and 19th sessions. For more information contact: Tonya Vaturi, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: ++1-212-963-4704; e-mail: vaturi@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd18_seminar_series.sht

24-26 February, Bali, Indonesia. ELEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM. The Governing Council constitutes the annual ministerial-level global environmental forum in which participants gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment. The largest global environmental gathering since Copenhagen, the forum will be attended by environment ministers from over 100 countries, civil society representatives, heads of UN agencies, scientists and environmental experts. The Ex/COP for the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions is expected to convene immediately prior to this meeting. For more information, visit <http://www.unep.org/gc/gcss-xi/> or contact Jamil Ahmad: tel: +254 (0)20 7623431/7623411; fax: +254 (0)20 7623929/7623748; email: unep.gcss-xi@unep.org.

25 February, Jakarta, Indonesia. TRADE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (TKN) SOUTHEAST ASIA'S RESEARCH WORKSHOP ON TRADE, ENVIRONMENT & FOOD SECURITY. This research workshop is intended to serve as a discussion forum enabling TKN Southeast Asia to gather input from relevant

policy-makers and other stakeholders in the region. The event is expected to involve relevant ASEAN-related bodies, its member government representatives in Jakarta, the Association's dialogue partners, international organisations, industries, professional experts, and non-governmental organisations. For more information, please contact the TKN Southeast Asia Coordinator at: achandra@iisd.org.

1-2 March, London, UK. POWERING THE LOW CARBON ECONOMY. This conference will explore the steps needed to rapidly decarbonise the production of electricity in order to meet emissions reductions targets in 2020 and 2050. Sessions will focus on the prospects of achieving these goals in the post-Copenhagen landscape, new energy technologies, what an ideal power sector would look like, the role of policymakers and government, and the involvement of the private sector. For more information contact the organisers: tel: +44-020-7957-5753; fax: +44-020-7321-2045; email: conferences@chathamhouse.org.uk; internet: http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/mena_energy/

Other Upcoming Events:

22-26 March, London, UK. 60TH SESSION OF THE IMO'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE. The 60th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) will be held at IMO headquarters. Issues scheduled to be on the agenda for the meeting include, reducing air pollution from ships, harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water, recycling of ships, and noise from commercial shipping and its adverse impacts on marine life. For further information, visit http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D26826/1.pdf or contact the IMO: tel: +44 (0)20 7735 7611; fax +44 (0)20 7587 3210; email: info@imo.org.

23 March, Geneva, Switzerland. Workshop on Emerging Trade Measures in Timber Markets. This one-day multi-stakeholder workshop, co-organised with the Economic Research and Statistics Division of the WTO Secretariat, will be dedicated to issues surrounding tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and emerging trade regulations

on timber. Led by expert presentations, workshop participants will discuss the economic impacts of trade and trade-related measures on timber markets, taking into account the role of trade in timber markets and the link between trade liberalisation and key challenges facing the forest-based sector. For further information, visit <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=270> or contact Cédric Pène: tel: +41-22-917 1286; fax +41-22-917 0041; email: cedric.pene@unece.org.

21-23 April, Seoul, Korea. BUSINESS FOR ENVIRONMENT GLOBAL SUMMIT (B4E). The organisers of this summit call it the leading international conference for dialogue and business-driven action for the environment. CEOs and senior executives from some of the world's largest multinational corporations will join leaders from governments, international agencies, and NGOs to discuss energy efficiency, green growth strategies, clean tech innovations and partnerships. Over three days of presentations, seminars and debate, B4E 2010 aims to galvanise the international business community into further action, highlighting the vital role that companies can play and inspiring them to become low-carbon leaders. For further information, visit http://www.b4esummit.com/?page_id=106.

24-28 May, Guatemala City, Guatemala. 26TH SESSION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION. This biennial meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (Comisión Forestal para América Latina y el Caribe or COFLAC), which advises the FAO on forestry policy in the region, aims to bring several Latin American countries together to discuss policy formulation, review and coordinate regional implementation, and act as a platform for information exchange between countries. For more information, visit <http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/comisiones/coflac/2010/default.htm> or contact Edwin Oliva: tel: 00 (502) 2321-4520; fax: 00 (502) 2321-4520; email: eoliva@inab.gob.gt.

Resources

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

LABELING GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD IN INDIA: ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES IN FOUR MARKETING CHANNELS. IFPRI Discussion Paper by Sangeeta Bansal and Guillaume Gruère, January 2010. In 2006, India proposed a draft rule requiring the labelling of all genetically modified (GM) foods and products derived thereof. In this paper, the authors use primary and secondary market data to assess the economic implications of introducing such a mandatory labelling policy for GM food. The paper focuses on four products that would likely be the first affected by such a regulation in India: cottonseed oil, soybean oil, brinjal (eggplant), and rice. In each of the cases, the authors find that labelling would generate significant adjustment costs for the industry and large enforcement costs, and consumer benefit would not always be visible and would highly depend on the degree of enforcement. In fact, voluntary labelling could achieve less-distorted results with lower costs and therefore appears to be a superior regulatory solution. Still, provided enforcement is ensured, a well-designed mandatory labelling regulation with limited product coverage, a non-zero labelling threshold, and an informative labelling content would lead to a much better outcome and lower costs in India than the current draft rule, especially if it is accompanied by a large awareness campaign regarding GM food and consumer safety in India. To access this discussion paper, visit <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp00946.pdf>.

FOREST WATCH SPECIAL REPORT – UPDATE REPORT ON FLEGT VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS. By Saskia Ozinga and Iola Leal. EU Forest Watch (FERN) February 2010. As part of the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan, the EU is negotiating and implementing voluntary

partnership agreements (VPAs) with a number of timber-producing countries. This FERN Special Report offers a brief overview of VPAs and an update on the status of negotiations with countries such as Ghana, Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and Malaysia. The Report can be accessed here: <http://fern.org/sites/fern.org/files/VPA%20update.pdf>.

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: YEAR IN REVIEW 2009. Convention on Biological Diversity. January 2010. This publication is a summary of the events and analyses of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Special attention is given to key biodiversity developments of 2009, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and projections on how these issues will be dealt with in the lead-up to COP-10 in Nagoya, Japan. Event summaries include six Bureau meetings, and one joint COP-SBSTA Bureau meeting, all of which took place in Paris, France; Nairobi, Kenya; Strömstad, Sweden; and in Montreal, Canada. The document highlights the progress of and focuses of the CBD throughout 2009. The publication in its entirety can be accessed at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/reports/cbd-report-2009-en.pdf>

TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT REVIEW 2009/2010: PROMOTING POLES OF CLEAN GROWTH TO FOSTER THE TRANSITION TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY. UN Conference on Trade and Development. February 2010. The financial crisis and interrelated climate and food crises have become defining parameters for policy-making today. The Trade and Environment Review 2009/2010 asserts that these crises offer a window of opportunity to embark on a path of more resilient and sustainable economic growth, including in low-income and least developed countries. The Review places particular emphasis on the transition to a more sustainable economy in the 140-plus low-income and least developed countries, which - although they did not cause the economic, financial, climate and food crises (for instance, they account for less than 10 per cent of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions of all developing countries) - have to bear the brunt of these crises. The Trade and Environment Review 2009/2010 highlights the need for a proactive mitigation strategy that addresses ecological, social and financial reform in an interrelated way, tying new green growth poles to job- and income-generating activities and financial reform. The full report can be accessed here:

<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=5305&lang=1>