connectivity 6.16.97

Recommended Citation

"connectivity 6.16.97", Aprenet, June 16, 1997, https://nautilus.org/aprenet/connectivity-6-16-97/

Connectivity
Asia-Pacific Trade, Environment and Development Monitor

APRENet Home Nautilus Home

JULY. 2ND, VOL. 1 NO. 6

Regional News

Cairns Group Calls for New Rounds of the WTO

June 13, 1997 - Source: The Bangkok Post

In order to keep attention focused on the liberalization of trade in farm products, the Cairns Group is calling for a new round of WTO agricultural negotiations prior to the scheduled 1999 round. According to the report, the group is pushing for the acceleration of negotiations in the face of a new US farm act and EU reform of common agricultural policy, coupled with the expansion of membership of the WTO could threaten their efforts to liberalize agricultural liberalization talks. The communiqué was the result of the latest Cairns Group Ministerial, held in Brazil last week.

APEC Sustainable Development Ministerial

June 10-12 Source: Reuters, Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail

Environment ministers from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member states closed a three-day meeting on Wednesday, having failed to produce any concrete or enforceable measures to address the environmental concerns in its 18 members, according to a Reuter's report. (APEC environment meeting makes little progress, Reuters, June 11)

U.S. delegate Eileen Claussen said the credibility of eight-year-old APEC, a trade-liberalization forum that includes 18 countries, is on the line (Act on pollution, APEC urged, The Globe and Mail, June 10, 1997.) "Many people have real doubts about whether APEC can evolve into a credible force for environmental protection," Claussen told the meeting. "It is true that we certainly have not become one yet." This sentiment was backed by New Zealand, which urged APEC to broaden and deepen it's agenda. New Zealand Environment Minister Simon Upton noted that, "Our citizens are going to expect us to focus on common issues that affect us all," he said. ". . . If we can't talk about these issues at APEC, where can we talk about them?"

However, APEC's other members were less forthright and quietly approved the vague action plans for the regimes tripartite agenda of sustainable cities, clean production, and clean pacific initiatives. The Environment Minister's recommendations for these initiatives will be presented to the annual APEC Leader's Summit and Economic Ministerial to be held this November in Vancouver.

* For the text of the ministerial declaration please visit the Nautilus Web site <http://www.nautilus.org/aprenet/library/>. A complete wrap-up of the ministerial will be part of Connectivity's 'APEC and the Environment' special edition set to be published in August of this year.

Japan to Push Environment at G-7 Summit

June 5, 1997 - Source: Japan Times

Japan is ready to "go to bat for the environment" at the upcoming G-7 (plus Russia) Summit, according to a recent Japan Times report. At the heart of Japan's efforts will be furthering consensus between G-7 members on climate change negotiations, as Tokyo views the June 20-22 Summit as a prelude to the December U.N. Conference of the Parties to the climate-change convention, to be held in Kyoto, Japan.

However, Japan may not get what it wants as the draft document to be issued is expected to only call for "reductions" of greenhouse gases and not "limitations," which Tokyo is currently pushing for. Another point of contention will be the European Union's request for language on numerical targets, as Japan and the US oppose mentioning any specific reduction figure.

According to Japanese officials, the major environmental topics that will emerge at the Denver summit are: a successful conclusion of the Kyoto (climate change) conference, a proposed forest-protection treaty and a stable supply of fresh water -- especially in developing countries. Japan is also pushing for, but unlikely to get, language on strengthened international cooperation in fighting serious maritime oil spills, as has been demanded by Japan in the wake of the January Nakhodka accident that polluted the Sea of Japan.

ROK Presses Taiwan Nuke Deal at APEC Meeting

June 13, 1997 - Source: Korea Herald

Korea made a plea to APEC Environment Ministers to pressure Taiwan to abandon its efforts to transfer nuclear waste to North Korea, "not only in the interests of the Korean people but also for the sake of preserving the safety of the APEC region's environment." In his remarks, South Korean Amb., Roe Chang-hee, challenged APEC to take action against Taiwan, as APEC is the only international body in which Taiwan is a member. Roe specifically called for strengthened regional cooperation in controlling intentional movements of nuclear waste. ``The Korean delegation views it as extremely important that comprehensive procedural rules be in place in our region to make cross border movements subject to a system of strict control and supervision,'' Roe said. According to the

report, Delegates from 13 members of the 18-member APEC agreed with Roe's remarks. Taiwan's chief environment official, Tsai Hsung-hsiung, told the gathering that Taiwan has not yet endorsed a plan to ship Taiwanese nuclear waste to North Korea for storage.

New Economic Region Planned

June 9, 1997 - Source: Bangkok Post

ASEAN members have agreed to build an ASEAN Economics Region (AER) by the year 2020, but will not create a customs union, according to a draft agreement. According to an unnamed source at the Thai Commerce Ministry, the AER will include the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) with tariffs ranging from zero to 5%, to be in place by 2003 for most ASEAN member, 2006 for Vietnam, and the three proposed members - Burma, Cambodia and Laos - by 2008. The group will have no tariffs on internal trade after 2003 but will apply identical rates to products from third countries.

Decisions on Trade in Endangered Species Near a Vote

June 9, 1997 - Source: Environmental News Network Daily News

This week, at the opening session of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe proposed lifting the seven year ban on ivory trade, and resuming trade in ivory products. Another highly controversial item on the agenda is a proposal by Japan and Norway to resume whaling for scientific purposes. The meeting will conclude June 19th.

Pacific Economies to Continue to Grow

June 3, 1997 - Source: Associated Press

According to a report issued by the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council and the Asia Foundation, the 20 countries that border the Pacific (with the exception of Russia) are set to grow slightly faster in 1997 and 1998. Average growth is expected to be 4.1 percent for the next two years, compared with 4 percent in 1996. Excluding the United States and Japan, the region's two largest economies, growth rates will jump to 5.5 percent in 1997 and 5.7 percent in 1998, the report said.

Fish Stocks Running Low as Government Subsidies Rise

June 2, 1997 - Source: The Associated Press

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), government subsidies are to blame for widespread overfishing practices. Fish stocks are being depleted faster than they can renew themselves because of high demand for a highly subsidized product, according to the joint report. The WWF estimates that the world's leading fish producing countries spend over $124 billion on subsidies each year to generate revenues of $70 billion. Leaving the world's taxpayers have to make up the other $54 billion.

Peoples' Republic of China

China Set to Establish Model 'green' Cities.

June 9, 1997 - Source: China Daily

China's National Environmental Protection Agency (Nepa), will select several cities to serve as "good environmental models." Xie Zhenhua, director of the National Environmental Protection Agency

(Nepa), said that Xiamen, Zhuhai and Dalian, in Fujian, Guangdong and Liaoning provinces, were leading the country in socio-economic development and environmental quality. The three cities' investment in environment is equivalent to 1.5 per cent of their respective gross domestic product, while Xiamen is planning to increase it to more than 3 per cent. The three cities not only lead the country in urban environmental quality, concludes the report, but also boast rapid economic development, according to Wang.

China Fights Anti-Dumping Charges with Pollution

June 5, 1997 - Source: China Daily

China is preparing to fight European anti-dumping charges on alloy exports by claiming low pollution abatement costs. Twelve Chinese manufacturers will travel to Brussels to defend the PRC at the June 9thhearing. The EU charges China with exporting ferro-silico-manganese, an alloy for steel and iron production, below-cost. The PRC contends that their costs are below world market prices because of their low wages (wages in coastal areas, where the labour cost is comparatively high in the country, are only 5 per cent of those of US and EU); and secondly, lower operations costs because producers do not have to pay for the environmental pollution they create. Non-compliance to environmental standards, "has significantly reduced operation costs," according to Zhou Shijian of the China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals and Chemicals Importers and Exporters (CCCMC).

'China Will be at the Center of APEC '

June 6, 1997 -- Source: China Daily

In an address to the second APEC International Trade Fair, PRC Foreign Trade Minister, Wu Yi, reaffirmed China's support for the regional cooperation regime. "China will be a firm partner in the fold of APEC," according to Wu, "as the PRC sees APEC as a priority for both trade and diplomatic purposes." Roughly 80 percent of China's foreign trade and 90 per cent of its foreign investment come from APEC members.

World Bank Approves US$980 million in loans and credits to China

May 28 - June 11, 1997 - Source: World Bank

Within a two week period, the World Bank approved over US$980 million in loans and credits to the People's Republic of China. The funds, dedicated largely to three infrastructure development, include: 1) a US$400 million loan for the Inner Mongolia (Tuoketuo) Thermal Power Project to create an independent power company and power plant; 2) a US$400 million loan to China's Shanxi Province for the Wanjiazhai Water Transfer Project to help alleviate the region's severe water shortages; 3) the Qinba Mountains Poverty Reduction Project received a loan package totaling US$180 million. "The project-funded by an IBRD loan of US$30 million and a US$150 million equivalent credit under IDA terms-will promote multisectoral rural development, increase labor mobility, and reverse environmental degradation in the Quinba mountains region of northern China, as an effective means to fight poverty."

Indonesia

Indonesia Turns to Solar Energy

June 3, 1997 - Source: Xinhua News Agency

This week, Indonesian President Suharto launched an ambitious plan to provide 50 megawatts of solar-powered electricity for 1 million homes. Aid from Australia and the World Bank, and grants from Global Environmental Fund and the German state of Bavaria, totaling more than $74 million have already been committed to the programe. Total investment required for the project was not disclosed, but is expected to be provided by the State Treasury. The first phase of the project will provide 71,400 units of home solar energy power generating equipment to 150 villages in Java Sulawesi, the Lesser Sunda islands, East Timor, the Moluccas, Central Kalimantan and Irian Jaya.

Japan

Japanese/ROK Fishery Negotiations Stalled

June 14, 1997 - Source: The Korea Herald

During the third round of fishery negotiations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, the ROK requested to re-negotiate claims to waters off the Tokto islets prior to any further bilateral fishery talks. Japanese fishermen are discontent with sharing the waters, a result of overlapping 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), because they claim that South Korean fishermen are depleting marine resources in the region. Japan has threatened to withdraw from both sets of talks if the issues are linked, stalling negotiations on both the EEZ and bilateral fishery talks.

Republic of Korea (ROK)

Korea will Move Ahead with Import Deregulation

June 14, 1997 - Source: Korea Herald

The Korean Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) announced today that beginning July 1 the import of major agricultural, livestock, and fishery products, except rice and beef, will be fully liberalized. These steps are in response to Korea's obligations made under the Uruguay Round (UR) of trade negotiations on agricultural products. Under the government's tariff-lowering program, the import-liberalization ratio will rise to 99.9 percent for the nation's industries overall in July and to 99.6 percent for agricultural, livestock and fishery products (100 percent for the fishery sector)

.

US Soap Accused of Making False Environmental Claims

May 28, 1997 - Source: The Associated Press

The Amway Corp. has been accused of falsely advertising the environmental friendliness of its' products and comparing Dish Drops dish washing detergent to South Korean brands - an illegal move under South Korean law. This accusation prompted the Korea Soap and Detergent Association to challenge the validity of Amway's environmental award from UNEP, a step which aggravated UNEP who defended the integrity of the award.

Philippines

New Environmental Requirements in the Philippines

June 13, 1997 - Source: Dow Jones News Service

Environmental compliance certificates will now be required prior to pursuing investment and

development projects in the Philippines. The requirement, according to the report, comes from the Board of Investments and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in an effort to raise the standards of environmental management practices.

"Philippines' Environment in Dismal State"

June 8, 1997 - Source: Straits Times

"Except for some gains in conservation, the state of the environment in the Philippines remained dismal, with pressure on it from deforestation, land degradation and growing air pollution," according to the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The report concludes that one-sixth of the country's land area was severely eroded, while less than 50 per cent of the country's 15.8 million ha are in good condition or received some form of protection. Of this, only 0.8 million ha was primary, old-growth forest. Other indicators listed: the country is losing forest land at an annual rate of about 130,000 ha; the country's fishing grounds were being overfished and production is dropping; only 42 million out of the population of about 70 million has access to a potable water; seven out of 75 rivers surveyed were biologically dead; and the country's agricultural base is being eroded as irrigated rice lands are being converted to urban settlements and industrial uses at the rate of 2,300 ha per year.

Thailand

Thai Shrimp Farmers Allowed to Stay in Mangrove Forests

Jun 6, 1997 - Source: The Bangkok Post

Deputy Agriculture Minister, Sampao Prachuabmoh, announced this week that the Ministry will allow five more years of 'environmentally destructive' shrimping practices in mangrove forests. If the fishermen are forced to relocate, according to the Minister, it is feared that even more destructive practices will take over. This recent decision to support coastal shrimp farmers, is coupled with Thailand's efforts to boost Thai shrimp exports by increasing the number of artificial shrimp habitats inland, which, according to the report, are less environmentally destructive.

United States

US Judge Limits Wood Imports

June 11, 1997 - Source: Reuters

A US federal judge has issued an order limiting the import of logs and other wood products to the US from Chile, New Zealand and Siberia. The Judge, Claudia Wilken, of US District Court in Oakland California, based her ruling on concerns that the imported logs may carry destructive pests from abroad. The decision was issued in response to a lawsuit filed by several environmental groups, including the Oregon Natural Resources Council, the Pacific Environment and Resources Center, and the Western Environmental Law Center, against the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, an agency under the Department of Agriculture. The injunction will bar imports until the service completes a new environmental impact study and proposes rules to regulate importation of wood products.

US Bill Introduced to Protect Asian Elephant

June 6, 1997 - Source: United States Information Agency

Legislation to protect the Asian elephant from extinction was introduced to the US congress this week, according to a US government report. The bill, introduce by US House of Representatives Neil Abercrombie and Jim Saxton, aims to protect the elephants by financially supporting conservation programs of countries where it is native and of the secretariat of CITES (Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species). The Asian Elephant and Conservation Act of 1997 would provide financial assistance to these programs at $5 million per year over the next five years.

US Condemns Indonesia / Indonesia Threatens Trade Retaliation

June 6 &12, 1997 - Source: Hong Kong Standard & South China Morning Post

On Tuesday, the US House of Representatives unanimously approved an amendment condemning Indonesia's human rights abuses in East Timor. ``This will send a strong and clear message to the Indonesian government that Congress will not tolerate the continued human rights abuses of the people of East Timor,'' said Representative Patrick Kennedy, the Rhode Island Democrat who introduced the amendment to the Foreign Policy Reform Act. Mr Kennedy said Tuesday's unanimous vote would ``serve as a launching point for further action against Indonesia.''

Indonesia quickly responded this week (US may provoke Suharto backlash, South China Morning Post, June 12 1997) to the US legislation. "If Congressman Kennedy continues to push the President," said Ikar Nusa Bhakti, a political analyst from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, "he may retaliate." "It is possible he may even sever some economic relations," said Bhakti. Indonesia last week reduced its military co-operation with the US by canceling the purchase of F-16 jets and withdrawing from a military training programme. In the early 1960s, the report concludes, then-president Sukarno told the US to "go to hell with your aid" when it tried to make funding conditional on political reforms. "There is now concern Mr Suharto may repeat history if pushed too far."

Connectivity is a bi-monthly information service reporting on trade, environment and development issues in the Asia-Pacific. The *Monitor* is emailed to members of the ***Asia Pacific Regional Environment Network*** (APRENet). To register for this free service please fill out the on-line registration form at or send email to nautilus@nautilus.org

---

APRENet is funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development

2342 Shattuck Avenue

Berkeley, CA 94704USA
http://www.nautilus.org
nautilus@nautilus.org

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/aprenet/connectivity-6-16-97/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org