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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes
(4 - 6 March 2002, Geneva)

REPORT ON ITS THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Executive summary

Reply from the Office of Legal Affairs: The Specialized Section discussed the reply concerning national certification schemes. The results were included in the work on developing a new introduction. Several proposals for future work were made.

New introduction to the standard: The draft text, developed by the Bureau was reviewed and amended. It will be further discussed in the Bureau and a new proposal will be made for the next session. (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.2 for the draft text).

Introduction of international classes: The proposal from Canada and the United Kingdom was accepted with some changes, e.g. making optional the marking of the field generation. (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.1 for the text which will be proposed to the Working Party for adoption).

Minimum provisions for the production of pre-basic TC: The proposal from the United Kingdom was adopted (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.1) with the exception of references to test methods mentioned in other regimes. This question will be discussed at a later session.

National Certification Schemes: The secretariat presented the draft results extracted from the answers to the questionnaire to which 30 countries had replied. A publication of the results will be prepared by the Bureau.

WTO: A member of the WTO Secretariat informed the meeting on the status of the UNECE standard as from the point of view of the WTO agreements (TBT and SPS)

Next meetings of the Bureau: France (8-10 July) and Canada (30 September to 4 October).

Next meeting of the Specialized Section: 6 to 8 March 2003 after the Specialized Section on Early and Ware Potatoes which will be held from 4 to 5 March.

Opening of the session

1. The session was held in Geneva from 4 to 6 March 2002. It was chaired by Mr. Pier Giacomo Bianchi (Italy).
2. The session was opened by the Chief of the Trade Policy and Governmental Cooperation Branch, Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos. She introduced the new structure of the Trade Division which consists of three branches: trade policy and governmental cooperation, global trade solutions and timber. She also informed delegations that Ms. Brigita Schmögnerová from Slovakia had been named as new Executive Secretary of UNECE.
3. Ms. Cram-Martos said that the Specialized Section had an important role in ensuring the quality of seed potatoes which in turn ensures the quality of potatoes used for consumption. She said that potatoes owed their importance as a commodity to the fact that they were the basis of many traditional dishes which form part of the cultural heritage of many countries.
4. She mentioned some of the items to be discussed at the meeting:
 - the development of a new introduction to the standard (for which the Bureau had prepared a proposal in three meetings);
 - the compilation of the answers to the questionnaire on national certification schemes to which 30 countries had replied - a first draft would be available which had been prepared by the secretariat with the assistance of an intern;
 - the definition of classes within categories;
 - the influence of Genetically Modified Organisms on the UNECE standard.
5. She recalled the successful meeting of rapporteurs which was held in Moscow in 2000 where interesting recommendations had been made. She expressed the hope that the group would reflect at this session on how to assist countries through technical cooperation projects.
6. She closed her introduction by thanking the population of Switzerland for the trust shown in the United Nations through their vote in favour of joining the organisation.

Participation

7. The session was attended by delegations from the following countries: Canada, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.
8. A representative of the World Trade Organization attended the session following an invitation by the secretariat.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/1

9. The provisional agenda was adopted with the following additions and changes:
10. Deletion of the following documents that were not received:
TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14.

11. Addition of the following informal documents:
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.1 (Secretariat), agenda item 4 (a)
 - TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.2 (France), agenda item 5
 - TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.3 (Secretariat), agenda item 13
 - TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.4 (Canada), agenda item 10

12. The secretary recalled that according to the decisions taken at the last session, the group would hold three full days of discussions at this session which would mean that the report would not be available in all official languages at the time of the reading of the report.

Item 2: Matters of interest arising since the thirty-first session

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/2

13. The Specialized Section noted the document which summed up the relevant outcome of the fifth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

14. The document also contained the reply received from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) to questions related to the WTO TBT and SPS agreements which had come up in the discussions of the Specialized Section.

15. The Specialized Section welcomed the replies which were seen as helpful in deciding about the future direction of the standard.

16. In their reply, the Office of Legal Affairs sees no legal problems with the explicit mention of the WTO-SPS agreement in the standard. Concerning the resolution of disputes on TBT matters, they state that, for disputes between two WTO members, the WTO dispute settlement procedure applies. If one of the countries is not a member of WTO then the dispute has to be settled differently. They note in this respect that the UNECE did not contain any provisions for the settlement of disputes.

17. The reply sparked off an interesting discussion on different subjects related to the application and promotion of the standard.

Application and possible future tasks for the standard

18. It was said that there were two possible types of client for the standard where disputes could arise:
- Between private exporters and importers who are trading on the basis of a contract and who are free to agree on a higher quality. For these, dispute settlement procedures exist, e.g. in the framework of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).
 - Between Governments, conflicts could arise owing to one country imposing higher measures for import which are not justified in the opinion of the exporting country.

19. Several delegations felt that the standard should make reference to dispute settlement procedures.

20. It was mentioned that phytosanitary import requirements specify either the absence of a disease or tolerances which vary between countries. It was suggested that the harmonization of these tolerances was a possible task for the UNECE standard.

21. The delegation of the Netherlands said that, in addition to the broad field of quarantine diseases which were not dealt within the UNECE standards, a disease may be regarded as a quarantine disease by some countries but as a regulated non-quarantine disease by other countries. They said that if some countries say that they accept the standard they should not be able to consider any common disease as a quarantine disease. There should be more active information about the standard so that Governments start discussing these items and realize that trading on the basis of the standard is the most effective way to minimise trade barriers.

22. The delegation of Canada raised the problem of equivalence and universally harmonized application of the concept of regulated non-quarantine diseases.

Application of the standard

23. The delegation of the United States said that the UNECE standard was a minimum standard which in their opinion meant that countries could apply higher standards for certification but should not apply lower standards. The present tolerances in the standard were not acceptable to the United States but the UNECE standard was being used as a model to improve the US Export Standard for Seed Potatoes. However, the USA might be able to adopt the UNECE standards at a later date.

24. The delegate of Switzerland said that his country respected the UNECE Standard, which was the basis for the possibility to export seed potatoes into the European Union. He said that following this example could lead to further liberalization of trade.

25. The delegate of Poland said that his country was in a similar situation to Switzerland.

Participation

26. It was mentioned that more countries than the countries present were interested in the trade of seed potatoes and should be informed of the work of the Specialized Section.

UNECE label

27. A number of delegations agreed that the standard should have a recognizable UNECE label similar to the label used by the OECD seed scheme to increase the visibility of the standard and its use.

Item 3: Information on the results of the meetings of the Bureau

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/3 (report of the meetings of the bureau)

28. The secretariat thanked the Chairman for the organization of the Bureau meeting in Milan in July 2001 and the Vice-Chairman for the organization of the Bureau meeting in Changins in September 2001. A further bureau meeting was held close to Geneva in January 2002. The main work achieved at the meetings was the drafting of a new introduction for the UNECE standard for seed potatoes and the preparation of the agenda of the Specialized Section. The specific items discussed will be dealt with under the relevant agenda items.

Item 4: Review of the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/2001/9/Add.11 (Text of the standard in force)

29. The Chairman proposed to review the reservations contained in the annexes:

- Annex IV: Reservation in footnote 4 was maintained by Romania.

The secretariat will write to Belgium, Greece and Sweden, concerning their reservations. If no reply is received within 3 months the reservations will be considered as withdrawn.

- Annex V: Correction: The footnote reference 5 should be moved after 2 (b). France and Portugal should be deleted from footnote 5 and added to footnote 6. The secretariat will write to Belgium and Germany concerning their reservations. If no reply is received within 3 months the reservations will be considered as withdrawn.

Item 4(a): Proposal for a new introduction to the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.2 (Secretariat)

30. At its last meeting, the Specialized Section decided to rewrite the introduction to the standard to reflect more effectively its purpose and application. A draft text was developed in the Bureau meetings.
31. The Specialized Section reviewed the text in detail. Sections 1, 2 and 3.1 were agreed. In section 3.2 the indent “identity and purity of the variety” was amended to read “varietal identity and purity”.
32. The Bureau had proposed to delete II. E. on national phytosanitary provisions because the first paragraph was included in section 3.3 of the new introduction which listed items not covered by the standard. It was also proposed to delete the second paragraph of II. E. which concerned the right of countries to impose stricter measures than provided for in the standard against the introduction of regulated non-quarantine pests which do not exist there or seem particularly injurious to the crops in (part of) the country. The Bureau proposed to handle these stricter measures through reservations for those pests already included in the standard. For pests not included in the standard, no specific provisions had been foreseen. It had been implied that these could be handled through additional regulations by countries.
33. Several delegations felt that this was not sufficient. They preferred to see the right of countries to protect certain areas against diseases that are not prevalent there explicitly written in the standard.
34. The delegation of the United States said that, as the UNECE standard was a minimum standard, there was a need to have the possibility of setting stricter requirements.
35. The delegate of the Netherlands said that in the case of less strict requirements, one could not speak of application of the UNECE standard. In case of stricter requirements, these should be technically justified.
36. Several proposals were made on how to deal with these problems:
37. Concerning stricter measures for pests already included in the standard, the delegate of Switzerland said that he could understand the need of countries where these pests did not exist to have very strict standards. He further said that he could also see the needs of those countries where these pests did exist to have less strict standards to allow them to trade. He proposed including both tolerances in the standard and let countries choose which ones they wanted to use.
38. The Chairman said that it might be possible to solve this problem through the introduction of international classes.
39. The delegation of the Netherlands proposed that reference should be made in the standard to the principles developed by IPPC for regulated non-quarantine pests.
40. It was decided that the text as prepared by the Bureau would be reproduced as addendum 2 to the report containing the passages still under discussion in square brackets. (TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.2)

Item 4 (b) Development of international classes within categories

TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/5 (Canada, United Kingdom)

41. At the last meeting of the Specialized Section in March 2001, a proposal (Trade/WP.7/GE.6/2001/4) for the "Introduction of Sub-divisions in the Categories" was presented by the rapporteurs from Canada and the United Kingdom. The principle of sub-division of all categories was accepted and the rapporteurs were requested to prepare a revised paper based on comments at the meeting.

42. The delegation of the United Kingdom introduced the document and said that the proposal attempted to combine the two systems used today - classification into categories and field generations. In addition, classes had been defined within the categories to present more choice for seed buyers within the standard.

43. The proposal to include a field generation marker was discussed extensively. The different positions and statements are reflected below.

44. The delegation of the United States said that in their country a limited field generation system was used indicating the exact field generation of the material but also the quality in a second marker. The success of this system had been demonstrated by the considerable reduction in the prevalence of certain diseases, e.g. blackleg, following the introduction of limited generation systems in the USA.

45. The delegation of the United States considered that the use field generation labelling should be confined to seed stocks derived from micropropagation. They said that the field generation system is more transparent than the differentiation into different quality categories and classes that are used differently in different countries.

46. The delegate of Romania supported the mandatory introduction of field generation into the standard. She said that the number of field generations gave the best information of quality concerning seed vigour.

47. The delegate of the United Kingdom said that the field generation was important information for the customers. The information was easy to obtain for certification authorities and should therefore also be given for reasons of transparency.

48. The delegate of the Netherlands said that in his country about 40% of the seed was derived from clonal selection. He said that field generation might be considered important by buyers and should be given when the buyer asks for it. In his country the number of generations used in the system was reduced recently to maximize quality.

49. He was of the opinion that:

- If included in the standard, field generations should be optional regardless of whether micropropagation or clonal selection was used.
- Material derived from micropropagation and clonal selection do not differ in quality.
- Field generation alone is no indication for the quality because FG3 seed from one growing region is by definition not comparable to FG3 seed from another region.

50. The delegate of France said that in his country micropropagation is used to produce 98% of their seed potatoes. He further said that field generation was important information for the producer but it should not be used in marketing because customers might be misled by the earlier generation even though this was not a sufficient condition for quality. He said that there should be a UNECE label to increase transparency and knowledge of the standard.

51. The delegate of Switzerland said that he could not see the connection between field generation and yield or seed vigour because this also depended on the climatic conditions and farming methods. He said he was interested in achieving an objective standard with clear and well defined categories and classes which could be used to establish equivalency between seed coming from different countries. He also said that the standard should ensure traceability.
52. Many delegations agreed to this and felt that the proposal was a first step towards harmonization and transparency in international trade.
53. Taking into account the different concerns mentioned in the discussion, the Specialized Section agreed to the following compromise:
54. In TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/5 amend B. (iv) to read:
- “Each class may additionally be classified according to the number of generations (FG1, FG2 etc.). The final designation of a class will therefore contain a class name and may contain a field generation record (e.g. Basic I FG3, Certified I FG3).”
55. In addition the following definition should be added to annex VIII of the standard:
- “The generation number is defined by the number of growing cycles since the first introduction in the field after micropropagation or clonal selection.”
56. The proposal for the introduction of international classes was adopted with the amendments above. The text has been included in the revised standard reproduced as addendum 1 to this report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.1).
- Item 4 (c): Minimum conditions for production of pre-basic TC*
TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/11 (United Kingdom)
57. The paper set out proposals for revising annexes II, IV and V to complement the proposal to introduce ‘international classes’ into the Standard and in particular to define more specifically the requirements for the production of Pre-basic TC class seed potatoes with cross-referencing to other schemes, where appropriate.
58. The main parts of the document, being consequential amendments to the introduction of international classes were adopted and are reflected in the revised standard reproduced as addendum 1 to this report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.1).
59. There was a lengthy discussion on the referencing of methods of other schemes as proposed in document 2002/11 for annex I, proposal 2. and annex V, proposal 2. References to methods described in the EPPO scheme had been proposed by the United Kingdom to give users a starting point to testing methods which had been accepted by regional bodies of international organizations.
60. Most delegations agreed that methods were important but were against making a reference to the methods recommended by just one other organization. If EPPO was referenced then NAPPO methods should also be referenced. The problem of correct sampling (testing on tubers or grow outs) was also raised.
61. The delegate of the Russian Federation said that methods were the key to a harmonized application of the standard. He warned not to take hasty decisions as this was a complicated issue. The task of the Specialized Section should be to select carefully an approved method as a standard method.

62. The delegate of Romania agreed and stressed that there was no other group in the world dealing with harmonization of test methods used for seed potatoes. She said that it could be the task of the Specialized Section to select a standard method maybe through a ring test. She said also that, for seed potatoes to be in conformity with the UNECE standard, it was necessary to use harmonized methods for the determination of seed quality. Standard methods should be included in a new annex to the standard.

63. The delegate of the Netherlands said that the Specialized Section should not work on methods as most delegates did not have the necessary specialized knowledge. He said the group should concentrate on making an inventory of useful commonly accepted and validated methods, which could be referenced in the standard.

64. The delegate of Switzerland said that for other seed, FIS, ISTA and OCDE had cooperated on harmonization of methods but no similar initiative existed for seed potatoes. He proposed to stay with the existing text for the time being.

65. It was decided not to make reference to any other schemes at the moment. In the future a meeting of the Bureau should look more into the possibilities of referencing methods or including standard methods in a new annex to the standard. The replies to the questionnaire should serve as a starting point for this question as they give an indication about methods used in different countries.

Item 4 (d) Amendments to Annex IX to include common and powdery scab

66. At the meeting of the Bureau in Changins the delegation of France offered to prepare a proposal to amend annex IX to include common and powdery scab.

67. The delegate from France introduced the system used in his country for visual inspection of tubers. It contains a series of photographic scales concerning different diseases. He said that it would be possible to prepare a similar system for introduction into the UNECE standard. He said that the annex as it stands today had been very useful in the past but could be ameliorated today to serve as a reference for inspection.

68. It was decided that, for the first stage France will draft a concrete proposal to include images of reference tubers for rhizoctonia, common and powdery scab and, in a second stage, will prepare a proposal on how to further improve the annex.

69. The delegate of France suggested to have an explanatory brochure for seed potatoes possibly in cooperation with the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.

70. The delegate from the United Kingdom suggested that the title of annex IX could be amended to cover both common and powdery scab as the images were appropriate for both diseases.

71. Discussions on this topic will continue in the Bureau meetings and at the next Specialized Section meeting.

Item 5: Separation of quality and quarantine pests

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/8 (France)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.2 (France)

72. At the Bureau meeting in Milan it was decided to look into the possibility of separating quality and quarantine pests in the standard. The discussion was continued at the Bureau meeting in Changins and is summarized in TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/3.

73. The delegation of France presented a list of the potato diseases commonly covered by seed potato certification schemes.

74. It was suggested that, in pursuing this work, account should be taken of work done by other organizations in this field: e.g. EPPO, NAPPO pest fact sheets.

75. It was decided that the list would be developed by France indicating which are considered as quarantine and which as quality pests. Comments and contributions from other delegations should be taken into account if they are sent to the delegate of France by 30 May 2002. The replies to the questionnaire will also be taken into account. The Bureau will discuss the list at its meeting in summer 2002.

Item 6: List of varieties

76. The delegation of Switzerland will prepare a paper explaining:

- How OECD deals with this question;
- Why it should be included in the standard (transparency, GMO, use of micropropagation);
- How it could be included in the standard.

Item 7: Superficial necrosis caused by virus

77. The delegations of France and the United Kingdom will prepare a proposal concerning superficial necrosis caused by virus (e.g. rattle) for the next session.

Item 8: Standardization of methods

78. At the last session the delegation of the Russian Federation suggested as a possible new area of work the standardization of methods for detection of viruses and pests.

79. The question had already been discussed in detail under agenda item 4 (c).

80. The Chairman said that the UNECE standard could not cover everything concerning testing but could serve as a starting point to assist in the choice of the appropriate method.

81. It was suggested that methods for testing varietal integrity other than visual inspection could be included because the UNECE standard was the only international scheme dealing with this question. An informal paper from Canada was available on this matter (TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.4).

82. It was decided to proceed as follows:

- France will complete the table on pests with a column on possible methods existing for the pests contained in the UNECE standard.
- The replies from the questionnaire should be taken into account.
- France will send the table to the secretariat (until 30 May 2002) who will distribute it to all delegations for comments which should be sent by 30 June 2002.
- On the basis of the results the Bureau will prepare a proposal for the next session.

Item 9: Concerns of seed buyers

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/12 (United Kingdom)

83. The Specialized Section will continued the discussion on concerns of seed buyers at the next session based on the information provided by the United Kingdom.

84. The delegate of the Netherlands said that the results were similar in his country.

85. As the buyers had shown some discontent with the uniformity of size grading it was proposed to hold an informal discussion on grading tolerances.

Item 10: Questions related to GMO

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.4 (Canada)

86. The delegate of Canada distributed a discussion paper on methods and approaches to enhance varietal integrity within seed potato certification systems.

87. The Specialized Section welcomed the document which could serve as a basis for further discussion in the Working Group (Canada, the Russian Federation and the European Community) dealing with the questions of identity of the variety, the impact of GMOs on the standard, the possibility of labelling the variety and whether the present system is still valid to assess varietal identity and purity.

88. The delegation of Russia will prepare a document concerning the situation in Russia for the next session.

89. Also for the next session, the European Community will provide the relevant Council decision and the report of the Standing Committee establishing a threshold.

Item 11: Destination tolerances for tuber rots

90. At an earlier session possible ways to deal with tuber rots in the standard were discussed, such as low tolerances at shipment, tolerances at destination and quality assurance of production, storage, transport and handling. A working group (Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom) was formed to discuss quality assurance (based on information from France) and destination tolerances for tuber rots. The item will remain on the agenda.

Item 12: Discussion on areas of certification schemes that might benefit from further standardization

Field inspection tolerances

91. At the last session it had been decided that work on field inspection tolerances should start after integrating the principle of international classes into the standard (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2001/8, para. 29).

92. The delegations of the Netherlands and Portugal will prepare a proposal for the next session.

93. The delegations of Canada and the United Kingdom will prepare a list of pests to be checked on the candidate nuclear stock material.

Item 13: Results of the questionnaire on national certification schemes

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.2

94. The secretariat has received 30 replies to the questionnaire up to now. A preliminary compilation of the replies, in table format, had been prepared by the secretariat.

95. The Specialized Section thanked the secretariat for the excellent work done.

96. Some corrections were pointed out which will be integrated into the document. It was mentioned that it could be useful to include an analysis of the replies to each question.

97. It was decided that the work should proceed as follows:
- Delegations would check the document and provide comments to the secretariat until 6 April 2002;
 - The secretariat will contact countries who have not replied up to now and who might want to contribute;
 - After 6 April the secretariat will prepare a revised version of the document based on the comments received. This version will be sent to all delegations and be put on the Internet.
 - The document will have its final reading at the Bureau meeting in summer where more comments can be integrated and will then be published on paper and on the Internet.

Item 14: Status of the revised UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes, its promotion and future role

98. Discussions on this subject were held under different agenda items.

Item 15: Matters of interest related to the activities of the World Trade Organization

99. The Secretary of the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee (SPS), Ms Gretchen Stanton gave an introduction into the WTO agreements.

100. She addressed the different concerns mentioned by delegations in the following list:
- How does WTO see the link with the UNECE standard?
 - What is the procedure to judge the technical justification given by a state?
 - How does WTO see the possibility for a state to have stricter regulation?
 - How to differentiate TBT from SPS?
 - How to be sure whether rules fall into SPS?
 - Is there a model procedure to resolve disputes?
 - Which are the model standards referred to to solve controversies?
 - Can the UNECE standard be recognized by WTO?

Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

101. The WTO-SPS Agreement encourages members to use standards set by international standard-setting bodies. As such, the Agreement mentions exclusively three international bodies:

- IPPC, International Plant Protection Convention,
- Codex Alimentarius Commission,
- OIE, Office International des Epizooties.

102. The Agreement provides that for matters not covered by the three organizations explicitly mentioned, appropriate standards, guidelines and recommendations of other relevant international organizations open for membership to all WTO Members, as identified by the SPS Committee, can be used.

103. If a WTO member uses different standards or imposes stricter measures, it has, if challenged by another Member, the burden to prove that the measure is justified scientifically to ensure an appropriate level of protection (risk assessment).

104. The standards for seed potatoes set by the WP.7, EPPO and NAPPO are at present not recognized by the SPS agreement. The standards could be used if

- the SPS Committee agrees that the matters are not covered by IPPC and the organization in question is open to all WTO members; or

- a country has done a pest risk assessment which proves scientifically that these standards ensure an appropriate level of protection.

Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade

105. The situation in the WTO-TBT agreement is different to SPS. The agreement also encourages members to use international standards but it only mentions principles and good practices for standardization without recommending any specific organization. Bodies can be recognized as international standard-setting bodies if they are open to all WTO members. There is no formal recognition procedure.

106. Countries may set stricter standards than international standards to ensure a higher quality if they do this in compliance with the agreement (e.g. no different treatment to products coming from other countries etc.).

Distinction between TBT and SPS

107. Sometimes it is difficult to decide if a measure falls under the TBT or SPS agreement. In general it can be said that if a measure has as its goal to prevent the introduction or spread of diseases (human, animal or plant), it falls under the SPS Agreement.

108. If a measure makes reference to diseases with the goal of guaranteeing the quality or economic value of goods without speaking about the spread/introduction of diseases, then it should fall under the TBT agreement.

109. An SPS measure aims at keeping out diseases that are not present in the territory of a country. From the present work of IPPC it is not yet clear which diseases fall into the category of neither being quarantine nor being regulated non-quarantine diseases.

Dispute settlement

110. The WTO does not actively control the application of the agreements. The dispute settlement procedure starts when a WTO member challenges another concerning a measure which it considers not in line with one of the the agreements. The structure of the dispute settlement procedure can be found on the WTO home page.

111. The Specialized Section thanked Ms. Stanton for coming to the meeting and provide the very useful information.

Item 16: Next meetings and future work

112. The delegation from France offered to hold the next meeting of the Bureau from 8 to 10 July 2002 in Brittany. All members of the Specialized Section are welcome to participate. An invitation with further details will be sent out by the UNECE secretariat.

113. The delegation of Canada offered to host a second meeting of the Bureau in Ottawa from 30 September to 4 October 2002. Further details will be communicated by the UNECE secretariat.

114. The next meeting of the Specialized Section has been tentatively scheduled to take place from 6 to 8 March 2003. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes will be held on 4 and 5 March and delegations are welcome to participate in that meeting also if they so wish.

115. Future work of the Specialized Section will include:

- New introduction (Bureau)
- Publication on national certification schemes (Bureau)

- Field tolerances (Netherlands, Portugal)
- List of pests to be checked on the candidate nuclear stock material (Canada, United Kingdom)
- Web site on national legislations (United States)
- UNECE label
- Discussion of grading equipment
- Tuber rots, destination tolerances, quality assurance (Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom)
- Further development of annex IX (France)
- Dispute settlement procedures
- Separation of quality and quarantine pests (Bureau)
- Inclusion of test methods/ referencing methods (Bureau)
- Superficial necrosis caused by virus (France, United Kingdom)
- Concept of variety (Switzerland)
- Impact of GMO on the standard (Canada, Russian Federation and European Community)
- Concerns of seed buyers
- Discussion with representatives of IPPC, EPPO, NAPPO

Item 17: Preparation of the 58th session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

116. The secretariat will transmit the revised standard to the Working Party for adoption (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/15/Add.1)

Item 18: Other business

117. No discussions were held under this item.

Item 19: Election of officers

118. The Specialized Section elected Mr. P.G. Bianchi (Italy) as its Chairman and Mr. P. Miauton (Switzerland) as its Vice-Chairman.

Item 20: Adoption of the report

119. The Working Party adopted the report of its thirty-second session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

Task list

Write to Sweden, Belgium and Greece concerning their reservations in annex IV	Secretariat	asap
Write to Germany and Belgium concerning their reservations in annex V	Secretariat	asap
Proposal to include images of reference tubers for rhizoctonia, common and powdery scab	France	May 2002
Complete list of potato diseases with columns indicating: - which are considered as quarantine and which as quality pests; - possible methods for tests (Comments and contributions from other delegations by 30 May 2002; replies to the questionnaire to be taken into account)	France	May 2002
Definition of the concept of variety: - How does OECD deal with this question; - Why should it be included in the standard (transparency, GMO, use of micropropagation) - How it could be included in the standard.	Switzerland	May 2002
Finalize new introduction	Bureau	July 2002
Inform other countries about the work of the Specialized Section	Bureau	July 2002
Review possibilities of referencing methods/ including standard methods in a new annex to the standard using replies from the questionnaire as a starting point for an indication about methods used in different countries	Bureau	July 2002
Proposal concerning superficial necrosis caused by virus (e.g. rattle)	France and United Kingdom	September 2002
Proposal for integration of field tolerances in the standard	Netherlands and Portugal	September 2002
List of pests to be checked on the mother tuber	Canada and United Kingdom	September 2002
Finalize publication on national certification schemes	Bureau, Secretariat	October 2002
Provide the relevant Council decision and the report of the Standing Committee establishing a threshold for GMO	European Community	December 2002
Discussion paper on GMO	Russian Federation	December 2002
Invite IPPC, EPPO and NAPPO to the next session	Secretariat, Chairman	December 2002