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### LEAD STORIES

#### MEMBERS SCALE BACK EXPECTATIONS FOR HONG KONG

Trade ministers from the US, the EU, and Brazil said on 9 November that it was highly unlikely that WTO Members would be able to agree on a detailed framework for concluding the Doha Round in time for the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December. They had originally been hoping to agree there on 'full modalities' for the negotiations -- including specific numerical values and formulae for reducing tariffs on farm products and industrial goods. The ministers emphasised, however, that their ambition for the round as a whole had not changed.

Members are scaling back their expectations for what they will be able to achieve in at the Ministerial Conference, following three days of meetings in London and Geneva during which representatives from influential governments were unable to bridge the wide differences that separate them, particularly on agriculture. Trade diplomats are now looking to the December summit for 'partial modalities' and agreement on a date for finalising full modalities, possibly at a second ministerial-level gathering in early 2006 that some have dubbed "Hong Kong Two."

Although most Members insist that they remain committed to concluding the round by the end of 2006, many trade observers are starting to wonder whether they will be able to do so in time for the mid-2007 expiry of the 'trade promotion authority' (TPA) granted to the Bush Administration by the US Congress, widely viewed as the real deadline for the negotiations.

#### What would 'scaling back' entail?

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy has previously indicated that even an agreement on numbers and formulae in Hong Kong would only take Members "two-thirds" of the way to completing the round, because of the time required for subsequent technical work (see BRIDGES Weekly, 19 October 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-10-19/story2.htm>). Nonetheless, sources report that both Lamy and

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several delegations believe that negotiating positions are simply too far apart for this to be within reach.

Alfredo Chiaradia, Argentina's secretary of trade and international economic relations, told reporters that G-20 countries were in the process of "reassessing what can be accomplished" by Hong Kong. He said that mention had been made of "two-thirds of full modalities," or "second approximations." The latter is a reference to the outline agreement or "first approximations" of a Doha Round deal that WTO Members tried but failed to agree on at the end of July.

One negotiator welcomed the lower expectations, saying that "unlike [the 2003] Cancun [Ministerial Conference], disagreements have come to the fore" well before Hong Kong, making it less likely that the talks will collapse as they did two years ago.

However, another delegate pointed out that "The big question is: what would partial modalities look like? What can be locked in before the rest is settled?" A developing country source suggested that a post-Hong Kong meeting would only be significant if the EU's position on agriculture did not remain the same.

Partial modalities on agriculture, for instance, could potentially include agreement on the structure of the formulae, such as the number of tariff bands and whether to make linear tariff cuts within them, in association with a range of numbers.

International charity Oxfam issued a statement warning ministers against scaling back their ambitions for Hong Kong. Arguing that it was not too late to rescue the talks, it said "Every day of delay is another day of suffering for millions of people who are being locked into poverty by unfair trade." Oxfam drew particular attention to the effects of rich country farm subsidies and the high tariffs that they levy on developing country exports.

### **EU, Brazil blame each other for impasse**

Responding to criticism that the EU's proposed agricultural market access was insufficient, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson took a combative stance, saying that "we have done everything that we could reasonably be expected to do" on agriculture. "These moves," he added without directly naming Brazil and India, "have not been reciprocated by our partners in the areas of industrial tariffs and services." Mandelson said that "some countries" were "hiding behind [the EU] on agriculture" to avoid making offers in other areas. Later in the press conference, he accused the G-20 countries of not seriously negotiating because they had not tabled offers on non-agricultural market

access (NAMA) and services, and urged them to do so in order to provide "an incentive to Europe" in the talks.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim hit back immediately afterwards, telling reporters that the NAMA, services, and other conditionalities demanded by the EU were so disproportionate to the level of agricultural market access it was offering that they appeared to be intended primarily "to make progress difficult on agriculture" (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-02/story2.htm>). He said that it would be inappropriate for the G-20 to make a NAMA proposal "that would be a big step for developing countries" when no similar step has been forthcoming from the EU on agriculture, since the EU would treat any eventual proposal as a basis for negotiations. Moreover, Amorim indicated that Brazil had alluded to certain concessions on industrial goods during the 7 November meeting of the so-called 'Five Interested Parties' (FIPs; Australia, Brazil, the EU, India, the US) in London, but that they "fell on deaf ears" as far as the EU was concerned.

### **Ministers discuss non-market access issues**

Perhaps as a result of the persistent differences on agricultural market access, the recent high-level discussions, both among the FIPs and the larger groups of ministers that met with Lamy in Geneva, turned their attention to other issues, including development.

Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath sent a letter to all of his WTO counterparts on 3 November in which he criticised countries that were focusing mainly on market access at the expense of other development-related concerns. "Ambition means different things to different countries," he wrote, "to some it means market access; to four-fifths of humanity it means development." According to a press release from the government of India, Nath used the London meeting to draw his colleagues' attention to issues of importance including anti-dumping; the relationship between the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and public health; TRIPS and its links to biodiversity and traditional knowledge; environmental goods; and implementation issues.

Widely criticised for the effects of its farm subsidies and tariffs on poor people in developing countries, the EU announced that it was seeking an "early harvest" (i.e., early agreement and implementation) at Hong Kong on a series of development issues. These include a commitment by developed countries to accord duty- and quota-free access to exports from least-developed countries (LDCs), and the development of a substantial aid-for trade package. Mandelson said the EU was also looking for Members to agree on how to respond to

some of the LDC proposals for special and differential treatment (S&D), particularly those asking for LDCs to be exempted from certain obligations under the TRIPS Agreement and the Agreement on Trade-related Investment Measures (TRIMS). In addition, he called on Members to address preference erosion and the cotton issue.

US Trade Representative Rob Portman and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns both characterised the Geneva discussions on LDC concerns, particularly with regard to improving their supply-side capacity to trade, as "excellent."

Amorim later said that while a Hong Kong package of development measures for LDCs would be "a good thing, of course," it would not be sufficient to make the summit a success.

### **End date for the round: TPA expiry looming ever larger**

US President George W. Bush's "fast track" mandate to negotiate trade agreements is set to expire in mid-2007. If a Doha Round deal were reached after that, the Bush Administration would no longer be able to submit it to Congress for a simple yes-or-no vote without the risk of facing demands for major amendments.

It is within Congress' power to extend Bush's TPA for the strict purpose of completing the Doha Round -- in June 1993, for example, Congress extended the Clinton Administration's fast track mandate by six months to let it finalise the Uruguay Round agreements. However, it is not clear whether an increasingly protectionist Congress would do the same in 2007. In 2001, the House of Representatives approved Bush's request for general TPA by a margin of one vote. In July 2005, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) passed in the same chamber by only two votes.

On the other hand, a December 2001 study from the Brookings Institution observes that while Congress has often been reluctant to grant presidents general fast track authority, it has never refused to grant them TPA for specific, pending agreements.

When asked about the round's end date and the possibility that it would outlast Bush's TPA, Johanns reiterated the US' commitment to the end-2006 deadline. Posed a similar question, Amorim responded that the G-20 wanted results that are "ambitious, balanced, and equitable." He said that the group didn't want to wait too long for such an outcome, since "there are many hungry people in the world" who are depending on it. "If time is necessary" for such a result, he said, "we are willing to wait."

ICTSD reporting; "Trade powers swap blame as WTO talks stumble," REUTERS, 9 November 2005; "Oxfam International reaction to talk of scaling down ambition on Doha Round," OXFAM INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE, 8 November 2005; "Fast Track Trade Promotion Authority," BROOKINGS INSTITUTION POLICY BRIEF, December 2001; "Protecting Farmers' Interests: Kamal Nath Pushes G-4 To Get SP and SSM On Board In Hong Kong Agenda," GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU PRESS RELEASE, 9 November 2005.

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## **NAMA CHAIR: STATE OF AFFAIRS IS BAD**

WTO negotiations on industrial tariffs are "becoming more confused" and "in dire need of political input," Chair Ambassador Stefan Johannesson of Iceland told Members at an informal 8 November meeting of the Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA). Reporting on his recent consultations with delegates, he said that there was little convergence on the coefficients to be associated with the tariff reduction formula or the flexibilities to be accorded to developing countries when making tariff cuts. He said that Members had even been unable to agree on the products to be covered by NAMA disciplines -- fish products, for instance, are currently counted as farm products.

"My overall impression about the state of affairs of the NAMA negotiations is bad," said Johannesson while warning Members that he would be unable to come up with draft ministerial declaration text for the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference if they did not resolve some of their differences. "I am not producing texts on elements on which I do not see some convergence. This is a truly bottom up approach. You need to give me something to work on otherwise the process is doomed to fail."

South Africa tabled a statement (TN/MA/W/65) on behalf of countries including Argentina, Brazil, China, Egypt, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia denouncing the attempts by some Members to link the flexibilities accorded to developing countries by Paragraph 8 of the NAMA mandate in Annex B of the 2004 July Package (WT/L/579) to the structure of the tariff reduction formula (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 September 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-09-28/story2.htm>).

Paragraph 8 provides for allowing developing countries to choose among cutting tariffs on some products by levels lower than those required by the formula, exempting a smaller number from formula cuts altogether, or retaining some unbound tariff lines,

subject to certain conditions. The sponsors of the paper said that their minimum requirements for these 'stand-alone' flexibilities were the figures provided for in brackets in the July Package, namely less than formula cuts on 10 percent of tariff lines, or not applying the formula to 5 percent of tariff lines.

The US and the EU, among others, have argued that developing countries should generally have to give up these flexibilities in return for a more lenient formula. Assigning developing countries a higher coefficient would allow them to retain relatively higher tariffs after making the reductions required by the formula. There was little time for discussion at the 8 November meeting, but Norway intervened to stress its belief that all of the paragraphs of the July Package were linked.

Barbados tabled an informal document on behalf of several countries suggesting that all Members whose merchandise trade accounted for less than 0.090 percent of global commerce should not be required to apply the tariff reduction formula. Instead, they should be allowed to make an average cut of 15 percent, with minimum reductions of 10 percent for each tariff line.

Johannesson said that he would convene another informal meeting on 11 November for Members to give him guidance on what to include in a text for ministers in December.

ICTSD reporting.

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## US AND CHINA AGREE TO TEXTILES DEAL

US Trade Representative Rob Portman and Chinese Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai signed a pact on 8 November that will place quotas on Chinese textile and clothing exports to the US until the end of 2008. The agreement, which will enter into force on 1 January 2006, was the result of five months and seven rounds of negotiations that finally concluded in Washington last week (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 September 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-09-07/story3.htm>).

The US already has import limits in place on 19 types of Chinese textile and clothing products under the 'textile-specific safeguard' clause that is part of China's terms of accession to the WTO. The clause allows countries to restrain the annual growth of textile and clothing imports from China to 7.5 percent if they are found to be causing market disruption. The new agreement covers 34 product categories, including the 19 currently subject to safeguard quotas. Furthermore, the US successfully retained the right to use the safeguard

mechanism for textile and clothing categories not covered by the agreement, so long as it "exercises restraint" in doing so.

Portman said that the deal would address concerns by retailers, consumers, and producers in both countries by bringing predictability to the market, and thus avoiding the disruption that can be caused by unilateral safeguard quotas. "This agreement is a good example of where, through hard work and good faith, constructive solutions can be found to difficult trade issues," he said.

The deal broadly limits growth in Chinese clothing imports to 10 percent in 2006, 12.5 percent in 2007 and 15 percent in 2008, though the growth limits vary for different types of clothing. For textile products, the rates are 12.5 percent in 2006 and 2007 and 16 percent in 2008. The US had originally asked for the limits to be 7.5 percent for the duration of the agreement. Notably, for the 19 products currently under safeguard protection, the extent of import growth now allowed in 2006 is actually lower than the 7.5 percent increase that would have been permissible had safeguards been renewed, while for 2007 the level is about the same and for 2008 only slightly higher.

The accord provides for avoiding overshipments -- a source of great confusion during the EU's recent imposition of limits on some Chinese textile exports -- by giving US retailers two months to prepare for the new quotas.

"US textile and apparel manufacturing workers and their communities are big winners today," said Auggie Tantillo, executive director of the American Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC), a US manufacturers lobby. US retailers and Chinese producers also hailed the agreement's likely positive impact on workers, welcoming the predictability the agreement would bring to the more than USD 18 billion dollars of Chinese textile and clothing exports to the US.

However, the fact that the new limits expire at the same time as the textile-specific safeguard clause in 2008 has raised alarm bells regarding the adjustment costs in the US, and potentially around the world, three years from now. "This does not solve the problem. It only pushes the danger from China farther off," said Cass Johnson, president of US textile industry group the National Council of Textile Organisations. Tantillo told reporters that the US and other textile exporters should "come together" on the issue in the ongoing Doha Round trade talks at the WTO. Trade in textiles and clothing has come under WTO disciplines on non-agricultural market access since 1 January 2005, when trade quotas in the sector expired.

Some textiles producers in the US and elsewhere are considering lobbying their governments to seek the creation of a sectoral carveout for textiles and clothing trade from the NAMA negotiations at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in December. However, the sectoral approach that they seek would have textiles and clothing subject to tariff cuts lower than those required by the eventual tariff reduction formula. This would be precisely the opposite of sectoral tariff initiatives as they are generally understood in the talks, which seek expedited liberalisation for the products covered.

ICTSD reporting; "USTR Portman Announces US-China Broad Textile Agreement," USTR, 8 November 2005; "Comprehensive Deal Reached to Limit US Imports of Chinese Textiles and Clothing: Deal Addresses Concerns of US Textile Industry," AMTAC, 8 November 2005; "US textiles industry demands new WTO curbs on China," AFX, 8 November 2005; "US, China reach deal on clothing, textiles," REUTERS, 9 November 2005; "U.S., China Reach Textile Agreement; Industry Groups Praise Terms of Accord," WTO REPORTER, 9 November 2005; "Media Availability On U.S. China Textile Agreement," US EMBASSY TO THE UN, 8 NOVEMBER 2005.

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## **SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS FAILS TO RESURRECT FTAA**

The Fourth Summit of the Americas, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, came to a late close on 5 November after countries were unable to overcome their differences over establishing a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Despite the fact that it had not even been formally on the agenda, the FTAA -- a potential free trade agreement (FTA) that would encompass every country in the western hemisphere except for Cuba -- emerged as the centre of attention at the summit.

FTAA negotiations have been effectively deadlocked since February 2004, primarily over issues related to farm subsidies and intellectual property rights (IPRs) (see BRIDGES Weekly, 8 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-04-08/inbrief.htm>; and 9 March 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-03-09/story4.htm>). However, some countries, led by Mexico, had hoped that the Mar del Plata meeting would be able to serve as a venue to revive the talks. Although the gathering was originally intended to focus on job creation, poverty reduction, and democratic governance, when a group of countries insisted that the summit's final declaration include support for reviving

the FTAA, the prospective hemispheric FTA came to monopolise discussions.

### **Summit members split on FTAA**

Initially launched at the first Summit of the Americas in 1994, the FTAA negotiations were supposed to come into force on 1 January 2005. However, the intervening years saw the potential FTA become bogged down in a series of disagreements. The FTAA ministerial meeting in November 2003 saw countries agree to a more flexible two-tier approach to the FTAA in an attempt to broach differences primarily between the US and Brazil (see BRIDGES Weekly, 26 November 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/03-11-26/story3.htm>). Negotiations effectively came to a halt in April 2004, when governments failed to resolve differences on US agricultural subsidies and the agreement in general (see BRIDGES Weekly 8 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-04-08/inbrief.htm>).

After prolonged negotiations in Mar del Plata, five of the 34 countries represented refused to support efforts to pursue the FTAA. Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay and Paraguay insisted that the final declaration contain explicit text against the FTAA, stating that "conditions do not exist to attain a hemispheric free-trade accord that is balanced and fair with access to markets free of subsidies and distorted commercial practices."

Nevertheless, backing remained strong from traditional supporters. "It is a people's agenda," said Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin of the FTAA. "Freer and fairer trade will lift more human beings out of poverty than all of the assistance programs in the world combined."

US President George W. Bush, also an FTAA supporter, left the summit when it became clear that no further progress would be made. He departed immediately for Brazilia to prepare for a previously scheduled 6 November meeting with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The US and Brazil are currently the co-chairs of the FTAA negotiations.

Despite the fact that relations between Bush and Lula appeared amicable, they were unable to come to an agreement on the FTAA. Nevertheless, they made statements reiterating their commitment to the FTAA process after the meeting. The presidents agreed that a successful Doha Round, which would address trade-distorting agricultural subsidies in developed countries, is essential to the future of the FTAA.

## Bilaterals and WTO summit complicate FTAA negotiations

The US and Uruguay signed a bilateral investment treaty at the summit, another example of the US' continuing interest in negotiating more manageable trade and investment deals such as the Central Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and the FTA with Chile. The US is also pursuing an FTA with the four Andean Community countries; the talks are set to resume on 14 November. Countries in the hemisphere have signed a barrage of bilateral trade deals during the ten years of inconclusive FTAA negotiations. "Reaching a consensus in a body of this size [the FTAA] is sometimes a difficult task," a senior US administration official told reporters following the summit.

A major underlying issue standing at the centre of the FTAA deadlock is timing. With only five weeks left before the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, the FTAA may simply not be a top priority for many governments in the region (see BRIDGES Weekly, 2 November 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-11-02/story1.htm>). With this in mind, Bush alluded to the potential impasse even before the start of the summit "the Doha round really trumps the FTAA as a priority, because the Doha round not only involves our neighbourhood, it involves the whole world."

"Trade Accord Eludes Americas Summit Group," INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, November 6 2005; "Summit of the Americas: Leaders Agree To Disagree on FTAA," INTER PRESS NEWS AGENCY, November 8, 2005; "Bush is Set to Meet Brazil's Leader After Summit Ends Without Deal," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6 November 2005; "Despite FTAA Defeat at Americas Summit, Free Trade to Be Imposed on Colombians," COLOMBIA JOURNAL ONLINE, 7 November 2005; "Fact Sheet: Accomplishments at the Fourth Summit of the Americas," WHITE HOUSE PRESS RELEASE, 5 November 2005.

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### IN BRIEF

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#### NEW REPORT REVEALS UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF FRENCH FARM SUBSIDIES

According to a report from Paris-based economics think-tank Groupe d'Economie Mondiale (GEM) de Sciences Po, less than one percent of French farmers - the largest ones -- receive more in subsidies than the bottom 40 percent of farmers taken together. In addition

to this statistic, the report highlights the lack of transparency with regard to the disbursement of farm subsidies under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). French media outlets have also recently highlighted the fact that large farms receive the lion's share of such grants.

In response, international charity Oxfam issued a statement calling for a change to these policies. Celine Charveriat, head of Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign, stressed that "we want [the CAP] changed so that it supports small farming and environmentally-friendly production, not the big export-oriented agribusinesses that dump cheap produce into poor countries." France -- a stout defender of the CAP -- receives EUR 9.4 billion out of the EUR 44 billion allotted to EU farms under the subsidy programme. Oxfam has previously published data showing that CAP funds in other EU member states similarly benefit big agribusiness and the wealthy.

In the US, the Washington based research and advocacy organisation Environmental Working Group (EWG) regularly publishes information on the distribution of US agricultural subsidies, which also overwhelmingly benefit big agribusiness rather than family farms. Their most recent study demonstrated that 72 percent of US farm subsidies over the past decade went to only 10 percent of the recipients.

To access the GEM report visit <http://gem.sciences-po.fr/content/publications/pdf/PACbriefEN20051107.pdf>

The EWG Farm Subsidy Database is available online at <http://www.ewg.org:16080/farm/>.

ICTSD reporting; "Lid comes off French farm subsidies," OXFAM RELEASE, 7 November 2005.

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### WTO IN BRIEF

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#### SAUDI ARABIA SET TO JOIN WTO

The stage is set for Saudi Arabia to become a Member of the WTO. At the last meeting of the Working Party for the Accession of Saudi Arabia, held on 28 October, Members approved all of the Working Party documents. The WTO General Council is expected to formally approve its accession at its next meeting on 11 November, making Saudi Arabia the 149th Member of the organisation.

The Saudi negotiating team was led by Hashim Yamani, Minister of Commerce and Industry, who noted that "our road to accession has been long but finally rewarding," and that the country had made "far-reaching, very substantial and commercially meaningful concessions and commitments on goods and services."

The Saudi accession negotiations began 12 years ago. In early September this year, Saudi Arabia concluded a bilateral agreement with the US, its main outstanding trading partner (see BRIDGES Weekly, 14 September 2005, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/05-09-14/story5.htm>). Saudi Arabia and the EU also recently reached a last-minute agreement regarding dual energy pricing. Although the two parties signed a bilateral agreement in 2003, they had different interpretations of the issue. Under the Saudi dual energy pricing policy domestic natural gas prices are lower than export prices, something the EU sees as a de facto subsidy to upstream domestic industry. The Saudis claim this policy is legal, and that they had made no commitment to change it but had simply promised to ensure that domestic prices would be commercially based. According to the final accession document, Saudi Arabia will be able to maintain its current system, but the deal will not set a precedent for future accession agreements.

ICTSD reporting; "WTO Members Approve Saudi Accession," ARAB NEWS, 29 October 2005; "WTO Completes Saudi Accession Talks; EU Concedes on Domestic Energy Pricing" WTO REPORTER, 31 October 2005; "Saudi to celebrate WTO membership in Geneva Friday," MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA FINANCIAL NETWORK, 8 November 2005.

## EVENTS & RESOURCES

### EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/index.htm>. If you would like to submit an event, please email [events@ictsd.ch](mailto:events@ictsd.ch).

#### Coming Up: 10 November - 16 November

14-18 November, Antalya, Turkey: FIFTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO REVIEW ALL ASPECTS OF THE SET OF MULTILATERALLY AGREED EQUITABLE PRINCIPLES AND RULES FOR THE CONTROL OF RESTRICTIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES. This UN Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD) Fifth Review Conference will focus on assessing the application and implementation of the UN "Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices" on competition in its 25 years of existence, and discuss proposals for its improvement. This event is open to all UNCTAD member states as well as selected civil society and private sector representatives. For further information contact Karma Tenzing, tel: (+41) 22-917-5636; fax: (+41) 22-917-0056; e-mail: [correspondence@unctad.org](mailto:correspondence@unctad.org); internet: [http://www.unctadxi.org/templates/Startpage\\_2816.aspx](http://www.unctadxi.org/templates/Startpage_2816.aspx).

16-18 November, Tunis, Tunisia: THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) - PHASE TWO. This event, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), is the second phase of a two-part summit endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2001 to create a global discussion on the digital revolution and the ever-widening 'digital divide' and related development gap between rich and poor. Phase Two in Tunis will allow working groups to build upon the achievements of the December 2003 Phase One in Geneva, Switzerland and take measures to bridge the digital divide and hasten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For further information contact the World Summit on the Information Society Executive Secretariat, tel: (+41) 22-730-6317; fax: (+41) 22-730-6393; email: [wsis@itu.int](mailto:wsis@itu.int); internet: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>.

#### WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/meets.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

10 November: COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS

10 November: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY

11 November: GENERAL COUNCIL

11 November: WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

14 - 18 November: GENEVA WEEK

16 November: COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT - DEDICATED SESSION

### Other Upcoming Events

1-2 December, Beirut, Lebanon: REGIONAL SEMINAR ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS OF THE AGRO-FOOD SECTOR. Some topics addressed at this UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia seminar include strategies for overcoming obstacles that are hindering the growth of the agro-food sector, ways of enhancing competitiveness, safety and technical regulations, and labelling and marketing. For further information contact Issa Toubbeh, tel: (+ 961) 1-9781117; fax: (+ 961) 1-981501; e-mail: [toubbeh@un.org](mailto:toubbeh@un.org); internet: <http://www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/sdpd/events/1-2dec05.pdf>.

6 December 2005, Washington, DC: RESOURCES FOR GLOBAL GROWTH: LINKING AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND TRADE FOR THE FUTURE. This conference, organised by the Center for American Progress, will discuss investing in the potential of American agriculture to produce energy, to ensure that trade benefits producers in the US and abroad, creates jobs and increases farm incomes and grows more self-reliant by developing safe, clean and affordable energy. For further information contact the Center for American Progress, tel: (+1) 202-741-6246; e-mail: [events@americanprogress.org](mailto:events@americanprogress.org).

13-17 December, Hong Kong, China: HONG KONG TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM. The goal of this symposium, co-convened by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the University of Hong Kong in collaboration with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), is to encourage innovative thinking on issues related to trade and development that could be subsequently be translated into constructive inputs for the ongoing Doha Round negotiations. The main topics for discussions will be drawn from key development-related issues in the trade policy and trade rules arena. For further information contact Patrick Lunt, e-mail: [plunt@ictsd.ch](mailto:plunt@ictsd.ch); internet: <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/hongkong/tds/>.

14 December, Hong Kong, China: EMPOWERING RESEARCH AND TRAINING COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. This Ministerial Conference side event will discuss the University Professor Training Programme on the WTO and Sustainable Development, a project developed by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) and the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation. The Training Programme aims to build institutional capacity by increasing the number

of courses focussing on the WTO, trade and sustainable development at universities in developing countries. Venue: Plaza V, Novotel Century Hotel, Hong Kong, Time: Side event 5-6.30pm, cocktail reception 6.30-8pm. For further information please contact Rebecca Carter, tel: (+81) 45-221-2335; fax: (+81) 45-221-2302; email: [carter@ias.unu.edu](mailto:carter@ias.unu.edu).

14 December, Hong Kong, China: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT IN THE WTO DOHA ROUND: AN INTERNATIONAL LAW EXPERTS PANEL EVENT. This Experts Panel Event, organised by the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) in partnership with Foreign Affairs Canada, will provide a space for discussants from the trade law and policy community to debate the conclusions of a new legal paper that addresses topics related to the role of sustainable development in the Doha Round negotiations. A report will be produced detailing the conclusions of the event. For further information contact Marie Bourdeau, Communications Officer, tel: (+1) 514-398-8918; fax: (+1) 514-398-8197; e-mail: [mbourdeau@cisdl.org](mailto:mbourdeau@cisdl.org).

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## RESOURCES

THE COFFEE PARADOX: GLOBAL MARKETS, COMMODITY TRADE AND THE ELUSIVE PROMISE OF DEVELOPMENT. By Benoit Daviron and Stefano Ponte. Zed Books, November 2005. This book poses the question: can developing countries trade their way out of poverty? International trade has grown dramatically in the last two decades in the global economy, and trade is an important source of revenue in developing countries. Yet, the authors argue, while many low-income countries have been producing and exporting tropical commodities for a long time, they are still poor. This book shows that the coffee paradox -- the coexistence of a 'coffee boom' in consuming countries and of a 'coffee crisis' in producing countries - exists because what farmers sell and what consumers buy are becoming increasingly 'different' coffees. It is not material quality that contemporary coffee consumers pay for, it is mostly symbolic quality and in-person services. The authors argue that as long as coffee farmers and their organizations do not control at least parts of this 'immaterial' production, they will keep receiving low prices. The book offers in-depth analysis of commodity production and trade in order to create a better sense of understanding of the subject. It also puts forward policy-relevant suggestions for 'solving' the commodity problem.

THE INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SYSTEM: LIMITATIONS, EXCEPTIONS AND PUBLIC

INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT. By Ruth Okediji. International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), 2005. This paper discusses the limitations and exceptions that exist within the international copyright system as they relate to developing countries' access to creative works. A key theme of the paper is the central role that copyright plays in building capacity for economic growth and development. It notes that the role of copyright in disseminating information and promoting welfare can only be effectively realised when copyright law reflects a balance between the competing interests of protection and access. The author argues that effective diffusion of knowledge goods is directly related to the limitations placed on the proprietary rights of owners of such goods. Specifically with regard to education and basic scientific knowledge, she contends that limitations and exceptions within copyright law are an important component in creating an environment in which domestic economic initiatives and development policies can take root, since a well-informed, educated and skilled citizenry is indispensable to the development process. Available online at [http://www.iprsonline.org/unctadictsd/docs/Okediji\\_Copyright\\_2005.pdf](http://www.iprsonline.org/unctadictsd/docs/Okediji_Copyright_2005.pdf).

REGIONAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS IN AFRICA. By Yongzheng Yang and Sanjeev Gupta. International Monetary Fund, 2005. In recent years, African policymakers have increasingly resorted to regional trade arrangements (RTAs) as a substitute for broad-based trade liberalisation. This trend has long-term implications for the effectiveness of trade policy as a tool for poverty reduction and growth. The paper examines the record of RTAs in promoting trade and investment. It also explores policy measures that may help improve the RTAs' performance. The paper concludes that African RTAs have been generally ineffective in promoting trade and foreign direct investment. Relatively high external trade barriers and low resource complementarity between member countries limit both intra- and extra-regional trade. Small market size, poor transport facilities, and high trading costs make it difficult for African countries to reap the potential benefits of RTAs. The paper offers suggestions for overcoming obstacles that are impeding the effectiveness of RTAs in Africa. Further information is available on the IMF website, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=18099.0>.

REPORT ON THE ONLINE FORUM ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY June 1 to 15, 2005. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), September 2005. From 1-15 June 2005, WIPO conducted an online forum on intellectual property in the information society as part of its contribution to the World Summit on the Information

Society (WSIS). The forum received some 52,000 visits and 374 comments from a wide variety of participants in different countries. The discussions were focused on ten themes relating to intellectual property and how it affects, and is affected by, the information society. This report contains the background commentaries on each of the ten themes, together with a brief synopsis of the comments received, as well as background resources. Available online at [http://www.wipo.int/ipisforum/en/pdf/wipo\\_crss\\_inf\\_1.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/ipisforum/en/pdf/wipo_crss_inf_1.pdf).

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