

supervised elephant cull have chosen not to challenge import bans on ivory maintained by Canada and other parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, despite the economic losses to them.

The increasing public attention to this aspect of the trade and environment file has underlined to trade panels and environmental negotiators alike the desirability of avoiding policy or legal conflicts, and instead ensuring mutual supportiveness, through the process of negotiating and implementing trade and environmental agreements. In practice, of course, countries that do not share the prevailing consensus on how to implement a trade-related environmental obligation are likely to continue to address specific problems through WTO dispute settlement mechanisms, since these are (so far) more effective than those contained in most MEAs.

Another clear change in the behaviour of the Government of Canada and other governments is in the growing use of strategic environmental assessments of trade negotiations. While technical assessments of specific projects have been around for many years, the assessment of policies—and especially of complex policy undertakings such as trade talks—is a more recent phenomenon; in Canada's case, it dates to the NAFTA negotiations in the early 1990s. In line with the Government of Canada's commitment to undertake environmental assessments of all major policies, a Framework for the Environmental Assessment of Trade Negotiations has been developed and is currently being applied to the WTO and FTAA negotiations. The idea behind the Framework is to allow trade negotiators to identify environmental considerations and systematically factor them into all phases of an agreement, from negotiation to implementation, in a transparent and accountable fashion. Canada—with the United States, the European Union and a handful of others—is pioneering this kind of assessment, and has offered to share its experience with any interested country. Our fundamental logic is that "a stitch in time saves nine": it is better public policy to anticipate the probable impact of various trade and investment liberalization scenarios while there is still time to adapt strategies, reinforce benefits and mitigate risks.