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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development
Fifty-fifth session, Geneva, 3 to 5 November 1999

REPORT OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit): The trial period for the revised UN/ECE Recommendation for Walnut Kernels was extended for one year (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.3). The UN/ECE recommendation for Inshell Walnuts was adopted as a revised UN/ECE standard (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.4). A new UN/ECE standard for Cashew Kernels was adopted (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.5).

Early and Ware Potatoes: No amendments to the UN/ECE standards for early and ware potatoes were proposed. Discussions on the marking of the cooking type, long varieties and the UN/ECE conditions of sale continue.

Seed Potatoes: Two meetings of rapporteurs were held. After its session in January 2000 the Specialized Section will report in detail to the Working Party.

Meat: Work on a standard for bovine carcasses is expected to be finalised in Spring 2000. The general requirements were adopted by the Working Party (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.6). The proposal to change the name of the Specialized Section was adopted.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: The revision of the UN/ECE standard for Apples and Pears was adopted as a UN/ECE Recommendation for a one-year trial period (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.7). The Specialized Section was authorized to discuss splitting the standard for Apples and Pears and to develop a new UN/ECE standard for Pineapples. The proposed revision to the UN/ECE standard for Citrus Fruit was referred back to the Specialized Section. Revisions to the following standards were adopted: Asparagus, Broccoli, Plums and Table Grapes (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.8, -/Add.9, -/Add.10, -/Add.11).

Revision of the working procedures: It was decided to review the existing procedures in a working group.

Elaboration of explanatory material: The question was discussed extensively. It was decided to create a working group to elaborate the exact modalities and procedures for this possible future task.

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 3 to 5 November 1999 and chaired by Mr. M. Vilchez-Barros. The session was opened by the Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division, Mrs. C. Cosgrove-Sacks.

2. Mrs. Cosgrove-Sacks said that the UN/ECE continued to accord the highest priority to the work of the Working Party as an umbrella for the work on commercial standardization of perishable produce. She informed delegates of other work done in the Trade Division which could be of relevance to the work of the Working Party:

- intellectual property rights;
- international commercial arbitration;
- electronic commerce where new technologies are used to implement standards and recommendations. In June 2000 a major forum on electronic commerce will be organized by the Trade Division;
- new strategies and principles regarding relations with the business sector.

Participation

3. The session was attended by delegations from the following countries: France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

4. The European Community was also represented.

5. On the invitation of the secretariat, a representative of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables participated in the session.

Adoption of the Agenda

Document: TRADE/WP.7/1999/1

6. The delegation of the United States withdrew document TRADE/WP.7/1999/4 on revision of the working procedures (agenda item 8).

7. The following documents representing the outcome of the 45th session of the Specialized Section on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables were added to agenda item 7:

- TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.1 (Secretariat) - Apples and Pears
- TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.2 (Secretariat) - Citrus Fruit
- TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.3 (Secretariat) - Asparagus, Table Grapes, Plums
- TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.4 (Secretariat) - Broccoli
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/15 (Secretariat) - Report of the 45th session.

8. The provisional agenda was adopted with the changes mentioned above.

Matters of interest arising since the fifty-fourth session

Document: TRADE/WP.7/1999/2

9. The Working Party took note of the relevant outcome of the third session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development.

10. The Chairman informed the Working Party of a mission to Beirut on the invitation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCWA) to begin a cooperation on commercial quality standards for perishable produce. Twenty-five UN/ECE standards had been translated into Arabic. He also informed about a seminar in Hungary on producer organizations for fresh fruit and vegetables as a measure to prepare Hungary's entry into the European Union, he was invited by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture to give a presentation on quality standards..

11. The representative of the UN/ECE secretariat thanked the government of Germany for the invitation to give a presentation at the Geisenheimer Tagung and the Government of Slovakia for the invitation to present the work of WP.7 at two training courses for the control services and the trade. He also thanked the Western Pistachio Association for its invitation to give a presentation on UN/ECE standards for Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit) at Pistachio '99 in Hamburg.

Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/12 - Report of the forty-sixth session
TRADE/WP.7/1999/3 - Cashew Kernels

12. The Chairman of the group Mr. W. Staub (Germany) presented the report on the forty-sixth session of the Specialized Section.

Consideration to extend the trial period for the UN/ECE Recommendation for Walnut Kernels for one further year.

13. The Specialized Section discussed this recommendation intensively. A compromise on quality classes and the colour chart for walnut kernels was found. A new version of the colour chart was provided to the rapporteurs and the secretariat by the delegation of the United States. This chart will be further discussed in the Specialized Section.

14. The Working Party adopted the text contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/12, Appendix 4 as a UN/ECE Recommendation for Walnut Kernels for one further year. The recommendation will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.3.

Consideration to adopt the UN/ECE recommendation for Inshell Walnuts as a revised UN/ECE standard.

15. The delegation of France entered a reservation on the tolerances for mouldy walnuts as follows: "Reservation of France requesting 2% for Extra Class, 3% for Class I and Class II."

16. The Working Party adopted the text contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/12, Appendix 5, with the reservation entered by France as a UN/ECE Standard for Inshell Walnuts. The standard will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.4.

17. The Chairman encouraged the Specialized Section to discuss the tolerances again at its next meeting in order to try to come to a solution or compromise so that this reservation can be lifted.

Consideration to adopt the revised UN/ECE Recommendation for Cashew Kernels as a new UN/ECE standard.

18. The Working Party adopted the revised recommendation as a new UN/ECE Standard for Cashew Kernels. The new standard will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.5. The Chairman welcomed the very active participation of India in the development of this standard.

Revision of the standard layout

19. The Specialized Section discussed a proposal from Germany for the revision of the standard layout. The text will be finalised at the next session. New text for the annexes was proposed by Spain and will be discussed at the next session.

20. The Chairman said that if in the course of this revision changes to the Geneva Protocol were deemed necessary then these had to be presented to the Working Party by the Specialized Section.

Future work

21. The following items have been placed on the agenda for the next session:

- review of the UN/ECE standards for Pistachio Nuts;
- review of the UN/ECE Recommendations for Hazelnuts;
- review of the UN/ECE Recommendation for Walnut Kernels;
- work on the standard layout and its annexes;
- work on a dictionary of defects (rapporteur Italy);
- elaboration of a sampling plan.

22. The Specialized Section has decided not to create a standard for pitted dates because it was felt that provisions for pitted dates could be included in a future revision of the UN/ECE standard for dried dates.

23. The Working Party approved the report of the Specialized Section including the future work.

Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.5/1999/6

24. The secretariat gave a short summary of the work done at this year's session of the Specialized Section:

- UN/ECE standards FFV-30, 31 were reviewed; no amendments were deemed necessary;
- It was decided not to include a list of varieties in the standards;
- Delegations indicated the use of the UN/ECE standards in their national legislation;
- The definition of long varieties was discussed and proposals for an amelioration were invited;
- An indicative list of long varieties of irregular shape was established ("Stella", "Ratte", "Corne de Gate"). Responses from the trade will be reported at the next session;
- Proposals for the harmonization of the definition and marking of the cooking type were

- invited;
 - Switzerland gave as practical demonstration of the method for the inspection of a sample;
 - It was decided to await the publication of RUCIP 2000 before deciding whether to revise the UN/ECE General Conditions of Sale for Potatoes
25. The following items were be placed on the agenda of the next session:
- Review of the UN/ECE standards FFV-30, 31
 - Definition of cooking types and eventually a colour scheme for marking of cooking types on consumer packages
 - Review of the definition for long varieties
 - Review of reactions from the trade to the indicative list of long varieties of an irregular shape
 - Each delegation was invited to provide their national legislation to the secretariat
 - Review of RUCIP 2000 and a list of differences to the UN/ECE standards
 - Information on the progress of the OECD explanatory brochure for Early and Ware potatoes
 - Presentation by France on methods used for inspection and sampling
 - Presentation by Belgium of charts used to indicate washability
26. The Working Party approved the report of the Specialized Section including the future work.

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

27. There was no meeting of this Specialized Section since the last session of the Working Party. The secretariat informed the Working Party that two meetings of rapporteurs had been held (Seattle, December 1998, Milan September 1999) where the future direction of the work of the Specialized Section and the UN/ECE Standard for Seed Potatoes were discussed. These proposals will be finalized at the Specialized Section to be held from 31 January to 3 February 2000 and presented to the next session of the Working Party.

Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (Porcine, Bovine and Poultry)

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/5

28. The secretariat gave a short summary of the work done at this year's session of the Specialized Section:
- The group continues work on a standard for beef. The general requirements were separated from beef-specific requirements in the standard so that they can be reused when discussing other types of meat (ovine and caprine).
 - It was decided to review the porcine standard to integrate it into the new framework.
 - The group prepared the meeting of rapporteurs (which was held in Brisbane 5-7 October 1999) to finalize the beef specific requirement.

 - The Specialized Section decided to cooperate with the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies in the creation of a UN/ECE quality trade mark for meat. The rapporteurs will prepare a draft protocol

29. The group intends to finalize the beef specific requirements at its next session and present it to the Working Party for adoption.

30. As proposed by the Specialized Section the Working Party adopted the General Requirements for beef as contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/5, Annex 4 and approved to delete the words "(Porcine, Bovine and Poultry)" from the name of the Specialized Section. The General Requirements will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.6.

31. The Working Party approved the report of the Specialized Section including the future work.

32. The Chairman welcomed the very active participation of the private sector in this group.

Report of the Meeting of Experts on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/15

TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.1, ../INF.2, ../INF.3, ../INF.4

33. The Chairman of the group Mr. D. Priester (United States) presented the report of the group. He said that the attendance of the session had been very good, with delegates from 26 countries, the European Community and several organizations represented. He informed that an informal meeting of several working groups had been held the day before the session and that this method had made it possible to make progress on many standards.

Apples and Pears

34. Work on the text of the standard was finalized. Work on the list of varieties will be finalized at the next session and annexed to the standard.

35. Following the proposal from the Specialized Section, the text as contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.1 was adopted as a UN/ECE Recommendation for a one-year trial period. The recommendation will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.7.

Asparagus

36. Following the proposal from the Specialized Section, the amendments as contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.3 and based on the amendments to the draft Codex standard, were adopted. They will be included in a consolidated version and published as a revised UN/ECE standard in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.8.

Broccoli

37. Following the proposal from the Specialized Section, the corrected standard as contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.4 was adopted. The text will be published as a revised UN/ECE standard in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.9.

Citrus Fruit

38. A revision of the standard (as contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.2) had been agreed by

GE.1 and proposed to the Working Party for adoption as a revised UN/ECE standard. Maturity requirements and green skinned oranges will be discussed in an informal working group and at the next session according to the report of GE.1.

39. In the proposed text, reservations concerning the items still under discussion had been entered. It was felt by several delegations (Greece, Netherlands and Russian Federation) that it would be regrettable to publish a standard containing reservations concerning items which were still on the agenda. Therefore they were not in favour of adopting the text at present.

40. Because no consensus could be found, document TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.2 was not adopted.

41. The Working Party stressed that it accepted all amendments contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.2 and the discussion on these items should not be reopened at the next session of the Specialized Section.

42. The Working Party invited the Specialized Section to discuss maturity requirements and green skinned oranges again at the next session to try to find a solution or compromise for the diverging positions.

Cultivated Mushrooms, Kiwifruit

43. Work on the revision of the standards continues in informal working groups.

Peaches and Nectarines

44. Italy will for the time being stop the experiment of bulk transport because of lack of participation from the industry.

Plums

45. As proposed by the Specialized Section, the amended list of varieties for plums as contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.3 was adopted. The revised standard will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.10.

Table Grapes

46. The issue of trade marks and names of varieties was discussed and several amendments to the list of varieties were agreed.

47. The Working Party decided because of the request from Greece to delete the proposed amendment concerning the variety "Rasaki" and adopted the remaining amendments as contained in TRADE/WP.7/1999/INF.3. The revised standard will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.11.

Pineapples

48. Following the proposal from the Specialized Section, the Working Party authorized the creation

of a new UN/ECE standard for Pineapples.

Future Work

49. Work on individual standards: Apples and Pears, Maturity requirements for Avocados, Beans, Citrus Fruit, Cultivated Mushrooms, Kiwifruit, Pineapples, Plums and Table Grapes.

50. Other work: Issues concerning trade marks and names of varieties, Operational activities, Acceptances, Provisions for miniature fruit and vegetables, Establishment of a list of countries using code marks, Exchange of information on non-conformity cases, Promotion of the work of the Specialized Section, Information from other international organizations.

51. The Working Party approved the report of the Specialized Section including the future work.

Revision of the Working Procedures of the Working Party and its Specialized Sections

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/1998/9, paras. 52 and 53

52. The Chairman recalled that document TRADE/WP.7/1999/4 had been withdrawn by the United States. He invited delegations to discuss the reasons for a revision of the Working Procedures and how the subject could be approached in future sessions.

53. The delegation of the United States said that the intention had been to create a procedural manual as a reference regarding how to work in the sessions of the various groups. He said that some discussions at this session had shown that it was necessary to explain clearer how reservations should be dealt with. He also said that in promoting UN/ECE standards one of the first questions asked was always concerning the procedures for adoption and revision. He said that all necessary information was already now available in different documents but it would be easier to have one consolidated text (e.g. a handbook) where to include all information necessary to show how the UN/ECE groups work.

54. The Chairman said the existing working procedures had been revised by Spain and adopted in 1997 to adapt them to the new framework in which the groups are working. He said that three different levels should be taken into account when revising the working procedures:

- the existing procedures should be known. Copies of the existing procedures should be available at every session and be taken into account by the Chairman and the secretariat.
- the existing procedures should be accepted and applied to maintain the transparency of our work.
- if they can be improved then any revision of the procedures should use the existing text as a basis and mark the proposed changes.

55. The representative of the European Community said that in his opinion it was useful to revise working procedures if this could render the work more efficient. He said that the European Community and its Member States considered that when creating new working procedures for WP.7 it should be taken into account that the European Union Member States have transferred competence on standardization of perishable produce to the Community. He said that the European Community will clarify the issue of sharing activities between the Community and the Member States on this matter as soon as possible and inform the Working Party so that the position can be taken into account in the future revision of the working procedures.

56. The delegation of Switzerland said that before discussing any revisions, the existing procedures should be reviewed. He said that the present session had shown some insecurities concerning procedures. The delegation of Greece supported that statement and said that especially the use of reservations should be reviewed.

57. The Chairman recalled that the working procedures were a compromise and that reservations were sometimes necessary to allow a text to move forward even if there were minor disagreements. Ideally reservations should be maintained only during the trial period and be lifted before the publication of the standard. He said that the reason why UN/ECE standards were respected in international trade was that they were developed on the basis of unanimous consensus in a spirit of compromise.

58. The Working Party decided to create a working group on the review of the working procedures. The delegations of the European Community, Romania, Switzerland and the United States offered to participate in that group. The secretariat and the Chairman of the Working Party will also participate.

Elaboration of explanatory material to UN/ECE standards

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/1999/5 (Secretariat) - discussion paper
TRADE/WP.7/1999/2 (Secretariat) - discussion at the 3rd session of the CIETD

59. The Chairman gave an introduction into the background of this agenda item: At present, most of the work on the interpretation of UN/ECE standards is done in the framework of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables. Exceptions are the UN/ECE Standards on Meat (Poultry, Porc, Beef), Eggs and the color chart for Walnut Kernels.

60. Because of uncertainties concerning the future of the OECD Scheme, the European Commission had initiated a discussion on this question at the second session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED). At the third session of the Committee, the European Commission requested the secretariat to prepare a study on the modalities of preparing explanatory brochures to UN/ECE standards in the framework of WP.7 and its Specialized Sections. This request was supported by the United States and agreed by the Committee.

61. The Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division introduced document /1999/5 containing the secretariat's understanding of the goals of the interpretative work and how this work could be integrated into current work programmes, describing also the costs for personnel and production of the brochures and how they could be financed.

62. The Director emphasized that UN/ECE highly valued the cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in different areas (e.g. electronic commerce) and that UN/ECE is not looking for extra work or taking work away from other organizations. She stressed that it was in this spirit that the document had been prepared because of uncertainties about the future of the OECD Scheme.

63. The Director outlined the main results of the study:

- work on explanatory brochures can be integrated into the framework of the existing specialized sections without any significant extension of the number of meeting days;

- it will not be possible to do the additional work with the existing staff. It will be necessary to recruit an additional staff member at the junior professional level;
- the additional costs including the new staff member, a contribution to travel costs, and printing of the brochures have been estimated as US\$150,000.

64. She said further that taking into account that UN/ECE is working with a 0% growth budget in the next biennium (meaning in effect a 3% reduction of the budget), it will not be possible to include this amount into the regular budget of UN/ECE. This could be done only if member States decided to stop another activity taking place under the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and to transfer the resources to the agricultural standards unit. She said that this was not likely to happen in the near future.

65. She explained that a possibility to fund additional work was to create a trust fund. This trust fund would be managed under strict United Nations procedures and with complete transparency. The UN/ECE would launch an appeal for contributions and then every interested party (public or private) could decide to contribute. She said that there would have to be the expectation of regular contributions because otherwise the recruitment of a staff member to be financed by the trust fund would not be authorized.

66. The delegation of the European Community welcomed the study and the additional clarifications given by the Director. He said that in recent coordination meetings, the European Community and its Member States agreed that it would be useful to regroup the activities on explanatory material at the UN/ECE. He said that the same position would be kept at meetings of the OECD Scheme, where 13 EU Member States are contributing members.

67. He said that it is hoped that the regrouping of activities will lead to a reduction in travel costs and also to an increased efficiency of the work. He said that now that it was clear that the work could be done at UN/ECE it was necessary to discuss in depth the modalities of financing. He informed that EU Member States had asked whether contributions to the trust fund could be financed out of the Community budget. He said that it was necessary to continue the discussions now so that the activity at the UN/ECE would be rapidly operational in the case that the work at the OECD Scheme should be discontinued.

68. The delegation of Finland fully supported the statement made by the European Community and said that it was important to have the work on brochures done somewhere because it was essential for the application of the standards but that the question of funding seems to require further study.

69. The Chairman said that in his view there would be a number of advantages if the interpretative work was done at UN/ECE because this would enable delegates to discuss both brochures and standards at the same time. There would be savings in money and time because of a reduction in travelling. He also said that the participation at the work of WP.7 and its specialized sections was open to all UN and UN/ECE Member States without any formalities.

70. The delegation of Greece recognized that there were problems at the OECD Scheme because several countries had decided to leave the scheme. He said that when discussing the regrouping of activities it should not be forgotten that the OECD Scheme has activities beyond the development of brochures (meeting of heads of control services, maturity requirements, quality assurance etc.). He

asked whether the Scheme would continue with these activities if the work of brochures was transferred to UN/ECE or if this work would also be transferred. He further said that there were many open questions concerning the funding to be answered (Who would contribute? Would there be a scale of contributions? etc.).

71. The delegation of the OECD secretariat regretted the missing transparency under which the proposal for the transfer of the work on the interpretation of standards from OECD to UN/ECE had been developed especially because this proposal could have large implications on the work of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables. The OECD secretariat has never been informed of this proposal neither by the European Community nor by the UN/ECE. The Chairman of the OECD Scheme had also not been informed.

72. She said that the OECD secretariat was surprised about the proposal especially because it was developed while the Scheme was undergoing restructuring in which the European Commission had actively participated and which had resulted in a major revision of the mandate and functioning of the Scheme. One of the objectives of this revision was to reduce the uncertainties referred to in document /1999/5 and one result of this revision has been to facilitate the participation which was now open to all UN Member States, the Specialized Agencies and WTO (see also TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.1).

73. She said that in her view the best way to solve the problem of duplication of international standards for fruit and vegetables was not in making bilateral proposal which only take into account a part of the problem i.e. the interpretation of standards. She said it seemed more efficient to act together with all parties concerned in this work and to take the time to reflect on and study the problems globally.

74. She said that the member States of the OECD Scheme have given the mandate to the Scheme to encourage the establishment of a single international body for the development of grade standards. Beginning at its next session the Scheme will study the best way to reach a conclusion on this subject.

75. The Chairman said that in his opinion there was no lack of transparency. The study prepared by the UN/ECE secretariat was not a proposal but a working document that examined a possible solution for the case that the work on the interpretation of standards would be discontinued at OECD. He said that the report of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise development was very clear and open on this question. The document had been provided to all delegations through the usual distribution channels of the UN/ECE.

76. The delegation of the European Community said that it was his objective to be fully transparent in this matter and regretted if the information provided at the last plenary session of the Scheme had led to any misunderstanding.

77. The Chairman summarized the results of the discussion:

- it is now known that the work can be done at the UN/ECE;
- the creation of a trust fund will be necessary for this (the detailed modalities for contributions to this fund need to be examined)
- it needs to be studied further how the work can be developed at the UN/ECE (organization, output, distribution)

78. He stressed that there would be no duplication of work: the Working Party is prepared to take

on this work if the work at OECD (which is highly appreciated by WP.7 and its specialized sections) is disrupted and if the funding problem can be solved.

79. The Working Party decided to create a working group to further discuss these questions. The delegations from the European Community, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the United States offered to participate in that group. The secretariat and the Chairman of the Working Party will also participate.

Acceptances of UN/ECE Standards

80. The secretariat prepared a questionnaire to obtain information which UN/ECE standards are applied by in the member countries. A correction to be made to document TRADE/WP.7/1999/6 was noted: the code for "not applied" should be changed from "n" into "x". Delegations were invited to provide the relevant information to the secretariat.

81. The delegation of the European Community informed that the Community would have an internal discussion about how to give harmonized replies to the questionnaire.

82. The Chairman said that it would be interesting to have the list of acceptances included on the UN/ECE website as information for exporters especially from third countries.

Report on international workshops and training courses on standardization and quality control

83. The delegation of Poland informed the Working Party that his country had cooperated with Germany and the United Kingdom for the realization of two courses where importers and exporters had taken part. He informed that another international training course would be held next year concerning quality control services.

84. The delegation of the United Kingdom informed that the Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate of the United Kingdom held its 10th International Training Course between 14-16 September 1999. Forty-five delegates from 22 countries attended. The crops covered were: Table Grapes, Strawberries, Cucumbers, Apples, Pears, Plums, Asparagus, Onions, Leeks and Ware Potatoes. Courses also took place in Northern Ireland, Jersey, Slovakia and Portugal. He said that the United Kingdom will continue holding this Training Course in the future.

85. The delegation of Germany said that the Geisenheimer Tagung was held with a large participation from international and national control services earlier this year and that the next Geisenheimer Tagung will be held in 2001.

Matters of interest arising from the work of other international organizations

Codex Alimentarius Commission and Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

86. There was no delegation from FAO present at the session. Information on the work of the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and the Codex Alimentarius Commission was provided by the Codex secretariat and is reproduced as received in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.2.

87. With regards to the comments made by the Codex secretariat on a new UN/ECE standard for

Pineapples, the Working Party stressed that when developing new UN/ECE standards for produce being standardized by Codex, the relevant Codex texts will be taken into account.

European Union

88. The delegation of the European Community informed that the European Union Experts Group has been working on a regular basis and since the last meeting several standards (Carrots, Sweet Peppers, Table Grapes, Plums, Peaches and Nectarines, Asparagus, Peas) were approved. It has been decided to publish the texts in a consolidated form to make them more user friendly. He said that the group continued to take existing UN/ECE standards into account when discussion EU standards to keep the texts harmonized. The differences contained in the texts that were decided this year, do not enforce stricter provisions and will be communicated to UN/ECE for harmonization. Future work of the EU group includes among others: Citrus Fruit, Beans, Walnuts and Hazelnuts. The European Community is also considering amending the regulation laying down quality control for fruit and vegetables.

OECD Scheme

89. The delegation of the OECD Scheme provided information on the work of the Scheme in the last year (see TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.1).

Matters of interest arising from the reports of the:

Working Party on Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

90. The Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs held its fifty-fifth session from 1 to 4 November 1999 in Geneva. Based on a proposal by the Russian Federation the question of including requirements for the transport of fresh fruit and vegetables in the ATP agreement was discussed (see TRANS/WP.11/200 paras 59-67).

91. The delegation of the Russian Federation stressed the necessity to include such requirements in ATP to solve problems of quality and undamaged condition of the products in long international transport.

92. Some delegations were of the opinion that it might only be necessary to include provisions for exceptionally long transports of fresh fruit and vegetables whereas others preferred not to include any provisions at all.

93. The delegation of the Russian Federation was invited to take account of the comments made at the session when preparing a document for the next session.

United Nations Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/CEFACT)

94. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division and head of the Trade Facilitation Section, Mr. H. Hansell provided information on the history and work of UN/CEFACT. He outlined how UN/ECE's work on trade facilitation had gradually become global so that it had been decided to create

UN/CEFACT on the basis of a UN/ECE working party. In UN/CEFACT all delegations (UN Member States, private sector organisations and inter-governmental organisations) are treated equally. The best known recommendations developed by UN/CEFACT are UN/EDIFACT (UN Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport) and the UN Location Code (UN/LOCODE).

95. He said that a possible link between UN/CEFACT and WP.7 could lie in the development of EDIFACT messages for trade of agricultural produce and the application of the UN layout key for the development of export documents.

Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies

96. The secretary of the UN/ECE Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) reported on the activities of this Working Party and in particular on the preparation of an international agreement on technical harmonization. The purpose of the agreement is to harmonize principles, methods and means of elaboration, presentation, implementation and confirmation of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures. The proposed agreement will be of a general nature (a framework agreement) with concrete obligations on specific subjects to be elaborated in protocols to the agreement. It was suggested that one of such protocols could be devoted to a quality mark on meat which is currently prepared by the specialized section on standardization of meat.

97. The Working Party welcomed the idea of cooperation with WP.6. After discussions it was decided that the first draft a quality mark after its preparation by the specialized section on standardization of meat will be submitted for comments to WP.6 and then for further discussions and approval to the Working Party meeting in November 2000.

Other Business

98. The Chairman proposed that a circular letter should be drafted to encourage the participation of both UN/ECE member countries and non-member countries.

99. The Chairman and the secretariat provided informed on a discussion on operational activities to assist southeast European countries and countries in transition which had taken place at the session of GE.1. All specialized sections will be encouraged to continue the discussion on possible contributions. The secretariat will establish a list of experts and possible activities so that decisions for concrete actions can be taken at the next session of the Working Party.

Programme of work

Calendar of Meetings

100. The provisional calendar of sessions of the specialized sections and the Working Party for 2000 is contained in the annex to this report.

Publications

101. The Secretariat asked the Working Party if they would like to have an updated publication of

the booklets of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and Dry and Dried Produce (published in 1991 and 1992) in paper format or if the standards should only be published on the Internet.

102. The Chairman pointed out that the Internet is a very good way obtain this kind of information but it would be useful to have the standards published in A4 loose leaf format as well.

Election of officers

103. According to the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the Working Party elected a Chairperson and two Vice-chairpersons. The Working Party re-elected the present bureau as follows:

Chairperson:	Mr. Vilchez-Barros (Spain)
Vice-chairperson:	Ms. O. Vorovenci (Romania)
Vice-chairperson:	Mr. D. L. Priester (United States of America)

Adoption of the report

104. The Working Party adopted the report of its fifty-fifth session.

ANNEX

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2000

Symbol and name	Session	Location	Date	10-week deadline for documents
GE.6: Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes	30	Geneva	31 January - 3 February	22 November 1999
GE.11: Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (Porcine, Bovine and Poultry)	9	Geneva	27 - 29 March	17 January
GE.1: Specialized Section on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	46	Geneva	22 - 25 May	13 March
GE.2: Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)	47	Geneva	19 - 22 June	11 April
WP.7: Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development	56	Geneva	6 - 8 November	28 August

ADDENDA TO THIS REPORT PUBLISHED IN SEPARATE DOCUMENTS

Information on the work of the OECD Scheme	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.1
Information on the work of Codex Alimentarius	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.2
UN/ECE Recommendation for Walnut Kernels	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.3
UN/ECE Standard for Inshell Walnuts	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.4
UN/ECE Standard for Cashew Kernels	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.5
General Requirements for Meat	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.6
UN/ECE Recommendation for Apples and Pears	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.7
UN/ECE Standard for Asparagus	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.8
UN/ECE Standard for Broccoli	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.9
UN/ECE Standard for Plums	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.10
UN/ECE Standard for Table Grapes	TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.11