



Bridges Trade BioRes

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

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CLIMATE CHANGE

EU, US Downplay Expectations for Durban Climate Meet

Leading climate officials from the EU and US last week expressed serious doubts about the feasibility of establishing a legally binding climate deal in Durban later this year. By calling the possibility “highly unlikely” last week, EU climate change commissioner Connie Hedegaard aligned herself with US climate negotiator Todd Stern who, in a statement last month, called such a deal “not doable.” Although doubts about an ambitious agreement in Durban have been raised before, these statements by representatives of two of the world’s largest emitters certainly are of a new quality.

To the disappointment of the EU, neither Copenhagen nor Cancun had delivered on creating a single binding agreement to reduce emissions worldwide. Emerging and developing countries have started to criticise the lack of fast-start funding under the Copenhagen Accord (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [7 March 2011](#)); however, some progress was made late last week on establishing framework for the Green Climate Fund (see related story, this issue). Developing countries have also expressed frustration over what they call the inadequate incorporation of equity, intellectual property rights, and trade issues in the documents adopted in Cancun. They have since requested that a future climate framework should be more in line with the Bali Road Map.

The US could be regarded as the country having the least to lose from the latest developments as it deems a binding agreement “unnecessary.” The US position in the international negotiations is, to a large extent, a reflection of domestic developments. In 2007, a Supreme Court ruling granted the Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) vast authority with respect to emissions regulation under the Clean Air Act. Four bills prepared by Republicans that would restrict the EPA's ability in this regard were recently defeated by the Senate (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [18 April 2011](#)). But due to expected further attempts to nullify the EPA's finding that climate change is a threat to public health and rising support from Democratic senators for a restriction of the EPA's authority, the outlook for the Obama administration's climate policies remains cloudy.

Bangkok meeting underscores complexities

Despite the emerging spirit of compromise between developed and developing countries reported from Cancun, the first UNFCCC meeting after Cancun which was held in Bangkok last month served as a reminder of the political complexities that underlie the negotiations (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [18 April 2011](#)). In Bangkok, discussions in both the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) were to focus on how to implement the decisions taken at the COP16 (referred to as the [Cancun Agreements](#)) in 2011, and resolve the outstanding issues that were not addressed in Cancun.

However, in both AWGs, Parties faced difficulties in agreeing on [the agenda](#) for the negotiating session. Generally speaking, this was the result of different views of Parties with regards to what the focus of the work in 2011 should be on issues related to Cancun (e.g., level of ambition by developed countries, agriculture, technology transfer and its trade implications re-emerged, and sources of financing).

Talks under the two AWGs will reconvene in early June in Bonn, likely to be followed by an additional session in late September or early October, before the COP17 in Durban at the end of the year.

Thus, it is expected that the focus in Durban will shift to seeking agreements on sub-topics. The EU, for example, intends to push for the inclusion of shipping and aviation in the international

negotiations, because the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has thus far been unable to deliver on taking measures against climate change. The EU also supports the linkage of existing regional carbon markets and the associated emergence of a global carbon price.

ICTSD Reporting: "Durban climate deal impossible, say US and EU envoys", THE GUARDIAN, 28 April 2011; "Major Polluters Say 2011 Climate Deal 'Not Doable'", REUTERS, 28 April 2011; "Proposal to Handicap EPA's Regulation of Greenhouse Gases Evaporates in Senate", CLIMATE CHANGE INSIGHTS, 8 April 2011; "Bills That Would Limit the U.S. EPA's Clean Air Act Authorities", WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE, 19 April 2011; "EU Praises Chinese Action on Climate, Blames U.S. for Blocking Global Deal", BLOOMBERG, 15 April 2011.

DOHA ROUND

WTO Keeps Eye on Prize Despite Lacklustre Progress

In spite of widespread speculation over the possibility of an alternate face-saving route for the Doha Round in the wake of a series of uninspiring reports by negotiating chairs, the WTO remains committed to locking down the "whole package."

On 21 April, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy released a set of documents highlighting the state of play with regard to the long-struggling Doha round. While the documents, which cover all areas of the negotiations - spanning from industrial and agricultural products to trade facilitation and fisheries subsidies - amount to hundreds of pages, they contain no surprises.

Lamy conducted a series of informal "green room" meetings among key members last Thursday and the full membership met in the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) on Friday. While the Friday meeting reportedly focused on the 21 April documents, no specific report was singled out. Instead, Lamy said, the relevant

negotiating groups would focus on the chairs' texts respectively. Notably, there was no mention of a "Plan B."

The 21 April documents comprise a set of updates and texts provided by the chairs of the respective negotiating groups, as well as a cover note by Lamy. Just prior to releasing the documents, Lamy had been holding intensive one-on-one meetings with key delegations, so called "confessionals," to gauge the scope for any new possible compromises and grounds for agreement. However, Lamy emerged from these meetings with a sense that unbridgeable gaps still remain. "This is a grave situation for the round and for all of the efforts and aspirations it embodies," Lamy wrote. "It is our reality, however, and we must face it squarely in order to try to find a way forward together."

In his cover note, Lamy stressed the value of concluding the Doha round, both in terms of being a concrete win for multilateralism in turbulent political times, and in terms of allowing expanded trade, with all its accompanying benefits, at the global level. Lamy called on members to carefully reflect on the way forward, so as not to end up throwing away ten years of solid work. He stressed that he has sensed a desire among members to find a solution "although at the moment there is little clarity about what this might be." However, he said, it cannot just be "business as usual," nor can members just "stop and reboot."

Lamy reiterated this position at Friday's TNC meeting and eschewed any rumours of separating easier issues from more difficult ones under an alternate harvest. "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed," he said.

NAMA remains key sticking point

Lamy did not mince words in the note accompanying the chairs' documents: the divisions on non-agricultural (industrial) market access (NAMA) are "not bridgeable today." Despite other unresolved areas, he expressed the belief that "a deal would be doable... but for NAMA, where the differences today are effectively

blocking progress and putting into serious doubt the conclusion of the Round this year."

The WTO chief expressed similar views in a report on consultations he held with seven large members on the most contentious issue in the NAMA talks: the role of initiatives to deeply cut or even eliminate tariffs on entire industrial sectors, and specifically, the extent to which large developing countries like China, India, and Brazil participate in them.

The US is the most vociferous of the developed countries demanding that the fast-growing emerging economies to sign on to several of these sectoral initiatives. China, Brazil, and India point to the explicit negotiating mandate that participation in sectorals is to be voluntary, and argue that the modest farm reforms that rich countries have put on offer do not merit dramatic increases in NAMA liberalisation.

In an effort to help bridge the gap on sectorals, the EU last Thursday put forward a submission which focuses on chemicals, machinery, and electronics. Some details of the submission were outlined in the [EU's statement at the TNC](#). Most welcomed the submission, but China said it only represents the interests of developed countries.

Speculations on "Plan B"

Speculations and opinions on how to move on beyond Doha are being discussed both informally among trade professionals and in the media. The talks were launched in Qatar in 2001, and have been ongoing for almost ten years. Karel de Gucht, the EU trade head, mentioned a "Plan B" to European constituencies at the beginning of this month, and his statement has been heavily cited by others. According to trade sources in Geneva, one option would be to hand pick issues where there is agreement, and conclude the round in the form of a narrower deal, leaving out the large and controversial areas like NAMA and agriculture. Salvaging part of the deal would, according to some, be far better than simply giving up and calling the round dead.

Trade veteran Susan Schwab, the former US Trade Representative, embarked on the same train

of thought in an article she wrote for the May-June issue of Foreign Affairs. In her article, she says that several smaller deals can and should be salvaged, pointing in particular to trade facilitation, restrictions on export support in the area of agriculture, and agreements to limit fishery subsidies and bring down tariffs on environmental goods and services. According to Schwab, broad and inclusive negotiations in the format of a “single undertaking” no longer work, but plurilateral agreements among the willing, under WTO auspices could and should. “Doha may be dead, but by accepting what everyone knows and no one wants to admit, the world can actually reinvigorate and strengthen the multilateral trading system,” she concludes.

Simon Evenett, trade professor at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, has similarly laid out a clear plan of action for the WTO in an online article, focusing on the need to salvage parts of the Doha round where there is agreement, provide opportunities for ‘bottom-up’ negotiations in narrower areas among members that so wish, and strengthen certain WTO secretariat functions, such as for collecting and analysing trade data.

Despite Lamy’s insistence that Doha is achievable in its current form, many experts continue to speculate that an alternate path is inevitable.

Analysis of the 21 April documents

In-depth analysis of the 21 April chairs’ reports is available in the current issue of our sister publication Bridges Weekly.

Analysis of the Committee on Trade and Environment report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the Rules report (including fisheries subsidies) can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the NAMA report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the Agriculture report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the TRIPS Council report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the Services report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the Development report can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the Trade Facilitation draft text can be accessed [here](#).

ICTSD Reporting; “Life after Doha,” FT, 18 April 2011; ‘Doha trade deal in ‘serious doubt’: WTO chief,’ AFP, 21 April 2011; ‘WTO faces tough choices after latest Doha setback,’ REUTERS, 21 April 2011; ‘Doha trade round faces risk of collapse after 10 years of talks,’ GUARDIAN, 23 April 2011; ‘After Doha: Why the Negotiations Are Doomed and What We Should Do About It,’ FOREIGN AFFAIRS, May-June 2011; ‘WTO chief says Doha trade round at ‘serious risk’ over differences on industrial goods tariffs,’ WASHINGTON POST, 21 April 2011; ‘World Trade Organisation draft to be discussed on April 29,’ ECONOMIC TIMES, 21 April 2011.

SUSTAINABLE FORESTS

Urgent Action Needed to Prevent Mass Deforestation: Report

Failure to act urgently to shift historical patterns of forest destruction could result in the loss of 232 million hectares of forest by 2050, according to WWF and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in their Living Forests report. A growing global population demanding more food, fibre, and fuel coupled with historical patterns in misgoverned forest resources will lead to massive destruction of forests, loss of species and release of carbon emissions unless action is taken immediately, the report predicts.

WWF is calling upon public and private institutions to take on an initiative of Zero Net Deforestation and Forest Degradation (ZNDD) by 2020 as part of the International Year of the Forests (See Bridges Trade BioRes [7 February 2011](#)). The initiative strives for “no net forest loss through deforestation and no net decline in forest quality through degradation.”

Urgency of action

Due to the impacts that forest loss is having on climate change and biodiversity, ZNDD requires immediate and widespread implementation, says WWF.

“If we delay and climate change impacts kick in, forests as a whole will become more like emissions sources rather than sinks,” Rod Taylor, WWF’s director of forests told BioRes. Therefore, Taylor said, ZNDD aims to be a part of achieving global emissions peak by 2020, as well as following the emissions decline.

Furthermore, there is urgency for biodiversity as well. The loss of forest habitats is the leading cause of forest species decline and extinction, according to WWF’s [Living Planets Index report](#).

“The best way to save species is by saving forests,” said Taylor. “Every year we defer, we lose species that can never be replaced.”

The Living Forests report highlights the “high degree of synergy” strategies to curb climate change have with efforts to reduce loss of biodiversity and denotes the necessity to make changes to benefits them both sooner rather than later.

Achieving ZNDD

WWF advocates more efficient land use and a change in consumption habits as key to achieving ZNDD. If no action is taken to improve governance over deforestation by 2030, WWF predicts that some 55 percent of deforestation would be due to failure to optimise land use.

However, the report says, boosting productivity of agricultural land rather than expanding crop cultivation is a major means by which nations - especially developing ones - can maintain their economic growth strategies while avoiding further deforestation.

“A really good example could be palm oil in Indonesia, where government has production growth goals that can be met through efficiency

and high productivity rather than expansion into more and more land,” Taylor pointed out.

Good governance is therefore a necessity to ZNDD success, the report acknowledges, because without good governance it is difficult for forests to compete with economic incentives.

To be able to sustain forests, consumption patterns in the developed world need to shrink, the report says. Essentially, the Living Forests report finds that rich countries will need to reduce food waste, meat and dairy intake, energy use, and general over-consumption to allow for secure access to basic materials in the developing world.

Taylor also noted that safeguards on supply chains have the capacity to alter consumption patterns, making them more sustainable.

“By placing safeguards, such as the EC ban on illegal timber, developed nations can make sure they are not outsourcing environmental problems” (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [23 June 2010](#)).

The ZNDD would be a comprehensive measure that would encompass the globe to ensure protection over forests in order to reduce detrimental impacts on climate change, biodiversity, and economic development.

“Doing nothing, delaying or taking half measures, all result in more forest loss and associated GHG emissions, irreversible impacts on biodiversity and declines in ecosystem services,” the report says. The Living Forests report will be in development throughout 2011.

More information

The Living Forests report can be found [here](#).

ICTSD Reporting; “Forests: What future do we want?,” WWF PRESS RELEASE, April 2011; “WWF warns of massive forest loss”, UPI, 27 April 2011.

ANALYSIS

WTO Seal Dispute Begins in Earnest

By Marie Wilke

On 21 April a joint panel was established at the WTO to hear Canada's and Norway's claims against a European Commission (EC) ban on seal products that was adopted by the trade block in 2009. With this step, one of the most controversial and emotional cases at the WTO enters the next stage.

Although Ottawa and Oslo requested separate consultations, the first step in a WTO dispute, many of their legal claims are the same – hence the creation of a joint panel. In particular, the two countries argue that the EC ban violates the fundamental WTO principle of non-discrimination embodied in the national treatment and most-favoured nation provisions in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) agreements.

They also claim that the ban constitutes an illegal technical regulation violating Article 2 of the TBT Agreement, as it is not “necessary to achieve a legitimate objective” and constitutes an “unnecessary obstacle to trade.” Two aspects will be the focus of the following assessment: the matter of “differential treatment and effect” and the qualification of “animal welfare” as “animal health” or “natural resource conservation.”

One ban with three exemptions

The EC Regulation (automatically binding on all member states), which came into effect in 2009, is not a total bar against the importation and exportation of seal products, but rather a bar against putting such products on the market, in other words selling them in EC member states. Thus, the regulation does not prohibit the practice of importing seal products for processing and re-exportation.

It also provides three exemptions: for seal products harvested by Inuit, by-products of seal hunting conducted for the purpose of sustainable marine resource management, and products imported as tourist souvenirs. The Inuit exemption has triggered an outcry among indigenous and local communities in sealing nations for its ambiguous character. While it applies to clearly defined Inuit communities it only shields seal products resulting from “hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities and contribute to their subsistence.” Neither the term “traditional” nor the link to “subsistence” is further specified in the regulation.

Indigenous communities that initiated legal proceedings against the regulation at the EC's court system furthermore argued that the exemption was developed without sufficient consultation (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [22 January 2010](#)). Canada, on the other hand, which is not a member to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (referenced in the Regulation) rejects the exemption outright.

The overriding objective of the ban is to take account of “animal welfare considerations due to pain, distress, fear and other forms of suffering” incurred during the harvesting process and to discourage such treatment by banning the sale of seal products within the EC. While on its face the ban appears to be in line with the WTO non-discrimination requirement as it applies to all products irrespective of their origin, it could run afoul of the principle “in effect.”

Who stands to lose?

Seal hunts are performed in three EC countries (Finland, Sweden and the UK (Scotland)), in three WTO member states (Canada, Namibia, and Norway), in one non-WTO state (Russia), and in Greenland, a territory associated with Denmark that is neither a WTO member nor a member of the EC but trades under special terms with the EC. According to a [European Commission impact assessment study](#) conducted in 2008, the impact on EC member states would be negligible as those

states' seal hunts are conducted in a limited way and are often directed at the processing and re-exportation of products rather than sales within the EC.

While Greenland would be medium affected, the Canadian and Norwegian hunts will be the most affected as the EC is their prime export market for seal products. Notably, in the case of Greenland, some 80 percent of its population is of Inuit origin potentially placing them under the Inuit exemption. Thus, the ban most negatively affects Canada and Norway. Namibia has refrained from taking action and Greenland – not being an independent state within the meaning of public international law, but represented by Denmark in its external affairs – could not challenge a trade ban adopted by the EC of which Denmark is a member. It did, however, through Danish action, strongly object to the EC law.

Animal welfare, animal health, and conservation

Both Canada and Norway also argue that the ban is a technical barrier to trade, violating Article 2 of the TBT agreement. This provision provides that technical regulations may be adopted only if they do not constitute an “unnecessary obstacle to international trade.” It defines this as a measure “more trade restrictive than necessary to fulfil a legitimate objective, inter alia: the protection of [...] animal life or health, or the environment.” This wording partially resembles the language of the “exception clause” Article XX of GATT, which is referenced in most environmental cases.

The EC regulation clearly states that it was adopted as an animal welfare measure. The relevant question here is whether the seals product ban could be shielded from legal condemnation because it is necessary for the protection of animal life or health or the environment. To date, the WTO court has never been called on specifically rule on an animal welfare case, but it has been confronted with a number of cases related to the conservation of natural resources and the protection of animal health and life. Examples include, the *Tuna-Dolphin* dispute (currently in its third round, see Bridges Trade BioRes Review,

[Spring 2011](#)) and the *Shrimp-Turtle* case (see Bridges Weekly, [8 November 2001](#)).

Animal welfare, however, potentially addresses different concerns than conservation efforts and animal health and life protection. While the conservation of exhaustible natural resources arguably only addresses cases of species conservation and not specimen protection, animal health could be limited to the fight of animal diseases. The World Organization for Animal Health, for instance, an entity recognised as a reference organisation by the WTO, makes a clear distinction between animal health and animal welfare, with animal health qualified as as one component of animal welfare. Also, it provides for a set of standards to be observed during slaughtering of animals for human consumption but refrains from banning the slaughter of selected species.

On the other hand, in the absence of further specification in the WTO agreements, one could argue that animal welfare – so long as it is directed at avoiding unnecessary suffering and not the killing of certain specimen *per se* – falls within the scope of animal health.

While some experts have argued that animal welfare as consequence is clearly distinct from animal health as interpreted in the context of WTO law, the issue remains unanswered under current WTO case law (see forthcoming issue of [Bridges Review](#)). The WTO seal dispute, however, may boil down to this, as the question constitutes a core element of both the TBT test (as elaborated above) and the GATT test (through the exception clause of Article XX GATT).

The way forward

Months if not years will pass before the panel will conclude its work – unless parties come do a mutual agreement. Public attention is likely to accompany that process with prominent advocates such as Hollywood actress Pamela Anderson (see her letter to the Canadian Minister of International Trade [here](#)) taking either side. For the WTO, however, the case is about more than seals. As it raises an array of complex legal questions relevant for a number of pending and

potentially forthcoming cases, the case will act as a barometer for gauging the where the WTO stands on questions such as animal welfare, environmental standards, labelling and discrimination on the basis of production methods.

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IN BRIEF

Mexico Green Climate Fund Meet Yields Progress

A two-day meeting of high-level climate change finance representatives in Mexico City resulted in progress for the Transitional Committee (TC) of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Forty experts, 25 from developing or least-developed countries, and 15 from developed countries compose the TC.

On day one of the meeting, officials became bogged down with organisational details, such as who should chair the meeting and how to set the agenda. However, by day two, the committee was able to establish a general working arrangement and work plan, which was the primary goal of the meeting.

In Cancun, Mexico last December, at the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) for the UN Climate Convention, countries agreed to create the GCF to help assist developing nations in coping with the adverse effects of climate change. Countries also agreed to establish TC to design the GCF.

The 28-29 April meeting, the first formal TC gathering, was slow to launch into the agenda. Instead, the entire morning and most of the afternoon on day one was spent deciding who would chair the meeting. In the end, the committee decided that three countries – Mexico, who currently holds the presidency of the COP, South Africa, who will take over the presidency this December, and Norway – would all co-chair.

The Committee then spent an hour discussing an alternate agenda proposed by the African Group. The proposal was much more detailed than the draft agenda circulated by the Secretariat of the UNFCCC, who organised the meeting. Finally, the group agreed to adjust the original agenda with some minor amendments. The meeting was extended to briefly address the scope and purpose of the CGF.

On day two, the TC managed to establish its general working arrangement and work plan. The officials established “workstreams” under which the TC will divide its task: scope, guiding principles, and cross-cutting issues; governance and institutional arrangements; operational modalities; and monitoring and evaluation. These workstreams will be facilitated by representatives of Spain and Barbados, Switzerland and Democratic Republic of Congo, Australia and Pakistan, and Sweden and Bangladesh, respectively.

The consensus rule for decision-making was an issue that caused some debate among TC members. Some members expressed the need for clarification on what is meant by “consensus,” a clear reference to the eleventh hour conflict in Cancun last December (see Bridges Cancun Update #3, [14 December 2010](#)). Meanwhile, others asked for flexibility on decision-making based on their current mandate.

The TC also discussed the nature and functions of the Technical Support Unit (TSU). The Secretariat confirmed that various regional development banks as well as international institutions have responded to the UNFCCC call to serve as members of this technical group. Some TC Members expressed concern about the need to establish clear rules in order to avoid conflict of interest in the TSU work.

Regarding its work plan, the TC agreed to have two technical workshops, starting in Bonn next June, and three additional substantive meetings before the next COP in Durban, South Africa this December. Japan offered to host the second meeting of the TC, which is expected to take place next July. The first workshop will be devoted to

analyse the state-of-the-art of multilateral financing.

The Green Climate Fund will support projects, programmes, policies and other activities relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries through thematic funding windows. The Fund will be responsible of mobilising US\$100 billion per year for developing countries by 2020 from private and public sources.

ICTSD Reporting.

Potential for Biofuels in Cutting Transport Sector Emissions?

With improvements in sustainability, the commercialisation of biofuels in the transport sector could play a major role in reduction of carbon emissions, according to a new report from the International Energy Agency (IEA). The report, released on 20 April, finds that by 2030, scale and efficiency improvements could lower the cost of biofuels to rival those of fossil fuels and begin to serve as a replacement for diesel, kerosene, and jet fuel.

“Biofuels will be needed to provide low-carbon fuel alternatives for planes, marine vessels and other heavy transport modes, and will eventually provide one fifth of emission reductions in the transport sector,” Bo Diczfalussy, IEA Director of Sustainable Energy Policy and Technology, said in a statement.

Biofuels, once considered a silver bullet for tackling climate change and agricultural overproduction, have come under fierce criticism over the past few years (see Bridges Trade BioRes, [8 November 2010](#)). But the IEA report provides evidence that with improvements in sustainability certification, biofuel production and use could have positive environmental, social and economic impacts. It would increase as a transport fuel from 2 percent today to 27 percent in 2050.

In early April, the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels launched a set of comprehensive

sustainability criteria aimed at ensuring that certified sustainable biofuels were obtained without harming the environment or violating human rights.

The report says that greater investment in research, development and demonstration (RD&D) is necessary to improve conversion and land-use efficiency in order to lower costs to levels that can unlock the potential of biofuels.

“Support policies should incentivise the most efficient biofuels in terms of life-cycle greenhouse-gas performance which ensures food security and biodiversity are not compromised,” IEA said in their press release.

Emphasised within the report, is the importance that international cooperation will play in lowering barriers to trade in biomass and biofuels. Developing countries’ successful participation in sustainable biofuel production particularly hinges on international involvement in capacity building and technology transfer.

More information

The IEA Technology Roadmap: Biofuels for Transport can be viewed [here](#).

ICTSD Reporting; “IEA ‘roadmap’ shows how biofuel production can be expanded in a sustainable way, and identifies needed technologies and policy actions”, IEA PRESS RELEASE, 20 April 2011; “IEA Report Proposes Steps for Sustainable Global Biofuels Expansion”, UNCSD UPDATE, 20 April 2011.

Authorities in Asia Seize Wildlife Contraband

Three of the largest loads of smuggled ivory to date were recently seized by officials in China, Thailand, and Vietnam. The largest of the three seizures, which occurred 19 April, yielded 707 elephant tusks, 32 ivory bracelets, and a rhino horn. The contraband was discovered in China close to its border with Vietnam.

The remarkably large confiscation comes on the heels of two smaller, but still significant, seizures. Earlier in April, 247 tusks estimated to be worth around US\$3.3 million were seized by customs officials in Thailand, while Vietnamese officials confiscated 122 from a warehouse along the Chinese border.

Experts say the recent seizures have reconfirmed their suspicions that Vietnam, Thailand, and China are primary transit and destination countries for smuggled ivory. According to the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS), the world's largest database of elephant product seizures, over 20 tonnes of elephant ivory have been confiscated in these three countries alone.

Although experts from environmental groups have praised officials for confiscating the smuggled goods, they remain concerned over the growing prosperity of the ivory trade and the environmental hazards associated with it.

"We congratulate the law enforcement officials for the successful interception of the ivory," said Grace Ge Gabriel, the Asia Regional Director for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). "However, we are concerned about the unrelenting demand for elephant ivory." The high profit margin that can be gained in the illegal trade of ivory is fuelling rampant smuggling and trafficking."

Tom Milliken, an expert on illegal ivory trade for wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC, echoed Gabriel's statement.

"The enforcement authorities in all these cases are to be congratulated for making these interdictions, but these tusks attest to the poaching of more than 500 elephants, which is a major conservation concern."

Environmentalists are also reminding governments that although confiscating the goods is an acceptable short-term solution, longer-term solutions need to be developed to successfully curb trade in illegal ivory.

"While major seizures, arrests and prosecutions are certainly deterrents to these smuggling operations, the only long-term solution to curtail

elephant poaching has to be to reduce the demand for illegally sourced ivory to negligible levels."

ICTSD Reporting; "Ivory Seizure in Asia Shows Need for Action Against Illegal Trade," INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE, 19 April, 2011; "Major Ivory Seizures in Thailand, China, and Viet Nam," TRAFFIC, 20 April, 2011; "Thailand Seizes 2 Tons of African Elephant Tusks in Country's Largest Ivory Seizure," THE CANADIAN PRESS, 1 April, 2011.

Agriculture Forum Urges African Countries to Share Knowledge

Knowledge sharing is the best way to help drive increased agricultural productivity in Africa, according to a pan-African agriculture advisory organisation. The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) outlined the recommendation in its four-year strategic plan that was developed at its most recent summit in Accra, Ghana.

Participants at the symposium noted that in the past, a lack of cooperation between African farmers, researchers, and policy makers has hindered the widespread adoption of new research findings and technologies. Poor information exchange, a lack of sharing practices at the continental level, and low levels of networking were also cited as other causes.

The four year plan advocates for a wider dissemination of research outputs, increasing the uptake of new and improved technologies (including biotechnology), and committing to additional research to help improve knowledge sharing in Africa. The plan's ultimate goal is to bring all national agricultural advisors together under a single information-sharing platform.

"AFAAS will stimulate the process in knowledge sharing and capacity building, organisation sharing at both national levels through country chapters but also at continent level through AFAAS and linking up with other organisations like the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa and sub-

regional organizations, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union," said AFAAS chair Salim Nahdy.

The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) has identified agriculture as the most important industry for achieving six percent economic growth on the continent and for helping Africa meet the targets of its Millennium Development Goals.

Established in 2004, AFAAS goal is to create "Agricultural Advisory Services that effectively and efficiently contribute to sustained productivity and profitable growth of African agriculture." In order to accomplish this goal, the organisation seeks to "build partnerships at national, regional and international levels between agricultural advisory services and other institutions contributing to sustained growth and transformation of agriculture."

Improvements in agricultural advisory services, like the ones proposed by AFAAS, have been identified by Ghana's Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture, Yaw Effa Berfa, as essential for driving rural development and continuing to empower farmers.

FARA, which works in tandem with AFAAS to strengthen ties between researchers and farmers in Africa, hopes that increased information sharing will not only increase productivity but also help reduce poverty, increase incomes, and increase sustainable use of natural resources.

ICTSD Reporting; "ACCRA hosts Africa-wide symposium on agric advisory services," MYJOYONLINE, 14 April, 2011; "AFAAS in the News," AFRICAN FORUM FOR AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES; "Sharing agricultural knowledge in Africa 'Vital for food security,'" SCIDEV NET, 15 April, 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 (2-16 May)

3 May, Washington D.C. CORPORATE ECOSYSTEM VALUATION: WHY AND HOW? The World Business Council for Sustainable Development will look into how ecosystem goods and services (e.g. freshwater, fiber, food, flood control, water purification, waste treatment, etc.) enable business and society to function. There is continued anticipation that ecosystem values will be incorporated into public policies and considered by the finance sector and business-to-business customers in terms of risk and opportunities. For more information, please refer to the [website](#).

4 May, London. TAKING CONTROL OF ENERGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY. With oil prices spiking, unrest in the Middle East and the nuclear renaissance in trouble, Chatham House is hosting John Sauven, the Executive Director at Greenpeace, to set out the economic and environmental case for a revolution in the UK's approach to building a resilient, efficient and clean energy system. For more information, please consult the [website](#).

5 May, Washington DC, US. CANADA CRUDE TO CHINA? PROSPECTS AND BARRIERS OF INCREASING CHINESE IMPORTS OF CANADIAN OIL. This conference, cosponsored by the Canada Institute and the China Environment Forum of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, will examine China's desire to import heavy crude oil from Canada. Discussions will explore completing the project, regulatory challenges, environmental concerns, and the larger implications for North American Energy Security. Keynote speakers will include Nathan Lemphers, an oilsands policy analyst at the Pembina Institute, and Robert Johnson, the Director of Global Energy and

Natural Resources for the Eurasia Group. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

9-14 May, Rosario, Argentina. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND AIR QUALITY CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN 2011. The main objective of this conference is to address how to achieve sustainable transport in the Latin American and Caribbean region. It will examine the health and environmental benefits of improving urban transport, emissions inventories, emissions monitoring, the use of alternative fuels, and carbon financing to ultimately improve urban transport and regional collaborative initiatives. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

9-13 May, Istanbul, Turkey. FOURTH UN CONFERENCE ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC-IV). This conference aims to assess the results of the 10-year action plan adopted at the third UN Conference on LDCs and to adopt new measures and strategies for their sustainable development. The conference will connect governments, international organisations, civil society organisations, academia, and the private sector. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

10-11 May, Istanbul, Turkey. ISTANBUL TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. This symposium, organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), the OECD Development Center, the Centre for Policy Dialogue Bangladesh, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation will take place in conjunction with the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UNLDCIV). The event will bring together policy makers and experts from international organisations, civil society, private sector, and academia to identify innovative strategies for tackling the implementation challenges of the UNLDCIV outcome towards structural transformation in LDCs. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

10-11 May, Geneva, Switzerland. ACTION PLAN ON FORESTS AND THE GREEN ECONOMY. This meeting, co-organised by the

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the FAO Forestry and Timber Section, seeks to further develop the Action Plan on Forests and the Green Economy, which will be presented as a regional contribution from the forest sector at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The main objectives of the meeting are to review a draft Action Plan, to define focus areas for the forest sector, to consider implementation challenges, and to discuss conditions that will ensure the forest sector's move toward a green economy. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

Other upcoming events

20-24 June, Manila, Philippines. SIXTH ASIA CLEAN ENERGY FORUM 2011: NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND POLICY DRIVERS – BUILDING THE LOW-CARBON FUTURE. This conference will promote best practices in clean energy policy and regulation, financing and investment, innovative business models, and energy access across Asia. Sessions will provide opportunities for stakeholders to discuss successfully innovative and creative methods to break down barriers to large-scale clean energy development and deployment in the Asia Pacific region. Participants will include governments, national and multi-national banks, carbon and clean energy investment funds, environmental regulators, academia, and civil society. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

22-23 June, Brussels, Belgium. OCEAN ENERGY 2011: SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN ENERGY ASSOCIATION (EU-OEA). This conference will focus on creating a networking platform for the European ocean energy community. It aims to connect leading technology developers, policy makers, industrial players, supply chain partners, utilities and investors. Highlights of the convention will include an address by the European commission and presentations from developers and investors that will highlight the supply chain opportunities a thriving marine energy sector will offer the European Union. For more information, visit the [event website](#).

29 June – 1 July, Chisinau, Moldova. **FOURTH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AARHUS CONVENTION.** This meeting is a follow up to the Aarhus Convention, which focused on access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. It will seek to provide an opportunity to discuss the procedure for accession to the Convention by States from outside the UNECE region and the role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development. The meeting is expected to adopt the draft Chisinau Declaration on the role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development as a its contribution to the preparatory process for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20). For more information, visit the [event website](#).

16-22 July, Rome, Italy. **THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CGRFA 13).** The session, which is convened under the constitution of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, will focus on plant and aquatic genetic resources, the application and integration of biotechnologies in the conservation and utilisation of genetic resources, and climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture. The four day session will be preceded by a day of regional consultations on the conference's key issues. 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.

SPECIALISED LIBRARY ON CLIMATE CHANGE (SLCC). By The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) (April 2011). The SLCC is a TERI initiative under the aegis of the *Framework Agreement for the Programme of Cooperation on Energy, Environment, and Climate Change* sponsored by the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the government of Norway. The SLCC holds a wide collection of specialised books, journals, and CD-ROMs on various issues related to climate change. The major objectives of the collection is to gather, compile, and disseminate information on climate change; develop and provide access to information services; and build awareness among the research, scientific and student communities. The library catalogue of print and electronic resources is available [online](#).

MITIGATION POTENTIAL OF REMOVING FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES. Produced by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (April 2011). This working paper analyses the assumptions, data, and environmental and economic implications of removing fossil fuel subsidies. Its primary finding shows that removing fossil fuel subsidies would equal approximately one-seventh of the action needed to keep global temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius. However, the paper also demonstrates that although subsidy removal would provide economic and environmental benefits, not all countries and regions would benefit evenly. The full working paper is available [online](#).

THE ILUC DILEMMA: HOW TO DEAL WITH INDIRECT LAND USE CHANGES WHEN GOVERNING ENERGY CROPS? Published by the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (April, 2011). Due to land use effects, bioenergy use has the potential to have adverse effects on biodiversity, soil and water and may fail to guarantee a GHG emissions reduction compared to fossil fuel use. Currently, there is no consensual methodology that takes into account indirect land use change that substantially contributes to GHG emissions and biodiversity loss. The article covers the current state of the discussion surrounding how to quantify these adverse effects related to biomass cultivation. It also analyses the approaches developed for taking indirect land use change into account. Assessment criteria for coping with this dilemma are developed, and policy recommendations are derived from these recommendations. The full article is available for purchase [online](#).

BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM INSECURITY: A PLANET IN PERIL. Published by Earthscan (April 2011). This book provides an authoritative and comprehensive assessment of the threats presented to human security and well-being by the loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. Contributors examine the current trends and state of global biodiversity, the drivers of biodiversity loss, and the mechanisms and policies needed for conserving and restoring biodiversity in the future. Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of placing a realistic economic value on nature and the services that ecosystems provide. The book is available for purchase [online](#).