

GSO News Volume 3 Number 7, September 2007

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This is the last issue of **GSO News**, a subscription service provided by the Geneva Social Observatory reporting on developments at WHO, WTO, ILO and many other Geneva-based organizations, as well as other selected developments on global social issues. We hope that you have enjoyed our service and invite you to stay in touch with developments at the Geneva Social Observatory by consulting our website at www.gsogeneva.ch.

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We would like to thank interns **Kellyn Moran** and **Jessica Van Ness** with the Kent State University programme for their contributions to this issue of **GSO News** and for their invaluable help with GSO projects. With their able assistance we have produced a bumper edition of **GSO News** for you.

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Now in its ninth year, the WTO public forum continues to offer members of the public, civil society, and media a chance to debate, analyze, and provide constructive criticism in a series of panels conducted by officials at the WTO. This year's forum, "How can the WTO help harness globalization?" from 4 to 5 October, will focus on four topics of discussion: global governance, coherence, economic growth, and sustainable development.

3. [WTO and Aid for Trade](#)

The WTO will host the first global review of its Aid for Trade initiative from 20 to 21 November in Geneva. The initiative, which began in March 2006 independently of the Doha Development Round, sets to provide technical assistance and resources to least developed countries facing supply-side constraints that leave them at a disadvantage in the international market.

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UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board are meeting from 1 to 11 October. At the top of the agenda is a high-level segment on globalization and inclusive development. Included in the meeting is a civil society hearing.

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UNCTAD's Trade and Development Report predicted a positive climate for developing states to catch-up in the global economy in 2007, while warning of certain risks and instabilities in the financial and monetary markets. The report encouraged regional cooperation among developing states in order to promote economic growth and integration into the global economy.

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GSO News

1. [WTO Progress on the Doha Round](#)

Following the traditional August break, the WTO resumed its negotiating schedule for the Doha Round one week early, on 3 September. The Doha Round, a negotiating agenda for trade liberalization with a development theme, was set by the Doha Ministerial Conference of WTO trade ministers in November 2001. Now approaching its seventh year and almost three years past the time originally set for the completion of negotiations, the negotiators have missed one “deadline” after another, to the point that they are now avoiding the term entirely. Nonetheless, there do seem to be certain

“looming events” that make these months of September and the rest of 2007 extremely important months for the negotiations.

Most of these are US-driven “looming events” – the Presidential elections of 2008, the expiration and renewal of the US farm bill by 30 September, and the US negotiating authority that has already expired (last 30 June) but could be revived should there be a breakthrough in the Doha Round. One cannot deny that the three US-related “looming events” are creating the impression that we were now facing THE deadline if anything is to be done to complete the Doha Round now. Otherwise, it is argued, the agenda shifts into dormancy for at least another two years or more. Nonetheless, even as this kind of brinkmanship has kept negotiators on duty in Geneva, the political mood in the US appears to be worsening with regard to the Doha Round. More and more one hears key figures there voicing a preference for waiting until a new President comes in, in 2009.

Meanwhile, Geneva negotiators have not given up but are in fact searching for a real breakthrough. On 3 September, the informal consultations began on agriculture. The draft negotiating text from the chair of the agriculture negotiating group, **Ambassador Crawford Falconer** of New Zealand, has served as the basis for these consultations. A significant development in mid-September was a signal, albeit a fuzzy one, that the US just might accept something in the range of subsidy cuts on agriculture that Ambassador Falconer had included in his draft text. Other issues in agriculture have also been explored with signs of progress.

Consistent with typical trade negotiating culture, the discussions have been convened on multiple tracks – an “E Room” set that has some 36 representatives of coalitions and interested parties meeting with Ambassador Falconer, and a “Group of 8” which has been expanded to a “G-12” to search for common ground. The eight include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, EU, India, Japan and the US. The additional four are China, Indonesia, South Africa and Jamaica. These discussions have been influenced by the US position on subsidies, to be sure, but they also seem to have gotten down to business on the range of exceptions to tariff cuts, etc., that fit into what USTR Susan Schwab called the “black box” some time ago. That is to say, the talk appears to be making headway on matters relating to how countries can protect themselves for their “sensitive” or “special” or “tropical” products and how broadly developing countries can benefit from invoking a “special safeguard mechanism”. This terminology continues to be very specialized to the trade negotiating scene, but the mood does seem to be fairly upbeat.

On the agriculture front, the talks are now in a two-week hiatus as negotiators review their options with their capitals. **Ambassador Falconer** will bring them back together for another two weeks starting on 8 October. On the industrial goods front, however, the earlier expectations of convening the “NAMA” negotiations in mid-September seemed to have slipped. **Ambassador Don Stephenson’s** draft text for this group was not well received in July, and it seems that the main developments here have been to identify the percentage impact of tariff cuts on various developing countries that his draft

would have resulted in. These recent statistics do seem to help clarify where to look for possible compromises, though. And on the services front, there are meetings scheduled in October that may keep things moving for possible “exchanges” there, so all is not lost.

Waiting in the wings for a grand entrance is a possible “total package” from the **Director-General, Pascal Lamy**. Mr. Lamy himself, of course, absolutely denies that this is under consideration. However, a sort of “trial balloon” was launched recently when former U.S. and EU ambassadors Stuart Eizenstat and Hugo Paemen urged this strategy. So the Doha Round continues to be alive – running late and with lots of orchestrating yet to be done.

2. [WTO Public Forum 2007](#)

As the WTO Doha Development Agenda nears its seven-year mark, **Mr. Pascal Lamy**, Director-General of the WTO, and other members of the WTO Secretariat invite the public to an open forum from 4 to 5 October in Geneva to debate the organization’s role in the future of globalization. Guided by the theme, “How can the WTO help harness globalization?” panelists will discuss topics such as “Restoring Morality to the Global Market” and “Trade and Climate Change: Is trade killing our planet?” Ultimately, the hope is that a dialogue between panelists – who represent a wide range of interests from private industry to NGOs to governmental bodies – will collaborate to bring new perspectives to an ongoing debate on development in the global economy. GSO’s **Katherine Hagen** will be on a panel representing the International Federation of University Women and organized by the International Gender and Trade Network. The four main points of the forum are global governance, coherence, economic growth, and sustainable development. Participation to the forum is free. An online forum will also be set up for each session. This is the ninth year for the forum, which began in 1999. For more information or to register, see http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/public_forum2007_e/information_e.htm

3. [WTO and Aid for Trade](#)

The WTO will host its first global monitoring and evaluation event for its Aid for Trade initiative on 20 to 21 November 2007 in Geneva. Separate from the Doha Round, this “single undertaking” began in 2006 as a recommendation from a task force to monitor the economies of Least Developed Countries, but it has moved well beyond this group to encompass developing countries generally. Three regional reviews were conducted throughout September and October on Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa. In November, there will be a global review in the Committee on Trade and Development and a debate on Aid for Trade in the General Council, which will become an annual event.

At the closing remarks of the Latin America and the Caribbean regional conference on 13 and 14 September, **Mr. Pascal Lamy**, Director-General of the WTO, said that there must be political and business leadership working together to produce a national

development strategy, agreed-upon priorities that maximize export capacity, a decrease in risk and barriers to investment, and partnership between all interested parties. In his closing remarks at the Asia and the Pacific conference, Mr. Lamy added to this list the importance of private-sector inclusion in dialogue on trade and development strategy, saying that "Aid for Trade will be relevant if it is 'market-driven'." The regional meeting for Africa is 1 to 2 October in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

More information on the November meeting or the Aid for Trade initiative can be found at http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/aid4trade_e.htm.

4. [UNCTAD Trade and Development Board meeting](#)

The UNCTAD Trade and Development Board will host its 54th session from 1 to 11 October at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The provisional agenda covers a variety of issues from globalization and inclusive development to regional cooperation for development to UNCTAD's role in the implementation of and follow-up on the outcomes of major United Nations conferences. The sixth progress report on UNCTAD-wide implementation activities in favor of LDC's will be presented.

The Board will also review issues in the post-Doha work programme of particular concern to developing countries. In a document available on the Web site for the event, the Secretariat appeals to the members of the WTO Doha round to conclude discussions on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) by the end of 2007 in order to "deliver on its development promise." In another of the documents, the UNCTAD Secretariat focuses its advocacy on two points: that the current trend of growth is actively maintained so that developing states can benefit and that the process of globalization needs to become more inclusive.

Finally, the Board will be looking to UNCTAD XII, the quadrennial jamboree that sets policy for UNCTAD, which will be held in Accra, Ghana in April 2008. The theme of UNCTAD XII is

See <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Meeting.asp?intItemID=4146&lang=1> for more information.

Civil Society Hearing

On the afternoon of 2 October the fourth Civil Society Hearing will take place at the Palais des Nations as part of the UNCTAD TDB meeting. These meetings have enjoyed varying degrees of success in the past with sometimes limited interaction between government representatives and those from NGOs and the private sector, defeating the object somewhat. This time discussions are due to revolve around two topics, the "new regionalism" and capturing the benefits of globalization. Presenters on the two topics at the hearing include NGO representatives from Action Aid, the International Gender and Trade Network, OCAPROCE International and Third World Network. More information

can be found at

<http://www.unctad.org/TEMPLATES/meeting.asp?intItemID=2068&lang=1&m=14336>.

5. [UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2007](#)

Developing countries have a window of opportunity for catch-up growth in the current economic climate, according to UNCTAD's *2007 Trade and Development Report* released 5 September, 2007. Developing countries witnessed a 30 percent growth in terms of per capita GDP between 2003 and 2007, while the Group of Seven highly industrialized nations only witnessed a growth of 10 percent. The report notes that the prospects for developing countries have not been as favorable as its current state since the early 1970's.

The report advocates regional cooperation between developing countries as it creates a collaborative environment which encourages economic growth and eases the transition process as developing countries integrate into the global economy. However, in order to keep trade lines open in the medium- and long-term, UNCTAD recommended that developing states "proceed carefully with North-South bilateral or regional preferential trade agreements." The report warns that preferential trade agreements are not the only tool for success; developing countries also have to work on monetary and financial arrangements, infrastructure projects, and other policies related to the economic sector. One danger for developing countries is the possibility of a recession in the United States, which would dramatically slow demand for exports from the fastest growing nations of China and India.

Crucial to the success of developing countries is a realization of the current global economic environment. According to the report, distorted exchange rates due to speculative capital flows and current-account imbalances could hamper growth as it maintains an imbalance between countries. The report suggests the creation of global exchange-rate agreements which mimic the level of discipline of tariffs or export subsidies. Until that is realized, though, developing countries can exercise some control over the market through regional cooperation.

Strong export markets continue to drive the growth of developing countries. Real exports more than doubled between 1998 and 2006, and developing countries' share in global trade rose by almost 10 percent in the last decade, according to the report. In recent years, the countries saw net capital outflow accompanied by domestic capital formation, which the report says points to a need to re-examine development theory. Despite hopes that this trend of growth will reduce poverty to a level specified in the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, there is a disparity in growth rates between regions of developing countries with sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and West Asia falling behind East and South Asia.

For more information, refer to the report on UNCTAD's website

<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=8951&intItemID=4330&lang=1&mode=downloads>

6. [WIPO Assemblies](#)

Top of the agenda for this year's WIPO Assemblies (24 September to 3 October) are matters concerning a new Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (the "CDIP"), following a three-year process driven by Brazil and Argentina and their "Friends of Development" group. The assemblies decided to disband the current Permanent Committee on Intellectual Property and Development and set meeting dates for the new, permanent CDIP during the next year. A work plan is to be drafted before the first meeting, but it is also expected that the member states will approve 19 of the 45 proposals for the CDIP to be implemented immediately.

A controversial point in the conference was the creation of the "Friends of the Chair" group, which was established to conduct an investigation on wrongdoings by **Director General Kamil Idris**. Concerns have been raised over the past several months and again in a recent report that Mr. Idris had listed his birthdate as 1945 in numerous WIPO records even though his actual birth date is 1954. The United States and Switzerland have been leading a group wanting to hear the report and even seeking his resignation. Other members of the assembly, mainly from Africa, who have been supportive of Mr. Idris through the process, did not want to interrupt substantive debate to discuss the issue during this session.

The US is also expected to push hard for a renewed effort to draft a Substantive Patent Law Treaty. This is the main avenue now for ensuring that WIPO will be in the forefront for protecting intellectual property rights even as it opens up its program to a balancing act between IPR and development.

A dialogue on the relationship between intellectual property and genetic resources is another avenue that is receiving a renewed mandate this year, although the Assemblies only agreed to its continuation rather than getting embroiled in that particular debate at the moment. This is through the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, which gets a new lease on life for the next two years. Similar issues are being debated at the WTO.

When most other international organizations are struggling to maintain budget levels, WIPO is facing a lively debate on what to do with a big surplus. Several options are proposed to use these available reserve funds, while the US is also proposing that such surpluses be avoided in the future by cutting the fees charged by WIPO under the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Brazil issued a revised proposal on 25 September criticizing the U.S. plan to cut fees by 15 percent as undermining such initiatives as the Development Agenda, but the country recognized a potential need to cut rates to some extent if it would be beneficial to developing and Least Developed Countries. Brazil based this view on statistics from 2006 which showed that over 90 percent of patent applications were received from developed countries.

7. [WHO draft strategy boost for health?](#)

The draft strategy and plan of action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property was issued on 31 July (<http://www.who.int/gb/phi-igwg/phi2/E/index2.html>), intended to serve as the basis for the WHO's second Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property from 5 to 10 November.

As expected, the draft includes provisions on TRIPS flexibilities, new incentives for R&D, and new financing mechanisms. The draft also proposes, for the first time in this IGWG process starting in May 2006, to focus the strategy and plan of action on the effective treatment of 14 neglected diseases in developing countries.

It comes as no surprise that HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and dengue fever are on the list, but it is also interesting to note that certain chronic diseases that are prevalent in both developed and developing countries are also on this list – i.e. cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In these instances, the draft proposes that the issues to be addressed in the strategy and plan of action have to do with the accessibility or effective application of known treatments in resource-poor settings. These matters will be discussed at several regional consultations, prior to the second IGWG. WHO has also organized a second web-based public hearing (http://www.who.int/phi/public_hearings/second/) for stakeholders to contribute to from 15 August to 30 September 2007. This web-based hearing is made up of two sections. Section 1 asks for responses to the draft strategy (http://www.who.int/phi/public_hearings/second/submission_section1/en/index.html). Section 2 relates to the 2007 World Health Assembly resolution sponsored by Brazil and not supported by the US, to develop proposals for health-needs driven research (http://www.who.int/phi/public_hearings/second/submission_section2/en/index.html) that conceivably go beyond the IGWG mandate.

8. [World Health Report 2007](#)

In light of the recently revised International Health Regulations (IHR (2005)) coming into force in June 2007, the annual World Health Report this year focuses on the need for global public health security in the face of infectious diseases, pandemics, and other acute health events as defined in the IHR (2005). The purpose of the IHR (2005) is to avoid an international health crisis by preventing the spread of disease across international borders. In the report, the WHO provides a framework for countries to understand and implement the IHR (2005) by creating a system that could effectively detect and control public health risks domestically and, if need be, cooperatively with the international community.

The report concludes the governments must make a concerted and transparent effort to create public health policy that is reflective of the goals of the IHR (2005). The report also suggests that a comprehensive surveillance, outbreak alert and response system be established internationally; that knowledge, technologies and materials be shared among nations in order to provide health security to an optimal number of the population; that all governments bear a responsibility to ensure that each country has

the capacity to deal with a health crisis; that cross-sector cooperation be encouraged within a government to ensure public health policy is intertwined with the work of other policy sectors such as agriculture and tourism; and that there be an increase in the amount of resources dedicated to all of these goals.

The report mentions that the focus of the 2008 report will be individual health security and access to the basic necessities for a healthy life. A full copy of the 2007 report can be found on the WHO Web site at <http://www.who.int/whr/2007/en/index.html>.

9. [Human Rights Council – Sixth Session](#)

In her address to the Human Rights Council Sixth Session on 13 September, 2007 in Geneva, the **High Commissioner on Human Rights, Ms. Louise Arbour**, supported the importance of the Universal Periodic Review process in the Council, saying that the relevance and influence of UN human rights bodies depends on an expeditious beginning of the process and thorough review of human rights situations on the ground in member states. Ms. Arbour recognized the importance of institution building discussions during the sixth session, and discussed specific human rights concerns in countries such as Myanmar, Iran and Thailand. She reported that the OHCHR expanded its operations throughout the world during the last year with offices opened or expanded in areas such as Central America, West Africa, and Central Asia, while facing diplomatic difficulties in North Africa and Zimbabwe among others. Ms. Arbour also encouraged the Council to seize the opportunity to close gaps in Special Procedures during the review of mandates.

Institution Building and the Universal Periodic Review

The sixth session serves as a test of the institution building measures decided upon in June and member states showed an eagerness during the opening session of the council to work with the new structure to test whether the modalities would be suitable for this and future sessions. During discussion of the mechanisms, it was emphasized that the institution-building document was not to be re-opened for the time being, so that it could be tested for efficacy as it is implemented.

As part of the framework for the Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review was created to monitor human rights situations on the ground in UN member states. Members of the Human Rights Council will undergo UPR first, followed by the rest of the members of the General Assembly. Decided during the Council was the list of 16 countries to undergo Universal Periodic Review at the first session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group in 2008. During a discussion on UPR, delegates expressed concern that there are no explicit guidelines for form and content of the review, as well as the extent of coverage.

Toward the conclusion of the session, there was positive feedback on this matter from **Human Rights Council President Mr. Doru Romulus Costea** in an NGO Bureau

meeting who said he was quite pleased with what the Council has done so far in terms of institution building and approaching substantive matters.

Interim Report on Darfur

An interim report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan and the Group of Experts on Darfur mandated by the Human Rights Council was given on 24 September 2007. The report said that the short-term recommendations implemented in the Sudan have yet to produce significant results. The Special Rapporteur called on the Human Rights Council to ensure the continued implementation of recommendations, hold the Sudanese government accountable for bringing perpetrators of human rights to justice, call for parties involved in the violent conflict to lay down arms, and continually monitor progress in the state.

The follow-up discussion on the report encouraged continued collaboration between the United Nations and the government of Sudan, recognizing the efforts the Sudanese government has been making thus far to fulfill its mandate. Following debate on this report was a general discussion of humanitarian issues that should be brought to the Council's attention, during which some delegates claim there was too much pointing blame and not enough substantive debate on how to resolve the issues at hand.

Panel on Gender Perspective in the work of the Human Rights Council

Of note this session was a widely welcomed discussion on the integration of the gender perspective into the work of the Council on 20 and 21 September. On the panel were **Ms. Kyung-wha Kang**, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Dr. Radhika Coomaraswamy**, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and **Mr. Miloon Kothari**, Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, and the Moderator, **Ms. Maria Nzomo**, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Summing up the panel Ms. Nzomo stated that integrating gender into human rights work could have a significant impact on the life and death of women and girls across the world. She reminded participants that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action made the gender perspective into a priority for the United Nations system as a whole. NGO representatives took an active part in the debate, including **Ms. Conchita Poncini**, the UN Delegate for the International Federation of University Women, and saw the process as a positive sign of the Council's willingness to develop the role and participation of NGOs during its sessions. Whilst the panel may not become a regular event in future sessions the debate will surely have had an effect on prioritizing the inclusion of gender dimensions in the implementation of human rights instruments.

Conclusion of the Session

As **GSO News** goes to press toward the end of the sixth session, the Council is voting on 36 resolutions. Also, due to the recent conditions in Burma, some members of the

Council have asked that this issue be addressed by the Council before it adjourns. Coinciding with debate on issues of humanitarian concern around the world, the Council faces a loss of United States funding in the near future. The US Senate voted in early September to cut the America's funding of the Council. The United States has historically been a critic of the Council, claiming that it overemphasizes criticism of Israel and ignores regimes in other countries guilty of perpetrating human rights.

Sources:

Canadian Press, 13 September, 2007

<http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALeqM5hlmVRAjgPRr62nwLD2dPuwOHQcBg>,

Washington Times, 11 September, 2007

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070911/FOREIGN/109110060/1003>,

Human Rights Council sixth session documents and press releases

<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/> &

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf

10. [Kofi Annan's Humanitarian Forum](#)

Calling it "perhaps the single most important humanitarian challenge of years to come," former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on 17 September that he will make the issue of climate change a top priority of a new Global Humanitarian Forum. The forum, which he will launch on 17 October, will address the impact of climate change and natural disasters on global refugee movements and humanitarian efforts. "This Forum will serve as a catalyst and will build ties ... That's something which isn't being done at the moment," said one official with the Swiss government. According to local reports, the Swiss Federal Government has pledged support to the tune of 1.3 million Swiss Francs to the Forum, which will be based in Geneva. The Forum's foundation board will have its first meeting in October.

11. [Award for Kofi Annan from the Business Humanitarian Forum](#)

On 20 September the Business Humanitarian Forum Association presented the **Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian award** to **Mr. Kofi Annan**. Mr. Annan, who formerly served as Secretary General of the United Nations, was honoured for his extensive work in "encouraging responsible business policies and private sector support for humanitarian agencies of the United Nations", according to the organization's website. The award, which is handed out annually, was presented to Mr. Annan during a ceremony in Geneva, which drew attendance from UN agencies, local governments and the private sector.

The Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award was established in 2004 to "recognize outstanding achievements in the field of humanitarian affairs involving the private sector". Mr. Annan was recognized particularly for his Global Compact, which encourages businesses to develop socially responsible projects and for his efforts in raising awareness about the potential the private sector has to impact sustainable

economic development. Highlighted also was his work in bringing together the public and private sectors to further humanitarian efforts in, among other things, the reduction of poverty and the creation of jobs.

Past awards were presented to Mr. Rory O'Riordan, President of the European Generic Medicines Association and Mr. Farooq Kathwari, CEO of Ethan Allen Industries.

More information on the Russell-Whitehead Business Humanitarian Award and the BHF can be found on www.bhforum.org

12. [ILO Sectoral Meeting on Global Food Chains](#)

As discussed in the previous edition of the **GSO News**, interested government representatives, 18 employer representatives, and 18 worker representatives met from 24 to 27 September at the International Labour Office, Geneva for the Tripartite Meeting to Examine the Impact of Global Food Chains on Employment. The meeting is part of the ILO's Sectoral Activities Programme. The focus, as decided on during the ILO's 297th session, was on the social and labor implications of the development of global food chains. The hope is that the discussion will result in better policy coherence.

The points discussed at the meeting were how recent trends in employment in the food and drink sector are influenced by the growth and development of global food chains, how global supply chain management is affecting employment and work organization in the sector, the most important skills requirements for the future of the industry, the role social dialogue can play in the context of globalized food chains, and how the ILO can help employers and workers in the sector meet the challenges of global food chains. An issues paper, provisional list of participants, and draft agenda is provided on the ILO website. The issue paper for the event provides an overview of the changing dynamic of the food and beverage industry, including a discussion on the increasing trend of vertical coordination within food chains, the transformation of consumer demand over the last few years, changes in the structure of food chains, and employment conditions in the industry. (See <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/tmfce07/index.htm> for more information.)

As discussed during the opening plenary and in the issue paper, global food chains are undergoing vertical coordination, where each part of the chain from employer to buyer has a specific role to perform; thus, wholesale markets are significantly decreasing in importance. Progressively more producers, export agencies, processors and retailers are bound by a contractual agreement to work within the confines of a chain – often run by one of the few lead firms. These firms exert an enormous amount of influence over the market by deciding terms of agreement and, to some degree, the price that will be paid. Four types of companies that are strongly involved in food production, processing, and distribution are identified as: large food retailers, large food-processing companies, large fast food chains, and other non-food firms and private equity firms operating operations in the food and beverage industry. These changes in the industry, along with

others such as format franchising and the outsourcing of work, have influenced the market, the labor environment and standards.

Consumers are becoming more health conscious, and now chains are competing against specialty stores to provide healthier options, such as organically produced food. A trend that is having less impact at the moment is the interest among consumers in industrialized countries to buy locally produced food and drink as a reaction to globalization. Conversely, for some products such as coffee, tea, chocolate, bananas, some consumers are demanding fair trade products.

Reaction

During the meeting, **Mr. Shroder**, a spokesperson for the workers group, advocated support of local producers and for restricting investment of multi-national corporations that have a history of labor regulation violations. He expressed that he would like to discuss hygiene and quality regulations as he believes they are important in the long-term. The spokesperson for the employers group said that many of the jobs in the industry are inflexible, and that the challenge is to find a solution which will allow firms to maintain a level of competitiveness in the global free market. He emphasized that the employers group does not want the formation of a regulatory body for food chains.

For more information on the topic, please refer to the issues paper posted on ILO's Web site <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/tmfce07/tmfce-r.pdf>.

13. [Internet Governance Forum consultations](#)

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held open consultations on the 3 September to discuss the five main themes decided on during the inaugural meeting, as well as preparations for the organization of the Rio de Janeiro meeting scheduled for 12 to 15 November, 2007. As mandated in para. 72 of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Tunis Agenda for Information Society, the IGF was established for a term of five years to facilitate multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on the issue of internet governance. On the agenda for the meeting was general discussion of the substantive programme of the Rio meeting, including the 5 issues (Critical Internet Resources, Access, Diversity, Openness, and Security) plus emerging issues; the schedule of the Rio meeting; dynamic coalitions; presentation of the logistical arrangements by the host country; structure of the Advisory Group; and "desirability of the continuation of the forum" (as stipulated in para. 72 of Tunis).

The meeting brought representatives from multiple perspectives. Lewis Pouzin of Eurolinc announced the creation of a civil society working group on information networks governance, while Masanobu Katoh of Fujitsu Limited emphasized the need to appeal to CEOs to attend the Rio meeting. He stressed the need for increased participation among the business sector. Mr. Katoh said the make-up of Athens IGF was 13 percent private sector, 28 percent government, and 29 percent civil society. The International Chamber of Commerce voiced concern on the same issue. Emily Taylor, a

member of the advisory board and Director of Legal and Policy at Nominet (.UK), said that the United Kingdom has attempted to bridge the connection between different sectors in the country in order to discuss and develop a best practices model. She said a multi-stakeholder meeting is being held in the U.K. during October. Separately, a representative from Italy announced the Internet Bill of Rights Forum 27 September in Rome.

14. [ISO annual meeting – growing importance](#)

The role of the International Standards Organization (ISO) was defined as increasingly necessary and relevant in a globalizing market during the organization's 2007 General Assembly open session. As International Standards become more necessary and affect more stakeholders, so too does the organization that designs the standards; this was the message of many of the speakers at the session.

The focus of the session, which was held 20 September 2007 in Geneva, was "International Standards and Public Policies." This included deliberations on redefining the scope and understanding of sustainable development in order to contribute to three aspects of public policy on the matter: "economic growth, economic integrity, and social equity." Participants discussed the need for ISO to level the playing field by establishing international standards to "promote good practices, support clear communication, measure progress, and monitor achievements," while ensuring not to clash with regional or international public policies. Another trend of significance was the increase in private standards, especially among small and medium enterprises in developing countries and the subsequent need for collaboration among standard-setting organization, governments, and the private sector in future standards-setting and coordination.

For more information or a copy of the "Information document on the use of ISO and IEC standards for technical regulations," visit the ISO event Web site at <http://www.iso.org/iso/pressrelease.htm?refid=Ref1078>.

15. [Personnel Changes and News about People](#)

GSO News reports on recent changes in Geneva-based international organizations and elsewhere.

Mr. Martin Watson, President of the Geneva Social Observatory and Representative for Global Economic Issues at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva will be heading up communications and outreach at the **International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development** (ICTSD) as of December 2007. We wish Martin all the best in his new post.

New Geneva Institutes

The **Swiss Network for International Studies** is set to replace the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN) at the end of 2007 in Geneva. The Swiss

Network is only one of the recent changes due to take place on the academic scene in Geneva. You may also recall the two new institutes reported on in the July/August issue of **GSO News**, the new **Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies** (IHEID) due to open in January 2008 and the new **Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights** that will open its doors in October 2007.

International Labour Organization

As reported in the last issue **Mr. José Ricardo Hernandez Pulido** is the new Director of the Relations, Meetings and Document Services Department. He succeeds **Mr. Steve Marshall** (New Zealand), who has accepted the difficult assignment of ILO Liaison in Burma.

Changes at the Geneva Missions

A total of sixteen new Ambassadors have joined their missions since July as permanent representatives to the UN and other international organizations, some of whom were featured in the last issue of **GSO News**. They are:

Mr. Alaihuddin Taha (Brunei Darussalam), **Mr. Marius Grinius** (Canada), **Mr. Jean-Baptiste Mattéi** (France), **Mr. Reinhard Schweppe** (Germany), **Mr. Mohamed Camara** (Guinea), **Mr. Dáithí Ó Ceallaigh** (Ireland), **Mr. Jānis Mapeiks** (Latvia), **Ms. Najla Riachi Assaker** (Lebanon), **Mr. Victor Camilleri** (Malta), **Ms. Mounina Mint Abdallah** (Mauritania), **Mr. Milomir Mihaljevic** (Montenegro), **Mr. Abdulla Falah Abdulla Al-Dosari** (Qatar), **Mr. Hans Dahlgren** (Sweden), **Mr. Faysal Khabbaz Hamoui** (Syria), **Ms. Erlinda F. Basilio** (The Philippines) and **Mr. Obaid Salem Saeed Nasser Al Zaabi** (United Arab Emirates).

More information on the new Ambassadors can be found at [http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600582E34/\(httpPages\)/75D895B16F87F6E280256EF8004CB5F5?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600582E34/(httpPages)/75D895B16F87F6E280256EF8004CB5F5?OpenDocument).

After two years as Deputy United States Trade Representative and six years in the current administration, **Ambassador Karan K. Bhatia** is leaving in October to work once again in the private sector.

Norwegian health attaché **Ms. Turid Kongsvik** has returned to Norway. Her responsibilities will be divided up between two new officials in the Norwegian Mission in Geneva, **Mr. Thor Erik Lindgren** from the Ministry of Health and by **Dr. Sissel Hodne Steen** from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

Our neighbor and friend **Mr. Hussam Al Hussein**, First Secretary at the Jordanian Mission has been promoted to a high post in the Jordanian Foreign Ministry and has been replaced in Geneva by **Mr. Bashar Abutaleab**.

UN appointments

Ms. Noeleen Heyzer has been appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the new Executive Secretary of the **Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok** with the rank of Under-Secretary-General. Ms. Heyzer is the first woman to head ESCAP, the biggest of the UN's five regional commissions.

Mrs. Miriam Nisbet has taken up the post of Director of the Information Society Division at **UNESCO** after eight years service with the American Library Association. Her division is providing the secretariat for the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) that UNESCO is currently chairing.

Mr. Michael Klaus, formerly based in Mozambique and Mexico, is the new head of **UNICEF's information unit** in Geneva.

New UN Peace Envoys

The United Nations has named four new peace envoys this month. They join the four existing envoys: **Mr. Elie Wiesel**, **Mr. Michael Douglas**, **Ms. Jane Goodall**, and **Mr. Yo-Yo Ma**. The new envoys were honoured during a ceremony on 21 September, the International Day of Peace, and are:

Jordanian **Princess Haya**, a former Olympic equestrian and president of the International Equestrian Federation. Princess Haya has been recognized for her promotion of youth health, education, and sports programs and is a member of the Olympic Committee.

Musician **Mr. Daniel Barenboim** of Israel, who helped found the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which brings together Israeli and Arab youth.

Mr. Paulo Coelho, author of *The Alchemist* and political activist. Mr. Coelho also founded an institute to help the underprivileged in Brazil and served as a special counselor for the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Midori Goto is a renowned violinist and instructor who started a nonprofit which provides music education to underprivileged children in New York.

The International Monetary Fund

As **GSO News** goes to press it has not yet been announced whether **Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn** (France), a former finance minister, has been chosen over **Mr. Josef Tošovský** (Czech Republic), as the new Managing Director of the **International Monetary Fund**. He received the backing of the US, the IMF board's largest shareholder, the day before he was interviewed by the IMF board. If he is selected we will replace **Mr. Rodrigo Rato** (Spain) who is coming toward the end of his term of office.

Intellectual Property Watch

Moves are afoot at IP-Watch as staff member **Ms. Tove Iren Gerhardsen** leaves them to work with the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen on the vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization programme. In the meantime **Mr. Paul Garwood** (Australia) has joined IP-Watch as their new Associate Editor.

GSO News would like to take this opportunity to thank Intellectual Property Watch for the exchange arrangement that we have enjoyed these past months with the ***IP-Watch Monthly Reporter***.

16. [Events](#)

A listing of events in October through December 2007 that are due to take place in Geneva unless indicated otherwise.

24 Sept to 3 Oct WIPO, Assemblies of Member States

October

1 to 11 October UNCTAD, Trade and Development Board, fifty-fourth session

1 to 5 October UNHCR, Executive Committee, fifty-eighth session

2 October UNCTAD civil society hearing

4 to 5 October WTO Public Forum 2007: "How Can the WTO Help Harness Globalization?"

8 October Human Rights Committee, States Parties to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 11th Session

8 to 12 October ILO International Symposium on the Role of Trade Unions in Workers' Education: The Key to Trade Union Capacity Building

9 to 10 October WTO General Council

15 to 19 October Human Rights Council, Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, 27th Session

15 Oct to 2 Nov Human Rights Committee, ninety-first session

16 October World Food Day

17 October International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

- 22 October Human Rights Committee, States Parties to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 11th Session
- 24 October United Nations Day
- 29 Oct to 2 Nov ECOSOC Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax matters (3rd Session)

November

- 1 to 2 November ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization (Lisbon, Portugal)
- 1 to 16 November ILO 300th Session of the Governing Body and its committees
- 5 to 10 November Second meeting of the WHO Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (IGWG2)
- 5 to 23 November Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, thirty-ninth session
- 5 to 23 November Human Rights Council, Committee against Torture, 39th Session
- 14 November World Diabetes Day
- 15 to 16 November ILO Multi Forum 2007: 30th Anniversary of the ILO's Declaration on Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
- 14 November First Annual UN-sponsored World Diabetes Day
- 16 November International Day for Tolerance
- 19 to 23 November UNCTAD's Sixth inter-Regional Debt management Conference
- 19 to 23 November Human Rights Council, Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of the Committee against Torture, 3rd Session
- 20 November Universal Children's Day
- 20 to 21 November WTO First Annual Review of Aid for Trade Initiative
- 22 Nov to 7 Dec ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations

- 25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- 26 to 30 November Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, seventh session
- 26 Nov to 7 Dec Human Rights Council, sixth session second part and seventh session

December

- 1 December World AIDS Day
- 3 December International Day of Disabled Persons
- 4 to 6 December Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (60th Session)
- 5 December International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
- 6 to 10 December Human Rights Week
- 10 December Human Rights Day
- 10 to 13 December ILO Meeting of Experts to Examine Instruments, Knowledge, Advocacy, Technical Cooperation and International Collaboration as Tools with a view to Developing a Policy Framework for Hazardous Substances
- 18 December International Migrants Day
- 19 to 20 December WTO General Council
- 20 December International Human Solidarity Day