



Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest

Weekly trade news from a sustainable development perspective

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LEAD STORIES

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

Trade ministers from two dozen influential WTO member countries on Saturday 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 on 29 January. "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.

Commodity Price Hikes Could Spark Unrest, Warn Heads of WTO, UNCTAD

High and volatile prices for key commodities, including food products, could spark unrest in poor countries, warned the heads of the WTO and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on Monday.

Rising food prices "are now stoking global inflation, not to mention political unrest of proportions that we could have seldom imagined" said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, speaking at the opening of a two-day conference on commodities in Geneva this week.

UNCTAD Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi echoed his comments, telling delegates that a predictable supply of commodities is needed "to address the acute problems of food and energy security, especially in environments of extreme poverty with the potential for social and political unrest."

While neither Supachai or Lamy explicitly mentioned the political upheaval in North Africa and the Middle East, tension around food prices and unemployment may have been a factor that helped trigger protests.

Supachai cautioned that growing numbers of young people in the developing world "will not easily withstand" future price rises, especially given the lack of social protection in many countries, and "what has so far been a jobless recovery" from the recession.

Demand: Propelled by growth

Supachai told delegates that copper prices had risen 35 percent since the summer, while gold, sugar, and cotton were all at 30 year highs. The FAO's agricultural commodity index had recently touched just one point below its maximum level reached in 2008, Supachai noted, "clearly signaling that the 2010-11 price hikes are similar in magnitude to 2008".

Lamy predicted that prices for most commodities would continue to rise in 2011, as global GDP growth of 4 percent bolsters demand. Over 70 percent of the growth would come from commodity-intensive emerging markets, he said, with China, India and Latin America playing a major role.

"The ascent in prices is likely to be most pronounced for crude oil, due to contracting global inventories, copper, gold, corn, and soybeans" said Lamy. "Droughts and biofuels in several parts of the world have tightened the supply of corn and soy, together with much higher Asian demand for the latter".

Natural gas, zinc and cattle would see the least pronounced price rises, Lamy said, with higher grain prices having slowed demand for live cattle.

Supachai argued that the rise in commodity prices was likely to continue. "The historical trend is towards increasing demand, especially in high growth areas in the developing world", he observed. Commodity producers could benefit from the increased demand, he said, if resource rents were properly managed.

Supply: Floods, fire, drought, and biofuels

Natural disasters had contributed to the tightness of supply, speakers at the conference acknowledged. Last year "major weather events, from floods in Pakistan to fires in Russia and drought in other areas of the world" had affected the prices of commodities such as wheat and cotton, Supachai said.

Lamy noted that corn and soy supply had been affected by drought as well, with biofuel policies

an additional factor affecting the growth in demand.

"It is still open to speculation whether such events are related to climate change", said Supachai, "but the balance of evidence points to the increasing impact of climatic changes on agriculture".

Hunger rising

David Nabarro, who was appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon as a special representative on food security and nutrition, also echoed Lamy and Supachai's concerns. During previous price spikes in 2008, a 30 to 50 increase in the food bill of the poorest one billion people "led to some very, very difficult choices", Nabarro said, noting that small children and pregnant women had been hit particularly hard by the shocks.

Supachai underscored that the poorest communities were most at risk from sudden price changes. "Volatility has huge negative impacts on vulnerable groups, such as low-income households in developing countries, for whom food expenditure can account for up to 80 per cent of household budgets", he warned.

More than one hundred million people are believed to have been pushed into hunger as a result of the 2008 price spikes. "These are people whose voices are not generally heard", Nabarro noted, "but some of them did decide that this was just too much to bear, and in more than 32 countries we had riots by people who just could not cope with these food price rises".

The current food price situation is therefore "not just an issue of hunger and nutrition, it's also an issue of security," he argued.

Debate on role of commodity markets

The magnitudes of recent price volatility "point to speculative distortions" which can complicate the management of commodities production and trade, Supachai told the meeting. The "financialisation" of agricultural commodities, and the activities of certain commodity funds that "seek to manipulate prices" also played a role, he said.

However, other participants at the forum argued that speculation had played little, if any role, in contributing to recent price spikes. "There is little evidence that speculators have been the underlying cause" of dramatic corn and wheat price increases in the last six months, said Brian Durkin, managing director and chief executive officer of CME Group, a Chicago-based operator of derivatives and futures exchanges.

At the instigation of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the G-20 group of leading economies is expected to highlight food price volatility in a series of summits throughout this year. France is reportedly keen to tackle speculation of commodity markets as part of this initiative.

Although Lamy made no mention of the relationship between price volatility and speculation in his remarks, he recently told a meeting of agriculture ministers that there was no consensus on how policy-makers should best respond.

Trade: Export restrictions and price volatility

Instead, said Lamy, governments should look at whether trade policies such as export restrictions have exacerbated shortages of commodities, especially for food. These measures "were the single most important reason for the 2007-08 price explosion on the rice market", said Lamy, who also identified Russian and Ukrainian wheat bans as having made an important contribution to the 2010-11 price rise for cereals.

Lamy acknowledged that "there is an imbalance in the WTO rule-book between the stringency of the rules for imports and their laxity for exports", even though export restrictions "could actually starve" net-food-importing countries. He suggested that the WTO's ongoing Doha Round of trade talks provided countries with "a window" for tackling agricultural export taxes and export restrictions.

More broadly, Lamy suggested that a Doha deal would "oil the wheels of international trade in commodities, giving the developing world its fair share of the market". Warning participants that "volatility is at its worst in tight and closed

markets", he emphasised that a Doha deal was an opportunity to reduce the developed world's remaining tariff peaks, such as those on rice; an opportunity to reduce tariffs in emerging economies; and to cut developed country farm subsidies for products such as cotton. "These subsidies crowd out the developing world from international markets, and prevent it from fairly competing," Lamy said.

Lamy also told the gathering that climate-induced pressures on resources would make a new global deal even more important. "Droughts, and other natural catastrophes, should not deprive parts of the globe from food," he said.

ICTSD reporting.

OTHER NEWS

TNC: Members Endorse Attempt at July Breakthrough, Doha Conclusion by Year's End

Suppressing their senses of déjà vu, WTO members on Wednesday backed a new timeline for reaching an agreement in the long-struggling Doha Round of global trade negotiations by the end of this year.

At an informal session of the Trade Negotiations Committee on 2 February, they endorsed a schedule calling for revised draft agreement texts in every area of the talks by April, an agreement on formulae and figures for tariff and subsidy cuts and flexibilities by July, and legal texts and commitment schedules to be finalised by December. The timeline is similar to that for previous, unsuccessful attempts to strike a multilateral trade deal.

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, who chairs the committee that oversees the Doha Round negotiations, had called the meeting to discuss developments in the talks, both in Geneva and at a recent meeting of several trade ministers in Davos.

Lamy, who attended the Davos meeting along with General Council Chair Ambassador John Gero (Canada), reported to members he had told the ministers that the talks in Geneva were moving too slowly and were “short of the kind of substantive progress” needed to meet the target of revised texts by Easter. He warned that a more harmonious tone in the negotiations was not the same as actual convergence. “We urgently need to build on the good atmospherics to accelerate negotiations at all levels if we are to record substantial progress across the board by the [August] summer break.”

“Acceleration, texts, convergence is now the name of the game,” he said, stressing the need for members to engage in meaningful give-and-take.

Roughly three dozen delegations intervened, most of them generally welcoming of Lamy’s assessment. Many pointed to the risks of not concluding the round in 2011, before election campaigns start up in the US and elsewhere. They stressed that the rules-based trading system would be damaged by a failure to conclude a Doha accord, and that an accord would be a stimulus package for the global economy.

But amidst the standard declarations of willingness to negotiate seriously and appeals for transparency, members’ statements revealed the stark differences that they need to overcome if they are in fact to reach an agreement.

Brazilian Ambassador Roberto Azevedo said that the carefully designed December 2008 draft texts in agriculture and non-agricultural market access, which included terms upon which WTO members came close to agreeing in July of that year, represented “our desires framed by reality,” sources told Bridges. New calls for “ambition,” trade-speak for increased market access (or subsidy cuts, depending on who’s talking), were making things unclear. Tradeoffs are only possible if countries take into account each others’ defensive interests, he warned. “Ambition coupled with selectiveness can backfire.”

The implied target of the Brazilian’s remarks was the United States, which has been pushing China, Brazil, and India to do more to open their markets

to industrial products, without volunteering new concessions on its own farm subsidies.

US Ambassador Michael Punke, in his own statement, rejected “the notion of inherent balance in the 2008 package,” saying that “the cloth woven in 2008 has major holes – including widely acknowledged unfinished work in services and [NAMA] sectorals.”

Washington, he said, is “ready, willing, and able to engage in a process of give and take on all fronts – bilateral, plurilateral, and multilateral,” but that this can only occur if other countries engage in serious negotiations.

The US envoy argued that deadlines alone would not contribute to success, likening them to “making hotel reservations at a nice resort while not making the reservations to get there.”

Like Brazil, South Africa’s ambassador argued that demands by major developed countries for greater market access in manufactures and services were unfair, since South Africa had lost one million jobs to a financial crisis it had no role in creating. He argued that focusing on removing unfair practices was crucial to avoiding repeating the breakdowns of 2006 and 2008.

The divide between the US and large developing countries is hardly the only fault line in the negotiations; it is simply the most prominent one. Members’ interventions also pointed to some of the divisions that have been overshadowed. Costa Rica called for greater ambition by both developed and developing countries. While Indonesia stressed the importance of food and livelihood security for farmers on behalf of the G-33 bloc of import-sensitive developing countries, Uruguay emphasised the importance of opening up access to agricultural export markets, in developing as well as developed countries.

Mauritius, speaking for the African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, cautioned that while increasing ambition, members must be careful not to unravel what has already been painstakingly negotiated.

On behalf of the group of least-developed countries, Bangladesh called for attention to some

of the bloc's priorities, such as cotton subsidy reform, duty- and quota-free market access, and reformed rules of origin requirements. It also stressed that the group was looking for an outcome on the mandate to make special and differential treatment provisions more precise, effective and operational.

Some members raised systemic concerns. Canada said it was important to bring the Doha Round to a rapid conclusion so that governments can confront other challenges facing the multilateral trading system. Uruguay urged members to look beyond simple commercial gains to focus on what they would gain by bolstering the rules-based trading system.

China, for its part, said that the planned timeline for the negotiations this year was "desirable, doable, and agreeable." Wishing delegations a happy lunar new year, the Chinese representative voiced hope for progress in the Doha Round that is swift like the year's namesake rabbit.

ICTSD reporting.

ACP Countries Call For 'Immediate Action' on Cotton Subsidies

The group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries has called for an "immediate" resumption of negotiations on cotton subsidies at the WTO, castigating the US for maintaining support measures that the global trade body's dispute settlement mechanism has ruled illegal. A solution to the problem "cannot wait", the ACP members said in a 27 January statement.

The 79-member bloc, which includes some of the world's poorest nations, has long argued that lavish US cotton subsidies lower world prices, harming the already-fragile livelihoods of cotton farmers in developing countries, notably in West Africa. In the Doha Round trade negotiations, developing countries have pushed for extra-deep cuts to cotton subsidies, an effort spearheaded by the 'cotton four' of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali. While the US has agreed to slash its cotton subsidies more deeply than support for other farm products, it has insisted that it would

make such cuts only as part of a Doha Round accord, not earlier. In 2004, WTO members agreed to address cotton subsidies and market access barriers "ambitiously, expeditiously, and specifically, within the agriculture negotiations," in light of its "vital importance" for developing and least-developed countries.

Separate from the Doha Round, the US's existing cotton subsidies have already run afoul of WTO law. In a long-running dispute dating back to 2002, Brazil has successfully argued that a variety of US support programmes for the cotton sector violate Washington's obligations under WTO rules governing agriculture and subsidies. Washington, however, failed to bring its policies fully into compliance with the ruling. Brazil was poised last year to introduce WTO-authorised retaliatory sanctions worth \$829 million against a variety of US goods and intellectual property, but it stopped short of doing so, instead striking a compromise with Washington. Under that temporary 'framework' agreement, the US agreed to set up a \$147.3 million per year "technical assistance fund" to help Brazilian farmers; it also pledged to work with Brazil to reform current and future cotton subsidy programmes.

According to the ACP group, the US-Brazil interim deal -- under which Washington effectively agreed to subsidise Brazilian cotton farmers in order to keep subsidising its own -- "only serves to reinforce inequality in treatment and go against the interests of other producers."

"The ACP group deplores the present impasse consisting in an unprecedented and exceptional situation where a WTO member is avoiding bringing its trade policy into compliance with its obligations towards the Organisation in return for a payment made towards the producers of one other member only," the bloc said.

The ACP statement was timed to coincide with a meeting of trade ministers from several leading WTO members in Davos, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum summit. The summary remarks from that 'mini-ministerial', which called for concluding the Doha Round by the end of this year, did not mention cotton.

Stressing that the US remained in violation of its WTO obligations, the bloc called for an “immediate resumption” of negotiations, based on a draft agreement text from December 2008. That text, the most recent comprehensive draft in the Doha Round agriculture negotiations included a formula, originally proposed by the ‘cotton four’, for determining cotton subsidy cuts based on whatever average reduction was agreed for other products. As the formula was structured, the less ambitious the overall cut, the larger the size of the additional quantum of reduction for cotton subsidies would be. Thus, a 60 percent overall cut would result in an 82.2 percent reduction to the spending limit for cotton subsidies; for a 90 percent overall cut, the reduction for cotton would be a modestly higher 93.7 percent. The text also included provisions for deeper cuts to cotton subsidies deemed to fall in the ‘blue box’, and for the lifting of market access restrictions on cotton from LDCs.

Priority should be given to an “early solution,” the ACP group said, failing which cotton should at a minimum “be treated in parallel, and not subsequently, to the outstanding issues in the Doha Round negotiations.”

Cotton had been pointed to, along with duty- and quota-free access for LDC exports and trade facilitation, as issues that could be part of a potential ‘early harvest’ of agreements among WTO members prior to a Doha Round conclusion. However, the notion of any such early harvest has failed to gain widespread support among WTO members.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

Long Stalled, US-Colombia FTA May Be Sent to Congress This Year

A free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia could be put to a vote in the US Congress this year, after three years in limbo.

The accord has gained momentum in Washington in recent weeks. President Barack Obama mentioned the deal in his State of the Union speech, though he stopped short of calling for its approval (as he did for an FTA with South Korea).

Other leading Democrats have been less reticent about their support for ratification. Senator Max Baucus, the Democrat from Montana who chairs the Senate committee with jurisdiction over trade, said it was “extremely disappointing the president did not lay out a timeline” in his address for submitting the Colombia FTA (or a similar agreement with Panama) to Congress, reports The Hill.

On 28 January, following a meeting with Colombian Vice-President Angelino Garzon, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton responded with a direct “Yes” when asked if the Obama administration would send the FTA to Congress this year.

Ratifying the FTA would immediately eliminate the majority of tariffs on US exports to Colombia, with all remaining tariffs phased out over defined time periods.

According to the Colombian embassy in Washington, the US’s share in Colombia’s agricultural imports has dropped from 46 percent in 2008 to 22 percent today, due to the integration of Latin American markets while trade barriers against US products remained in place. Furthermore, according to Gabriel Silva, Colombia’s ambassador to the US, China is nipping on the heels of the US as Colombia’s largest trading partner, and could overtake it by the end of the decade.

The US-Colombia FTA was first concluded by the George W. Bush administration in November 2006, and re-negotiated in 2007 to meet criteria set out by the then-Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives. However, it has languished since then, amid concerns by Democrats about violence against labour union leaders in Colombia. An attempt in 2008 by the Bush administration to send it to Congress for a vote without the assent of Congressional leaders was parried by Democrats using a procedural

manoeuvre. Now, shrinking violence rates are adding to hopes for ratification. When Garzon was in Washington, US Vice-President Joe Biden commended him “for his leadership on issues related to labour and human rights.”

While Colombia waits on the US Congress for ratification of the FTA, it is seeking an extension of a temporary agreement under which the US unilaterally offers duty-free access to many products from Colombia and Ecuador. That trade preference agreement is already extended six weeks beyond its original expiration date of 31 December 2010.

ICTSD reporting; “U.S. committed to passing Colombia trade pact: Biden,” REUTERS, 28 January 2011; “Colombia Trade Agreement Gaining Momentum in Washington,” FORBES ([blog](#)), 30 January 2011; “Baucus rips Obama for not providing trade agreement timeline,” THE HILL, 26 January 2011.

WTO IN BRIEF

Russia Could Join WTO in 2011: Lamy

Russia’s long-running negotiations to join the WTO could see it enter the global trade body in 2011, according to WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy.

“I believe Russian accession to the WTO before the end of the year is doable,” the WTO head told reporters after meeting with trade ministers on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum summit in Davos on Saturday 29 January. He said that in the last year, the Russian leadership has “been pushing on the gas pedal and as a result of that the process has been moving on very substantially.”

Russia, the world’s largest economy outside the WTO, has been seeking membership since 1993, surpassing even China’s 15-year-long entry negotiations. Nevertheless, developments in the past several months augur well for the prospects of Russian accession. In December, Russia signed a memorandum of understanding with its biggest

trading partner, the EU, setting the terms for resolving all bilateral issues between them. In one key provision, Moscow committed to reduce export restrictions on lumber.

The Obama administration has praised Moscow’s concessions on intellectual property rights and US Trade Representative Ron Kirk has reported that talks with Russia have been going well with the US, with over 95 percent of outstanding issues resolved.

However, there are still several outstanding issues that Russia needs to resolve with its partners before it successfully accedes. These include farm subsidies, the treatment of state-owned companies, and intellectual property. It also faces a potential veto from neighbouring Georgia, with which it has a troubled diplomatic and commercial relationship. Theoretically, any individual WTO member could block consensus on a country’s entry into the organization. However, major players, like the US, could encourage Georgia to accept Russia’s bid.

While Russia had been aiming to join by the first half of 2011, a Russian official acknowledged on Tuesday that negotiations would continue through May or June.

WTO accession is a multi-phased process that can take several years. The country seeking accession must first negotiate bilateral market access concessions with the other WTO member countries, and then seek approval in the multilateral and consensus-based working group. Currently, Russia is working on negotiations to complete the final phase of the process.

The working party that oversees Russia’s accession talks met on 25 January. According to sources, the parties are still gathering information about Russia’s agricultural programmes. While no firm commitments on farm subsidies have been reached, movements on the technical level have been proceeding well. The next working party meeting is scheduled for late March.

ICTSD reporting; “Lamy says Russia could enter WTO in 2011,” REUTERS, 29 January 2011; “Russian WTO talks to run into May 2011-official,” REUTERS, 1 February 2011; “Russia moves closer to WTO membership with EU

deal,” BLOOMBERG, 07 December 2010;
“Russia close to taking seat at economic table,”
WASHINGTON POST, 21 October, 2010.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

3-5 February, New Delhi. DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2011: TAPPING LOCAL INITIATIVES AND TACKLING GLOBAL INERTIA. The Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS), organized annually since 2001, is an international undertaking that provides a platform for knowledge exchange and debate on all aspects of sustainable development. This year it will look at the importance of local initiatives in creating momentum towards building a sustainable future. More information can be found on the event [website](#).

4 February, Tokyo. ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK SEMINAR ON VIETNAM. Held by the Asian Development Bank Institute, this meeting is intended to promote understanding of the current situation and problems of the Vietnamese economy. For more information, please visit the [website](#).

9 February, London. CHINA'S RISE: A 4,000 YEAR TURNING POINT? Hosted by Chatham House. The writer Eamonn Fingleton will examine what he considers to be the key driver of the East Asian economic model: intelligent authoritarianism. He will discuss the economic success of China and why it may be seen as one of the most important turning points in political history. For more information, please refer to the [website](#).

WTO events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at:
http://www.wto.org/meets_public/meets_e.pdf.
Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal

meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

4 February: Negotiating Group on Rules

7 February: Dispute Settlement Body

Other upcoming events

6-11 February, Dakar, Senegal. WORLD SOCIAL FORUM. The World Social Forum is an open meeting place where social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organizations opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, for formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action. Since the first world encounter in 2001, it has taken the form of a permanent world process seeking and building alternatives to neo-liberal policies. For more information, please click [here](#).

Resources

THE DRAGON IN THE ROOM: CHINA AND THE FUTURE OF LATIN AMERICAN INDUSTRIALISATION. By Kevin P. Gallagher and Roberto Porzecanski (Stanford University Press, 2010.) China's unprecedented economic rise has brought nothing but good news to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; however, this book argues that China is simultaneously out-competing Latin American manufacturers in world markets – so much that it may threaten the ability of the region to generate long-term economic growth.

GOVERNMENT DEBT ISSUANCE IN THE EURO AREA: THE IMPACT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS. By Mark de Broeck. (International Monetary Fund 2011.) This paper documents and analyses crisis-related changes in government debt issuance practices in the 16 euro zone countries and Denmark. Using a newly constructed database on primary market debt

issuance during 2007-09, the author finds evidence of a shift away from pre-crisis standards of best funding practices and competitive auctions of debt instruments with a fixed coupon, long maturity and local currency denomination (DLTF). The full text can be downloaded from the [IMF website](#).

CHINA AND GLOBAL MARKETS: COPPER SUPPLY CHAIN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT STUDY. By Martin Streicher-Porte and Hans Jörg Althaus. (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2011.) This paper provides a life cycle analysis of the copper production and refining process in China, concluding that the most important environmental impacts of domestic copper production in China arise at the extraction phase of production. For the complete text, please consult the [website](#).
