

AFTINET Bulletin No.2

21 March 2000

****PLEASE NOTE****

THE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR AFTINET is pranald@piac.asn.au (Pat Ranald) and for the mailing list smitchell@piac.asn.au (Sarah Mitchell).

REMINDER: IF YOU ARE ON THE AFTINET MAILING LIST BUT HAVE NOT PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION YOU MUST DO SO BY **1 MAY 2000** TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS BULLETIN. THE SUBSCRIPTION FORM IS AT THE END OF THE BULLETIN.

Contents

1. WTO and Australian Salmon Quarantine Laws
2. WTO Framework and Structures: the Debate
3. Coming Events
4. Join AFTINET now!

1) The WTO and Australian Salmon Quarantine Laws

The Australian government has refused to appeal the WTO decision upholding the Canadian complaint that Australian quarantine restrictions for the packaging of imported fresh salmon were too restrictive. The deadline for the appeal has now passed. Negotiations between the Australian and Canadian governments are still proceeding about how less restrictive measures will be implemented, with Minister Mark Vaile claiming that the agreements reached so far will still reduce the risk of imported disease .

The Tasmanian government argues this is not the case and reaffirmed today that it will not lift its ban on imports of fresh salmon. The Tasmanian government has produced a detailed import risk analysis which shows that the Tasmanian salmon industry, currently disease-free, would be at risk if the ban were lifted. It is not clear what action Canada might be able to take against Tasmania through the WTO if it continues to defy both the WTO and the Federal Government.

An AFTINET media release which updated the letter in the last bulletin was quoted by the Hobart Mercury of 17/3/2000 and there was interest from several other print media. The release emphasised that this decision is the latest of many by the WTO which puts the commercial priorities of exporters above issues like the environment and health and safety. The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee report on this issue has been postponed until 12 April.

The National Anglers Lobby, which represents over 4.5 million recreational anglers of Australia has produced a sticker promoting disease-free local fresh fish. The sticker, "We sell fish, we care" is to be displayed at fresh seafood outlets in major supermarkets across the country. Consumers will be asked to purchase where this sticker is displayed.

For further information see the website <<http://members.iinet.net.au/~jenks/salmon4.html>>

2) WTO Framework and Structures: the Debate

- a) Some WTO member governments are at least acknowledging that there are problems which require change. The European Trade Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, while still supporting a new round of WTO negotiations, has acknowledged that the WTO lacks transparency and that developing country governments have legitimate complaints about the neglect of economic development issues. In the longer term, he suggested to a European Parliamentary Committee, the possibility of setting up a WTO parliamentary assembly should be examined to strengthen the democratic control of the WTO (EUR News Report, 21/02/00). Further information on the EU position can be found at <europa.eu.int/comm/trade/2000_round/ecwto01.htm>
- b) In response to Seattle the WTO itself has initiated a survey of non-government organisations to establish a forum where NGOs can express views about the WTO. There is no proposal from the WTO that this forum will have any formal influence on WTO structures. However, it provides an opportunity for NGOs to receive regular information about WTO activities and feed back their views. The website address is <www.wto.org/wto/feedback.htm>.
- c) On March 10, 100 days after the “Battle of Seattle” the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions General Secretary claimed that WTO member governments had failed to grasp the lessons of Seattle. He called on governments to take urgent action to defend basic labour standards during globalisation, to tackle the concerns of developing countries about fair treatment in the multilateral trading system, and to make the trading system environmentally sustainable. <www.icftu.org>
- d) On 15th March, 2000 manufacturing workers rallied in Brisbane for “fair trade not free trade” to express their concern about the crisis in Australian manufacturing industry and the closure of the Evans Deakin manufacturing plant. Australian Manufacturing Workers Union National Secretary Doug Cameron argued that job losses have been exacerbated by government’s blind commitment to free trade at the expense of industry development. He called for a reduction in company tax for Australian-based manufacturing companies and for Australia’s tariff commitments in the WTO on manufactured goods to be raised from 5% to 10%, which he argued is the tariff level of many of Australia’s trading partners. The Queensland Premier subsequently announced he would support an inquiry into manufacturing industry.
- e) To coincide with President Clinton’s visit to India this week a group of US and Indian community organisation and unions including the International Forum on Globalisation produced a statement arguing that WTO agreements have contributed to inequality and the environmental damage. It criticised WTO’s rules and procedures as undemocratic, non-transparent and non-accountable. It called on the governments to ensure that all trade between the United States and India contributes to the increased well-being and improved labour, social and environmental rights of people in both countries. Contact <divwomen@del6.vsnl.net.in> for more information.

3) Coming Events

- a) The Australian Council for Overseas Aid forum on TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
VENUE ACFOA Human Rights Office. “Blue Room”, 124 Napier Street
(Uniting Church premises), Fitzroy, VICTORIA
Tel: (03) 9417 7505
DATE AND TIME Monday - March 27, 2000 from 12.30 to 2.30 PM

Speakers are ANNA REYNOLDS, Australian Conservation Foundation on the Seattle WTO meeting.
and JIM REDDEN Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) on the UNCTAD forum in Bangkok.

Both speakers will address the implications of these meetings for NGOs concerned with human rights, the environment and sustainable development, followed by further discussion and analysis and input on labour issues.

b) PEOPLE'S SUMMIT 2000 : SHATTERING ILLUSIONS: The Truth about Australia's Unemployment & Globalisation

Date and Time: Sunday 30 April from 9.00am-3.30pm

Venue: Gallery Function Centre, Level 6, University of Technology, Sydney
(Main entrance off Broadway)

Speakers include Prof. Jane Kelsey, University of Auckland, New Zealand, on "Globalisation: The New Zealand Experience", Dr Ian Watson University of Sydney and Dr Geoff Dow, University of Queensland, on unemployment, Anna Reynolds, Australian Conservation Foundation, Trevor Thomas, Jubilee 2000 Movement, James Goodman, UTS and Lee Rhiannon, Greens MLC on globalisation

Further information: Contact Summit 2000 Coordinator, Frances Milne, Economic Reform Australia
Phone/fax: 02 9810 7812 email milne@itlite.com.au.

4) JOIN AFTINET NOW

In return for the membership fee, members will receive:

- materials for a basic educational training session on the WTO and AFTINET. (Copies for overhead projection slides and explanatory text).
- fortnightly email bulletins with relevant news, analysis and events on trade and investment issues
- access to the bulletin to publicise their own activities relevant to AFTINET
- news about specific AFTINET initiatives
- optional access to an interactive discussion list with more frequent email discussion for those who want this option .

AFTINET MEMBERSHIP FORM - Please complete and return by 1 May 2000.

Contact Details:

Name/Organisation: _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

Email : _____

Contact Person: _____

Membership Fees:

Organisations: _____ \$100 International/National Organisation

_____ \$25 State/Territory/Small Organisation

Individuals: _____ \$10 waged

_____ \$5 individual / concession

*Please make cheques payable to AFTINET - Post cheques to Sarah Mitchell, PIAC
Level 1, 46-48 York St, Sydney 2000. Ph 02 92997833 Fax: 02 92997855

The membership fee means you will be placed on the AFTINET email list for the bulletin. Would you also like to be on the interactive/discussion mailing list which means you will receive more frequent e-mails? YES / NO

Declaration:

_____ (insert name/organisation) as a member of the AFTI-
NET, agree with the AFTINET principles and will join with others to implement them.

Signed _____

Organisation _____

Date _____

Position _____