

Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest

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LEAD STORIES

Concerns over Protectionism, Currency Dominate Trade Agenda at Americas Summit

The impact of rich country monetary policy on Latin American economies and the rise of import restrictions in the latter both took centre stage last weekend as leaders from thirty Western Hemisphere countries gathered in Cartagena, Colombia. The Summit of the Americas also saw Washington and Bogotá establish the implementation date for their long-awaited trade pact, as US President Barack Obama works to promote his trade record ahead of the November presidential elections.

US, Colombia set date for FTA

The long-awaited free trade pact between the US and Colombia will enter into force on 15 May, leaders from both countries announced at the summit. The pact was ratified and became law in the US late last year following four years of political wrangling in the US Congress that saw Colombia come under harsh scrutiny for allegedly poor protections of labour rights.

“This agreement is a win for both our countries,” US President Barack Obama [said](#). “It’s a win for the United States by increasing our exports by more than US\$1 billion, supporting thousands of US jobs and helping to achieve my goal of doubling US exports.”

For his part, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos also underscored the jobs that the pact would bring to his country, noting that the deal “is a dream we had for a long time.”

The announcement comes as the US President works to promote his trade record ahead of the upcoming November elections, having announced

in early 2010 a goal of doubling US exports from their 2009 levels of US\$1.57 trillion to US\$3.14 trillion by the end of 2014.

“I’m willing to go anywhere in the world to open up new markets for American businesses,” Obama [said](#) during a campaign stop in Florida on the way to the summit.

“In Latin America alone, over the past decade, tens of millions of people have stepped out of poverty and into the middle class,” he continued. “That means they’ve got more money to spend, and we want them spending money on American-made goods, so that American businesses can put more Americans back to work.”

However, Obama’s trade record has come under fire from his Republican opponents, particularly Mitt Romney, the front-runner for the Republican party nomination.

In a statement released by the Romney campaign the same day, Florida Governor Jeb Bush, also a Republican, [criticised](#) the US President’s trade policies, claiming that Obama’s “recent decision to focus on trade... comes three years too late” and that the US pacts with Colombia and Panama could have been ratified sooner had the US President not given in to “political pressure from labour unions.”

Brazil currency woes echoed by regional leaders

At the summit, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff repeated her earlier criticisms of rich country monetary policy, which have dominated headlines in recent months as Brazilian government officials renewed warnings of a global “currency war.” (See Bridges Weekly, [7 March 2012](#)).

Excessively loose monetary policy in advanced economies have been criticised by emerging economies for flooding their markets with imports, with Brazil taking a strong public stance on the subject as it struggles to combat the effects of the appreciation of its currency, the real, on its manufacturing sector.

Rousseff’s remarks in Cartagena took a similar tone to her White House comments earlier this month. (See Bridges Weekly, [11 April 2012](#)) “This is affecting us by causing our currencies to appreciate, [creating] an obstacle for the trade in goods and services and transform[ing] our economies into easy prey for deindustrialisation,” she said in a speech on Saturday.

“It’s clear that we have to take measures to defend ourselves,” she added, rebuffing claims that Brazil’s measures to respond to these monetary pressures are protectionist. “I said defend, not protect. To defend is different, defend means ... that we cannot leave our manufacturing sector to be cannibalised.”

Brazil’s criticism of US monetary policy’s effects on Latin America was supported by some of the other nations in the region, with the summit’s host, President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia, publicly echoing Rousseff’s concerns.

“In some ways, [rich countries] are exporting their crisis to us via the appreciation of our currencies,” he said. “I share President Dilma Rousseff’s anxiety.”

US, Argentina discuss trade tensions

Argentina’s policies on import restrictions also drew attention from its trading partners during the weekend summit, with US President Barack Obama holding a meeting with his Argentine counterpart, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, to discuss recent trade frictions between their two countries.

Trade tensions between the two sides have been on the rise in recent weeks, with Washington suspending Buenos Aires from its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme last month, citing Argentina’s failure to pay arbitration awards in two disputes involving US investors (see Bridges Weekly, [28 March 2012](#)).

A week later, the US joined the EU, Japan, Mexico, and 10 other WTO members in sharply rebuking Argentina for its import restrictions at a meeting of the WTO’s Council on Trade in Goods – policies that, the group said, were

“unbefitting any WTO member.” (See Bridges Weekly, [4 April 2012](#))

The criticism drew a harsh response from Buenos Aires, and fostered speculation that Argentina could soon face a WTO challenge over these policies.

The White House, in a press release, said that Obama “reiterated his concern with regards to certain trade matters” during this weekend’s bilateral meet. Experts from both sides will meet to discuss these issues further, Argentine Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman said afterward.

However, officials from both Washington and Buenos Aires rebuffed suggestions that their trade disagreements were indicators of larger problems. “Obama clarified to [Kirchner] that, although there might be some small differences regarding some trade issues, in no way would these be the focal point of the relationship between the two countries,” Timerman commented.

“I think the position of the United States is simply that we believe that all businesses, all countries need to adhere to the clear standards articulated by international organisations like the WTO,” US Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes told reporters prior to the summit.

“But we believe that... the relationship between the United States and Argentina is broad and able to prosper, even as we have our occasional differences.”

Argentina’s policies have also drawn notice from some of its other trading partners in the region, with recent reports indicating that Mexico City is considering requesting consultations at the WTO regarding Argentina’s import policies.

“Mexico is preoccupied that this sort of protectionism is occurring just as regional trade integration is increasing, therefore we will not permit such a thing to occur,” Mexican economy minister Bruno Ferrari told Mexican newspaper Reforma earlier this month, while adding that Mexico would first explore all other options before filing a complaint.

ICTSD reporting; “Obama Certifies Colombia Labor Plan, Clearing Trade Pact,” BLOOMBERG, 15 April 2012; “EE.UU. impulsa más represalias comerciales contra la Argentina,” CLARÍN, 11 April 2012; “México podría demandar al país,” LA NACIÓN, 5 April 2012; “On the Way to International Talks, Making a Stop for Domestic Concerns,” NEW YORK TIMES, 13 April 2012; “Americas Meeting Ends With Discord Over Cuba,” NEW YORK TIMES, 15 April 2012; “Latin America rebels against Obama over Cuba,” REUTERS, 15 April 2012; “WRAPUP 2-Obama seeks to woo Latin America, scandal mars trip,” REUTERS, 14 April 2012; “Brazil’s Criticism Of Weak Dollar Garners Support At Summit,” WALL STREET JOURNAL, 15 April 2012.

OTHER NEWS

India Challenges US on Steel Duties

Trade tensions between Washington and New Delhi ratcheted up another notch on 12 April, with India launching a WTO challenge against US countervailing, or anti-subsidy, duties on imports of certain Indian steel products ([DS436](#)). This complaint is the latest in a series of commercial disagreements between the two trading partners.

“We decided to knock the WTO door formally as our informal consultations with the US on the issue failed to yield results,” an official at the Indian Ministry of Commerce told the Economic Times.

Although India’s request for consultations was not publicly available when Bridges went to press, New Delhi is reportedly questioning the legality of anti-subsidy duties levied on imports of steel pipe from India.

The move comes after the US Commerce Department imposed last month an initial anti-subsidy duty of nearly 286 percent on imports of circular welded carbon-quality steel pipe from India. Those duties are expected to be finalised by the US Commerce Department in August.

Countervailing duties are meant to combat imports priced below market value because the producer receives undue support from its government. While they are not illegal under WTO law, they are disciplined by the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Agreement), which provides that they may only be imposed if a country properly determines that subsidised imports have injured domestic industry.

Acting on a petition from a coalition of US steel companies, including Allied Tube and US Steel, the US Commerce Department argues that India's steel subsidy comes from its state-operated and industry leading iron ore producer, the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC). According to Commerce, NMDC is supplying steel pipe makers with ore that is far below market prices, thus creating an implicit subsidy, the US coalition says.

The Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) has attributed the low price of raw materials for steel producers to Indian export restrictions on iron ore since 2008.

"These restrictions reduce Indian exports of these inputs, and may reduce supplies on international markets for raw materials used in steel production," said a 2010 USTR [report](#) on India. "The Indian government appears to be using these measures to improve the availability and lower prices of inputs used by India's rapidly growing steel industry."

If consultations between the two parties fail over the coming sixty days, India may request a WTO panel to hear the case.

Sparring over poultry, visas

The countervailing duty complaint is one of several trade spats involving New Delhi and Washington as of late.

Just last month, the US launched its own complaint against India at the WTO regarding the latter's ban on imports of US poultry and other farm products (DS430). India has justified the five year ban as an attempt to prevent avian influenza outbreaks in its country, but the US

argues that there is no scientific evidence to justify the measure (see Bridges Weekly, [7 March 2012](#)).

Also lurking in the background is an expected WTO complaint from India over US visa fees for skilled workers. Although an official WTO dispute has not been launched, India has recently voiced its displeasure with Washington's visa regime, with government officials promising to file a complaint in the coming days.

Specifically, New Delhi disagrees with 2010 US legislation that nearly doubles visa application fees in order to finance US-Mexico border security, claiming that the law disadvantages India's services trade (see Bridges Weekly, [11 April 2012](#)).

The current disputes between India and the US could have broader implications for their trading relationship, observers caution.

"These things end up poisoning the larger relationship," said Bill Reinsch, president of the National Foreign Trade Council in Washington, to the Financial Times. "It's worrisome and it's getting worse."

ICTSD reporting; "India challenges US over steel duties," FINANCIAL TIMES, 12 April 2012. "India drags US to WTO over 'wrongful' imposition of penal duties on steel exports," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 13 April 2012; "India launches WTO case against US steel duties," REUTERS, 12 April 2012.

Jim Yong Kim Named New World Bank Chief

The World Bank announced on Monday that Jim Yong Kim will be the organisation's next president, following a heated race that saw developing countries challenging the US for the Washington-based international financial institution's top post.

The election of Kim, Washington's candidate for the position, is not surprising. The head of the World Bank has traditionally been from the US, while the chief of the Bank's sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, is usually a European, thanks to an informal agreement

between the two sides when the institutions were established after the Second World War.

However, this marks the first time in the bank's history that it has considered multiple candidates for its top position, and Kim will face the immediate challenge of reconciling differences caused by a bitter election.

The two other candidates were José Antonio Ocampo, Colombia's former finance minister, and Nigerian finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; Ocampo had dropped out of the race on Friday, backing Okonjo-Iweala's candidacy.

Already Kim's main challenger has called the transparency and democratic nature of the voting process into question, while at the same time congratulating Kim.

"With regard to the selection process, it is clear to me that we need to make it more open, transparent and merit-based. We need to make sure that we do not contribute to a democratic deficit in global governance," Okonjo-Iweala [posted](#) on Monday.

Kim is unique in comparison to previous World Bank chiefs, being a doctor and anthropologist by training, not a banker, politician, or US foreign policymaker, the traditional professions of his predecessors.

He is also a global health expert who has worked at the World Health Organization and founded Partners in Health. In both capacities Kim has focused on health programmes in poor countries.

"[Kim's] rigorous, science-based drive for results will be invaluable for the World Bank Group as it modernises to better serve client countries in overcoming poverty," said outgoing World Bank chief Robert Zoellick in a [statement](#). Kim will replace Zoellick at the organisation in July.

BRICS pushing for reform

The power dynamics in global lending and financial support for developing countries have changed drastically in recent years, with emerging economies being credited as major drivers of economic growth following the crisis. Many of

these emerging economies also have deep cash reserves and have already become leading investors and lenders to poorer developing economies.

While emerging economies were granted an increased relative voting share in 2010 at the World Bank, the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, and China – have repeatedly called for a major overhaul of the Bretton Woods institutions, a goal that they reiterated at their annual summit in New Delhi last month (see Bridges Weekly, [4 April 2012](#)).

At the summit, BRICS leaders [urged](#) the World Bank leadership to commit to reform that "truly reflects the vision of all its members, including the governance structure that reflects current economic and political reality."

"The nature of the Bank must shift from an institution that essentially mediates North-South co-operation to an institution that promotes equal partnership with all countries as a way to deal with development issues and to overcome an outdated donor – recipient dichotomy," they continued.

The BRICS had been hopeful that a strong candidate from the developing world could challenge the US' hold on the Bank's top spot. Okonjo-Iweala had been nominated in a rare show of unity between the sub-Saharan rivals South Africa, Nigeria, and Angola.

However, the developing economies could not forge similar agreement to present a unified backing for one developing country candidate. It was only days before the vote that Ocampo dropped out of the race and put his support behind Okonjo-Iweala.

In the end, sources close to the voting said that China and India backed Kim in executive board deliberations on Monday, according to the New York Times.

However, BRICS countries are likely to support the new president regardless of whoever wins, Rogério Studart, executive director of the World Bank representing Brazil, commented to the Financial Times prior to the decision's

announcement, as “the institution is more important.”

Meanwhile, calls for the bank’s institutional reform continue. “The bank could become irrelevant if it doesn’t reform,” said Otiye Igbuzor of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development in an interview with the LA Times. “Emerging economies are growing very quickly and in 50 years time they’ll be bigger than the developed economies.”

ICTSD reporting; “BRIC Nations to Back World Bank Choice, Brazil Says,” BLOOMBERG, 13 April 2012; “S. Africa pushing for more World Bank, IMF reform,” BUSINESSWEEK, 16 April 2012; “World Bank job favourite ‘lacks expertise,’ FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 March 2012; “World Bank picks Kim as new head,” FINANCIAL TIMES, 16 April 2012; “Africa calls for World Bank reform after Nigerian denied top post,” LOS ANGELES TIMES, 17 April 2012; “U.S. Candidate Is Chosen to Lead the World Bank,” THE NEW YORK TIMES, 16 April, 2012.

IN BRIEF

India Environment Minister Links EU Aviation Emissions Rule to UN Climate Talks

The EU’s controversial decision to include aviation under the bloc’s emissions trading system (ETS) has been dubbed a “deal breaker” for global climate talks by India’s environment minister, Jayanthi Natarajan. While the minister is India’s lead negotiator at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) talks, it is not clear if her comments reflect official government policy.

Several countries – including EU member state France – have expressed concern over the new aviation rule in the EU’s ETS, with India and China leading international resistance by forbidding their airlines from complying with the new standards (see Bridges Weekly, [11 April 2012](#)). The Asian manufacturing giants say that the aviation scheme overreaches Brussels’

jurisdiction and represents a unilateral trade levy disguised as an attempt to fight climate change.

While international criticism has been growing steadily since late last year, Natarajan’s remarks are the first public comments from a major official to suggest the scheme could influence negotiations at global climate talks.

“I shall stick my neck out and say, for the environment ministry, yes the unilateral measure by the EU... is a deal breaker for the talks,” Natarajan said at a meeting hosted by the Energy Resources Institute ([TERI](#)) in New Delhi last week. “I strongly believe that as far as climate change discussions are concerned, this is unacceptable.”

The minister added that she has written to Connie Hedegaard, Europe’s Commissioner for Climate Action, demanding that the scheme, which affects passenger and cargo aircraft, be scrapped.

Brussels quickly dismissed Natarajan’s comments, noting that EU airlines face more financial pressure than foreign airlines under the scheme.

“We do not see how the European initiative is a deal breaker,” said Isaac Valero-Ladrón, Hedegaard’s spokesman. “We believe that it aims to encourage similar systems to include aviation in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

India played a prominent role in influencing the outcome of last December’s Conference of the Parties in Durban, South Africa. With a handful of developing countries resisting the language of the draft text in the final hours of the Durban meet, Natarajan made an emotional plea to not be asked to “sign away the rights of 1.2 billion people and many other people in the developing world” by agreeing to something that could limit their ability to grow their economy.

India ultimately agreed to somewhat weaker language, allowing COP 17 to come to a close (see Bridges Durban Update #4, [12 December 2011](#)).

Climate negotiators are poised to meet again in Bonn, Germany at the UNFCCC’s annual [mid-year conference](#). The 14-25 May meeting is the first major climate change meeting to follow

Durban. It is not yet known what role, if any, the EU's aviation law will play in the negotiations.

ICTSD reporting; "India says EU tax a 'deal breaker' for climate talks," AFP, 11 April 2012; "EU airlines emissions law is 'deal-breaker for climate talks'," THE GUARDIAN, 12 April 2012.

Argentine Seizure of Spanish Oil Company Unlikely to Reach WTO, EU Officials Say

Argentina's controversial announcement on Monday that it would be nationalising Spanish oil company Repsol YPF is unlikely to face a WTO challenge, according to unnamed EU officials cited by Bloomberg, following comments by Spanish industry minister José Manuel Soria hinting that Madrid would push back in the areas of "diplomacy, trade, industry, and energy."

Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner announced on 16 April that her country's government planned to take a 51 percent controlling stake in the Spanish oil company, which would then be split between the Argentine central government and the country's provinces in a 51-49 ratio. The plan is expected to move swiftly through Argentina's Congress.

Kirchner justified the move by arguing that Repsol has not sufficiently invested in new oil production, in turn causing Argentina to have to import more energy. For its part, Repsol has argued that Buenos Aires' recent transition to becoming an energy importer is instead the result of an unsustainable energy policy by Argentina.

The announcement prompted outcry from Spanish and European officials, who expressed disappointment at the decision. However, recent speculation that the decision could lead to either a WTO dispute or to Spain imposing trade sanctions are unlikely, trade experts say.

Observers note that filing a challenge at the global trade body would have little chance of success, given that investment-protection pledges are not included in WTO rules.

The Commission has also warned that Spain would be breaking both European and international law by unilaterally imposing trade restrictions on Argentina, according to EU officials cited by Bloomberg.

Meanwhile, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht is expected to write to Argentina's trade minister to "reiterate our serious concerns." The EU is also set to postpone an EU-Argentina joint committee meeting focused on trade and economy issues that was scheduled for later this week.

"We are at the moment giving political support to Spain while also exploring all options," commission spokeswoman Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen said yesterday.

Mixed response from regional trading partners

Kirchner's move also came under fire from neighbouring Chile, with Santiago's economy minister Pablo Longueira noting that such measures could hurt future investment in Latin America.

"It turns us into a less attractive, less trustworthy region," he told Reuters, adding that G-20 trade ministers meeting next week should push for stronger WTO rules to punish countries that do not comply with international standards.

"I think that international forums should very clearly take on these protectionist signs by sanctioning those countries that in some way are not respecting the rules of the game at the international level."

Spain also received backing from Mexican President Felipe Calderón, who recently called Kirchner's decision "irresponsible and irrational."

However, Buenos Aires' move was supported by Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, while Bolivian President Evo Morales noted that the situation is a bilateral matter.

Spain-Argentina bilateral investment treaty at issue

Spain and Argentina currently have a bilateral investment treaty that entered into force in 1992. Investment treaties provide protection to foreign investors by guaranteeing national and most-favoured nation treatment, and usually protect against expropriation without compensation. These treaties further give investors the chance to call for international arbitration to solve investor-state disputes.

According to Spanish newspaper El País, Repsol is already considering pursuing investor-state arbitration against Argentina at the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes – an international forum that Argentina has faced on numerous occasions in recent years to resolve investment disputes with foreign companies.

The oil company has pledged to take “all necessary legal action” to preserve the value of its shares and the interests of its shareholders, according to El País.

ICTSD reporting; “EU Sees Repsol's Leverage in Investment Pact, Weighs Own,” BLOOMBERG, 17 April 2012; “Spain Vows Argentina Trade War as Repsol Seeks \$10.5 Billion,” 17 April 2012; “España priorizará el biodiesel europeo sobre el argentino como represalia,” EL PAÍS, 18 April 2012; “Repsol acusa a Argentina de expropiar YPF para tapar la crisis económica y social,” EL PAÍS, 17 April 2012; “Repsol planea demandar a Argentina en un arbitraje ante el Banco Mundial,” EL PAÍS, 17 April 2012; “Spain Weighs Response to Nationalization of YPF,” NEW YORK TIMES, 17 April 2012; “UPDATE 1-EU voices concern over Argentina YPF seizure,” REUTERS, 17 April 2012; “Chile says Argentina's YPF seizure hurts investment,” REUTERS, 18 April 2012.

WTO IN BRIEF

Trade Growth to Continue Slowing in 2012, WTO Says

World trade growth is expected to continue slowing in 2012, WTO economists announced last

Friday, following a sharp deceleration in trade growth in 2011. The global trade body credited the European sovereign debt crisis, among other shocks, for being among the main causes for the global economy's continued loss of momentum.

World trade expanded in 2011 by 5 percent, the global trade body said, after having rebounded in 2010 to 13.8 percent. Growth will slow further still to 3.7 percent this year, WTO economists predict – a number that is both below the 6 percent average for 1990-2008 and lower than the 5.5 percent average over the last two decades, including the period of the trade collapse.

“More than three years have passed since the trade collapse of 2008-09, but the world economy and trade remain fragile,” WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy said. “The further slowing of trade expected in 2012 shows that the downside risks remain high. We are not yet out of the woods.”

The trade chief also renewed previous calls for countries to withstand protectionist pressures in light of the weak figures.

“The WTO has so far deterred economic nationalism, but the sluggish pace of recovery raises concerns that a steady trickle of restrictive trade measures could gradually undermine the benefits of trade openness,” he cautioned.

“It is time to do no harm,” Lamy added, urging WTO members to instead focus their efforts on “revitalising the trading system and to ensuring such a scenario does not materialise.”

Various setbacks, continued risk

While the global trade body had already anticipated a slowdown in trade expansion for 2011, economists found that various setbacks hampered growth beyond previous expectations.

Many of these developments had a disproportionately negative impact on developing economies, the WTO noted, citing events such as the interruption of oil supplies from Libya, which in turn hurt African exports, and the impact of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami on global supply chains, which caused exports from China and

other developing countries to take a particularly hard hit.

The preliminary number of 5.0 percent for world trade growth in 2011 is 0.8 points lower from the last forecast update in September 2011, which was already a scaled back version of earlier estimates (see Bridges Weekly, [28 September 2011](#)).

Given that the process of reducing debt reliance and reducing budget deficits is likely to take years, the world, in the meantime, “may have to resign itself to a long period of slower-than-average growth in international trade,” economists warned.

Numbers from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that were released on Tuesday as part of their World Economic Outlook similarly underscored the high-risk environment, with IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde [cautioning](#) in a recent speech that the situation remains “fragile.”

However, she also attempted to inject a positive tone, noting that there has been “some improvement in the economic climate.”

“For the past six months we’ve been on a rollercoaster ride,” IMF Chief Economist Olivier Blanchard said on Tuesday.

“Our baseline is that [economic] growth is going to be slow in advanced economies; sustained, but not great, in emerging market and developing economies. But the risk of things turning bad again in Europe is high,” Blanchard warned.

ICTSD reporting.

Lamy Names Panel to Identify Future Trade Challenges

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy has announced the composition of a stakeholder panel to examine challenges to global trade in the 21st century, an initiative previously outlined at the December ministerial conference.

The panel will examine trade drivers and obstacles, trade patterns, and how to keep transforming trade into development, growth, jobs, and poverty alleviation, bearing in mind the role of trade in contributing to sustainable development and economic growth, according to the global trade body.

The analysis of these world trade drivers will be produced by the panellists in early 2013, after the panel hears views from WTO members this autumn.

The panel will consist of 12 members from the business and civil society sectors, according to a 13 April [announcement](#).

“The difficulties we, and many other multilateral institutions, have encountered in recent years is indisputable proof that yesterday’s solutions simply cannot be applied to the problems we face today,” Lamy said on Friday in announcing the panel’s members.

“[The panel’s] analysis will spark debate and open new channels of thinking on how we can best confront the stumbling blocks that today’s rapidly evolving world has strewn in our collective path.”

The idea of addressing so-called “new 21st century issues” has been increasingly raised by some WTO members as a way to keep the multilateral trading system relevant in the absence of movement in the Doha trade talks, which were declared at an impasse during the 2011 Ministerial.

“We are really in a situation where there is a rut, and we don’t seem to have answers [to the Doha impasse]. Not only answers, but we don’t seem to have approaches or ideas,” one developing country official commented to Bridges.

However, others argue that old trade issues need to be resolved first before moving on to new problems. Furthermore, some members believe that these new issues should be addressed within existing WTO bodies and committees, rather than by expanding the WTO’s mandate, an issue that some delegates noted was a source of contention when raised at December’s ministerial gathering. (See Bridges Daily Update, [16 December 2012](#)).

The panel will meet several times in 2012. The first meeting of the group is scheduled for 16 May in Geneva.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

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 is also partnering 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 began its work on 17 April. For more information on the UNCTAD XIII Conference and the Civil Society Forum, please visit the UNCTAD XIII [website](#).

23 April, Doha, Qatar. HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT. Gender inequalities persist in all countries and take the form of labour segregation, gender wage gaps, gaps in asset ownership and in access to technology and information, and huge differences in responsibility for house and care works. As a main event occurring during the UNCTAD XIII Conference, this event aims to promote policies that empower women to be full participants in economic and political life. Its purpose is threefold: to take the gender issue to a new level of political prominence; to yield new insights into the relationship between macro-economic

policies, development, and gender; and to launch a number of institutional initiatives to further the above objectives. The event will feature an interactive roundtable and will be organised into four thematic sessions, bringing together policy leaders, UN agencies, academia, the private sector, and civil society. For more information, please visit the event’s [website](#).

23-25 April, Stockholm, Sweden. STOCKHOLM+40: PARTNERSHIP FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Held in commemoration of the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, this event aims to bring together actors from the international community for a dialogue on sustainable development and its challenges. The conference will be based on the following themes: sustainable innovations, sustainable production, and sustainable lifestyles. Representatives from the business sector, civil society, researchers, decision-makers, and young people will discuss sustainable solutions in areas of technology, production, and living in order to create a holistic view of how best to achieve sustainable development. For more information, please visit the event’s [website](#).

23-27 April, Brazzaville, Congo. 27TH SESSION OF THE FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA. Hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), this meeting will consider a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition; public-private partnerships; the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme; and the Programme of Work and Budget for 2012-2013, and Areas of Priority Action for Africa. With regards to climate change, the meeting will address the Regional Office for Africa Climate Change Framework. Participants will include senior officers from those organisations involved in the regional conference. For more details, please visit the event’s [website](#).

25-26 April, London, UK. THIRD CLEAN ENERGY MINISTERIAL. The Third Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM3) will bring together over 20 participating countries to discuss progress made by the CEM’s 11 clean energy initiatives, ways to enhance intergovernmental co-operation, and strategies to drive public-private engagement in support of clean energy deployment. The CEM

is a forum aimed at promoting policies and programs that advance clean energy technology, sharing lessons learned and best practices, and encouraging the transition to a global clean energy economy. For more details, please visit the event's [website](#).

25-26 April, Geneva, Switzerland. **THIRD WORKSHOP ON WATER AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS: MAKING ADAPTATION WORK.** This workshop aims to offer a platform for exchanging experiences on climate change adaptation strategies, best practices, success factors, and lessons learned. Organised under the leadership of the governments of the Netherlands and Germany, with the support of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat, in partnership with the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), the Global Water Partnership Mediterranean (GWP-MED), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Meteorological Organization, and the European Commission, the workshop will bring together stakeholders from all over the world, engaged in activities on water and adaptation to climate variability and change. For more information, 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.

16 + 19 April: Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

23 April: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices – Informal Group on Anti-Circumvention

23 April: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices – Working Group on Implementation

23 April: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices – Regular Committee

24-25 April: Negotiating Group on Rules (Technical Group)

24 April: Dispute Settlement Body

25 + 27 April: Trade Policy Review Body - Uruguay

Other Upcoming Events

27 April, Geneva, Switzerland. **FIFTH MEETING OF THE UNECE TASKFORCE ON WATER AND CLIMATE.** Hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), this meeting will bring together experts representing governmental authorities, the private sector, NGOs, and international organisations in order to review progress of the different activities under the Task Force, as well as future activities on water and climate under the UNECE Water Convention beyond 2012. It will be organised back-to-back with the third workshop on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, which will be held on 25-26 April 2012 in Geneva. For more information, please visit the event's [website](#).

1-2 May, Ottawa, Canada. **BUILDING ON RIO+20: CANADA'S ROLE AND PRIORITIES IN A GLOBAL GREEN ECONOMY.** The green economy is increasingly on the global agenda as decision-makers prepare to meet in Rio de Janeiro for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20) this June. With Rio+20 fast approaching, the aim of this Ottawa-based event is to examine Canada's role in a global green economy by: taking stock of Canada's efforts to build a low-carbon, green economy; providing a cross-cutting view of the challenges that Canada and other nations face in the context of Rio+20; and identifying leading practices, solutions, and challenges in transitioning to a green economy. For more details, please visit the event's [website](#).

3-7 September, Hanoi, Vietnam. **SECOND GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND**

CLIMATE CHANGE. Organised around the theme “Hunger for Action,” this event will allow global leaders, practitioners, scientists, civil society, and the private sector to share experiences and demonstrate how early action on climate-smart agriculture can act as a driver of green growth. The conference is co-hosted by the Governments of Vietnam and the Netherlands, in collaboration with other partners, including the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). The results of the meeting will also be presented at the Rio+20 Conference in June. For more information, please visit the event’s [website](#).

24-26 September, Geneva, Switzerland. WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION PUBLIC FORUM 2012. Convening under the theme “Is multilateralism in crisis?”, the Public Forum is the WTO’s largest annual outreach event. It aims to provide a platform for participants to discuss the latest developments in world trade and to propose ways of enhancing the multilateral trading system. The event regularly attracts over 1,500 representatives from civil society, academia, business, the media, governments, parliamentarians, and intergovernmental organisations. For more details about this event, please visit the WTO’s [website](#).

Resources

OECD ENVIRONMENTAL OUTLOOK TO 2050: THE CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (March 2012). Based on joint modelling by the OECD and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, this publication looks forward to the year 2050 to find out what demographic and economic trends might mean for the environment if the world does not adopt more ambitious green policies. It also looks at what policies could change that picture for the better. This Outlook focuses on four areas: climate change, biodiversity, freshwater, and health impacts of pollution. These four key environmental challenges were identified by the previous Environmental Outlook to 2030 (OECD, 2008) as “Red Light” issues requiring

urgent attention. For more information regarding this resource, please click [here](#).

AN ALTERNATIVE TO A GLOBAL CLIMATE DEAL MAY BE UNFOLDING BEFORE OUR EYES. By Johan Lilliestam, Antonella Battaglini, Charlotte Finlay, Daniel Fürstenwerth, Anthony Patt, Gus Schellekens, and Peter Schmidt for *Climate and Development* (April 2012). Published in the latest issue of the scientific journal *Climate and Development*, this article investigates the “green economy” as another option in the attempts to battle climate change. Researchers from Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), and PricewaterhouseCoopers test the viability of this strategy by examining trends in Europe’s electricity sector. The authors find that changes are occurring in the political, policy, and regulatory landscape in Europe, as well as North Africa, that are consistent with a continuous and accelerated deployment of renewable power in the region. They suggest that this supports the proposition that a technology push could be sufficiently substantial and sustained to make some renewables economically competitive with fossil fuels, possibly by the end of the decade. They emphasise that if this occurs, renewables could potentially become attractive and viable globally, even in the poorest of countries, and even in the absence of a global treaty. To access this resource, please click [here](#).

FARMER BEHAVIOUR, AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (April 2012). Drawing of the experiences of OECD countries, this report underlines the importance of considering farmer behaviour when seeking to improve both the environmental effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of policies. It also identifies policy options that would contribute to a sustainable and resilient agricultural sector in the context of climate change. For more information or to access this resource, please click [here](#).

WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2011: SEEKING ANSWERS TO GLOBAL TRADE CHALLENGES. Published by the World Trade

Organization (WTO) (2012). This resource provides an overview of the discussions held at the 2011 WTO Public Forum, which was entitled “Seeking answers to global trade challenges.” Representatives from civil society, academia, business, the media, governments, and inter-governmental organisations participated. The main discussion themes in the 2011 Forum were food security, trade in natural resources, the “Made in the World” initiative, and the challenges for the multilateral trading system. Participants discussed the role of trade in achieving food security, the effects of international trade on the sustainability of natural resources, how measuring trade flows in value-added terms can affect the ways in which international trade is analysed, and how the rules-based multilateral trading system should respond to the rapidly changing global environment. The Forum sought to identify practical and effective ways forward. The publication provides a summary of each of the sessions held during the three-day programme. To view this publication, please click [here](#).