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a quarterly newsletter from the International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council

IPC cautiously optimistic after WTO Hong Kong Ministerial

The IPC held three briefing sessions during the 6th Ministerial Conference of the WTO held 13 – 18 December 2005 in Hong Kong. With agricultural trade negotiations the key issue at stake throughout the negotiations, the IPC provided an objective analysis of the proposals on the negotiating table and a critique of their pro's and con's for the global trading system, from the perspective of both developed and developing countries. The IPC released its paper "The State of Play in the Agricultural Negotiations: Behind and Beyond the Numbers" at its sessions Hong Kong, aimed at informing the main participants of the Ministerial. The IPC's briefing sessions generated much interest, with a total of about 150 attendees – ranging from delegation members, industry association representatives to NGOs and other key stakeholders. There also was considerable press interest in IPC activities during the week, with members Pedro de Camargo and Ajay Vashee giving live interviews on CNN International to a worldwide TV audience. Raul Montemayor and Ajay Vashee were also interviewed by Reuters.

The first session, on the opening day of the Ministerial, analyzed the options for the contentious agricultural trade negotiations and featured presentations from Antoine Bouet (International Food Policy Research Institute - IFPRI) and Philip Turner (Fonterra and the Global Dairy Alliance). The IPC, represented by Chairman Robert Thompson and Chief Executive M. Ann Tutwiler, used the session to present its recommendations for the Hong Kong Ministerial, providing a rigorous analysis of the potential impact of the proposals on actual policy measures.

The focus of the second session, a panel held at the Hong Kong Trade and Development Symposium organized by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), was on developing countries and their stake in the agricultural negotiations. IPC members Pedro de Camargo (Brazil), Ajay Vashee (Zambia) and Raul Montemayor (Philippines) commented on the progress of the negotiations from their respective countries' viewpoints. Given the stalemate of the negotiations at that point, the IPC members voiced their frustration about the apparent lack of ambition and progress at the talks. Export subsidies and food aid emerged as particularly contentious areas of the WTO talks. At the final briefing session, IPC members discussed the draft declaration that was emerging from the ongoing agricultural negotiations and the impact this would have on the overall Doha Round.

While the final Ministerial Declaration was considered to be rather modest in its ambition, the IPC welcomed it as a sign of progress in the WTO negotiations. Many recommendations publicized by the IPC over the last few months were reflected in the final Ministerial Declaration, such as the move to set a date for the elimination of export subsidies, the structuring of tariff cuts and the provisions for duty- and quote-free market access for least developed countries to advanced markets. Considering the low expectations ahead of the Hong Kong Ministerial, the IPC is cautiously optimistic that the Declaration can be seen as a right sign that a final deal can be reached in time in 2006.

IPC Welcomes Charlotte Hebebrand as New CEO

The IPC welcomes Charlotte Hebebrand as its new President and Chief Executive Officer, effective February 2006. She succeeds outgoing Chief Executive and IPC co-founder M. Ann Tutwiler, who will be joining the Hewlett Foundation after nearly twenty years of dedicated service to the IPC.

Charlotte Hebebrand joins the IPC from the Delegation of the European Commission in Washington DC, where she held the position of Special Advisor for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Safety & Consumer Affairs. She has previously held the positions of Trade Advisor and Development Affairs Officer at the European Union. A US-German binational, Charlotte Hebebrand is a graduate of Georgetown University and John Hopkins University (SAIS). She is bilingual in English and German as well as proficient in French and Spanish.

The IPC would like to thank M. Ann Tutwiler for her leadership, dedication and commitment to furthering IPC's goals during her time as CEO and wishes her well in her new position.

IPC Calendar

The next IPC Seminar and Plenary Meeting will take place in Budapest, Hungary, on May 11 - 14, 2006, in cooperation with COCERAL.

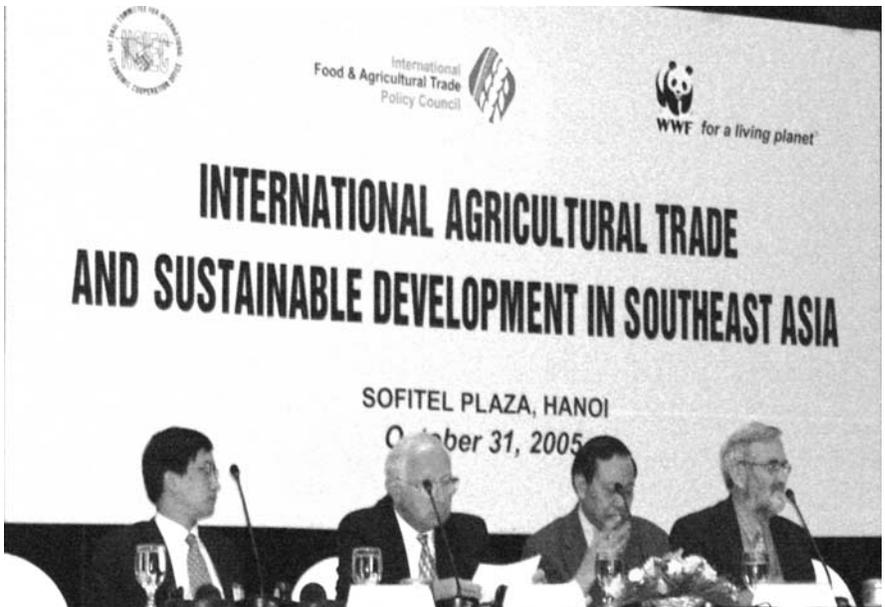
IPC holds 36th Seminar in Hanoi

The 36th IPC Seminar, “International Agricultural Trade and Sustainable Development in Southeast Asia,” was held on October 31, 2005 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The Seminar was held together with the Vietnamese National Committee for International Economic Cooperation (NCIEC) and was attended by over one hundred participants from Vietnamese government officials and ministers, farm leaders, trade associations, business groups, local NGOs, academics and representatives from foreign embassies.

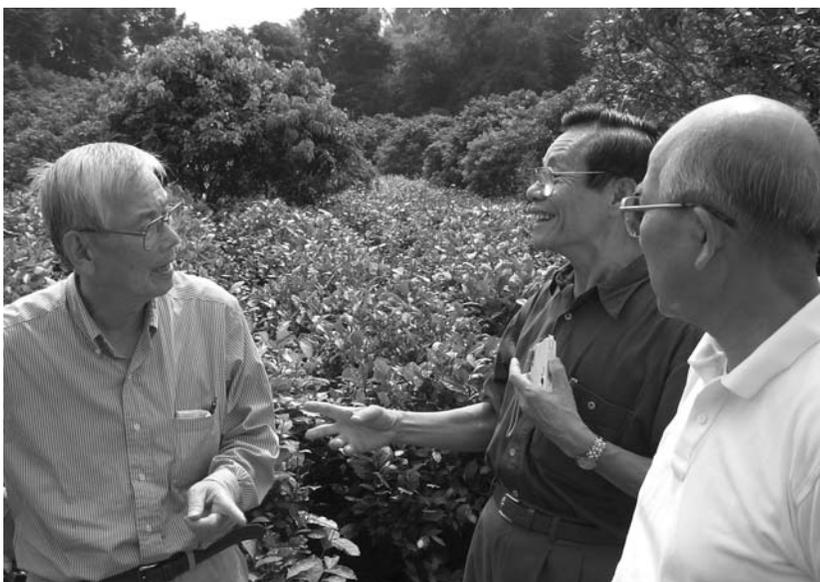
Vietnam’s Deputy Minister of Trade Luong Van Tu gave the Seminar’s keynote address, focusing on Vietnam’s ongoing accession talks to the WTO and highlighting the government’s efforts to encourage development of the agricultural sector and enhancing the country’s trading capacity. The Seminar’s first sessions featured presentations by IPC Members Jikun Huang and Csaba Csaki on different countries’ recent experiences of joining the WTO and the lessons Vietnam can expect from the accession process.

The luncheon address, by Eric Coull, Director of WWF Indochina, focused on the challenge of balancing economic growth in agriculture with environmental sustainability in Southeast Asia. Eric Coull also highlighted some of WWF’s regional project work, noting the new joint project with the IPC on sustainable cocoa production in Vietnam. Masterfoods sponsored the luncheon address.

The afternoon sessions discussed strategies to improve competitiveness of the Vietnamese agricultural sector as the country prepares for WTO accession and increased trade liberalization. Expert guest speakers for these sessions were Dang Kim Son, Director General of the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Bui Quang Toan, Director of the Center for Agricultural Extension.



Left to right: Jikun Huang (IPC), Csaba Csaki (IPC), Luong Van Tu (Deputy Minister of Trade), Brian Chamberlain (IPC)



IPC’s Jiro Shiwaku and Hiroshi Shiraiwai discuss tea production with Bui Quang Toan at a plantation visited by the IPC members before the Seminar.

The second afternoon session elaborated on the issues by focusing on rural development, agriculture and domestic policy. Chu Tien Quang from the Research Department on Rural Economic Development Policies in Vietnam’s Ministry of Planning and Investment identified state investment in agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture as potential ways to develop rural infrastructure and eliminate poverty in Vietnam. IPC members H.S. Dillon and Raul Montemayor stressed the central role that agriculture needs to play in an effective rural development strategy. They also highlighted the importance of coherence, focus and perseverance in developing effective policies that work in favor of the rural poor.

The focus of the final session was on sustainable cocoa production and the value chain in Vietnam. The joint study between the IPC and the WWF's Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Program Office on how to balance economic and environmental incentives with sustainable development cocoa in Vietnam was presented at this seminar. The Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Dutch Government provided funding for the sustainability study and the cocoa project. Guest speakers Doan Trieu Nhan, Chairman of the Vietnam Coffee and Cocoa Association, and Vuong Dinh Tuan, Head of the Forest Breeding Division of the Forest Science Sub-Institute of South Vietnam, provided an overview of the country's cocoa industry and an outlook on future developments in demand for cocoa production. Ross Jaax, the Head of ACIDI/VOCA in Vietnam, presented the SUCCESS Alliance, which is a three-year-old public-private alliance project that seeks to promote prosperity amongst smallholder cocoa farmers through socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable growth of Vietnam's cocoa industry.

For more information and presentations of the Seminar, visit the IPC website at:

<http://www.agritrade.org/Hanoi%20materials.htm>



IPC Holds Briefings Sessions ahead of WTO Hong Kong Ministerial

In the run-up to the WTO's Ministerial in Hong Kong, the IPC held several briefing sessions for key agricultural trade stakeholders and decision makers in Washington DC, Brussels and Geneva. The presentations in Washington DC (November 16) and Brussels (November 28), entitled "Prospects for Hong Kong", provided an assessment of the agricultural negotiations to date and an analysis of the key negotiating proposals. The session in Washington DC featured IPC Chairman Robert Thompson as well as IPC members David Blandford and Joe O'Mara. In Brussels, Rolf Moehler, Michel Petit as well as David Blandford gave the analysis on the progress of the talks.

In addition, Robert Thompson presented his paper "The US Farm Bill and the Doha Negotiations: On Parallel Tracks or a Collision Course?" at the German Marshall Fund's Transatlantic Center in Brussels on October 25. He also gave the presentation in Geneva on October 24, as part of a seminar on the domestic politics of the EU and US agricultural reform by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development.



IPC News in Short

- In its October 20 edition, The Wall Street Journal published a Letter to the Editor by IPC Chairman Robert Thompson and IPC members Csaba Csaki and Michel Petit, who commented on the intentions of the new World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz to focus the organization's strategy more towards agriculture. The letter argues that the World Bank's agricultural strategy must emphasize investments and policies in three key areas: agricultural research, investments in infrastructure linking rural areas to domestic and international markets, and continued support for agricultural trade liberalization. Consistent support in these areas from the World Bank would send a strong signal to other donor organizations, and it could make an important contribution to combating poverty in the poorest parts of the world.
- Funding: The IPC has secured a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to conduct policy analysis centered on the WTO agricultural negotiations. The IPC has also secured funding for its Biosafety Protocol study in China and Brazil from the US Grains Council, the International Grain Trade Coalition and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.
- The IPC board members approved further studies in the areas of biofuels, animal agriculture and South-South trade, following a review of draft papers discussed at the IPC's Plenary and Seminar meeting in Hanoi in October.

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***Promoting an Open and
Efficient Food and Agriculture
System***

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The IPC's Mission

The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) is dedicated to developing and advocating policies that support an efficient and open global food system, that promotes economically and environmentally sustainable production and that distributes safe, accessible food supplies to the world's growing population.

The IPC's Members

IPC members represent the geographic diversity of the global food system, and the entire food chain from producer to consumer. IPC members are influential and experienced leaders in agricultural trade policy who are committed to finding solutions to global food and agricultural trade challenges.

Robert L. Thompson (Chair), United States

Piet Bukman (Vice-Chair), The Netherlands

Allen Andreas, United States
Bernard Auxenfans, France
Malcolm Bailey, New Zealand
Andrew Burke, United States
Csaba Csaki, Hungary
Pedro de Camargo Neto, Brazil
Luis de la Calle, Mexico
H.S. Dillon, Indonesia
Cal Dooley, United States
Franz Fischler, Austria
Michael Gifford, Canada

Huang Jikun, China
Rob Johnson, United States
Hans Jöhr, Switzerland
Timothy Josling, United Kingdom
Rolf Moehler, Belgium
Raul Montemayor, Philippines
Donald Nelson, United States
Joe O'Mara, United States
Nèstor Osorio, Colombia
Michel Petit, France

Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Denmark
Henry Plumb, United Kingdom
Marcelo Regunaga, Argentina
Eugenia Serova, Russia
Hiroshi Shiraiwa, Japan
Jiro Shiwaku, Japan
Jim Starkey, United States
Jerry Steiner, United States
Ajay Vashee, Zambia
Anthony Wylie, Chile

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