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Intellectual Property

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS REMAIN DIVISIVE IN WIPO PATENT REFORM

Efforts to reform the international patent system continued at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) where member countries met for the Working Group on the Reform of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) from 3-7 May and the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents from 10-14 May. In both meetings no substantive progress was made in the discussions and disagreements persisted over issues related to disclosure of origin, genetic resources and traditional knowledge (TK).

Forum discussions continue at PCT...

During the PCT meeting, Switzerland submitted additional comments to its earlier proposal for an amendment to WIPO's Patent Cooperation Treaty to enable countries to require patent applicants to declare the source of the genetic resources and TK in patent applications (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 13 June 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-06-13/story1.htm>). The EC welcomed the proposal, while many developing countries, among them India, Egypt and Brazil, acknowledged its potential to serve as a basis for further discussion on specific wording. Japan and the US, on the other hand, opposed the proposal.

The Swiss proposal was not discussed in detail at the meeting. In what one observer described as a "mostly political" debate, countries mainly focused on the appropriate forum for discussions, thus mirroring similar debates at the Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property Rights and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 2 April 2004; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-04-02/story1.htm>). The US and Japan continued to oppose

discussions in the PCT context, preferring issues related to genetic resources and TK to be dealt with by the IGC. Others, however, such as Switzerland, indicated that without doubt DoO would remain a formal requirement in some countries in the future, and thus needed to be included in the PCT system.

US, Japan, EC suggest to fast-track discussions on SPLT

The Standing Committee on the Law of Patents continued its discussions on the Substantive Patent Law Treaty (SPLT; see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 11 December 2002; <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-12-11/story2.htm>). During the meeting the 'trilateral group', composed of the US, Japan and the EU, proposed to split up the discussion on individual subject matters in the SPLT into primary and secondary issues. It was argued that this would reduce the sheer volume and complexity of the debate and as a result substantially speed up the process of agreeing on a working draft of the SPLT. To do so the Committee would give first priority to a 'reduced package of issues', focusing on matters related to definitions of prior art, grace period, novelty and inventive step (non-obviousness). In a later stage it would then cover the current draft SPLT as a whole and consider issues such as DoO of genetic resources and TK, public health and exceptions to patentability criteria. However, some developing countries, in particular Brazil and the Dominican Republic, opposed this suggestion. They noted that a large number of the issues being discussed in the SPLT were related to each other and should therefore not be separated in the negotiating process. Their demand to include TK and genetic resources in the first round of discussions, however, was rejected by the trilateral group. Because of a lack of agreement, the issue was passed on to the General Assembly for a decision.

Background

In 2001, the Director-General of WIPO announced a new initiative -- the WIPO Patent Agenda -- aimed at launching worldwide discussions for the purpose of preparing a strategic blueprint for the future evolution of the international patent system (IPS). Currently, WIPO's efforts to harmonize the IPS focuses on three elements. First, the Patent Law Treaty (PLT) -- concluded in June 2000 -- harmonises patent procedures relating to national and regional patent applications and maintenance of patents. Second, the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), an international filing system for patents that enables inventors to apply for patent protection in up to 112 countries by submitting a single "international application", is currently being streamlined and simplified to improve efficiency of the system and facilitate obtaining patents worldwide. Third, a Substantive Patent Law Treaty (SPLT) is being developed which would cover a number of basic legal principles that underpin the granting of patents in different countries.

Additional Resources

PCT Working Group documents: http://www.wipo.int/pct/en/meetings/reform_wg/reform_wg6.htm

Standing Committee documents: http://www.wipo.int/documents/en/document/scp_ce/index_10.html.

The WIPO Draft Substantive Patent Law Treaty: A Review of Selected Provisions, by Carlos M. Correa / South Centre, March 2004: <http://www.southcentre.org/publications/workingpapers/paper17/wp17.pdf>

IUCN/ICTSD reporting; "Member states discuss ways to further harmonise patent law," WIPO PRESS RELEASE, 18 May 2004.

Biotechnology

CODEX AGREES ON TRACEABILITY, STALLED ON BIOTECH LABELLING

Biotechnology-related issues featured highly on the agendas of both the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP), meeting in Paris, France, on 3-7 May, and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL), meeting in Montreal, Canada, on 10-14 May. While the CCGP adopted a definition for traceability/product tracing, the CCFL made virtually no progress on labelling of biotech foods.

Traceability defined

The CCGP discussed a definition of traceability/product tracing put forward by the Working Group set up at the last CCGP meeting (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 17 April 2003, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/03-04-17/story1.htm>). The final definition, which refers to the "the ability to follow the movement of a food through specified stage(s) of production and processing and distribution", was considerably broader than what had been proposed by the Working Group. In particular, the definition avoids specifying whether the tracing process was limited to "one step forward and one step back" as advocated by the US, or could require relevant information to be retained throughout the production process, as required by the EU's biotech traceability regulations. It is also broad enough to cover feed and food-producing animals, provided there was an impact on the food itself. The definition will be forwarded to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) meeting on 28 June - 3 July for adoption. The Committee avoided discussions on the objectives of traceability/product tracing, which had proven particularly contentious during the discussions. This issue will again be taken up at the December meeting of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems in Australia.

No progress on biotech labelling

The CCFL did not discuss the guidelines for Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering, restricting themselves to more general debates. The US, supported by Canada, Argentina, Australia, South Africa, Thailand and Mexico, insisted that biotech food products should only be labelled for safety reasons. They noted that labelling products as to its GM / GE status would be "truthful but misleading" and should not be allowed. Several countries that already require process labelling of biotech products, including the EC, India, Norway, Japan and Korea, as well as others (such as Brazil, Kenya, Cameroon and Egypt), came out strongly in favour of broader labelling objectives that could also include consumer information.

Some consumer groups expressed concern that the labelling guidelines were held hostage to trade interests. Such sentiments were also voiced by CCFL Chair Anne Mackenzie who referred to "trade clouds" overhanging the discussions, noting that the guidelines would have already been approved years ago if it were not for the trade concerns. The Committee decided to defer discussions to next year's meeting where they will spend a full day to debate the guidelines.

The CCFL also discussed country of origin labelling. Members continue to disagree over the need to address this issue in Codex (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 16 April 2002, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/02-05-16/story3.htm>). At the 2000 CCFL meeting, the UK had proposed new work on country of origin labelling, including suggestions to make such labelling mandatory and expand its coverage to ingredients. Several countries, including the US and almost all developing countries, do not see the need for these revisions, which they regard as an additional barrier to trade. The Committee requested guidance from the Commission meeting in July on whether to initiate work in this area.

Background

While Codex standards are only voluntary, the CAC is recognised by the SPS Agreement as the international organisation responsible for standard-setting related to food safety. WTO Members "shall base" their measures related to human and plant health on CAC's standards, guidelines or recommendations. Such measures "shall be deemed to be necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health, and presumed to be consistent with the relevant provisions" of the SPS Agreement. While Codex standards only apply to food safety, they are likely to have far wider implications on discussions in the other standard-setting bodies as well as in related fora, including other Codex Committees, the WTO and bilateral negotiations. The other two international standard-setting bodies recognised in the SPS Agreement are the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for plant health and the Office International de Epizooties (OIE) for animal health and zoonoses.

Additional Resources:

CCGP documents: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccgp20/gp20_01e.htm; CCFL documents: http://www.codexalimentarius.net/ccfl32/fl04_01e.htm

ICTSD reporting.

EU APPROVES GM CANNED MAIZE

On 19 May, the European Commission approved the sale of Syngenta's Bt-11 sweet corn. The genetically modified (GM) maize, which will be sold canned, is the first approval in five years of biotech food sales within Europe. The maize imports, authorised for a period of 10 years "has been subjected to the most rigorous pre-marketing assessment in the world," according to EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner David Byrne. The US has long complained that the EU's restrictions on GM products have not been based on scientific evidence. "Our basic concern is that the EU does not have a consistently functioning approval process. Recent actions by EU authorities to advance a few biotech products through its process are not sufficient to address US concerns," commented Neena Moorjani, spokesperson for the US Trade Representative.

Many civil society groups sharply criticised the Commission's decision. "Good science and democracy went out the window last week when the European Commission approved that maize...it certainly isn't because of overwhelming public opinion," said Liana Stupples of Friends of the Earth International. Former Ulster Farmers' Union president and independent candidate for the European Elections noted, "This decision is a direct result of the EU acquiescing to American bully tactics". Despite the approval, Syngenta on 26 May announced its decision not to market Bt-11 maize due to reluctance of the European food industry to add GM corn to its product range.

It remains unclear how the Commission's decision, which effectively ends the de facto moratorium on GMO approvals (at least for food products), will impact on the WTO dispute brought by the US, Argentina and Canada against the de facto moratorium (see BRIDGES Trade BioRes, 30 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/biores/04-04-30/story2.htm>). 544 organisations delivered a petition to the WTO on 25 May during its Public Symposium in Geneva, opposing the dispute launched by the US, Argentina and Canada against the de facto moratorium on GMO approvals. In addition, two groups have submitted amicus curiae briefs to the WTO on the biotech dispute

Additional Resources

WTO Bite Back Campaign: <http://www.bite-back.org/>

The amicus curiae briefs as well as the submissions by the US and Canada are available at <http://www.trade-environment.org/page/theme/tewto/biotechcase.htm>.

"Anger at Euro ruling on GM maize," BELFAST TELEGRAPH, 20 May 2004; "EU allows sale of genetically modified corn," THE WASHINGTON POST, 20 May 2004; "EU approves GMO canned maize, lifting 5-year ban," REUTERS, 20 May 2004; "Syngenta decides not to market GM product in the EU after all," CORDIS NEWS, 26 May 2004; "Protestors ask WTO to keep out of GM food issue," AP, 25 May 2004.

Forestry

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON THE AGENDA AT UNFF-4

The fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-4) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3-14 May. Faced with an ambitious agenda of seven decisions to negotiate, UNFF-4 succeeded in adopting only five of them, failing, inter alia, to agree on a resolution dealing with traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK). Discussions at UNFF-5 will focus on the future of the Forum, including the various legal options for achieving its aim of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Traditional knowledge: Agreeing to disagree

After long and protracted negotiations that continued late into the night on the penultimate day of the conference, delegates finally gave up on adopting a draft resolution on TFRK. Despite a generally constructive spirit, discussions were plagued by similar divisions as has been witnessed in other forums dealing with traditional knowledge-related issues (see also related story, this issue). Specifically, developing

countries (G-77/China) expressed concern over proposed language on the facilitation of access to TFRK, the perceived emphasis of using of mainstream intellectual property tools to protect the knowledge, and that discussions at UNFF might prejudice similar debates in other forums, such as the CBD, WIPO and WTO. Some observers noted that the Forum might have been too ambitious in its effort to address such a "deeply political issue" as traditional knowledge, given the divisions witnessed in similar discussions in other forums.

Looking ahead towards UNFF-5 and beyond

Although there was no official discussion on the future of the UNFF after its fifth session, it was certainly on everyone's minds. Most delegates appeared to agree that the UNFF in its current form had not delivered on its aims and was not politically viable for the future. Some of the options being considered in the post UNFF-5 era range from the current (but strengthened) arrangement to a legally-binding treaty. Other options being referred to include a protocol under the CBD and a soft legal instrument in the form of a set of binding guidelines or principles. The future of the forest forum will be discussed at length when the Ad-Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework for all Types of Forests will meet in September this year. A decision will have to be taken at UNFF-5, where Parties will also be reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangements on forests.

UNFF-5 will be held on 16-27 May in New York.

Additional Resources

UNFF-4 documents: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

For daily reporting and a detailed analysis of UNFF-5, see IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff4/>.

ENB Vo. 13 No. 116, 17 May 2004.

In Brief

EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT: PUTIN SIGNALS SUPPORT FOR KYOTO PROTOCOL

Following an EU-Russia summit on 21 May -- at which the EU agreed to support Russia's WTO accession -- Russian President Putin said he would "speed up" Russia's process to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Both topics had been slated for possible inclusion in an EU-Russia package deal (see BRIDGES Weekly, 28 April 2004, <http://www.ictsd.org/weekly/04-04-28/story5.htm>). The Kyoto Protocol, which sets emissions limitations for greenhouse gases, cannot enter into force without Russia after the US pulled out in 2001. In bilateral WTO accession talks with the EU, the Russian policy of low domestic gas prices had been a stumbling bloc. The EU had argued that the low prices constituted a de fact subsidy to Russian industry. The environmental implications of the low prices were never raised. In the final deal, Russia agreed to gradually increase domestic gas prices, and to open up its gas pipelines to private firms. Russia still has to clinch deals with other key WTO Members, such as the US and China, before joining the WTO. On Kyoto, Putin said "It is true that the European Union has met us half-way on certain issues during the WTO negotiations. This cannot but have a positive effect on our position on the Kyoto protocol. We will speed up Russia's moves towards ratifying the protocol...We clearly set out our position on Kyoto long ago. We are for the Kyoto process and we support it". Putin did not, however, set a date for Russia's ratification.

"Russia get EU deal on WTO, backs Kyoto," REUTERS, 21 May 2004; "Russia, EU agree on WTO-membership terms," PRAVDA, 25 May 2004.

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SEA TURTLE DECLINE

A study by the environment group WWF, the first global assessment of the economic value of sea turtle, reports that a decline in sea turtle population would threaten jobs, tourism and coastal economies, especially in developing countries. According to the report "Money Talks: Economic Aspects of Marine Turtle Use and Conservation", marine turtle tourism brings in almost three times as much money as the sale of turtle products including meat, leather and eggs. Six of the world's seven marine turtle species are endangered or critically endangered. "The continued decline of sea turtle populations will have serious economic consequences, particularly for coastal communities in developing countries," noted Dr. Susan Liberman, director of WWF's Global Species Program. Although all marine turtle species are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) prohibiting any international commercial trade by more than 160 signatory countries, illegal trade and trade between non-signatories continues. "Developers, politicians and community leaders should start to see marine turtles as a valuable asset, generating revenue and jobs," said Carlos Drews, WWF regional coordinator for marine turtle conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The WWF report is available at <http://www.worldwildlife.org/turtles/pubs.cfm>.

"Sea Turtles Worth More Alive Than Dead," ENS, 26 May 2004.

MONSANTO WINS CONTROVERSIAL BIOTECH DISPUTE IN CANADA

On 21 May, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of Monsanto in a case it had brought against a farmer that had replanted and sold canola containing modified genetic material patented by Monsanto. The farmer, Percy Schmeiser, claimed that the biotech canola seed had landed on his fields by accident from a neighbouring farm and in fact polluted his fields. Schmeiser further argued that plants, considered a higher life form, were exempt from patent. The court stated that the patent does apply to the gene and thus to the plant it is found in.

The ruling was the first of its kind and may, according to biotech analysts, set a strong precedent for patent rulings. Although the ruling was considered weak, with Schmeiser having to pay no damages, many civil society groups are concerned. They caution that Monsanto now could claim ownership and rewards over an entire plant based on the fact that just a patented gene has made its way into the plant. Farmers from developing nations fear that natural or accidental contamination of crops with such genes would give biotech companies like Monsanto power to seize their crops and pursue legal action. A Canadian National Farmers Union representative lamented the decision, saying that "What this issue is fundamentally about is control and ultimately greed... this court ruling is an unenlightened ruling that doesn't reflect the farmer's right to save seed. This is a tool of oppression now". On the other hand, Janet Lambert, President of BioteCanada, said that a ruling against Monsanto would have been a setback for Canadian biotech research. Executive Vice President Carl Casale of Monsanto also applauded the decision, "The Supreme Court has set a world standard in intellectual property protection, and this ruling maintains Canada as an attractive investment opportunity".

"Canada's top court backs Monsanto against farmer," IPS, 21 May 2004; "Farmer loses battle in biotech dispute," AP, 21 May 2004; "Monsanto prevails in patent fight," WIRED NEWS, 21 May 2004; "Supreme Court rules for Monsanto in key battle with Sask. farmer over seed," REUTERS, 21 May 2004.

SEAHORSE PROTECTED UNDER CITES

On 15 May, seahorses became the first commercially valuable marine genus to be protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). A number of the world's species of seahorses are threatened because of overfishing and unsustainable trade. IUCN lists nine seahorse species as vulnerable and one as endangered. Trade in recent years has been increasing at an 8-10 percent annual rate and an estimated 24 million seahorses are taken from the wild every year. Aquarium trade and use for

traditional Chinese medicine are the two main uses of a seahorse. At least 77 countries are involved in the trade, making international regulations necessary to ensure the protection of seahorses. The conservation group Project Seahorse and the wildlife trade-monitoring organisation TRAFFIC recently produced an ID manual to help ensure the seahorse regulations are successful in conserving the animals. Ernie Cooper of TRAFFIC noted the manual would be distributed to customs agents and law enforcement officials in 165 countries to help them enforce the new rules through proper identification of the different species. The CITES regulations for seahorses were approved in November 2002 but delayed for 18 months to allow countries time to put in place enforcement policies.

The ID manual is available at <http://seahorse.fisheries.ubc.ca/IDguide.html>

"International Protection Kicks in for Seahorses," ENS, 14 May 2004; "Consuming exotic animals," AP, 25 April 2004; "Seahorses Gain International Protection on May 15," US NEWSWIRE, 14 May 2004.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Vacancy at ICTSD

MANAGING DIRECTOR, ICTSD, Geneva, Switzerland: Competencies required include: ability to manage and lead the business, financial, legal and human systems of a multi-programme nongovernmental organization, ability to interact directly with staff and act as main interface and problem solver on programme issues related to above-mentioned areas, ability to lead, frame and provide guidance to multi-disciplinary teams and knowledge of and experience with international organizations and/or international non-governmental organizations. Application Deadline: 11 June 2004. For further information, see: <http://www.ictsd.org/about/ar/MgtDirectorAC.pdf>.

Events

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar, <http://www.ictsd.org/cal/2004calendar.htm>. 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.

Coming up in the next two weeks

29 May - 4 June, Washington, D.C., US: 36TH WORLD FARMERS CONGRESS. This Congress, organised by IFAP -- the world body gathering national farmers organisations -- will be the occasion to challenge world leaders on global issues, such as the WTO trade negotiations, water, food security and industrial concentration. For over 50 years, inter-governmental organisations have been mandated to eliminate hunger and poverty, and place the world on a sustainable path for global economic development. For further information, contact: IFAP-FIPA, tel: (+33-1) 4526-0553; fax: 4874-7212; e-mail: ifap@ifap.org; Internet: <http://www.ifap.org/wfc04/index.html>

1-4 June 2004, Bonn, Germany: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES. Themes to be considered include financing (instruments) and market development, formation of enabling political framework conditions, and capacity building (education, research, networks, cooperation, etc.). For further information, contact: Secretariat of the International Conference for Renewable Energies; tel: (+49-61) 9679-4404; fax: 9679-4405; e-mail: info@renewables2004.de; Internet: <http://www.renewables2004.de/>.

3-4 June, Paris, France: WORKSHOP ON EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE AND EUROPEAN OPINIONS ON TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. The fifth workshop of the Trade, Societies and Sustainable Development "Sustra" Network is dedicated to civil society participation in the policy-making process. It addresses the issue of the European governance of the trade negotiation process. The objective is to understand how collective preferences about trade and sustainability are built up within Europe. For

further information, contact: Jean-Marie Paugam, IFRI, tel: (+33-1) 4061-6083; fax: 4061-6060; email: paugam@ifri.org; Internet: <http://www.agro-montpellier.fr/sustra/>.

7 June, Copenhagen, Denmark: SEMINAR ON STANDARDS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT. This seminar is organised by the 'WTO, Trade & Development' network, an initiative based at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). The aim of the network is to provide an international forum for the discussion and dissemination of research and policy-relevant information on trade and development issues. The seminar is part of the 'Trade Mondays' series, with a seminar once a month at DIIS. For further information, contact: Stefano Ponte, Seminar Coordinator, email: spo@diis.dk

7-9 June, Copenhagen, Denmark: SYMPOSIUM ON UNCERTAINTY AND PRECAUTION IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT. This international symposium will address the engineering/science - policy/management interface, focusing in particular on the uncertainty and ignorance associated with predictions in science for policy, and on examining the implications of the Precautionary Principle from the scientific, ethical and legal perspectives. The specific areas of application that will be emphasised are water resource management and the risk assessment and regulation of chemicals. For further information, contact: MIACON, Meeting and Conference Services, tel: (+45-45) 859-727; fax: 839-727; e-mail: mia@miacon.dk; Internet: <http://upem.er.dtu.dk/>

8-10 June, Sea Island, Georgia, US: G-8 SEA ISLAND SUMMIT. US President George Bush will host the 2004 G8 Summit. For further information, contact: the 2004 G8 Summit Planning Organisation, tel: (+1-202) 647-4804; fax: 647-3079; e-mail: info@G8USA.gov; Internet: <http://www.g8usa.gov>

9-11 June, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY FORUM. The fourth Regional Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum for Africa will focus on the overall theme of Biodiversity and Livelihoods in Africa: Delivering on the Millennium Development Goals. A joint initiative of World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Regional Office for Southern Africa, IUCN South Africa, and ResourceAfrica, its aim is to gather and review regional experiences and perspectives on the precautionary approach in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation, review and discuss early drafts of case studies, and contribute to the development of best-practice guidance on implementation of the precautionary principle. For further information, contact: Kule Chitepo, ResourceAfrica, tel: (+27-12) 342-9252; email: kule@resourceafrica.org; Internet: http://www.gbfc.ch/present_session.asp?no=37&lg=EN

11-12 June, São Paulo, Brazil: UNCTAD CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM. As part of the official UNCTAD XI programme, a Civil Society Forum will provide an opportunity for civil society organisations (CSOs) to discuss priority issues relevant to the overall theme, subthemes and topics of the conference; to exchange information and build consensus among CSOs; to facilitate and support CSO advocacy and lobbying; and to raise public awareness of the issues at stake. CSOs are expected to present a final outcome document to UNCTAD XI. For further information, contact: the Brazilian Association of NGOs (ABONG), email: abong@uol.com.br; Internet: <http://www.abong.org.br>.

Other Forthcoming Events

17-18 June, London, UK: ILLEGAL LOGGING UPDATE AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION. Organised by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Sustainable Development Programme. The meeting is free of charge but registration is essential. Topics include: Anti-money laundering developments, updates on illegal logging initiatives, private sector initiatives and procurement updates. For further information, email: illegal-logging@riia.org; tel (+20) 7957-5711; Internet: <http://www.illegal-logging.info>

27 June - 2 July, Orlando, Florida, USA: FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF AGROFORESTRY 2004: WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE SYSTEMS. Organised by the University of Florida/IFAS, School of Forest Resources and Conservation in collaboration with others. This congress seeks to provide a global forum for agroforestry professionals to share knowledge, experiences, and ideas and to

plan future strategies in agroforestry research, education and training, and development. For further information, contact: P. K. Nair, Director, Center for Subtropical Agroforestry; tel: (+1-352) 846-0880; fax: 846-1277; email: pknair@ufl.edu; Internet: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/wca/>

20-23 July, Interlaken, Switzerland: THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL AND ASSOCIATED SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEES. For further information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: (+81-45) 223-1110; fax: 223-1111; email: ittc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=177&id=584>

26-30 July, Geneva, Switzerland: NEGOTIATIONS OF A SUCCESSOR AGREEMENT TO ITTA, 1994. The United Nations Conference (first part) for the negotiation of a Successor Agreement to the ITTA (International Tropical Timber Association), 1994, will follow ITTC-36. For further information, contact: ITTO Secretariat; tel: (+81-45) 223-1110; fax: 223-1111; email: ittc@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pageId=189>

20-21 September, Washington, DC, US: BIOTECH BUGS: A LOOK AT SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY SURROUNDING THE RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED INSECTS. Organised by the Pew Initiative. This two-day multidisciplinary workshop will provide an exploration of the potential benefits and risks of genetically engineered insects and the public policy and ethical implications of releasing them. Representatives of government, academia, consumer and environmental groups, and policy leaders are encouraged to attend. For further information, tel: (+1-202) 347-9044; fax: 347-9047; Internet: <http://pewagbiotech.org/events/0920/>

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy or review by the BRIDGES staff to Marianne Jacobsen, [mjacobson@ictsd.ch](mailto:mjacobsen@ictsd.ch).

LAW AND MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY: SELECTED ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE. By L. Glowka and A. Ingrassia. (FAO Law Office, 2003). This study, as part of its FAO Legislative Study series, reviews international, regional and a selection of national laws related to GMOs. Three categories of legal instruments are considered: those dealing with biosafety, food safety and consumer protection. The study includes issues such as public participation in the policy-making and regulatory decision-making process; oversight mechanisms to examine the merits of GMOs in the areas of biosafety, food safety or consumer protection and provides some general conclusions on major gaps and trends of existing biotechnology-related legislation. Available at <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/y4839E/y4839E00.pdf>.

PRIVATE RESEARCH AND PUBLIC GOODS: IMPLICATIONS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR BIODIVERSITY. By T. Raney and P. Pingali, FAO's Agricultural and Development Economics Division (ESA). ESA Working Paper 04-07, April 2004. This document, as part of its ESA Working Papers series, explores a range of policy options to increase the likelihood that private sector research and development, particularly in the form of transgenic crops, enhances rather than erodes crop genetic diversity. The ESA Working Papers series presents ESA's ongoing research and papers are circulated to stimulate discussion and comments. Available at http://www.fao.org/es/ESA/pdf/wp/ESAWP04_07.pdf.

ENLIGHTENED ENVIRONMENTALISM OR DISGUISED PROTECTIONISM? ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF EU PRECAUTION-BASED STANDARDS ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), April 2004. This paper contains three essays with regional implications: on Africa, with a discussion of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), on Asia with an outline of the impact of the Basel Convention's broad definition of 'hazardous waste' and its proposed Ban Amendment on important recovery and recycling industries in Asia and Latin America and Asia with a presentation of the extra-territorial scope of the EU-REACH Regulation on chemicals. Available at [http://www.nftc.org/default/white%20paper/riskreg3study404\(2\)Final.doc](http://www.nftc.org/default/white%20paper/riskreg3study404(2)Final.doc)

AN INVENTORY OF BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS IN EUROPE, 2002. Prepared by Ben Delbaere, European Topic Centre on Nature Protection and Biodiversity. Project Manager: Ulla Pinborg, published by European Environment Agency (EEA), Technical report No 92, May 2004. This review of biodiversity-related indicators was undertaken to support the development of a core set of environmental indicators by the EEA. Among its main conclusions is that a great variety of indicators has been developed to assess aspects of biodiversity at the national, international or global scale, but only a limited number of them are actually in use on a regular basis. The main content of the report is a summary of 655 such indicators. For further information, see: http://reports.eea.eu.int/technical_report_2004_92

AGRIBUSINESS AND SOCIETY: CORPORATE RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTALISM, MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND PUBLIC REGULATION. Edited by Kees Jansen and Sietze Vellema, Zed Books, 2004. Agribusiness and Society examines in detail how agribusiness corporations are responding to emerging environmental awareness. The book investigates particular biotech and other agribusiness companies - including Monsanto, Ciba Geigy, Dole, and Chiquita - and their behaviour around the world. Each study explores how institutional, cultural, economic, political and technological contexts shape the strategies of big business. Topics include 'green bananas', genetically modified tomatoes and soy, the new markets in organic produce, health and pesticides, and access to justice. For further information, see: <http://zedweb.cybergecko.net/cgi-bin/a.cgi?1%2084277%20412%203>

THE STATE OF FOOD AGRICULTURE 2003-2004. By the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2004. This edition explores the potential for agricultural biotechnology to address the needs of the world's poor and food-insecure. Agriculture continues to face serious challenges, including feeding an additional two billion people by the year 2030 from an increasingly fragile natural resource base. The effective transfer of existing technologies to poor rural communities and the development of new and safe biotechnologies can greatly enhance the prospects for sustainably improving agricultural productivity today and in the future. But technology alone cannot solve the problems of the poor and some aspects of biotechnology, particularly the socio-economic impacts and the food safety and environmental implications, need to be carefully assessed. For further information, see: http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/Y5160E/y5160e01.htm#P0_0

THE FTA AND THE PBS: A SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE US-AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT. By Professor Peter Drahos, Dr Thomas Faunce, Martyn Goddard and Professor David Henry. (2004). Topics covered in this submission include: intellectual property measures, concern with higher drug prices, effects on generic competitors, the PBAC Appeals Procedure, pressures on PBAC and the dispute settlement procedure. Available at <http://www.aftinet.org.au/campaigns/henrydrahossenatesub2.htm>

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