SUMMARY

Our third Global Trade Opinion Poll was conducted in the final week of May and took a slightly different approach to that followed in polls 1 and 2 in that the propositions tested were not so focussed on meeting previously-agreed negotiating deadlines. The implications of the current responses are in many cases more significant for the Doha Round’s long-term prospects than they may be for the Cancun meeting. Generally speaking, there seems to be a feeling that high-level political involvement is needed to move the Round forward and that key to progress will be positive developments in agriculture (CAP reform) and on issues important to developing countries. Interestingly, the Geneva-based view of issues differed significantly from the capital-based view in responses to fully half of the propositions tested. With a view to providing the most up-to-date pre-Cancun assessment, IIBE&L’s next poll will be conducted in the third week of July.

Part 1: WTO DDA Negotiations

Evian G-8 Summit: While there is often a certain scepticism among trade negotiators relative to G-8 pronouncements on trade, 93 percent of respondents agreed that the G-8 must express strong support for an on-time conclusion to the Round if Cancun is to have meaningful results. Geneva and capital cities were in full agreement on this point.

CAP Reform Package: 78 percent of respondents saw real progress in the agriculture negotiations tied to EU members’ ability to reach agreement this summer on a CAP reform package that contains substantial progress toward de-coupling support from production. Only 15 percent of participants affirmatively doubted this linkage.

“Peace Clause” Extension: Because the WTO Agreement on Agriculture’s so-called “peace clause” is due to expire a year before the planned end of the Doha Round, the poll suggested an extension would need to be negotiated to permit an orderly conclusion of the Round. Surprisingly, only 27 percent of respondents shared this view, while 29 percent opposed and 42 percent remained undecided. Geneva and capital respondents reacted differently as well, with a third of Geneva participants favouring extension but only 18 percent of capital-based respondents holding that position.

Negotiations on Safeguards: Fifty-four percent of respondents opposed adding safeguards to the “Rules” negotiations at Cancun, with just under one-third of poll participants favouring safeguards negotiations. Geneva differed with capitals again on this question, with proportionately twice as many capitals-based respondents favouring such negotiations post-Doha.

Importance of Developing Country Issues: Nearly three quarters of all respondents felt that a lack of significant progress on issues of concern to developing countries is now negatively affecting these countries’ participation in other areas of the Round. Considerably more of our
Geneva respondents were sensitive to this than were capitals-based participants (who are, after all, reacting from developed country cities).

**Dispute Settlement Negotiations:** 76 percent of all respondents thought WTO Members should agree to a limited package of DSU improvements now, “bank” the results at Cancun and agree to continue negotiating other improvements in the post-Ministerial period. Geneva respondents felt more strongly about this than did capitals-based poll participants.

**Industrial Tariff Formula:** Two-thirds of all respondents felt that Chairman Girard’s “Draft Elements of Modalities” proposal is a good basis on which to proceed with industrial market access negotiations. Notwithstanding the sentiments reported in the press, just 12 percent of those polled positively disagreed that Girard’s approach is a workable basis for the talks.

**Prospects for the “Singapore Issues”**: It looks like we are headed for another dust-up on the Singapore issues at Cancun. Only 24 percent of all respondents saw it as likely that Cancun would see WTO Members reach explicit consensus on modalities for negotiations for investment, competition policy, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement. A considerably larger number (37 percent) thought consensus was unlikely. By a very slight margin, the greatest number of respondents gave agreement a 50-50 chance.

**Part 2: Other Issues**

**US-EU GMO Dispute:** Readers will recall that in our first and second polls, around sixty percent of those polled thought the current dispute was likely. Now that the dispute is at the WTO, 72 percent of respondents hold the view that the dispute will be treated on its own merits and will not negatively impact the prospects for the Round.

**Impact of the Iraq War:** 71 percent of all those polled agreed that the war in Iraq had no negative consequences for the Doha Round. Only two percent of all respondents hold the view that the Round’s prospects suffered as a result of the war.

**Note on Methodology:**

The survey population has been increased somewhat from our first two polls (there were 85 respondents in this third poll) and a few people residing in cities other than our core capitals were included. As before, however, the population surveyed includes Geneva Ambassadors and other government negotiators, WTO Secretariat officials and private sector, government and academic representatives in Geneva, Brussels, Paris, Washington, Ottawa, Tokyo, Canberra and Wellington. Participation in the poll is confidential and anonymous.

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