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PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS

US, EU Formally Announce Decision to Launch Trade Talks

Washington and Brussels have decided to begin negotiations for a trans-Atlantic trade and investment agreement, the two sides announced this week, bringing to a close months of speculation on whether the EU and US would indeed commit to the initiative.

Earlier today, the EU-US High-Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth released its report formally recommending the talks, which had been originally scheduled for publication in late 2012. Wednesday's report has already received the [endorsement](#) of US President Barack Obama, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

"The [working group] has reached the conclusion that a comprehensive agreement that addresses a broad range of bilateral trade and investment issues, including regulatory issues, and contributes to the development of global rules, would provide the most mutual benefit of the various options we have considered," the final report [said](#), recommending that leaders begin the necessary domestic procedures for launching trade negotiations.

The process had been over a year in the making, after Obama, Van Rompuy, and Barroso tasked the group with examining ways for the two sides to deepen their trade ties, including the possibility of a bilateral pact. (See Bridges Weekly, [30 November 2011](#))

The US and EU already have the world's largest economic relationship, with trade in goods and services alone amounting to €2 billion a day, according to European Commission estimates.

Obama State of the Union, European Council summit

The release of the working group report comes less than a day after Obama, in his annual State of the Union address, called for trade talks with Brussels, giving the much-awaited political signal that Washington was ready to commit to the negotiations.

"Even as we protect our people, we should remember that today's world presents not only dangers, but opportunities," Obama [said](#). A US-EU deal would help in pursuing these opportunities, he added, "because trade that is free and fair across the Atlantic



International Centre for Trade
and Sustainable Development

supports millions of good-paying American jobs."

While top-level US officials had also expressed interest in the negotiations in the weeks leading up to Obama's speech – including Vice President Joe Biden during a trip to Europe in early February – all had stressed that talks should only begin if it was clear that they could be completed swiftly. The repeated delays of the working group report had largely been blamed on concerns on Washington's side regarding whether the two sides' differences might be too vast to overcome in a short period of time.

Washington had therefore asked Brussels to pre-emptively remove a series of agricultural barriers, as a sign that the EU has the necessary political will to address some of the tougher topics once the actual negotiations begin. The EU ultimately agreed to two of the three requests earlier this month, specifically deciding to lift its ban on imports of live pigs and of beef carcasses cleaned with lactic acid. (See Bridges Weekly, [6 February 2013](#))

The European Council, for its part, gave its own [backing](#) to the talks late last week, a move that had prompted many observers to predict that Obama was likely to follow suit on Tuesday. Leaders from the 27-country bloc stressed during their 7-8 February meeting the importance of bilateral trade deals in advancing growth and jobs, including the hoped-for talks with Washington, planned negotiations with Tokyo, and the conclusion of talks with Ottawa.

Negotiations to tackle market access, regulatory issues, non-tariff barriers, rules

In their report, the working group outlined three areas that the proposed EU-US deal should focus on: ambitious, reciprocal market opening in goods, services, and investment; modernising trade rules; and improving the compatibility of regulatory regimes.

The agreement should also be designed "to evolve over time," the working group said, specifically by including mechanisms that would effectively allow for the "further deepening of economic integration."

In the area of market access, the two sides should aim for ultimately eliminating all duties on bilateral trade. This would start with a "substantial" elimination of these duties upon the pact's entry into force; the remaining tariffs, with the exception of the most sensitive ones, would then be removed shortly thereafter. Both sides should also examine options on how best to treat the most sensitive goods, the working group said.

Tariffs between the trading partners are already low, with an average of 5.2 percent on the EU's part and 3.5 percent for the US, according to WTO estimates.

With regard to services, an EU-US deal should aim to bind liberalisation at the highest levels achieved in each sides' respective agreements with their other trading partners, while looking for other opportunities to increase market access. The services component of the negotiations would also address sub-federal levels of government.

Access to government procurement opportunities should also be "substantially improved" at all levels of government on the basis of national treatment, the working group said. Government procurement has been another area of past disagreement between the trading partners, who sparred repeatedly on the subject during the negotiations to revise the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA), which were completed in December 2011.

The major gains from a US-EU trade pact, however, are likely to come from the removal of non-tariff barriers and the harmonisation of their different regulatory regimes. This part of the discussions is also expected to be the most contentious, having stalled previous efforts to liberalise trade between the two sides.

The working group has suggested that Brussels and Washington negotiate “ambitious” SPS-plus and TBT-plus chapters, building – respectively – on the WTO’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement and the WTO’s Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement. The EU and US should also establish “cross-cutting disciplines on regulatory coherence and transparency,” as well as provisions or annexes with additional commitments geared toward promoting regulatory compatibility in specific goods and services sectors.

Notably, the working group also recommends that – in addition to pursuing the overall deal – both sides work toward making “early and continuing progress” on SPS measures that affect trade.

“This is not about downgrading the EU’s rules and standards,” the European Commission said in a [submission](#) to the European Council ahead of its 7-8 February summit.

“For the first time, the EU is going to negotiate FTAs with partners of similar size, and economic development as the EU,” the Commission stressed. “This demands different approaches, in particular on regulatory issues, which is a challenge for our approach to negotiations but also for coordination between negotiators and regulators, between different Council formations and European Parliament committees as well as between the EU and member state levels.”

Any flexibility from the bloc’s trading partners on regulatory issues would only come if the EU demonstrates its own willingness to make some concessions, the Commission added.

The third area of the trade talks will focus on rules aimed at strengthening the multilateral trading system. For instance, both sides will explore how to address selected intellectual property rights issues, but will not aim at harmonising their overall regimes in this area.

The deal is also expected to address environmental and labour issues, as well as the trade-related aspects of customs and trade facilitation, competition, raw materials and energy, and other so-called “21st century” topics.

ICTSD reporting.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Obama Shifts Gears on Climate Change

US President Barack Obama has outlined a series of new measures aimed at tackling climate change, following up on his January pledge to make the subject a priority in his second-term agenda. The announcement – which came as part of Obama's annual address to Congress on Tuesday evening – marks an overt change in tone on the issue, which has proven to be particularly divisive in the US.

The US president began his first four years in office with a strong position on combating climate change, leading many observers to believe the Obama Administration would take a far more aggressive position on the issue compared to the previous administration of George W. Bush. However, many environmentalists say they were disappointed when the US took a backseat in the international negotiations on the subject, which are held under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

During his inaugural address on 21 January that kicked off his new term, the president promised to "respond to the threat of climate change," a pledge that was viewed by observers as an early sign that Obama's second term might make the issue more of a priority than his first.

Accordingly, Obama followed up on this pledge in his speech on Tuesday by stressing the need to bring the issue back to the top of the domestic policy agenda, given recent extreme weather events.

"Yes, it's true that no single event makes a trend," Obama said. "But the fact is, the 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15. Heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and floods – all are now more frequent and intense. We can choose to believe that Superstorm Sandy, and the most severe drought in decades, and the worst wildfires some states have ever seen were all just a freak coincidence. Or we can choose to believe in the overwhelming judgment of science – and act before it's too late."

Accordingly, he called on Congress to pursue "a bipartisan, market-based solution to climate change," similar to the Climate Stewardship Act that was championed by Senators John McCain and Joe Lieberman – a Republican and Independent, respectively – some years ago. That initiative, and others following it, failed to make it out of Congress.

Should US lawmakers not act quickly enough at the federal level, Obama said that he would direct his cabinet to find executive actions that his office could take toward reducing pollution, fostering a quicker transition to sustainable energy sources, and preparing communities to handle climate change impacts. What form such actions might take, however, was left unspecified in the speech. Executive orders are a controversial tool in Washington, as some have criticised them for potentially circumventing the congressional process.

While market-based climate change initiatives have struggled to make significant headway in the US at the federal level, some efforts have moved forward at the state level. Specifically, California – the US' most populous state – recently [implemented](#) its own cap-and-trade programme. The scheme is part of California's efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, ultimately slashing 1990 levels by 80 percent by 2050.

Call for faster transition to renewable energy

As part of the push to drive down emissions, the US must continue to make inroads into the clean energy market, Obama said – particularly as other countries build up their own renewable energy sectors. Such an approach would not only help in fighting climate change, but would also create jobs, the US president argued.

"Four years ago, other countries dominated the clean energy market and the jobs that came with it. We've begun to change that," Obama said. "Last year, wind energy added nearly half of all new power capacity in America. So let's generate even more. Solar energy gets cheaper by the year – so let's drive costs down even further."

Renewable energy has been a contentious topic during Obama's presidency, particularly following the high-profile collapse in 2011 of Solyndra – a California-based solar cell manufacturer that had received over US\$500 million in government guarantees. The fall of the company had triggered a wave of criticism for the administration's decision to provide the support, and sparked questions among some observers over the financial viability of green technologies.

The Solyndra case also brought renewed attention to the development of renewable energy sectors in the US' trading partners, particularly China. Rows between Washington and Beijing over both sides' clean energy support practices have become commonplace in recent years, with complaints over alleged dumping and illegal subsidies being tabled by both sides.

The need to keep pace with other countries in this field is paramount, Obama stressed on Tuesday. "As long as countries like China keep going all-in on clean energy, so must we."

Energy efficiency is also key in the efforts to reduce emissions, the US president added, setting a goal of cutting in half the energy spent by homes and businesses over the next 20 years. He promised that those states with the best ideas for creating jobs and slashing energy bills via the use of more efficient building practices would be eligible for federal funding to translate those ideas into action.

Obama: Time to move away from oil

In his speech, Obama also stressed the need to focus on developing technology for cleaner natural gas and to reduce dependence on foreign oil – while eventually transitioning away from oil as an energy source.

With regard to the latter, the president proposed that the US' oil and gas revenues be used for funding an Energy Security Trust, which would be geared toward researching ways for cars and trucks to "transition off oil for good."

The reference to moving away from oil dependence comes amid growing speculation over the future of a proposed multi-billion dollar pipeline that would – if built – carry crude oil and bitumen from the oil sands of the Canadian province of Alberta to refineries south of the border.

The project, known as the Keystone XL pipeline, has been a lightning rod for controversy since the idea was first tabled nearly eight years ago. Environmental groups argue that the extraction and refining of Canadian sand oil carries a major carbon footprint, and that a spill could cause substantial environmental damage. Supporters, meanwhile, insist that the pipeline will provide safe, reliable oil access that will be an economic boon for both countries.

Obama blocked the pipeline over a year ago, citing an arbitrary deadline set by Congress on whether or not to approve the plan – but leaving open the possibility of endorsing a new application from TransCanada, the company behind the project. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 January 2012](#))

Lately, the fight over the pipeline has been gearing up for another round, with the news last month that Governor Dave Heineman of Nebraska has approved a revised route for the project – which has been seen as one of the plan's few remaining stumbling blocks. According to Heineman, the new route now avoids sensitive aquifers and other lands that could face severe environmental consequences in the case of an oil spill.

Given that the project crosses an international boundary, the pipeline will need to undergo a federal review by the US State Department – which now has John Kerry as its new Secretary – that would include an assessment of its environmental impact. Kerry promised last week that a federal decision on the project would be made in the “near term,” without specifying the date further.

ICTSD reporting; “Kerry wants Keystone pipeline decision in ‘near term,’” THE HILL, 8 February 2013; “Keystone Pipeline Route Approved by Nebraska Governor,” NEW YORK TIMES, 22 January 2013.

DISPUTES

US Lodges WTO Challenge Over India Renewable Energy Incentives

The US has filed a formal challenge at the WTO regarding India's support policies for solar energy, Washington officials announced last week. At issue in the complaint is a local content requirement in the Asian country's national solar programme, which Washington claims discriminates against foreign solar equipment manufacturers in favour of their domestic counterparts.

The challenge comes amid growing questions over the degree to which countries can help support their burgeoning renewable energy sectors, particularly given the global trade arbiter's recent panel ruling regarding a similar programme in the Canadian province of Ontario. (See Bridges Weekly, [19 December 2012](#)) The Canada dispute, which had been tabled at the WTO by the EU and Japan and also involved a local content requirement, is currently facing appeals from all parties.

US officials have stressed that the India-focused complaint targets only the Asian nation's local content requirement, and not the overall objective of developing renewable energy sources.

"Let me be clear: the United States strongly supports the rapid deployment of solar energy around the world, including with India," US Trade Representative Ron Kirk [said](#) in announcing the US challenge. "Unfortunately, India's discriminatory policies in its national solar programme detract from that successful cooperation, raise the cost of clean energy, and undermine progress toward our shared objective."

The benefits of local content requirements (LCRs) have long been a controversial topic. While countries often pursue multiple policy objectives through LCRs in the renewable energy sector, primarily to green their economy and to foster the sector's domestic development, while in parallel stimulating employment and investment, some analysts have noted that domestic content requirements might instead increase costs of energy, reduce competition, and therefore potentially slow down innovation.

India's programme – known formally as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (NSM) – was launched in 2010, with the goal of deploying 20,000 MW of solar panels through an interconnected grid by 2022. [According](#) to the country's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the scheme aims to reduce the cost of solar power generation in India, specifically via long-term policy, large-scale deployment targets, intensive research and development, and domestic production of the necessary raw materials and components.

"The objective of the National Solar Mission is to establish India as a global leader in solar energy, by creating the policy conditions for its diffusion across the country as quickly as possible," according to the programme's mission [statement](#).

One of the mission's goals, the statement says, is to undertake an international leadership role in the area of solar manufacturing across different stages of the value chain, in "leading edge solar technologies." In doing so, it is hoping to achieve a 4-5 GW equivalent of installed capacity by 2020, which would include developing manufacturing capacities for polysilicon material that would allow for the production of approximately 2 GW capacity of solar cells annually.

Washington: Policy gives domestic producers unfair advantage

Under the current phase of India's programme, the US says, New Delhi has required developers of photovoltaic projects using crystalline silicon technology to use solar cells and modules made domestically.

"As a result, solar power developers, or their successors in contract, receive certain benefits and advantages, including subsidies through guaranteed, long-term tariffs for electricity, contingent on their purchase and use of solar cells and solar modules of domestic origin," Washington says in its complaint, arguing that this violates the WTO's rules on national treatment.

Washington also argues that the measure constitutes an illegal subsidy, due to it allegedly providing a subsidy that depends on the use of domestic goods over their imported counterparts.

Among other concerns, the US claims that the Indian measures at issue have not been appropriately notified, thus violating the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) Agreement. In its consultations request, Washington also argues that the policies "appear to nullify or impair" the benefits due to the US directly or indirectly under this agreement, as well as the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) Agreement.

The upcoming phase of the programme would extend the local content requirement to cover more types of equipment imports, which the Office of the USTR says is also cause for concern.

The planned changes to the scheme would involve expanding the NSM local content requirement to include solar thin film technologies, which make up most of the US' solar exports to the Asian country. Over half of the projects under NSM have relied on imported thin films, which has been credited for prompting New Delhi to propose bringing these into the local content requirement.

Given that the majority of US solar exports involve solar film technologies, US companies are "not actually bothered by domestic sourcing of solar modules" under the current phase of the programme, one Indian trade official commented to The Hindu. The official speculated that the planned changes could have influenced the timing of the US complaint.

India responds

New Delhi officials quickly responded to Washington's challenge, arguing that the requirement has not substantially reduced imports of equipment and that its policy is in line with WTO rules.

The domestic content provision has been applied to only "a few projects totaling 350 megawatts (MW)," Tarun Kapoor, joint secretary at the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, told Reuters. India's total capacity for solar generation is 1200 MW, compared to 18 MW three years ago when NSM was in its infancy. India is currently building 1000 MW of solar power plants and will soon be building an additional 2000 MW, the official added, noting that this new capacity will not be subject to a local content requirement.

In the past, India has also argued that the scheme qualifies as government procurement and is thus exempt from national treatment requirements, according to Reuters – an argument that New Delhi could potentially try to use if this case reaches the panel stage, some trade observers have speculated.

A similar argument was also made in Canada's WTO row with the US and EU, only for a dispute panel to find that – while the Ontarian measures at issue were government procurement – it was done with a view for commercial resale. The Ontario scheme was therefore not exempt from the national treatment requirements referred to in the GATT, TRIMS, and SCM Agreements. That finding is currently under appeal by Ottawa.

Dispute panel proceedings do not have precedential effect, however, meaning that the results in the Canada dispute would not necessarily apply in India's case, should the latter dispute reach the panel stage.

Next steps

The request for consultations is the first step in the WTO dispute settlement process. Should the parties to a dispute be unable to reach a resolution after 60 days of talks, the complainant may request the establishment of a panel to hear the complaint.

ICTSD reporting; "The Solar War Heats Up," THE HINDU, 11 February 2013; "Widening Domestic Sourcing Net May Hurt India's Case," THE HINDU, 11 February 2013; "India to consult its solar sector on domestic content issue," SEE NEWS, 11 February 2013; "India Denies Violating WTO Rules on Solar-Product Import," BLOOMBERG NEWS, 07 February 2013; "US Challenges India's Solar Program Restrictions at WTO," REUTERS, 06 February 2013.

AGRICULTURE

China to Intensify Farm Subsidies in Grain Self-Sufficiency Drive

China will "intensify" farm subsidy spending in the country's ongoing bid to promote self-sufficiency in grains, Beijing has announced in its flagship annual policy statement, known simply as 'policy document no. 1'.

Farm support will figure amongst an arsenal of measures that the government will use to modernise farming and tackle a growing divide between urban and rural incomes, the [document](#) says.

The plans, which were released just under two weeks ago by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, highlight rural issues for the tenth year running – a sign that the government wants to be seen as taking firm action on problems such as rural poverty and food insecurity.

The document, timed to coincide with the start of Chinese New Year celebrations last weekend, spells out how the government will address the "three nongs," or three rural issues – agriculture, farmers, and the countryside.

"Improved" agricultural support system

"A whole section (out of a total of seven) is devoted to improving and strengthening the agricultural support system," said Wusheng Yu, associate professor at the Institute of Food and Resource Economics of the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

However, while agricultural support and protection figure prominently in the government's plans, they are not the only tools to do so.

"This time the document covers a wider scope of issues," said Andrzej Kwiecinski, senior agriculture policy analyst at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The proposals cover issues ranging from grain supply, migrant workers' rights, reforms to rural land expropriation, rural land registration, and the consolidation of small farms into larger ones, Kwiecinski noted in comments e-mailed to Bridges.

Last year's policy statement focused more narrowly on investment in agricultural science and technology, and the previous one on water conservation in farming. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 February 2012](#))

Farm support

The government will continue to raise minimum support prices for wheat and rice, according to the policy statement – a category of farm support that is classified as trade-distorting at the WTO. Beijing will also initiate temporary purchasing and storage of corn, soybeans, canola, cotton, and sugar, the document says.

Chinese farm spending has expanded dramatically in recent years – although it remains very low on a per capita basis, and is mostly reported as causing not more than minimal trade distortion. (See Bridges Weekly, [8 February 2012](#))

In particular, Beijing claims that payments linked to specific products are well below 8.5 percent of the value of production – the ceiling that China committed to respecting when it joined the global trade body in 2001.

Direct payments to grain farmers will continue, the new document says – although it does not give specific figures for these or other spending areas. Beijing also reports these subsidies as causing not more than minimal trade distortion.

Broad directions

"As usual, Document No. 1 gives broad directions and it remains to be seen how it is implemented," Kwiecinski said.

With China's latest domestic support notification to the WTO covering farm subsidy spending up to 2008, it still remains unclear how policy changes in the last few years have actually taken effect.

However, the new document does not appear to amount to a revolutionary new direction for Chinese farm policy, experts told Bridges.

"My overall impression is that the Chinese government will continue to apply active border policy measures where possible per its WTO commitments, and to continue the use of domestic subsidies for purposes of maintaining food security and improving peasants' income," explained Yu.

ICTSD reporting.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

WIPO: Text on Genetic Resources in Final Stages of “Relay”

Members of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have agreed to move forward with a draft text on genetic resources, following a week-long meeting held in Geneva. The document is expected to be transmitted to the organisation's General Assemblies in September, which will in turn decide whether to convene a diplomatic conference on the subject – the UN body's highest level of negotiations.

Genetic resources – defined by the document as genetic material of actual or potential value – are commonly used in patentable inventions, such as pharmaceutical products. Traditional knowledge is often linked to genetic resources as “associated traditional knowledge,” such as the healing properties of a plant, for example. Many biodiversity-rich countries and indigenous communities are concerned about the misappropriation of such resources and knowledge, which could be used to obtain a patent without their prior consent and without having adequate access and benefit-sharing mechanisms in place.

The Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore (IGC) was created in 2000. Last year, WIPO's General Assemblies renewed the committee's mandate to work on text(s) for an international legal instrument(s) aimed at ensuring the effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. The work would be divided into three thematic sessions to deal with the respective topics.

The last thematic session is scheduled for July, and will be extended in order to review and take stock of the draft text(s). Members will then make a recommendation to the September General Assembly, which will ultimately decide whether to convene a diplomatic conference. (See Bridges Weekly [15 October 2012](#))

This past week's session focused solely on genetic resources, an area in the IGC's work that has not witnessed the same progress as the two other areas. At the end of the session, IGC Chair Ambassador Wayne McCook of Jamaica compared the committee's work to a relay race – a sport his fellow countrymen excel in – reminding delegates that the most significant part is the change of the baton.

“[In a relay], much can be lost after much has been gained,” he warned.

Countries still at odds over disclosure

Though the new consolidated document shows a cleaner text with agreement on some areas – such as certain definitions – this latest version remains riddled with brackets, due to members' disagreements over some key elements.

The biggest point of contention is over a mandatory disclosure requirement in patent applications regarding the origin of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Proponents say that such a measure would prevent erroneous patents from being granted and ensure that adequate access and benefit-sharing provisions are in place.

In a statement supported by several delegations, Brazil suggested that the discussion focus on mandatory disclosure requirements and their basic elements. This, Brazil explained, would ensure that the instrument under discussion be consistent with the Convention on

Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol, which regulates access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise from their use.

"We were told when we were negotiating Nagoya that the place to discuss disclosure is the IGC, so it is unacceptable that our negotiating partners are not willing to discuss it here," Namibia said.

The US, meanwhile, reiterated its view that it "do[es] not support the use of the patent system to ensure compliance with the disclosure of the source of genetic resources."

"In order to incentivise innovation the requirements placed on the patent applicant must not be burdensome," the US delegate added.

Joint recommendations stir up heated debate

Also during last week's meeting, the US, Canada, Japan, Norway, and South Korea re-submitted a proposal for a [joint recommendation](#) without a mandatory disclosure requirement that sets non-binding general guidelines for the protection of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. The proposal was presented at last February's IGC session, but had not been discussed in detail. (See Bridges Weekly [22 February 2012](#))

The US called the re-submitted joint recommendation a "confidence-building measure" to help the IGC move forward, saying that it captures key objectives and facilitates the establishment of mechanisms for protecting genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

However, the proposal was met with resistance by many developing countries. South Africa, for one, said they "welcomed the move towards confidence-building, but the content does not even meet the minimum requirements of the *demandeurs*," namely disclosure and a legally binding treaty.

Many countries also pointed to the lack of clarity regarding how the joint recommendation would fit into the negotiating process for an international legal instrument. At this stage, Nigeria said, discussing the joint recommendation could be considered an "unnecessary diversion of resources."

The same group of countries – with the exception of Norway – also presented a [proposal](#) for the terms of reference for a WIPO study on measures related to the avoidance of the erroneous granting of patents and ensuring compliance with existing access and benefit-sharing systems.

Another proposal by the same group called for a [joint recommendation](#) on the use of databases for the defensive protection of genetic resources and the associated traditional knowledge. Proponents say that databases would help patent examiners find relevant prior art and avoid the granting of erroneous patents. Many developing countries, however, see databases as only complementary to other measures, such as disclosure.

"How do the proponents of this measure see the databases populated if not through disclosure?," Namibia asked in the plenary.

The proposals were not included in the consolidated document. For the European Union, however, these other documents "remain relevant and on the table."

The next session of the IGC is scheduled for 22-26 April 2013 and will focus on traditional knowledge.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Vacancies

King & Spalding is seeking one junior to mid-level associate and one senior associate for its WTO and International Trade practice in Geneva. Qualified candidates will have experience in WTO litigation, trade negotiations, and market access issues under the GATT, the TBT Agreement, and the GATS. Applicants for the junior to mid-level position should have at least two years of relevant practice experience, excellent research and English language writing skills, and the desire to be part of a hard-working, fast-paced environment. For the senior associate position, a minimum of 6 years of relevant experience is required. More information on the position is available [here](#).

Syngenta Crop Protection AG is seeking candidates for the position of Trade Affairs Officer. The post is based in Basel, Switzerland, and would last from March through December. Candidates should have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in law, economics, international trade, agriculture trade, or agriculture economics, as well as 3-5 years of experience in trade regulations: enforcing, applying, or writing regulations in any aspect of trade and/or the equivalent experience in working for a government or trade association in a management or supervisory capacity. Applications should be sent to maxine.kennett@syngenta.com.

Events

14 February, London, UK. THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY; REDESIGNING THE FUTURE. This event, hosted by Chatham House, will delve into the sustainability of the current global economy. Dame Ellen MacArthur, the event's guest speaker, is expected to lecture on how the world's current economy and systems of production are inherently unsustainable. MacArthur will also examine an alternative model and the possibility of transitioning to a more sustainable and regenerative – also referred to as "circular" – economy. More information about the event is available [here](#).

14 February, Manila, Philippines. PROCUREMENT MASTER CLASS: STATE OF THE WORLD 2012 –SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT. In this workshop – hosted by the Asian Development bank – Geoff French, President of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC), and Enrico Vink, FIDIC Managing Director, will share their perspectives on the current international thinking on sustainability, how to assess today's rating systems, and how to develop clear decision paths for critical investment in infrastructure. The workshop is geared toward providing participants with an understanding of the findings and recommendations of the State of the World Report on Sustainable Infrastructure commissioned by FIDIC in 2012. More information can be found [here](#).

19 February, Washington, US. THE UNITED STATES AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT: AN APPROACH IN TRANSITION. Co-hosted by the Development Assistance and Governance Initiative at the Brookings Institution and the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN), this event will feature a discussion on the current status of the US global

development reform agendas, in light of the start of US President Barack Obama's second term. The discussions will specifically take stock of the reform efforts that began in 2010 to elevate development as a core pillar of US national security and foreign policy. For more information, click [here](#).

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.

19-21 February: Trade Policy Review Body - Japan

25-26 February: General Council

Other Upcoming Events

21 February, Washington, US. THE INNOVATIVE METROPOLIS: FOSTERING ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE URBAN DESIGN. This event, jointly hosted by the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program and the Sam Fox School's Master of Urban Design Program, aims to explore the intersection between sustainable urban design and economic growth while discussing the implications for design and practice. The event will highlight policies that have enabled individual cities to become successful models of sustainability and examine specific design and policy issues through the lenses of economy, government, climate, and social systems. For more information, click [here](#).

25 February – 8 March, online. INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW 2013. This online course, hosted by the UN Institute for Training and Research, aims to provide attendees with a broad introduction to international environmental law's (IEL) main topics. The course will address the sources of international environmental law and its fundamental principles, as well as its main actors and the implementation and compliance procedures needed to understand the content of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The course will consist of five online lessons totalling twenty-four learning hours. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

25 February-21 April, online. CLIMATE CHANGE DIPLOMACY: NEGOTIATING EFFECTIVELY UNDER UNFCCC. This online course, hosted by the UN Institute for Training and Research, aims to develop participants' understanding of the climate change policy framework by building an appreciation of the science, causes, and impacts of climate change. It will also consider the challenges negotiators are currently facing in drafting environmentally friendly international agreements, evaluate the talks to date under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and consider the "hot topics" negotiators are likely to face in their efforts to establish a new global agreement on climate change by 2015. The course is offered in collaboration with Ricardo-AEA and the CDKN Advocacy Fund. To learn more, click [here](#).

Resources

ESTIMATING THE CONSTRAINTS OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By Evdokia Moïse, Claire Delpeuch, Silvia Sorescu, Novella Bottini, and Arthur Foch for the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (January 2013). This report identifies and analyses several supply-side constraints to developing countries' exports of agricultural products, with the goal of informing prioritisation and sequencing of domestic policy reforms as well as targeting of donor interventions. The analysis is supplemented by case studies of Aid for Trade programmes supporting agricultural trade expansion in Indonesia, Zambia, and Mozambique. The publication is available [here](#).

FOOD CRISIS UPDATE: MAIN DRIVERS OF PRICE VOLATILITY STILL NOT ADDRESSED. By Timothy Wise and Sophia Murphy for the Global Development And Environment (GDAE) Institute at Tufts University (February 2013). This op-ed, published on the Triple Crisis blog, delves into the global food supply chain and examines what role external factors – such as global droughts and population increases – play in the volatility of the international food market. The authors also suggest long-term solutions that, they argue, could help in solving the world-wide food crisis and ending market instability. The op-ed is available [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE BY COMMODITY STATISTICS, VOLUME 2012 ISSUE 2. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013)). This book provides statistics regarding international trade for Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Italy, and Mexico. The publication provides data in value by commodity and by partner country, and covers the years 2007 until 2011. To read the text, visit the [website](#).

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