



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

Volume 11 • Number 2, 7 February 2011

Biotechnology

EC Draft Outlines Possible Grounds for
GM Crop Bans..... 1

Doha Round

Davos: Ministers Target Doha Accord by End-
2011; Experts Call for 'Absolute Deadline'..... 2

Forests

UN Inaugurates Year of Forests..... 5

Sustainable Agriculture

Satellite Imagery Reveals Malaysian
Peatland Destruction 6

In Brief

CBD's Access and Benefit Sharing Protocol
Opens for Signing 7

Food Prices Continue Rise as
Weather Disasters Strike 8

Environmentalists say Canada-EU Trade Pact
bad for Climate Change..... 9

South Asian Countries Establish Network to
Combat Illegal Wildlife Trade 10

Events and Resources

Events..... 11

Resources 12

Bridges Trade BioRes© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at International Environment House II, Chemin de Balexert 7, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: (+41) 22-917-8492; fax: (+41) 22-917-8093.

Bridges Trade BioRes is made possible through the generous support of the Government of the United Kingdom (DFID) and ICTSD's core donors including the governments of Australia, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. Your financial or in-kind support to BRIDGES and the BRIDGES series of publications is a direct and visible commitment to advancing sustainable development in global policymaking. For more details contact Andrew Crosby, Managing Director at acrosby@ictsd.ch or +41 (0)22 917 8335. To subscribe to Bridges Trade BioRes or access back issues, visit www.ictsd.net/news/biores/. Excerpts from Bridges Trade BioRes may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. Comments and suggestions are welcomed and should be directed to the Editor or the Director.

This edition of Bridges Trade BioRes was edited by Andrew Aziz, aaaziz@ictsd.ch. Contributors to this issue were Andrew Aziz, Ammad Bahalim, Trineesh Biswas, Abigail Hunter, and Elizabeth Van Pelt. The Director is Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz.

ISSN 1682-0843

BIOTECHNOLOGY

EC Draft Outlines Possible Grounds for GM Crop Bans

European national governments could ban genetically modified (GM) crop cultivation if such a move would help maintain public order, according to a European Commission (EC) draft document. According to the proposal, bans could be enacted in the face of popular opposition or on grounds of public morality, such as religious or philosophical concerns.

The draft responds to a request from a handful of EU countries for a list of legally justifiable reasons that GM products could be outlawed. Countries had suggested that without clear legal grounds for enacting a ban, they could find themselves open to legal challenges in the WTO.

In addition to the public order and morality rationales, the draft also mentions the protection of the rights of consumers and producers to not be obliged to purchase nor grow GM products, town and country planning decisions, environmental conservation, and the protection of traditional farm practices as possible grounds for a ban.

List would be independent from decentralisation proposal

According to the draft, as long as all restrictions are justified, proportionate, and non-discriminatory, they would be permitted within the EU. But an EC spokesman said there are currently no plans to add the draft list to the GM cultivation proposals currently under consideration (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [22 November 2010](#)).

Some legal experts say the decision to not include the list as an integral part of the proposal calls the

strength of any legislation into question. Thijs Etty, a specialist in GM research at the Institute of Environmental Studies at the VU University in the Netherlands, said the draft would have to be added to the draft GM cultivation legislation in order to be secure legally.

"Without that, the legal validity of this list is quite questionable, and would not protect EU countries against legal action by biotech companies, farmers or WTO trade partners," Etty told Reuters.

Moreover, proving that any ban based on the list is proportionate and non-discriminatory would be difficult, Etty said. He further pointed out that the justifications outlined in the draft do not provide a valid rationale for restricting trade under WTO law.

GM puzzle a difficult one for Brussels

Last year, the Commission proposed that the decision-making process on GM crop cultivation be partially decentralised in response to a deadlock in the crop approval process (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [23 July 2010](#)). Only two genetically modified seeds have been approved for cultivation in Europe: a strain of maize produced by agriculture giant Monsanto and a type of starch potato from Amflora, which was approved in March, but only for industrial uses (see Bridges Trade BioRes and [19 March 2010](#)).

Brussels has also been struggling with how to deal with several member states that have defied the centralised policy on the issue and unilaterally implemented GM crop bans. Member states Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, and Luxembourg have issued bans on the cultivation of GM seeds, citing health and environmental concerns under a safeguard clause contained in the 2001 directive (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [3 April 2009](#)). Other countries, however - including the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom - appear more open to allowing their farmers to grow the altered crops.

Some member states and environmentalists have raised concerns over the push towards more liberal GM policies arguing that it could open the floodgates for new genetically modified crops in

the EU. Others, such as Italy and Spain, have said that the proposal undermines the spirit of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Council of the European Union – a body of twenty-seven national ministers – also challenged the Commission's proposal last November (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [22 November 2010](#)).

In another controversial move, the EC has said it plans to adopt a measure that would allow up to 0.1 percent of unapproved GM crops to be imported into the EU for animal feed. Some countries have called for the Commission to allow the unapproved GM crops to be permitted for human consumption as well, pointing out that it would be nearly impossible to distinguish the world's crop supplies between food and feed.

For its part, the Commission says its proposed policy on GM crops aims to reduce tensions surrounding the lack of compliance on GM issues by establishing clear parameters for countries' national policies on biotech cultivation that would lessen uncertainty for farmers and agri-business across Europe.

Experts are expected to discuss the draft list in Brussels on 11 February.

ICTSD Reporting; "EU draft: States can ban GM crops for public order," REUTERS, 4 February 2011; "EU GMO proposals draw widespread criticism," EURACTIV, 16 July 2010.

DOHA ROUND

Davos: Ministers Target Doha Accord by End-2011; Experts Call for 'Absolute Deadline'

Trade ministers from two dozen influential WTO member countries on 29 January agreed to push for a breakthrough agreement in the Doha Round negotiations by July, so that the long-struggling trade talks can be wrapped up by the end of the year.

Meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum's annual summit in Davos, they recognised that "divergences [in WTO members' negotiating positions] need to be drastically reduced" for any agreement to become possible, and pledged to empower negotiators to "engage in give and take" in order to arrive at compromises.

The ministers called for updated draft agreement texts in every area of the talks by April, an overall agreement by July, followed by the finalisation of legal texts and commitment schedules by the year's end.

Participants at the 'mini-ministerial' gathering shared "a sense that we are in the end game and that if Doha is done, it needs to be done this year," meeting host Johann Schneider-Ammann, Swiss economy minister, said in his summarising remarks at the Saturday meeting. "The price for failure of the Round would be too high for each of us and the multilateral system as a whole," he added, pointing to concerns raised about weakened multilateral rules, increased protectionist pressures, and further growth in the number of divergent regional and bilateral trade agreements.

The ministers, from trading powers such as China, Brazil, India the US, and the EU as well as smaller nations such as Costa Rica, Jamaica, and Peru*, echoed the view that 2011 constitutes a "window of opportunity" for concluding a Doha Round accord.

A trade ministers' meet has become a fixture on the margins over Davos summits over the past decade. In recent years, they have been used to take the temperature of the Doha Round negotiations, and try to set the tone for progress in the year ahead. None of these attempts have come to fruition, as the talks have dragged on through multiple breakdowns into their tenth year. Prior shots at breakthrough agreements by July, before the WTO's summer holiday, broke down in acrimony in 2006 and 2008.

For this year's call for an agreement to succeed, WTO members will need to overcome deep differences between the US and large developing countries such as China, Brazil, and India over the

depth of tariff and subsidy cuts. China, India, and Brazil have consistently rejected US demands for greater access to their markets as unrealistic and out of proportion to what rich nations are being asked to do in terms of cutting tariffs and farm subsidies.

Schneider-Ammann's summary statement suggests that ministers recognised the divisions more than is customary, agreeing that "there is a need for a reassessment of [countries'] positions." He said that ministers showed "readiness to engage in striving for a more ambitious result in all areas of the negotiations while building on progress reached so far," and agreed that "those who ask for more should also pay more." They also backed WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy's appeal for stepped-up bilateral and plurilateral discussions in search of common ground, and pledged "to engage in the negotiating process whenever appropriate."

Positive atmospherics also emerged from a smaller meeting hosted by the EU on 28 January, involving ministers from Australia, Brazil, China, the EU, Japan, India, and the US.

But a statement issued the same day by ministers from Brazil, China, India, and South Africa underlined the differences in how governments perceive the parameters for an agreement currently under consideration, and consequently, how far they need to go for a compromise. They said that the terms for a Doha deal that members came close to agreeing on before talks broke down in July 2008 "embod[y] a careful balance of concessions strenuously negotiated since the launching of the round in 2001, [but] should be improved to strengthen its development dimension."

The four ministers said that those formulae and figures for subsidy and tariff cuts and exceptions, which are captured in December 2008 draft agreement texts for agriculture and non-agricultural market access, would require developing countries "to offer a level of contribution without precedent by any member in any of the previous negotiating rounds." Those contributions, they argued, "are not being reciprocated by developed countries, some of

whom still seek further exceptions and flexibilities to continue with their existing trade barriers and trade distorting policies, adversely affecting the developing countries' interests." They warned that demands entailing "new disproportionate and unilateral concessions from developing countries" would jeopardise ongoing efforts to reach a Doha accord.

In contrast, Michael Punke, the US ambassador to the WTO, last month said it was Washington's "fundamental belief" that those same terms were "imbalanced against" the US.

Experts call for making end-2011 "absolute deadline"

Meanwhile, a high-level panel headed by trade economist Jagdish Bhagwati and former WTO head Peter Sutherland has called for making the end of 2011 an inflexible "absolute deadline" for a Doha accord, with the talks to be abandoned if governments fail to reach an agreement by then.

"The Doha Round is dying of political neglect," declared a report by the panel, which was convened by the governments of Germany, the United Kingdom, Indonesia and Turkey to come up with recommendations on boosting global trade and fighting protectionism. They argue that an explicit deadline - to come weeks after the tenth anniversary of the round's November 2001 launch - would "make the prospect of failure concrete, collective and unavoidable," thus forcing political leaders to seriously pursue a deal.

The panel pointed to many reasons underpinning the slow progress in the Doha Round, from changing economic beliefs and the rapid growth of countries like China, India and Brazil, to the fact that the negotiations reach far into countries' sensitive agriculture sectors.

These factors have been complicating countries' domestic politics surrounding the negotiations. The report's authors said that the notion that "a development-friendly trade deal must demand less of countries in a way that is proportionate to their state of development... permeates the Doha Round," and would rightly be one of the criteria for evaluating any final package. "This means that

developed countries have to accept that the outcome will be asymmetrical, even vis-à-vis large and competitive exporters like China and Brazil who remain in development," even if this makes the round "a difficult proposition for some domestic constituencies."

The report argued that a Doha accord would be an insurance policy against future protectionism, by curtailing developing countries' ability to raise tariffs; a driver of significant farm trade reform, by curtailing the EU and the US's ability to raise trade-distorting subsidies; a source of at least \$360 billion in new market access; and finally, a reinforcement to the multilateral rules-based trading system that would counter a "steady erosion" of the institution's centrality to trade governance.

Arguing that the broad contours of a Doha package are already clear - and represent "the only credible landing zone" for the negotiation - the report identified modest "top ups" in every sector of the negotiations that could for an acceptable deal.

It stressed that the onus would be on politicians, both to prepare the ground for a realistic Doha agreement, and to reject the traditional tendency to characterise exports as good and imports as undesirable. "Politicians must be willing to explain the value of liberalisation, not just in terms of new market access for exports but in terms of the value of imports to widen choice and competition and drive productivity and growth. This means breaking the habit that describes every new import as a concession, simply because it often comes with a price in adaptation. Without this willingness, the politics of open trade will always be hobbled and incompletely honest."

*WTO members participating in the Davos gathering were Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, the EU, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, and the US.

ICTSD reporting.

FORESTS

UN Inaugurates Year of Forests

The UN last week officially kicked off the International Year of Forests at a launching ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York. Officials pointed to multiple advances in forest protection that were made last year, which laid a foundation for further movement as forests become a focal point in 2011.

The 2 February ceremony took place during a high-level segment of the ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF). Joseph Deiss, president of the UN General Assembly, led the ceremony, which included multiple speakers as well as several film clips. In attendance were world leaders, forest experts, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai, an environmentalist and founder of The Green Belt Movement.

“Forests for People” is the specific theme of the International Year of Forests. According to the UN, the Year of Forests aims to celebrate the central role of people in conserving and responsibly developing the world’s forests. The UN says that reminding people of the multifaceted relationship between humans and forests is crucial to the well-being of both.

Chen Hin Keong, who heads the forests division of wildlife trade NGO TRAFFIC, referred to the world’s forests as “a treasures trove of biological resources,” as they are home to 80 percent of terrestrial biological diversity.

The UN says that forests also provide clean water, maintain the fertility of agricultural land, and reduce the risks of natural disasters. An estimated 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their subsistence needs, while 60 million people, many of which are indigenous

communities, reside in them. Roughly 31 percent of the world’s total land area is currently covered by forests, according to the UN.

Momentum gains through 2010

International Year of Forests follows in the wake of multiple 2010 policy changes that were directly related to protecting the world’s forests. In May, Indonesia and Norway signed a Letter of Intent in which Norway pledged to contribute up to one billion dollars to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, forest degradation, and the loss of peatland in Indonesia (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [24 January 2011](#)). Also, the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed in Cancun to slow, halt, and reverse forest loss and related carbon emissions in developing countries (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [14 December 2010](#)).

Other 2010 policy changes were concerned with illegal logging – a significant source of carbon emissions and biodiversity loss. World Resources Institute (WRI) called 2010 “a significant year for global efforts to tackle illegal logging.” Malaysia passed a new bill that increased the fine and jail sentence for those caught engaging in illegal logging activities.

In July, the EU passed legislation that banned the selling of illegally harvested timber on the European market (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [25 June 2010](#)). More recently, in December, the Indonesian House of Representatives initiated a bill for deliberation that will impose more stringent sanctions on illegal loggers. According to the Jakarta Post, the bill is the first of its kind to be proposed in Indonesia.

The UN General Assembly dubbed 2011 as the International Year of Forests in 2006 to “make concerted efforts to raise awareness at all levels to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable

development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reaffirmed this sentiment at the launching ceremony. “By declaring 2011 as the International Year of Forests, the United Nations General Assembly has created an important platform to educate the global community about the great value of forests - and the extreme social, economic and environmental costs of losing them,” he said.

The 2011 year of forests follows last year’s International Year of Biological Diversity, which produced a landmark biodiversity accord (see related article, this issue) and concluded by adopting a plan to reduce the loss of natural habitats at the UNFCCC’s Cancun COP.

ICTSD Reporting; “Illegal Logging,” GREENPEACE, 30 January, 2008; “In Draft Bill, at Least 1 Year in Prison for Illegal Loggers,” JAKARTA POST, 20 December, 2010; “International Year of Forests Dawns with Hope for Conservation,” ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE, 2 February, 2011; “International Year of Forests Officially Underway,” DIGITAL JOURNAL, 2 February, 2011; “Preparations and Inputs for Forests 2011,” UNITED NATIONS; “The REDD+ Decision in Cancun,” WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, 20 December, 2010; “The Year in Illegal Logging – A Look Back,” THE WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, 7 January, 2011; “What’s Next for Indonesia-Norway Cooperation on Forests,” THE WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, 13 July, 2010.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Satellite Imagery Reveals Malaysian Peatland Destruction

Palm oil production is rapidly leading to the destruction of Malaysia’s sensitive peat swamp forests, according to two new reports from Wetlands International and Dutch monitoring company Sarvision. The research – based on satellite imagery – shows precipitous rate of peatland deforestation since 2005, with 65 percent of peat swamp in the state of Sarawak now under oil palm cultivation.

The studies made use of satellite images from 2005-2010 and official records of registered boundary lines for palm plantations in the region to calculate deforestation within the boundaries. Sarvision says technological advancements have been crucial to projects such as these. The organisation says they are now able gather actual images of palm trees planted in prohibited areas.

“The process that we are seeing is that in the beachfront areas...there is a lot of forest conversion to palm oil and on mineral soils further inland, we find much deforestation from logging that precedes palm oil,” said Niels Wieleaard who directed the Sarvision report.

Combined with land surveys for validation and verification of subtle changes, the data collected through remote sensing showed that 44 percent of all palm plantations in Sarawak rest on cleared peatland.

Global demand fuels industry

Green group Wetlands International is pointing to the data as evidence that the increased world demand for palm oil is a major force behind the drive to open up peatland in Sarawak to agro-industries.

Palm oil is now the top traded vegetable oil in the world and is the largest growing feedstock for biofuels. Many environmental groups say Europe’s Renewable Energy Directive, which

places a target of 10 percent of renewable energy use to be met by biofuels, is a major cause of the rapid increase in demand for palm oil. This market is being capitalised by Malaysia, which provides some 45 percent of all palm oil traded cross-border and has been a boon to the Malaysian economy.

Alex Katt of Wetlands International says this economic incentive results in an overall reluctance on behalf of officials to contrive a national strategy that could deter further peat swamp destruction. "So far there is a complete denial of the facts," says Katt. "Malaysia creates its own truths [and] comes up with its own research that is completely the opposite figures than all the other science has provided."

Peatland and sustainability

The destruction of peatland is often cited as a significant source of carbon emissions and a threat to biodiversity. Peat swamp and peatland are known to be particularly effective natural carbon sinks. According to the academic journal Nature Geoscience, peatland destruction, along with forest degradation, is the second largest anthropogenic source of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere next to the burning of fossil fuels. In Malaysia, drainage of lowland peatland is estimated by Wetlands to account for some 20 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually.

In addition to CO₂ emissions, palm production on the island of Borneo threatens one of the most biodiverse habitats of the world. Within Malaysian peat swamps there are flora, fauna, wildlife, and aquatic species that are at immediate risk of extinction, says Wetlands. Examples include the Borneo Pygmy elephant, Sumatran rhino, Bornean clouded leopard, and the painted terrapin.

While new demands for Malaysia are being made by international consumers calling for forest-certified and green products, Wetlands says sustainability certifications are deceiving because the continued failure to protect peatlands. The organisation is calling on Malaysia to place a complete ban on palm oil production on peatlands and a halt further conversion of natural areas for the crop.

More information

The complete Sarvision report can be accessed [here](#).

The Wetlands International report can be accessed [here](#).

ICTSD Reporting; "New figures: palm oil destroys Malaysia's peat swamp forests faster than ever," WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL, 1 February 2011; "Malaysia Rapidly Destroying Forests for Palm Oil," REUTERS, 2 February 2011; "A quick scan of peatlands in Malaysia," WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL REPORT, March 2010; "Palm Oil as a Transnational Crisis in South-East Asia," AUSTRIAN JOURNAL OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN STUDIES, 2009; "Scoping agriculture-wetlands," FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION, May 2010; "CO₂ emissions from forest loss," NATURE GEOSCIENCE, November 2009.

IN BRIEF

CBD's Access and Benefit Sharing Protocol Opens for Signing

With much fanfare, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opened the landmark Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) to signing by parties at UN headquarters in New York. Once ratified, the Protocol will set the terms for commercial access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge and the sharing of benefits arising from products incorporating those resources or knowledge with the communities in which they originate.

The ABS issue is closely watched by the environment and trade community, which views the agreement as a crucial tool for creating incentives for biodiversity protection as well as for fighting biopiracy. The Protocol was clinched last autumn when, after six years of arduous negotiation, parties agreed to a compromise deal at the CBD's Tenth Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [8 November 2010](#)).

Japan's Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Tatsushi Terada – speaking on behalf of the COP president – acknowledged the difficult negotiations at the New York meeting and urged countries to move quickly to the next stage.

“The historic adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing was indeed the fruit of the collective efforts of all the Parties,” he said. “The next step that we need to focus is the early entry into force and the effective implementation of the Protocol.”

While countries have until 1 February 2012 to ink the Protocol, many officials say they would like to expedite the process to ensure the legal instrument takes hold as soon as possible. Four countries – Colombia, Yemen, Brazil, and Algeria – inked the deal at the meeting, but observers speculate that the waiting period for some countries may be protracted. The Protocol will take effect 90 days after the fiftieth party has ratified.

Many commercial pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and biochemicals are derived from genetic resources – whether from plants, animals, or micro-organisms. Officials say the new Protocol will benefit both producers and users in the process.

“It will benefit all,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, the CBD's executive secretary. “It will facilitate access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, on the one hand, and support the fair and equitable sharing of benefits with the provider country and indigenous and local communities, on the other.”

ABS is the CBD's third objective and is the only one that has not been implemented through design and adoption of a legal instrument to date – the other two being to promote the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. The ABS mechanism is of great importance to developing countries, because the world's most biodiverse countries are primarily located in poorer regions, whereas the users of genetic resources are typically located in developed countries.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), an independent financial organisation specialising in

environment-related loans to the developing world, has been designated as the financial mechanism for the Protocol. The institution has put forward US\$1 million to help encourage the early entry of the ABS instrument.

The first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Protocol is scheduled to take place in June 2011. The eleventh conference of the parties (COP-11) will be held in India from 8-19 October 2012. Organisers have targeted COP-11 as an opportunity for convening the first meeting of the parties to the Nagoya Protocol. For this target to be met, the Protocol must enter into force no later than 8 October 2012, with the fiftieth instrument of ratification deposited no later than 10 July 2012.

ICTSD Reporting.

Food Prices Continue Rise as Weather Disasters Strike

Tight food stocks and uncertain weather are putting pressure on commodity markets to push the cost of food higher for people across the world, according to a new UN report.

Cyclone Yasi in Australia this week damaged the country's sugar crop, while earlier flooding and drought deteriorated the quality of wheat, driving prices for higher quality wheat in the US upward. In Indonesia, heavy rains have flooded rice paddies, leading the government to scour for imports of its most important staple crop.

In the past six months Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine moved to limit exports of wheat according to the Centre for Economic Policy Research, a London based think tank. Some of the largest producers of the grains, the former Soviet bloc countries saw production plunge in 2010 as high temperatures and drought set records and parched crops.

In the US, a major exporter of grains, US Department of Agriculture [projections](#) for corn output have been repeatedly revised downward due to unusually fickle weather. Meanwhile,

government mandated blending policies for corn based ethanol strengthen demand, helping to keep prices high.

The US Department of Agriculture, last [December](#), projected that global grain consumption would outpace production in 2011 - putting pressure on already diminished stocks.

Commentators, such as Paul Krugman, a Nobel Prize winning Economist, recently [argued in the New York Times](#) that record setting weather is a part of broader climatic shifts. Experts at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, not referring specifically to the recent bout of high prices, have [warned](#) that changes in the climate are likely to exacerbate extreme weather events and agricultural production.

Although the debate on currently observed climate change impacts is at times divisive, projections of future changes in precipitation patterns and temperature, and the likely consequences for the agricultural sector in many countries around the world, are less so. Experts agree that climate change is likely to impact agriculture and food production.

More information

The full UN report can be accessed [here](#).

ICTSD Reporting. "Indonesia battles rice shortfall," FINANCIAL TIMES, 2 February 2011; "Food Prices Worldwide Hit Record Levels, Fueled by Uncertainty, U.N. Says," NEW YORK TIMES, 3 February 2011; "Droughts, Floods and Food," NEW YORK TIMES, 6 February 2011; Global Food Price Monitor, UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION, 3 February 2011; World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates, US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, 12 January 2011.

Environmentalists say Canada-EU Trade Pact bad for Climate Change

Environmentalists in Europe lashed out at policymakers last week over aspects of a planned

free trade pact with Canada that they say would compromise the EU's ability to effectively regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

The critics say EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) contains an investor-state dispute settlement clause that would allow corporations to sue governments if climate change regulations inhibited their ability to produce fossil fuels.

CETA negotiations are increasingly focussing on the EU fuel quality directive and whether it will discriminate against fuel produced from Canada's oil sands. Because of the nature of the oil sands, emissions from the refinery process are 23 percent higher than other sources, according to a European Commission report leaked to the European Voice.

Under the directive, oil companies operating in the EU must reduce their emissions to 6 percent below 2009 levels by 2020. It also creates a division between conventional and unconventional oil sources, with oil sands classified as the latter. This opens the possibility that Canadian tar sands oil would fall subject to import barriers in the EU.

Alberta's energy minister, Ron Liepert, travelled to Brussels on the 3rd of this month in an effort to promote the Alberta oil sands as a source of "secure energy" for the EU that shouldn't fall victim to unfair trade practices. According to protestors surrounding Liepert's European visit, he and his interests are using CETA to prevent governments from enacting policies to combat climate change.

Brussels has been considering implementing a policy that would discriminate against oil imports that contain a high carbon footprint, like those from the Canadian province of Alberta. But Canada has argued that the implementation and monitoring of such a system would be difficult and would constitute "unjustifiable discrimination" towards Canadian oil (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [11 October 2011](#)).

But European environmentalists counter that if CETA provisions neglect to establish the EU's

right to ascertain effective measures against climate change, the EU could potentially face legal challenges. Meanwhile Canada says that legitimising trade barriers in the name of environmental protection should be exceptional as they could trigger a chain reaction that would damage global trade.

China recently provoked many importers of rare earth metals when it slashed production and exports on environmental grounds (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [24 January 2011](#)).

ICTSD Reporting. "Trade Talks could wreck climate change measures, campaigners warn," THE GUARDIAN, 31 January 2011; "Tar sands 'more polluting than other fuels'," EUROPEAN VOICE, 3 February 2011.

South Asian Countries Establish Network to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trade

An international agreement between eight South Asian countries to help curb illegal wildlife trade and protect rare and endangered species was formally adopted last week in Paro, Bhutan. The South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) seeks to coordinate efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of threatened species in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Under the scheme, first conceived by South Asian environment ministers in 2008, the eight countries have committed to boosting regional cooperation in combating the illegal trafficking of wildlife and bio resources as well as wildlife conservation. The official launch of the network took place from 29-30 January.

TRAFFIC, a UK-based organisation that monitors wildlife trade, says the illegal movement of wildlife across national borders, has been a constant threat to many species in the South Asia. The BBC reports that decades of rampant poaching and exploitation for the use of animal parts in ornaments, jewellery and ancient oriental medicines have decimated the wildlife

populations. As a result, TRAFFIC says that the biodiversity in this region is highly vulnerable. A variety of species have been dramatically affected including populations of tigers, elephants, marine species, and medicinal plants.

SAWEN is focused on countering these threats that are presented by the illegal wildlife trade. At the most recent meeting, experts from member countries, IGOs such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and NGOs such as TRAFFIC, agreed on an action-oriented work plan. Certain aspects of this work plan will begin immediately. According to the BBC, SAWEN is the first collaborative wildlife initiative of its kind in South Asia.

"SAWEN will help...authorities and officials across the region to share good practices and resources to cooperate and coordinate actions to apprehend poachers and traffickers," said Lyonpo Pema Gyamtsho, Bhutan's Minister for Agriculture and Forests.

The regional network received much praise from environmental organisations as a significant co-operative effort. Samir Sinha, Programme Head of TRAFFIC India referred to SAWEN as "a milestone" and an "essential piece of collective effort to conserve a region of outstanding biological richness and diversity."

CITES echoed that it is "delighted" over the creation of SAWEN and commends the eight countries for "demonstrat[ing] their commitment to bringing to justice those criminals who are robbing this part of the world of its precious natural resources."

ICTSD Reporting; "New South Asian Anti-Trafficking Group is Formed," BBC, 31 January, 2011; "South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) Formally Launched at Paro," TRAFFIC, 30 January, 2011; "South Asian Scheme Launched to Fight Poaching," AFP, 1 February, 2011.

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Events

For a more comprehensive list of events for the trade and environment community visit the [BioRes online calendar](#).

Coming up in the next two weeks (7-21 February)

10-11 February, Paris, France. ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) GREEN GROWTH STRATEGY WORKSHOP. The purpose of this workshop is to review the OECD's latest work on the Strategy's Synthesis Report and to seek feedback to ensure that the report is a genuinely useful tool to support countries' transition to greener economies. This workshop brings together policymakers and experts from across OECD and partner countries, as well as stakeholders from international organisations, business, and civil society. For more information visit the [OECD website](#).

13 February, Gland, Switzerland. FOURTH MEETING OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BODIES OF THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS (CSAB). This meeting will work towards motivating the scientific community to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefits Sharing as well as to celebrate the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity. Plans for the meeting will also include identifying and discussing environmental issues that require a collaborative approach, such as ecosystem restoration and the harmonisation of species nomenclature. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

14-15 February, Geneva, Switzerland. SINGLE-YEAR EXPERT MEETING ON MAXIMIZING THE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT OF REMITTANCES. The purpose of this meeting is to explore avenues to maximize the development impact of remittances. This will be accomplished by reviewing the recent trends in migration and remittance flows, analysing the impact of remittances on poverty reduction and development in home countries, identifying

policies and measures that can channel saved remittances and other diaspora funds to better serve developmental needs, and addressing barriers to remittance flows. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

21-24 February, Nairobi, Kenya. TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM (GC26/GMEF). The Governing Council constitutes the annual ministerial-level global environmental forum where participants review emerging environmental policy issues. This session aims to contribute emerging issues to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20). Specific themes to be discussed are the green economy and international environmental governance. The Council/Forum will also review other related issues raised by its members. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

Other upcoming events

14-16 March, Geneva, Switzerland. MULTI-YEAR EXPERT MEETING ON SERVICES, DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE: THE REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION (THIRD SESSION). This session will focus on the trends and features of regulatory and institutional frameworks for infrastructure services, development and trade as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of these frameworks. Participants will exchange information concerning experiences and best practices for building human capital and institutional and regulatory frameworks. Further discussions will be held on trade agreements, regulatory and institutional frameworks, and regulatory barriers to exports. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

25-28 March, Calgary, Canada. INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB) ANNUAL MEETING. The IDB, in conjunction with the Inter-American Investment Corporation (IIC), will hold their annual meeting to discuss socially responsible development of natural resources, the future of oil in a carbon-conscious world, and sustainable cities.

Participants will include the institutions' governors, high-level authorities of member countries and representatives of multilateral financial institutions, development agencies, and private banks. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

25-29 April, Geneva, Switzerland. FIFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION. The upcoming meeting will discuss matters related to the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. Topics will include measures to reduce or eliminate toxic releases from international production and use of certain chemicals and releases from waste material. Participants will also work to encourage and enhance co-operation and co-ordination between the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

2-13 May, New York, US. NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-19). As the policy session of the fourth implementation cycle, CSD-19 will continue to focus on transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. The outcomes of CSD-19 will be published in the CSD-19 Report, which will include policy decisions and the summary of the high-level segment. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

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 Team to biores@ictsd.ch.

FROM CLIMATE FINANCE TO FINANCING GREEN GROWTH. By Climate Works Foundation and European Climate Foundation (23 November 2010). This briefing paper outlines the benefits of green growth and the importance

of developing the right policies that support a transition towards a low carbon economy. It assesses the financing needs of green growth in developing countries, the role of the financing described by the UN High Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing and how the climate finance system should develop over the next decade. The full briefing paper can be found [online](#).

STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS. Published by the Food and Agricultural Organization (February, 2011). The [ninth biennial issue in the State of the World's Forests](#) series focuses on the theme of "Changing pathways, changing lives: forests as multiple pathways to sustainable development." The report takes a holistic view of the multiple ways in which forests support livelihoods and highlights four key areas that warrant greater attention: regional trends on forest resources, the development of sustainable forest industries, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the local value of forests. The FAO says that together, these focal points provide insights on the true contribution of forests to the creation of sustainable livelihoods and alleviation of poverty. The full document can be found [online](#).

ENERGY 2050: MAKING THE TRANSITION TO A SECURE LOW-CARBON ENERGY SYSTEM. Published by Earthscan (December 2010). The book is the result of a major national energy research effort by the UK Energy Research Centre, which includes some of the UK's leading energy experts. It explores, in detail, factors which could help or hinder the attainment of the UK's 2050 climate change targets, and how these factors interact with the parallel objective of maintaining a robust and secure energy system. The authors say the book's results and recommendations are essential for any individual or organisation concerned with achieving large-scale reductions in carbon emissions, both in the UK and internationally. The book can be purchased from [Earthscan's website](#).

THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. Published by Springer as part of the International Climate Change Information Programme (January

2011). This book is the second in the series of “Climate Change Management” publications from Springer and ICCIP. It compiles papers from across the world that reflect on the social, economic, and political aspects of climate change. The selection of papers included within this volume attempts to illustrate the diversity of approaches to climate change management that are occurring globally. The book can be purchased from [Springer’s website](#).