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Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards
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Item 8(e) of the provisional agenda

Assessment of the Implementation of UNECE Standards*

Note by the secretariat : The Specialized Sections TRADE/WP.7/GE.1 and TRADE/WP.7/GE.2 have discussed a proposal from Germany on how to report on the acceptance and application of UNECE standards. This document sums up the result of these discussions.

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*   The present document has been submitted after the official documentation deadline by the Trade Development and Timber Division due to resource constraints.

1.   **Summary of the discussion at the 51st session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/18)**

The Specialized Section reviewed the list of acceptances to simplify it. The Specialized Section felt that the main interest was to know if a standard was accepted and if it was applied.

Based a proposal in document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2005/17 the Specialized Section agreed on definitions for the "acceptance" and the "application" for UNECE Standards for fresh fruit and vegetables:

> "**Acceptance** of a UNECE standard" means that the text of the standard has been adopted by the UNECE WP.7 and/or the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables (OECD Scheme)."

The Specialized Section assumes that in this case, the Working Party acts for all members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (whether present in the room at adoption or not) and that the same holds for the members of the OECD Scheme.

The Specialized Section invited the secretariats of WP.7 and the OECD Scheme to confirm with their legal advisors that this assumption was correct or if a written acceptance procedure was necessary for those countries not having attended the relevant meeting.

For non-members of UNECE and the OECD Scheme, the Specialized Section felt that acceptance could be assumed if they were represented at the relevant meeting or if they had confirmed so in writing.

> "**Application**" of a UNECE standard means implementation in the national legislation.

The table should include the option that industry and/or inspection services take the UNECE standards as a reference on a voluntary basis without reference to national legislation.

The Specialized Section decided not to assess in the list at which stage of marketing the standards were applied.

2.   **Summary of the discussion at the 52nd session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19)**

Additionally to the discussion held in GE.1 it was pointed out that the list of countries for the dry and dried fruit standards (in INF.1) was wrong. Instead of the list of EU members it should be the list of members of the OECD Scheme for all standards except for Inshell Hazelnuts and Inshell Walnuts.

The Specialized Section also discussed how to keep the list updated, as this information was the basis of the results for agricultural standards in the UN budgeting process. As countries do not regularly report on the use they make of the standards it is difficult for the secretariat to obtain this information.

Several delegations recognized that the number of countries using UNECE Standards was higher then the number known.

It was suggested to check the number of downloads from the UNECE website and through this identify countries that use the standards. This information could then be confirmed with the relevant ministry. The secretariat replied that at the moment this was not possible technically but possibly in the near future.

It was also proposed to take the percentage of the produce worldwide that was inspected according to UNECE standards as a measure for the success of the work but in general delegations felt that this number was too difficult to determine.

3.   Updated proposal for reporting on acceptance and application of UNECE standards

Note by the secretariat: The following text has been prepared on the basis of the discussions held and presents the definitions in a slightly different way to make them easier to read. The complete list of acceptances is not reproduced in this document. The secretariat will prepare an updated version based on the information presently on the Internet and the decision taken by the Working Party. The assumption made that the Working Party acts on behalf of all UNECE members still needs to be verified with the legal service. Further information will be given at the Working Party.

"**LIST OF ACCEPTANCES OF UNECE STANDARDS**

In the following a UNECE member is assumed to **accept** a UNECE Standard if the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards has adopted the standard and the member has not presented a reservation at the relevant session (orally or in writing).

A member of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables is assumed to **accept** a UNECE/OECD Standard if the Plenary Meeting of the Scheme has adopted the standard and the member has not presented a reservation at the relevant session (orally or in writing).

UN members that are not members of UNECE or the OECD Scheme are assumed to **accept** a UNECE standard if they have attended the relevant session of the Working Party and not presented a reservation or if they have informed the UNECE Secretariat that they accept the standard.

Application of the standards means implementation in the national legislation.

The following codes are used in the list of acceptances:

Country code only	If a country is listed under a standard only with its ISO country code this means that this country accepts the UNECE Standard.
ISO country code with superscript:	
1	UNECE standard implemented in national legislation
2	UNECE standard accepted and similar EC standard applied at all stages of marketing
3	UNECE standard accepted and similar national standard applied
4	UNECE standard used as a voluntary reference

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