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WASHINGTON

Obama Presses for "Fast Track" Trade Powers, Climate Action

US President Barack Obama made a public call on Tuesday for Congress to pass "fast track" trade powers, as part of a larger effort to advance ongoing negotiations with the EU and with 11 Asia-Pacific countries. Climate action was another key component of his State of the Union address, which comes after what analysts generally say was the toughest year of Obama's presidency.

"We need to work together on tools like bipartisan trade promotion authority to protect our workers, protect our environment and open new markets to new goods stamped 'Made in the USA'," he [told](#) Congress. "Listen, China and Europe aren't standing on the sidelines; and neither should we."

"Fast track" powers, known formally as Trade Promotion Authority, allows the US executive branch to negotiate international trade deals and then send them to Congress for a straight up-or-down vote, without amendments. The legislation, which expired in 2007, also outlines Washington's negotiating objectives in trade agreements.

Trade observers had been watching closely to see if Obama would call for Trade Promotion Authority in his speech, given the criticism from some Republicans that the White House has been too passive in pushing for "fast track" powers.

However, analysts have been quick to note that the president did not endorse outright the draft legislation that is currently being considered in Congress, which already promises to be controversial. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 January 2014](#))

Getting members of Obama's own Democratic Party to back TPA in any form is likely to be an especially difficult bargain, with many of them concerned both over the transparency of the negotiating process and the potential for some sectors of the US economy to experience negative impacts from lower trade barriers.

The fractious political climate has also raised questions over how many Republicans – who have traditionally shown more support for TPA – will back the measure.

The Senate Finance Committee has already held a hearing on the draft TPA legislation that was submitted earlier this month. However, the timing for next steps is unclear, given the expected departure of committee chair Max Baucus. Incoming chairman Ron Wyden has indicated that he is not ready to back the current TPA draft.



International Centre for Trade
and Sustainable Development

Meanwhile, in the House's Ways and Means Committee, the timeline for advancing "fast track" renewal is even less certain. While Chairman Dave Camp, a Republican, has introduced the legislation for consideration, his Democratic counterpart in the committee – ranking member Sander Levin – has openly opposed it. Levin says he plans to introduce a rival version in the near future, without specifying a timeframe.

TPP, TTIP timeline

Trade has become an increasingly prominent part of the Obama Administration's second term agenda, particularly as the 2015 deadline for the president's pledge of doubling US exports from 2009 levels draws ever nearer. The White House has highlighted its planned deal with the EU, along with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks, as key initiatives for fulfilling that promise.

The US and its 11 Pacific Rim partners in the TPP talks are aiming to finish their negotiations in the coming months, with ministers next slated to meet in Singapore in February to try to clear up some of their outstanding differences. The timeframe for the US-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is less clear, given that the talks are still in their relatively early stages, though officials from both sides say that they want to conclude a deal quickly.

The ability to send completed trade deals – such as the TPP or the US-EU pact – to Capitol Hill for a clean vote is seen as key for the US' trading partners in order to avoid having these agreements unravelled in Washington.

Obama: shift to clean energy economy requires "tough choices"

The State of the Union address, which is the US president's most high-profile speech of the year, comes at a difficult time in the Obama presidency, following a year marked by Congressional infighting over subjects ranging from the US budget and debt ceiling to the implementation of healthcare reform. These difficulties, along with Obama's persistently low approval ratings – which have been in the 40s – have been blamed for stalling efforts at passing major legislation in Washington.

A year ago, Obama made clear that he was ready to take a series of executive actions aimed at tackling climate change, in light of the continued difficulties in advancing climate legislation in the highly-polarised Congress. A few months later, he unveiled various measures that he was preparing to take as part of a broad "climate action plan" – such as imposing federal carbon limits on new and existing power plants – that would not require the approval of US lawmakers. (See Bridges Weekly, [27 June 2013](#))

The decision to bypass Congress in this area had riled some lawmakers. However, Obama defended these moves on Tuesday, noting that western communities in the US are already feeling the impacts of a changing climate.

"The shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require some tough choices along the way," he said. "But the debate is settled. Climate change is a fact."

Along with defending his June climate plan, Obama also outlined a series of other goals for the year, such as reducing red tape for building new factories that can use natural gas; taking executive action to protect federal lands; and pursuing a "smarter tax policy" that would give less money to fossil fuel industry and more to renewable technologies, such as solar. The US President also pledged to set new truck standards to improve fuel efficiency, which would be announced in the coming months.

ICTSD reporting; "Obama Seeks Trade Deals in Backing U.S. Companies' Goals," BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK, 29 January 2014; "Obama delivers careful message on trade," FINANCIAL TIMES, 29 January 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS

"Green Goods" Trade Initiative Kicks Off in Davos

A group of 14 WTO members – including the US, EU, and China – has agreed to pursue "global free trade" in environmental goods, announcing last week their plan to negotiate a plurilateral deal that would eliminate tariffs on such products.

"We are convinced that one of the most concrete, immediate contributions that the WTO and its members can make to protect our planet is to seek agreement to eliminate tariffs for goods that we all need to protect our environment and address climate change," the participants said in a joint [statement](#) last Friday, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The group plans to use the list of environmental goods agreed by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group as a starting point for their discussions. APEC members had announced in 2012 that they would reduce tariffs on a list of 54 green goods – such as wind turbines and solar panels – to five percent or less by the end of 2015. However, that regional pact was non-binding for its 21 members, and featured many products that already have low tariffs. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 September 2012](#))

Participants in this new initiative did not say how long they expect negotiations to take, nor did they say when these would be formally launched. However, they did say that the agreement – while first tackling tariffs – is meant to be a "future oriented" pact that might later address other barriers to green goods trade.

Total global trade in environmental goods reached nearly US\$955 billion in 2012, according to US data, with tariffs on some products as high as 35 percent.

Critical mass needed

Along with the US, EU, and China, current participants in the initiative also include Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, and Chinese Taipei – a group that together makes up 86 percent in global environmental goods trade.

The group intends to bring this deal into the WTO as a most-favoured-nation (MFN) style pact. For this to happen, however, enough participants would need to sign on for the pact to have a "critical mass" – in other words, to cover a sufficiently high percentage of environmental goods trade. This number is often set at 90 percent, as seen with the WTO's Information Technology Agreement, a plurilateral tariff-cutting mechanism for information and communication technology products.

Once enough participants have signed on to reach this critical mass, the agreement's benefits would be extended to the global trade body's entire membership, though only its participants would be required to make concessions.

"All WTO members need better access to the goods and technologies that protect our environment and combat climate change," EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht [said](#) on Friday. "Today's commitment is an important trade contribution towards addressing key environmental challenges as part of our broader, ambitious sustainable growth agenda."

The group says it is interested in bringing other WTO members on board, without specifying which members exactly. The participants have particularly stressed the importance of including all major traders.

Post-Bali momentum

The announcement comes just weeks after WTO members concluded a global trade deal at their ministerial conference in Bali – their first such pact in nearly two decades – that resolved some of the less contentious topics of the Doha Development Agenda. Trade watchers say that one of the main challenges for WTO members in 2014 will be to establish a “work programme” to address the remaining Doha Round issues, which are expected to be more difficult to resolve.

Trade ministers involved in the environmental goods initiative, such as US Trade Representative Michael Froman, have [said](#) that these types of “fresh, credible approaches to trade negotiation” could serve to keep the Bali momentum going back in Geneva.

Lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers in environmental goods and services (EGS) were part of the Doha Round’s original negotiating mandate. The negotiations, however, have struggled to advance at the WTO, with members at odds over issues such as how to identify these goods, and what products a global deal in this area would cover. (See Bridges Weekly, [27 April 2011](#))

When the APEC deal was announced just over a year ago, some in the trade and climate community had hoped that this could lead to a rejuvenation of EGS talks at the WTO. However, the idea of multilateralising the APEC deal – and making it binding – has received a lukewarm approach from some of the WTO’s members, sceptical as to whether outside agreements should influence discussions at the global trade body. (See Bridges Weekly, [14 November 2012](#))

Washington is among those members to have [advocated](#) for plurilateral and regional negotiations as ways to advance trade liberalisation, while serving also as a complement to the multilateral process. However, some WTO members have questioned whether these types of efforts actually detract from multilateral talks, particularly as plurilaterals such as the proposed Trade in Services Agreement gain steam.

The post-Bali agenda was the main focus of a separate [meeting](#) held in Davos by Swiss Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann, which was attended by WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo and a group of two dozen [ministers](#). Along with calling for “fresh and credible approaches” to address the rest of the Doha Round agenda, the Swiss official also [reported](#) a “common understanding” among ministers that the new work programme must address Doha’s hardest topics: agriculture, industrial market access, and services.

ICTSD reporting.

AGRICULTURE

US Farm Bill Process Enters Home Stretch

The US House of Representatives passed a compromise version of the Farm Bill on Wednesday, marking one of the final steps of a nearly two-year effort aimed at updating the country's most important legislation on agricultural support.

"Today's bipartisan agreement brings us closer than ever to enacting a five-year Farm Bill that saves taxpayers billions, eliminates unnecessary subsidies, and helps farmers and business owners create jobs," [said](#) Debbie Stabenow, a Michigan Democrat who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

The agreement could come to a vote in the Senate as early as next week, and would then need US President Barack Obama's signature in order to become law. Some estimates place the bill's potential spending cuts at nearly US\$16 billion over ten years from a US\$1 trillion package.

Spending continues to be dominated by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known more commonly as food stamps, with nearly US\$75 billion projected in annual outlays. Farm support, meanwhile, is slated to reach US\$25 billion a year. A dispute on the size and nature of SNAP cuts had been one of the main controversies during the Farm Bill debate.

Crop insurance shift

With regard to farm spending, the focus is set to shift to crop insurance schemes and away from direct payments, the latter of which fall under the WTO's "green box" of non-trade-distorting support.

The new bill combines the Senate's Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and the House's Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programmes into a final agreement, with farmers able to make a one-time choice for either system. The ARC would guarantee revenues based on a five-year average, while the PLC would provide support through a price floor set in the Farm Bill.

Insurance programmes already in effect will be enhanced by a Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO), which will protect farmers from "shallow losses" - in other words, up to 80 percent of insured crops.

By doing away with direct payments for most crops, the bill appeases citizens and politicians tired of spending that they have said is difficult to justify. However, the programmes that replace it may leave trading partners wary.

"This Farm Bill trades out essentially decoupled payments into payments that clearly violate the agricultural annex [to the WTO Agreement]," Vincent Smith, a professor of agricultural economics at Montana State University, told Bridges.

Critics note that these crop insurance payments will not face an effective cap, and would likely need to be notified as trade-distorting payments under the WTO's "amber" box. If notified as such, the US would have to comply with the trade body's constraints on such farm support.

Some analysts, such as Carl Zulauf, a leading crop insurance expert, told Bridges that he would be surprised if the new insurance and commodity programmes were not considered amber box.

Others, such as Bruce Babcock of Iowa State University, have described PLC in the past as the more trade-distorting of the two programmes.

Smith observed that the PLC is "essentially" like the counter-cyclical payment (CCP) programme, but with higher minimum prices. The now-defunct CCP paid farmers when prices fell, boosting production and distorting trade. Prices that trigger payments under the new programme have increased substantially for many commodities, Smith noted - with rice, for example, the price is 72 percent higher than it was under counter-cyclical payments.

Trade considerations?

Trade rules were not a major consideration in the Farm Bill deliberation process, a number of analysts told Bridges. The US-Brazil cotton dispute was perhaps the most significant issue expected to be resolved by the legislation, along with a separate disagreement between the US, Canada, and Mexico on meat labeling.

Both Canada and Brazil have expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome and have suggested that they may pursue further action at the WTO. (See Bridges Weekly, [23 January 2014](#))

How the US chooses to notify other WTO members about these changes will be critical as negotiators in Geneva hammer out future trade accords. The Congressional Budget Office [estimates](#) that the US will spend US\$44.5 billion on commodity programmes and US\$89.2 billion on crop insurance, in sum, over ten years. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 January 2014](#))

The timelines of the US Farm Bill and the EU's Common Agricultural Policy had been key factors in WTO negotiations on agriculture rule reforms, according to trade officials. The next opportunity for change in US policy will take place ahead of 2018, which is when the new bill is expected to expire.

ICTSD reporting; "Bill in U.S. Congress raises Canadian ire, warning of trade retaliation," CALGARY HERALD, 27 January 2014.

CLIMATE CHANGE

US Launches New Probe into China, Taiwan Solar Trade Practices

US officials have launched new investigations into Chinese and Taiwanese solar trade practices, in a move expected to rekindle tensions between Beijing and Washington.

The investigations announced by the US Commerce Department last Thursday come in response to a December petition by SolarWorld Industries America, the US' largest solar panel manufacturer. The company claims that China has managed to exploit a loophole in a 2012 trade case by using cells made abroad, mainly from Taiwan, in its production process – in effect avoiding US anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

Dumping refers to the practice of selling goods abroad at prices below their normal value. Countervailing duties, meanwhile, are meant to combat allegedly unfair subsidies to producers, and are also known as anti-subsidy duties.

"We are once again simply asking our trade regulators to investigate the facts and apply the well-established laws that enable free trade, robust competition, and lower long-term pricing," [said](#) Mukesh Dulani, president of SolarWorld, in December. "If fair competition can be restored, the US industry will return to growth."

China's Ministry of Commerce has urged the US to abandon the probe, and says it plans to follow the proceedings closely. Beijing will "resolutely safeguard our interests through various mechanisms," the ministry said in a statement published by media outlet Xinhua.

SolarWorld was one of the main proponents of the case that led to the original duties. Following a year-long investigation, the US Commerce Department had announced in 2012 that they had found evidence of both dumping and illegal subsidies, and would be imposing duties on Chinese-made solar cells to counter both. (See Bridges Weekly, [10 October 2012](#))

These new investigations will focus on imports of certain crystalline silicon photovoltaic products, which are the basic component of solar panels, modules, and/or laminates. In 2012, imports from China and Taiwan of these products were worth US\$2.1 billion and US\$513.5 million, respectively, according to US data.

As before, Chinese producers will be investigated for both dumping and unfair subsidies. Taiwanese producers will only face an anti-dumping investigation. The US International Trade Commission (ITC) will make its preliminary injury determinations by 14 February to determine whether the investigations will continue.

If the US ITC does find "reasonable indication" that such imports cause material injury to US producers – or threaten to do so – Commerce will then proceed with its investigation, and would announce preliminary countervailing determinations in March and its anti-dumping findings in June.

US solar industry remains split

The new investigation has the support of the Coalition for American Solar Manufacturing (CASM), a group of seven US solar panel manufacturers that includes SolarWorld, which had also backed the original 2012 Commerce case.

Not all of the US solar industry is on board, however, with downstream producers being among those to raise questions over whether these investigations actually cause more harm to US renewable energy production than good. Imposing duties on foreign-made cells, they say, can actually raise costs for US producers that use these cells as part of their overall manufacturing processes.

"We oppose [December's] escalation of the US-China solar trade conflict," [said](#) Rhone Resch, the president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association, following the news of the SolarWorld petition. "It's time to end this conflict and negotiations must play a role."

The past two years have been fraught with arguments between the US and China over their renewable energy trade practices, particularly as US producers struggle against the influx of lower-priced Chinese products. China's solar industry has experienced its own downturn in recent years, though new reports are indicating a potential resurgence.

The EU had similarly sparred with the Asian giant over solar trade, with the two sides later coming to a "price undertaking" arrangement last year that resolved the disagreement. The US was not part of this final deal, despite Washington officials being involved in some of the early discussions. (See Bridges Weekly, [5 September 2013](#))

China imposes duties on US, South Korean polysilicon

In a separate development, China's Ministry of Commerce [confirmed](#) on Monday that it would be imposing anti-dumping duties on imports of US and South Korean solar-grade polysilicon, an ingredient used in making solar panels. Beijing had imposed provisional duties on these imports last July. (See Bridges Weekly, [25 July 2013](#))

In the notice released on Monday, MOFCOM officials said that their investigation confirmed that there had been dumping of these products onto the Chinese market in the survey period, resulting in "substantial damage" to domestic industry. Furthermore, there is a "causal link between dumping and material injury," officials said.

US producers are also [set](#) to face anti-subsidy duties on these products, the Chinese ministry said in a separate announcement.

ICTSD reporting; "China urges U.S. to terminate anti-dumping probe," XINHUA, 26 January 2014; "China's solar industry rebounds, but will boom-bust cycle repeat?" REUTERS, 24 January 2014.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

Australian PM: For Upcoming G-20 Summit, "Trade Comes First"

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott made a strong public call at last week's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, for G-20 members to put free trade "first" as they work to sustain the momentum of the global economic recovery. Australia is the holder of this year's G-20 presidency, taking the helm from Russia, with the annual leaders' summit scheduled for November in the city of Brisbane.

Developed countries have shown increasingly consistent signs of improvement in recent months, and recent data also indicates steadier growth in developing countries. Economists warn, however, that this progress has yet to solidify into a lasting trend, and policymakers should remain vigilant against potential risks.

"It was the G-20 which helped to coordinate the actions which prevented another great depression," Abbott told his audience at Davos. "The challenge, as we continue to work through the weaknesses that brought on the crisis, is to strengthen governance without suppressing the vitality of capitalism.

The Group of 20 major industrialised and developing economies declared itself the "premier forum" for global economic cooperation during the early years of the financial crisis, a pledge that has since drawn attention – and sometimes criticism – as to what should fall under the G-20 agenda and how effective its commitments are in practice. Abbott stressed in Davos that this year's summit, like last year's, "must be more than a talkfest," promising to hold a "frank leaders-only discussion."

In these talks, he said, trade should come first. The Australian Prime Minister also [said](#) that G-20 members should continue working to combat tax avoidance by large companies, increase infrastructure investment, reduce unemployment, and improve financial sector resilience – all major topics at last September's summit in St. Petersburg.

Abbott is only a few months into his term as Prime Minister, after his party cruised to a landslide victory over Labor in September. Hosting the G-20 summit is seen by some analysts as a key test for the Australian leader's foreign policy credentials.

Back home, Abbott has focused primarily on starting the repeal process for two controversial taxes – one on carbon emissions, another on mining – that were enacted during the term of predecessor Julia Gillard. He has said that removing such taxes are key to boosting private sector growth and employment, a claim he reiterated at Davos, though critics have said that these planned repeals would undo some of Australia's most significant climate mitigation advances in years. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 September 2013](#))

Protectionism, bilaterals

In Davos, the Australian leader also pressed his fellow G-20 leaders to – at the very least – renew their existing commitments against protectionism, noting that his country will "make the most of its G-20 presidency to promote free trade." He also pushed them to commit to liberalise trade via new agreements on a bilateral, plurilateral, and multilateral level.

Last September in St. Petersburg, G-20 leaders had agreed to extend to 2016 their "standstill commitment" against raising or imposing new barriers to trade and investment, a pledge that was first made during their 2010 summit in Toronto, Canada. The group also reaffirmed its promise to "rollback" new measures that may have arisen since the crisis. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 September 2013](#))

However, recent WTO [data](#) on G-20 trade restrictions has found that such measures are actually on the rise, with 116 new ones reported between mid-May to mid-November – compared to 109 restrictions in the previous period.

The December report had also noted that trade flows in 2013 were lower than originally anticipated, warning that while 2014 would likely yield improvements, trade growth would still be below historical levels.

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

Seal Ban Dispute Enters WTO Appeals Stage

The high-profile WTO dispute on the EU's seal import ban has now entered the next stage, with Norway and Canada appealing the panel ruling that had upheld the EU measure as justified on moral grounds. Despite its favourable outcome, Brussels is also appealing other aspects of the panel's report with which it disagrees. ([DS400](#), [DS401](#))

At issue in the case is a 2009 European Commission regulation that bans the sale of seal products in all EU member states. Advocates for the measure say that it is necessary on the grounds of public morality, specifically regarding animal welfare, given the "inhumane" nature of commercial sealing operations. (See Bridges Trade BioRes, [2 May 2011](#)).

In their original complaints, Oslo and Ottawa had claimed that the ban unfairly discriminated against their industries, compared to sealing taking place in Greenland, as well as Sweden and Finland. Norway had also said that the ban complicated their own efforts at sustainably managing marine resources.

Back in November, a dispute panel had granted Brussels a partial victory in the case. While finding that the EU regime did restrict international trade, the panel agreed with the EU that the prohibition was necessary for the protection of "public morals" – a result that Brussels [welcomed](#) as confirmation that their ban was "justified."

According to [documents](#) posted yesterday on the European Commission's website, the EU is challenging some of the panel's findings, such as its characterisation of the measure as a "technical regulation" – which puts it under the WTO's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

Exceptions

The original panel had also reviewed two exceptions to the seal regime for their compatibility with WTO rules. Under the original EU regulation, seal products obtained from indigenous community hunts (ICs) or sustainable resource management programmes (SRMs) were able to obtain an exemption from the ban.

These exceptions allowed for limited trade in domestically-obtained seal products and an almost unlimited trade in Greenlandic seal products. However, they virtually excluded all Canadian and Norwegian-caught seal – a result that the panel deemed discriminatory. The panel also found that the legislative history of the EU's seal regime indicated a lack of "even-handedness" in the design of the IC and SRM exceptions.

The panel had found that the objectives of these exceptions were separate from the overall goal of promoting public morality, with regard to animal welfare. Canada and Norway have requested the Appellate Body to reverse this finding, and Norway has argued that promoting SRM is a legitimate objective.

Sources say that Brussels, for its part, is appealing the panel's finding that the IC exception diminishes the seal regime's contribution to the EU's public morality objective. The EU appeal is not yet publicly available.

Canada and Norway, sources add, have asked the Appellate Body to reconsider the panel's rejection of their proposals for alternatives to the EU regime. These proposals, the two complainants say, would have provided less-trade-restrictive ways of addressing EU concerns over inhumane seal hunting. Their suggested alternatives mainly involved implementing certification programmes rooted in animal welfare standards.

The Appellate Body will review aspects of law – such as legal interpretation – but generally will not interfere with the factual findings of the original panel. A report is likely to be issued within three months.

ICTSD reporting.

South Africa, Pharmaceutical Industry Face Off on Patent Reform

South Africa's efforts to reform its intellectual property (IP) regime in order to improve access to medicines has sparked a firestorm in recent weeks, with major pharmaceutical companies openly at odds with civil society and developing countries.

The [draft IP policy](#) was published last September, with Pretoria now taking steps toward its eventual implementation. The changes would establish a system of substantive patent examination, and would also strengthen the existing criteria for "patentability." These revisions, proponents say, would make it easier for generic drugs to compete in a market that has long been dominated by the research-based pharmaceutical industry.

"The current system allows pharmaceutical companies to obtain multiple patents on the same drug, even for inventions that do not fall under the country's definition of innovation," various civil society organisations have [said](#) in advocating for the reform.

The existing regime, they added, thus allows these companies to extend their monopolies and charge inflated prices for medicines, while making it difficult for generic manufacturers to compete.

However, the leak soon thereafter of a [memo](#) aimed at helping major drug companies undermine the proposed change has escalated the row, with South African Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi openly comparing the industry campaign to "genocide."

Civil society, developing countries weigh in

Several developing countries, along with a coalition of civil society groups, have spoken up in support of South Africa, most recently during last week's meeting of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Executive Board.

The industry response is "unacceptable in a country facing one of the world's most acute HIV and [tuberculosis] epidemics," Médecins Sans Frontières said at the meeting, noting that medicine prices in South Africa are up to 35 times higher than in countries where generics have a greater market share.

Some civil society organisations have formally called on the WHO Executive Board [to adopt a resolution](#) expressing solidarity with the African country.

WHO Director-General Margaret Chan has similarly expressed her concern, saying that "no government should be intimidated by interested parties for doing the right thing in public health."

ICTSD reporting; "South Africa slams Big Pharma in generic drugs row," REUTERS, 17 January 2014; "WHO Chief: No Government Should Be Intimidated For Doing 'Right Thing' In Public Health," IP-WATCH, 24 January 2014; "New Draft South African IP Policy Receives Initial Positive Reactions," IP-Watch, 9 September 2013.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

31 January, Washington, US. CONGRESSIONAL TRADE AGENDA. This event, hosted by the Washington International Trade Association, will feature various US congressional trade leaders, who will share their perspectives on the upcoming year's trade agenda on Capitol Hill. The discussion will be held on an off-the-record basis. Additional details, including the event's press policy, are available [here](#).

3-7 February, Geneva, Switzerland. WIPO INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GENETIC RESOURCES, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOLKLORE (IGC). This 26th session of the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) will address genetic resources. The event will be preceded by a meeting of ambassador/senior capital-based officials, in order to help guide the negotiating process. More information is available [here](#).

3-7 February, New York, US. EIGHTH MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SDGs (OWG8). At this meeting, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG SDGs) plans to discuss issues including oceans and seas, forests, biodiversity, equality promotion - including social and gender equality - and conflict prevention. More information about the Open Working Group is available on the OWG website. Further details regarding OWG 8 are also available [here](#).

4 February, Geneva, Switzerland. SEEDS, INNOVATION AND THE COMPETITION OF INTERNATIONAL REGIMES. This session will be hosted by the Quaker United Nations Office on the sidelines of the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. Discussions will focus on the effect of legal regimes on small-scale farmers' use and management of genetic resources, including innovation, and how these farmers' needs and expertise can be used more effectively in identifying questions and solutions. In the context of the IGC negotiations, panelists will discuss the possibilities for designing a coherent legal regime that supports all types of innovation and management systems, including those of small-scale farmers. More information is available [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.

31 January: Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation

11 + 13 February: Trade Policy Review Body - Tonga

14 February: Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration

25 February: Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

Other Upcoming Events

11 February, London, UK. UKRAINE'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA: THE IMPACT OF RECENT EVENTS. This event, held by Chatham House, will focus on Ukraine's political and economic relationship with Russia, especially in light of the current political crisis in Kiev. Speakers will note the challenges Ukraine has faced in adopting political and economic reforms, and Russia's own interests in maintaining its influence with its neighbour. Attendance at this event is by invitation only. More information is available [here](#).

12 February, Washington, US. FOOD SECURITY IN A WORLD OF GROWING NATURAL RESOURCE SCARCITY. This event, organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on the sidelines of a global agricultural summit, will serve as the launch for the new report "Food Security in a World of Growing Natural Resource Scarcity: Role of Agricultural Technologies." The publication aims to demonstrate how innovations can impact yields of maize, wheat, and rice in 2050, and the related impact on farm productivity, commodity prices, hunger, and trade flows, among other topics. The summit will feature academics, policymakers, and experts in this area. For more information, visit the IFPRI [website](#).

19 February, Beijing China. WORLD TRADE AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: A DIALOGUE WITH THE FORMER WTO DIRECTOR GENERAL. This lecture will feature former WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, who will discuss his views on world trade and global governance based on his book "The Geneva Consensus." Lamy will also discuss a separate report called "Now for the Long Term," which was released in October by the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations, a group that he chaired. The event is being co-hosted by the School of Public Policy and Management of Tsinghua University and the Brookings-Tsinghua Center of Public Policy and the Center for Industrial Development and Environmental Governance. To learn more, please visit the Brookings [website](#).

Resources

"COMPETITIVENESS AND CLIMATE POLICY NEED NOT CONTRADICT ONE ANOTHER", E.ON CEO. Published by viEUws, the EU Policy Broadcaster (January 2014). In this video interview, environment journalist Sonja van Renssen discusses the potential for competitiveness within the EU's 2030 Energy and Climate Framework with Dr. Johannes Teyssen, CEO of E.ON and President of Eurelectric. Teyssen contends that competitiveness and climate policy do not need to contradict one another, but can instead work in concert, if climate policy is implemented efficiently. To learn more, or to watch the interview, click [here](#).

GOVERNANCE TARGETS AND INDICATORS FOR POST 2015: AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT. By Marta Foresti and Leni Wild, with Laura Rodriguez Takeuchi and Andrew Norton, for the Overseas Development Institute (January 2014). This publication discusses the lack of reference to "governance" in the Millennium Development Goals, and argues that indicators and targets relating to specific dimensions of "governance" – such as rule of law or transparency – should be considered in the process of establishing a post-2015 development framework, particularly given recent progress. The authors note the difficulties in developing and measuring such indicators, particularly at the global level, and call for a constructive process with regards to this post-2015 framework. The report is available [here](#).

THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: SETTING THE STAGE. Published by the UN. These six concept notes were prepared ahead of three thematic debates and three high-level meetings that will be hosted in the coming months by UN General Assembly President John Ashe. These events, and the related concept notes, are meant to contribute to the process of elaborating a post-2015 development agenda. The topics addressed here include water, sanitation, and sustainable energy; contributions of women, the young, and civil society; the role of partnerships; ensuring stable and peaceful societies; contributions of North-South, South-South, triangular cooperation, and information and communication technology for development; and human rights and the rule of law. To learn more about the events and/or to download the concept papers, visit the [UNGA website](#).

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