



Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest

Weekly trade news from a sustainable development perspective

Volume 16 · Number 13, 4 April 2012

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Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest© is published by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), an independent, not-for-profit organisation based at Ch. de Balexert 7, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland, tel: +41 (0) 22-917-8492; fax: 917-8093. To subscribe to Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest or access back issues, visit the [homepage](#).

Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest is made possible through the generous support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID); the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); the Netherlands Directorate-General of Development Cooperation (DGIS); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Danida; the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway; AusAID; and Oxfam Novib.

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ISSN 1563-0

LEAD STORIES

BRICS Push to Redress Power Imbalances at New Delhi Summit

Heads of state from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – collectively known as the BRICS countries – concluded their fourth annual summit meeting in New Delhi on 29 March, with officials signing an accord to promote intra-BRICS trade in local currencies and proposing the creation of a new development bank to mobilise resources in the five-country group.

The one-day summit resulted in the [Delhi Declaration](#), named after this year's host city. The heads of state gathering was the second since the original BRIC grouping took on a fifth member, South Africa, and the fourth since Brazil, Russia, India, and China began meeting collectively in 2009.

World Bank race

A major overhaul of the Bretton Woods institutions has long been a goal of the BRICS countries, with the issue drawing additional relevance now that the race for a new World Bank head is underway in earnest. At the summit, the five heads of state reiterated earlier pleas for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) chiefs to be selected through “an open and merit-based process.”

Historically, the United States has picked one of its own to head the World Bank, while the IMF chief has always been European. The trend continued last year, when former French Finance Minister Christine Lagarde was selected to replace Dominique Strauss-Kahn as the IMF's new managing director.

The US has nominated Jim Yong Kim – a global health expert who is currently president of a US

university – as a candidate to fill outgoing World Bank President Robert Zoellick’s spot. Kim is competing for the post with Nigerian finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala – backed by South Africa, among others – and former Colombia finance minister José Antonio Ocampo.

Despite calls for a more open process, however, the BRICS countries have yet to coalesce behind either of the candidates vying against Kim for the post, which some analysts note is an indication of a broader difficulty to foster unity among the five emerging economies.

BRICS development bank?

The heads of state also put forward the possibility of their own development bank, one that would be charged with “mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries.”

BRICS finance ministers have been directed to explore such an initiative’s feasibility, and report back to leaders at next year’s summit.

The suggestion of a BRICS development bank was backed by Zoellick, who promised that his institution would support a BRICS bank, though he acknowledged that such an initiative might not be easy to implement.

If the BRICS countries “decide they want another financing vehicle – fine. Let’s figure out how to work with it... I’m enough of an economist that I’m not a monopolist,” the World Bank chief told the Financial Times.

Trade and development

With the WTO’s Doha Round of trade talks having been declared at an impasse last year, the BRICS leaders pledged to continue efforts for the round’s successful conclusion, “based on the progress made and in keeping with its mandate.”

“Towards this end, we will explore outcomes in specific areas where progress is possible while preserving the centrality of development and within the overall framework of the single undertaking,” the group said.

Long-standing disagreements between developed economies – such as the US and EU – and major emerging economies – such as Brazil, China, and India – on non-agricultural and agricultural market access have widely been faulted for putting the Doha negotiations on hold.

In light of the Doha stalemate, trade ministers agreed in December to explore “new negotiating approaches” that would allow for members to advance the trade talks in areas where progress might be achieved.

However, at last week’s meeting, the BRICS leaders stressed that members should be wary of pursuing plurilateral initiatives in the absence of movement in the Doha talks.

“We do not support plurilateral initiatives that go against the fundamental principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and multilateralism,” they said. “We believe that such initiatives not only distract members from striving for a collective outcome but also fail to address the development deficit inherited from previous negotiating rounds.”

A subgroup of 16 WTO members – including the US, EU, and Australia – has recently begun holding “exploratory talks” on the possibility of a services liberalisation agreement. The prospect of this services initiative has not received a warm welcome from all WTO members, with emerging economies being among those that have questioned the systemic implications of adopting a plurilateral approach to negotiations (see Bridges Weekly, [7 March 2012](#)).

Speaking to reporters in February, US Ambassador Michael Punke noted, however, that “everyone’s preference is for the emerging economies to be part of all the [services] discussions we have in Geneva because those are the markets that everybody is most interested in.”

Officials from the BRICS countries also signed two agreements to provide credit lines to the business community – pacts that are seen as a step toward fulfilling the five countries’ long-standing goal of eventually replacing the dollar as the main

unit of currency between them and increasing intra-BRICS trade.

Rich country monetary policy under fire

Monetary policy featured prominently in the joint statement, with the group lambasting “aggressive policy actions” taken by developed countries to protect their domestic economies, which have been blamed for releasing global liquidity that spills over into emerging markets, such as Brazil, causing currency appreciation and affecting export competitiveness.

Speaking to Reuters prior to the event, Brazilian Trade Minister Fernando Pimentel said that Brazil – which has been hard-hit by the appreciation of its currency, the real – would be pushing its emerging market peers, including China, to denounce what it calls unfair monetary policies by the US and the euro area.

Before the five-country meet, China had been concerned that language on global monetary imbalances could make it seem like Brazil “could be indirectly referring to them,” Pimentel said, given that Brazil and India have traditionally been worried about the negative effects of an undervalued Chinese currency on their exports.

However, “today’s [problem] doesn’t have to do with China,” the Brazilian trade minister continued. “It has to do with the dollar and the euro.”

Rio+20

The upcoming Rio+20 conference also featured in the final summit declaration, with leaders calling the event a “unique opportunity” for the international community to renew its commitment to supporting sustainable development.

However, the heads of state cautioned, “the concept of a ‘green economy’, still to be defined at Rio+20, must be understood in the larger framework of sustainable development and poverty eradication and is a means to achieve these fundamental and overriding priorities, not an end in itself,” referring to the ongoing debate among countries over whether the concept of a

‘green economy’ could be synonymous with green trade protectionism and conditionalities.

“We resist the introduction of trade and investment barriers in any form on the grounds of developing green economy,” they added, calling instead for flexibility for governments to “define their paths towards sustainable development based on the country’s stage of development, national strategies, circumstances, and priorities.”

Together, the BRICS countries represent over 40 percent of the world’s population and approximately a quarter of the global economy at US\$13.5 trillion. The next BRICS summit will be hosted by South Africa in 2013.

ICTSD reporting; “Brics nations threaten IMF funding,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 March 2012; “Zoellick throws support behind BRICS bank,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 1 April 2012; “College President Is Obama’s Pick for World Bank Chief,” NEW YORK TIMES, 23 March 2012; “Exclusive-UPDATE 1-Brazil to rally BRICS against rich countries,” REUTERS, 28 March 2012.

OTHER NEWS

Currency, Trade Relationship in the Spotlight at WTO Seminar

The relationship between exchange rates and trade took centre stage at the WTO last week, as members gathered for a highly-anticipated seminar on the subject. The 27-28 March gathering was convened in response to Brazil’s requests last year for the examination of possible trade tools to counter the impact of currency fluctuations – a debate that, one Brazilian trade official commented at the time, was “not taking place anywhere” (see Bridges Weekly, [28 September 2011](#)).

The event “raised awareness of the complexity of the issues and was held in a constructive spirit,” Martin Glass of Hong Kong – chair of the WTO’s Working Group on Trade, Debt, and Finance,

which hosted the seminar – told reporters last Wednesday.

Members had agreed prior to the seminar to focus the debate on developing a better understanding of the issues involved and their implications, trade sources told Bridges, leaving members' rights and obligations under the WTO agreements – a potentially touchy subject – for later discussions.

This seminar was “more about the diagnosis than about the remedy,” one delegate commented.

Discussions

The two-day event featured speakers from the private sector, public sector, academia, and international organisations, and was attended by representatives from various WTO members.

As expected, China's strict valuation of its currency, the renminbi, was the subject of a few sharp exchanges between Chinese representatives and US officials at the seminar, one developed country delegate told Bridges.

Beijing's currency policies have long been a hot-button topic with US lawmakers; critics argue that the renminbi is largely undervalued, making Chinese exports cheaper than their foreign counterparts as a result.

The issue has become increasingly high-profile as the US presidential election in November draws nearer, with both US President Barack Obama and his Republican challengers pledging to take a tougher stance on trade with China.

“A strong consensus now exists on the importance of promoting market-determined exchange rate systems, enhancing flexibility to reflect underlying economic fundamentals, avoiding persistent exchange rate misalignments, and refraining from competitive currency devaluation,” US Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Mark Sobel argued during the seminar.

“Exchange rate management and policies need to allow real exchange rates to better reflect fundamentals,” he added.

In response to US comments at the event, a Chinese representative argued that US fiscal policy was largely at fault for Washington's difficulties, not Beijing's currency policies, according to sources who attended the seminar.

At last November's G-20 summit, China pledged to “increase exchange rate flexibility consistent with underlying market fundamentals,” a promise that elicited praise from US President Barack Obama at the time (see Bridges Weekly, [2 November 2011](#)). Shortly afterward, however, Obama noted that – while Beijing has made improvements in this area – China could still do more.

Meanwhile, leading industrial nations have also faced scrutiny from Brazil, with the fast appreciation of the real – Brazil's currency – in the first months of 2012 leading Brazilian officials to sound new warnings of a “currency war” in light of the “tsunami” of cheap money from European countries, among others (see Bridges Weekly, [7 March 2012](#)).

“Some felt that the exchange rate misalignments were due to more direct intervention on the exchange rate markets and others felt that the main source of the problem was by means of fiscal and monetary policy that provoked very large flows of capital across borders,” Brazilian Ambassador Roberto Azevedo told reporters last week after the seminar.

Sensitive subject

“Reality has to be distinguished from emotions that inevitably arise on this topic, as much here as in other institutions,” WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said in his opening remarks to the attendees.

“Exchange rates are, and have always been, a highly sensitive subject in the WTO. There is an emotional, cultural – if not moral – dimension attached to it in the trade community, in which the line between reality and perception can become cloudy,” Lamy added.

Given the stalemate in the Doha Round of trade talks, the option of introducing new issues into the global trade body to address emerging

challenges – such as climate change, food security, and trade and exchange rates – has been suggested by some members as a way of keeping the global trade body current and credible.

However, at December's ministerial conference, some members expressed reservations about starting negotiations on new topics, due to concern either about "the possibility of addressing issues selectively or shifting the focus away from unresolved issues in the [Doha] negotiations" (see Bridges Daily Update, [18 December 2011](#)). At the time, many members said they would prefer that any new issues be brought to WTO committees instead.

"The work of the committees in overseeing the various WTO agreements... has perhaps suffered from some neglect in recent years due to the overwhelming amount of time and resources devoted to the Doha round," US Ambassador Michael Punke [commented](#) at an event in March, adding that the US would be looking for ways "to breathe new life into the WTO's committees."

In that light, Punke continued, "we welcome the initiative to foster this [currency] discussion within the WTO," noting that the area is one of interest for both Brazil and the US. "That's obviously a tricky area, surrounded by a lot of sensitivity for some members," he noted.

"The very fact that the WTO has agreed to discuss this represents an advance," Brazilian Trade Minister Fernando Pimentel said in March.

"This is a new issue, a global challenge, and the WTO needs to talk more about these global challenges," one delegate commented to Bridges.

Next steps

The direction of future discussions on the currency and trade relationship are still unclear, delegates commented to Bridges.

Many WTO members were ready to have the discussion last week, and are willing to continue the discussion further, officials present at the event commented to Bridges. "Members are open to discussing exchange rates, even if it will get

difficult down the road," one delegate commented.

Possible next steps are likely to be discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group on Trade, Debt, and Finance, which is scheduled for the end of May.

ICTSD reporting; "Currency Volatility Hits Small Companies Most, WTO Seminar Finds," BLOOMBERG, 28 March 2012; "Brazil Trade Minister Pimentel: Must Defend Forex Without Inflation," DOW JONES NEWSWIRE, 23 March 2012; "China-U.S. row at centre of WTO currency forum," REUTERS, 28 March 2012.

Argentina Import Controls Come Under Fire at WTO

Buenos Aires' trade policies fell under harsh scrutiny at the WTO last week, when the US, EU, Japan, and 11 other members openly criticised the South American country for its strict import controls.

Friday's joint [statement](#), which was read out at a meeting of WTO Council on Trade in Goods by US Ambassador Michael Punke, decried Argentina's import policies as "unbefitting any WTO member, particularly a member of the G-20 who has committed to refrain from raising new barriers to trade and investment."

"In light of the shared goal of making every effort to sustain global economic growth, Argentina's measures, which clearly limit the growth-enhancing prospects for trade, are particularly troubling," the statement said.

The statement was also backed by Australia, the EU, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and Turkey.

The criticism referred specifically to the increased number of products that have been subject to non-automatic import licensing since 2008, along with a new policy implemented earlier this year that requires all Argentine companies to file affidavits and wait for government approval

before they can import. (See Bridges Weekly, 18 January 2012)

The new policy, which was announced in January and entered into force on 1 February, has already drawn a cautious response from Argentina's partners in the South American customs union Mercosur; however, none of Argentina's Mercosur partners, which include Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, signed onto the joint statement (See Bridges Weekly, 8 February 2012)

The February import policy is Buenos Aires' latest attempt to combat a falling trade surplus and protect both its stock of international reserves and local industry. The country's overall trade balance dropped by 13 percent to US\$10 billion during the first 11 months of 2011.

The products currently requiring an import license to enter Argentina include laptops, home appliances, air conditioners, tractors, machinery and tools, autos and auto parts, plastics, chemicals, tires, toys, footwear, textiles and apparel, luggage, bicycles, and paper products, among others, the group claimed.

"The lack of transparency in Argentina's implementation and administration of its import licensing regime creates profound uncertainty both for exporters and potential exporters to Argentina, as well as for investors in Argentina," the 14-member group argued.

Other countries that raised concerns at the meeting over Argentina's import controls included Chile, Colombia, Malaysia, Peru, Singapore, and Hong Kong, trade sources said. For its part, China commented that it hoped the measures were only temporary.

Argentina lambasts statement

"We received this news with profound surprise and discomfort," Cecilia Nahón, Argentina's Secretary for International Economic Relations, told the Goods Council in response to the criticism, in comments reported by Argentine newspaper La Nación.

"We reject this declaration, as it is not based on objective data," she added, arguing that the

declaration could have "grave systemic consequences" for developing countries that might see themselves as threatened or otherwise unable to use legitimate trade policy instruments.

Shortly after the meeting, the Argentine Foreign Ministry issued a statement defending Buenos Aires' policies.

The foreign ministry promised that the Argentine government would "continue exercising the sovereign control of its trade policies," while staying in line with WTO rules. Buenos Aires would reject "any type of external interference," the ministry added.

"It's noteworthy that the initiative was launched by countries that have increased their exports to Argentina by 25 percent, surpassing their average level of exports to the rest of the world," the foreign ministry continued, noting that Argentina was the G-20 country that increased its imports the most this past year.

"It is also telling that none of the countries participating in the Goods Council session have presented a specific case in which Argentina has violated the rules of the WTO and that the signatories [of the statement] are basing their complaints on vague stories published by the local press," the foreign ministry argued.

Following the complaint at Goods Council meeting, several imports that had been awaiting government approval received a green light from Argentine customs authorities, according to Argentine newspaper Clarín.

"There are companies that had been blocked for some time, and Friday at the last minute their requests were authorised," Miguel Ponce of the Argentine Chamber of Importers told Clarín. "While there isn't any concrete information, we hope this means that the [approval] process will be accelerated."

ICTSD reporting; "Tras las quejas de 40 países ante la OMC, Aduana libera las importaciones," CLARÍN, 1 April 2012; "El Gobierno respondió ratificando su política," CLARÍN, 31 March 2012; "Queja de EE.UU. y Europa por las trabas a las importaciones," CLARÍN, 31 March 2012; "Dura

queja de 40 países por las trabas a las importaciones,” LA NACIÓN, 30 March 2012.

Rio+20 Preparations Gather Steam Ahead of June Meet

The Rio+20 preparatory process continues to move forward, with delegates holding back-to-back meetings in New York over the past two weeks to negotiate over the outcome document for June’s UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). However, observers noted afterwards that there has been little convergence of negotiating positions so far, despite the UN summit drawing ever nearer.

The June 2012 conference marks 20 years since the landmark 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Despite a slow initial uptake, the Rio+20 conference is beginning to gather steam, with over 100 heads of state having confirmed their attendance.

The meeting’s objective is to secure renewed commitment to sustainable development and to meet new and emerging challenges by focusing on the following themes: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

‘Zero draft’ continues to transform

Since January, the ‘zero draft’ outcome document of the conference has undergone a radical transformation, ballooning from its original 19-page form to approximately 206 pages in order to incorporate all of the proposed amendments from nations and major groups (see Bridges Weekly, [11 January 2012](#)).

Subsequent negotiations on the draft in New York were subdued, sources noted, as delegates attempted to come to grips with the expanded document during the seven available negotiating days.

In order to facilitate the negotiating process, the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the

Rio+20 Conference will streamline the current outcome document by inserting possible suggestions into the compilation text. The latest version of the ‘zero draft’ will be made available once the Bureau has compiled the most recent country comments.

Last month’s informal-informal negotiations, held from 19-23 March, saw the first reading of the sections of the ‘zero draft’ concerning the sections on the green economy, institutional framework, and framework for action.

The third intersessional, held on 26-27 March, saw a second reading of the amended text, incorporating all the sections of the ‘zero draft’, including the preamble and the renewing of political commitment sections.

During the New York meetings, delegates from both developed and developing countries emphasised the need for the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, environmental, and social – to be integrated at all stages of the negotiation process.

Speaking at a UN Development Programme event prior to the third intersessional, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon echoed this sentiment.

“Sustainable development recognises that our economic, social, and environmental objectives are not competing goals that must be traded off against each other, but are interconnected objectives that are most effectively pursued together in a holistic manner,” he said.

With this focus in mind, a number of suggested amendments stressed the importance of better co-operation and coherence between the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the WTO.

Running in parallel to the main negotiations, a series of side events, dialogues, and workshops were held that sought to unpack many of the more contentious issues on the Rio+20 agenda, such as the nexus between trade and sustainable development, with participants at a recent workshop requesting that language be recommended to improve the trade-related aspects of the next version of the ‘zero draft’.

Delegates seek tangible outcome in Rio

One proposed outcome for the Rio+20 conference are the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The SDGs initiative, originally proposed by Colombia and Guatemala, has been gathering increased interest from a number of countries, along with receiving support from the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability report.

Proponents of the SDGs have stressed that such goals would be universally applied. Questions remain, however, as negotiators seek to define the process for developing the goals. Some have also noted the potential for overlap between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and SDGs, given that the relationship between the two currently remains undefined, with the UNCSD lacking a mandate to address the MDGs directly.

Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of the Rio+20 conference, advocated for the SDGs in his opening remarks to the first round of informal-informal negotiations on 19 March.

"Agreeing to SDGs at Rio+20 would send a strong expression of renewed commitment for sustainable development," he said.

While the broader themes of the conference remain contentious, observers have noted that many discussions have centred around developing a better basis for planning and implementing sustainable development policy. Bringing science and the policy making process closer together; sharing knowledge across borders; and developing "beyond GDP" metrics to incorporate negative environmental externalities are among the initiatives that have been gaining broad support, observers commented.

Next steps

Several additional meetings to prepare for the UN summit are scheduled for the coming months. The 13th Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII), for example, will be held in Doha, Qatar on 21-26 April. There will also be a second round of informal-informal negotiations on the 'zero draft', which will be held between 23 April and 4 May.

The third and final Preparatory Committee meeting of the UNCSD will take place on 13-15 June in Rio de Janeiro, ahead of the conference itself from 20-22 June.

ICTSD reporting; "Summary of the UNCSD Informal Informal Consultations and Third Intersessional Meeting: 19-27 March 2012," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 30 March 2012.

IN BRIEF

EU, Vietnam to Launch Trade Talks

The EU and Vietnam are set to begin negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement, officials announced on 31 March, making Vietnam the third country of the ten-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to hold trade talks with Brussels.

"Today's decision marks a clear desire to deepen relations and improve the business environment between the EU and Vietnam. The countries are complementary economies with much to gain from ever closer co-operation," said EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht.

"The EU is committed to increasing its engagement with dynamic Asian emerging markets to boost trade and growth."

The two sides are aiming to include import tariffs elimination, trade in services, non-tariff barriers to trade, intellectual property rights, and competition in a potential pact, officials said after meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia last week.

In 2011, EU-Vietnam trade in goods was worth over €18 billion, with almost €13 billion in exports from Vietnam to the EU. Vietnam's key export items include footwear, textiles, coffee, leather, and furniture.

Vietnam is the EU's fifth largest trading partner within ASEAN, while the EU is Vietnam's third

largest overall trading partner after China and the US.

The European Commission is scheduled to hold consultations with EU member states in the coming weeks prior to launching bilateral negotiations with Hanoi.

Brussels hones in on ASEAN trade relations

Brussels had previously attempted to clinch a deal with the entire ASEAN regional bloc. But when talks ultimately stalled, the 27-country EU bloc moved toward pursuing individual pacts with ASEAN members, launching trade talks with both Singapore and Malaysia in 2010.

The EU and Singapore are reportedly in the “final stages” of negotiations on a free trade pact, EU ambassador and head of delegation for the city state Marc Ungeheuer said last week.

Brussels says it hopes to create a network of similar, complementary trade pacts across Southeast Asia, in order to pave the way for future ASEAN-EU region-to-region talks.

The ASEAN countries are “making big efforts towards integration and we would be very pleased if they continue and if they go even faster, because for us the ideal configuration is to have a region-to region process,” De Gucht told the Wall Street Journal on Sunday.

Currently, the EU accounts for 10 percent of ASEAN’s total trade, with trade in goods increasing 26.6 per cent since 2006 to €161.7 billion in 2011.

ICTSD reporting: “Europe, Singapore in Final Stages of Free Trade Pact Negotiation,” BLOOMBERG, 29 March 2012; “EU Vietnam Agree to Pursue Trade Pact,” WALL STREET JOURNAL, 31 March 2012; “EU Trade Chief Stresses Importance of Asia Trade,” WALL STREET JOURNAL, 1 April 2012.

White House Report Highlights IP Enforcement Efforts

The enforcement of US intellectual property rights (IPRs) has seen major advances at home and abroad in 2011, according to a new report by US Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator (IPEC) Victoria Espinel. However, room for improvement remains, the White House argues, particularly with regards to China.

Espinel was nominated in 2009 by US President Barack Obama to better coordinate the work of US federal agencies in this area. The [report](#) is the second since her appointment to the post.

“Fighting intellectual property rights infringement in other countries is a critical component of enforcing intellectual property rights,” Espinel said in the report, encouraging the use of plurilateral treaties and free trade agreements (FTAs) for this purpose.

According to Espinel, the signing of the controversial Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) by the US and seven other negotiating parties in October “represents a considerable improvement in international trade norms for effectively combating the global proliferation of commercial-scale counterfeiting and piracy.” (See Bridges Weekly, [5 October 2011](#)).

Notably, the IPEC report also stressed the importance of ensuring transparency in IP policy making – a subject which has been a major point of contention regarding the ACTA negotiations (see Bridges Weekly, [17 March 2010](#)).

The report also highlighted progress in the fight against counterfeit products, particularly pharmaceuticals, while recognising that “new legislative and non-legislative tools are needed to address offshore infringement and counterfeiting.”

However, Espinel clarified that the Obama Administration “will not support legislation that reduces freedom of expression, increases cybersecurity risk (including authority to tamper with the DNS system), or undermines the dynamic, innovative global Internet,” in line with earlier [statements](#) made by the White House in response to the protests against the controversial

PROTECT IP Act (PIPA) and the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) (see Bridges Weekly, 18 January 2012).

China at the forefront

US enforcement efforts in 2011 focused heavily on Beijing, the report noted, with China being the number one source of infringing products seized at the US border.

Trade tensions have been running high between Washington and Beijing during recent months as both sides prepare for potential leadership transitions, with China's protection of IPRs being one of several topics where the two trading partners have found themselves repeatedly at odds.

Espinell's report expressed particular concern over evidence suggesting that economic espionage and trade secret theft is being conducted on behalf of Chinese companies, calling it "an emerging trend." The US Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported an increase of 29 percent in investigations into these alleged practices in 2011 compared to 2010.

However, the report also welcomed some recent changes in Chinese policy, particularly Beijing's decision to make permanent an existing leadership structure that had led and coordinated IP enforcement across China since 2010.

"With regard to the US concerns concerning trade imbalance, IPR protection, indigenous innovation and investment environment, the Chinese side has taken steps to address them and will continue to do so," Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping told a Washington audience earlier this year.

ICTSD reporting; "Second Annual US IP Enforcement Report Shows Extensive Efforts at Home and Abroad," IP WATCH, 2 April 2012.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

5 April, Washington, US. BEYOND THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS: THE FUTURE OF THE US-LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP. Hosted by the Latin America Initiative at the Brookings Institution, this event is being organised in advance of US President Barack Obama's visit to the Sixth Summit of the Americas on 14-15 April. The mid-April summit will focus on the role of physical integration and regional co-operation, as well as other areas, such as poverty and inequality and access to technology. With this in mind, speakers at the Brookings event will provide an overview of key economic trends in Latin America and the Caribbean and an outline of the Obama Administration's economic policy priorities in the region. The discussion will be followed by a question and answer session. For more details, please visit the event's [website](#).

9 April, Online. EARTH DEBATE: FOOD SECURITY – HOW DO WE FEED 9 BILLION PEOPLE IN 2050? Organised by the UK's Natural History Museum, in partnership with the Stakeholder for a Sustainable Future and the British Council, the debate will feature a panel of leading experts, chaired by BBC environment correspondent Richard Black, that will tackle one of the key issues at the heart of the green economy agenda of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20). Webcast live from the Museum, this debate will focus on determining the available options for finding a balance between the demands of a growing population and maintaining an environment that can provide the essential services, food, water, and raw materials for a sustainable future. For more information, please visit the event's [website](#).

11-12 April, Bangkok, Thailand. PRIORITIZING ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA. This expert consultation seeks to provide a forum for

brainstorming research strategies and identifying potential partners and sites in Southeast Asia for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research's (CGIAR) Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security Program (CAAFS). This event plans to review best practices and technologies for climate smart agriculture; review the latest knowledge regarding the impact of climate change on agriculture; and prioritise research and development. This event is organised by the CCAFS, the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). For more information, please visit the event's [website](#).

11-12 April, The Hague, Netherlands. **REALISING INCLUSIVE AND GREEN GROWTH: UN RIO+20 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY.** Sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD 2012), this meeting is being organised as a preparatory event for Rio+20. It is meant to serve as an opportunity for business representatives, UN member states, and the wider international community to discuss critical private sector issues for the June summit. The meeting aims to stimulate action and increase awareness in international public-private collaboration in realising inclusive green growth and to develop constructive global private sector key messages from business to the Rio+20 Conference. Please note that this event is invitation-only. For more details, please visit the event's [website](#).

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted [here](#). 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.

11 April: Committee on Trade and Development

Other Upcoming Events

14-15 April, Cartagena, Colombia. **SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS 2012.** The Sixth Summit of the Americas will address the following theme: "Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity." The Summit will bring together 34 heads of state from the Western hemisphere, who will focus on the role of physical integration and regional co-operation as a means to achieve greater levels of development and to overcome the hemisphere's challenges in several key areas, including poverty and inequality, citizen security, disasters, and access to technologies. For more information, please visit the event's [website](#).

16 April, Brussels, Belgium. **HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON "COMPETITIVENESS, TRADE, ENVIRONMENT AND JOBS IN EUROPE: INSIGHTS FROM THE NEW WORLD INPUT OUTPUT DATABASE (WIOD)."** Hosted by the European Commission, the aim of this conference is to discuss the policy implications related to the expansion of global value chains and the shifting pattern of trade. The conference will make use of the WIOD database to deepen participants' knowledge of the causes and effects of the increasing interrelatedness of countries and industries. This way, it aims to help policy makers and societies better respond to many pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges. For more details, please visit the event's [website](#).

16-18 April, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. **WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ON LATIN AMERICA 2012.** Sponsored by the Government of Mexico and the Forum's key strategic partners, the meeting will convene key decision-makers from government, industry, civil society, and academia. Under the theme "Regional Transformation in a New Global Context," leaders will work on shaping a strategic vision for the region's growth, gaining understanding of its global potential, and aligning stakeholders around that vision to inspire its realisation. This event will address Latin America's role and contribution to the governance of the global economy, the creation of innovative models for a sustainable future, and the improvement of capabilities for a regional

transformation. For more information, please visit the event's website [here](#).

21-26 April, Doha, Qatar. THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD XIII) AND CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM. This Conference will convene under the theme "Development-centred globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development." The Conference's aim is to enhance the understanding of specific trade and development issues, especially after the fallout of the economic crisis. In parallel with the Conference, UNCTAD has also partnered with the United Nations Non-Government Liaison Service and the Qatari National Human Rights Committee to organise a Civil Society Forum, where representatives from the private sector and civil society will explore different ways to strengthen partnerships with UNCTAD to boost the effectiveness of trade and development efforts. The Civil Society Forum will begin its work on 17 April. For more information on the UNCTAD XIII Conference and the Civil Society Forum, please visit the UNCTAD XIII [website](#).

Resources

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND INNOVATION: KEY COUNTRY PRIORITIES FOR RIO+20. Released by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development's (ICTSD) Programme on Innovation, Technology, and Intellectual Property (March 2012). As the world prepares for the Rio+20 Conference, the vital role of innovation and technology transfer in addressing the most pressing sustainable development challenges of recent years must be widely recognised. This information note highlights the most salient proposals for action on technology transfer and innovation in country submissions to the Rio+20 Conference. The report identifies key priority areas in proposals – namely mechanisms, innovation, enabling environments, capacity building, intellectual property, and financing – that could potentially contribute towards a tangible outcome at Rio. It also suggests that Rio+20 should seize the opportunity to send a strong

signal about the importance of innovation and technology transfer in accelerating sustainable development and transitioning to a green economy. To view this report, please click [here](#).

CARBON MARKET INTEGRITY: A REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN CARBON PRICING MECHANISM. Published by The Carbon Market Institute (March 2012). This compendium report questions whether the institutional framework for operation, regulation, and oversight provided by Australia's Clean Energy legislative package and its associated Acts and regulations will be sufficient to protect the nascent Australian carbon market from disruption and loss caused by theft, fraud, and other undesirable market behaviours. It also notes that the Australian rules are complex and new, and are enacted in many different acts and regulations. This resource is accompanied by three information briefs, which together provide a review of the legislative frameworks that underpin the EU, New Zealand, and Californian emissions trading schemes. This publication can be accessed [here](#).

AID EFFECTIVENESS 2011: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE PARIS DECLARATION. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (March 2012). This study seeks to present evidence of progress and challenges in making aid more effective, focusing specifically on commitments made in the Paris Declaration. The report also describes the achievements of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea, which was held in late 2011. The authors argue that the evidence in this study should help forge a consensus beyond Busan that aid – and its effectiveness – represents only one element of a broader landscape of development finance and joint efforts to make aid more effective can and should inform a broader development effectiveness agenda. For more information regarding this resource, please click [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN NATURAL RESOURCES: PRACTICE AND POLICY. Published by the World Trade Organization (March 2012). This working paper reviews the literature regarding international trade policy in the natural resources sector, which accounts for

20 percent of world trade and dominates the exports of many countries. The various policy instruments reviewed include export taxes, price controls, production quotas, and domestic producer and consumer taxes. The paper argues that the policy equilibrium in the natural resources sector is inefficient. This inefficiency is exacerbated by market failure in long-run contracts for exploration and development of natural resources. Furthermore, it suggests that properly coordinated policy reforms will offer an avenue to resource exporting and importing countries to overcome these inefficiencies and obtain mutual gains. For more information about this resource or to view it, please click [here](#).