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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON TRADE**

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**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK, 2008-2009: WORK ITEMS**

Submitted by the Bureau of the Committee for approval

This document contains the draft 2008-2009 programme of work of the Committee and two of its subsidiary bodies: the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7). Since the third subsidiary body, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), will decide on its programme of work at its plenary meeting only in May 2006, that programme appears in a separate document (ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/27). The draft is consistent with the 2008-2009 strategic framework for Trade Subprogramme, approved by the Commission.

## **1. DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND APPLICATION OF UNECE STANDARDS**

1. In 2008-2009, the Committee on Trade will develop and maintain trade-related instruments, norms, standards and recommendations as part of its core activities.

### **1.1 Trade Facilitation Standards and Recommendations**

2. The Programme of Work of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) will be defined at the UN/CEFACT plenary in May 2006 and set out in document ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/27.

### **1.2 Recommendations on Standardization and Regulatory Policies**

3. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) will:

- (i) Review its current recommendations to Governments on establishing business-friendly standardization and regulatory environments
- (ii) Draw up new recommendations
- (iii) Define the areas for future work on recommendations
- (iv) Identify and recommend best practices for countries to follow

*Target Audience:* Government regulatory authorities.

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised recommendation on reference to standards (2009)
- New guidelines on market surveillance (2008)

### **1.3 Agricultural Quality Standards**

4. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) will:

- (i) Review the recommendations made by its specialized sections
- (ii) Define the directions for their future work on standards
- (iii) Monitor the implementation of standards

*Target Audience:* Governments; quality inspection services; trade, producers' and consumers' organizations.

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Approximately one third of the current total of 89 standards are reviewed for possible revision or updating

(a) Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

5. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1) will:

- (ii) Revise and update its standards
- (iii) Develop new standards
- (iv) Develop criteria for reflecting inner quality/maturity of fruit in the standards
- (v) Align existing standards with the new text of the standard layout
- (vi) Codify the provisions of standards to make them acceptable for use in electronic business and electronic export certification
- (vii) Develop explanatory material for implementation of the standards (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD)

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised and/or new standards
- Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year)

(b) Standards for Dry and Dried Produce

6. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2) will:

- (i) Revise and update its standards
- (ii) Develop new standards
- (iii) Develop explanatory material for standards (subject to approval of the transfer of this work from OECD)
- (iv) Review the UNECE General conditions of sale for dried fruit

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised and/or new standards
- Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year)

(c) Standards for Meat

7. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (GE.11) will:

- (i) Revise and update its standards
- (ii) Develop new standards
- (iii) Develop colour chips/marketing cards for a harmonized presentation of standards for meat
- (iv) Undertake pilot studies (e.g. on the implementation of the bovine standard)

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised and/or new standards
- Revised Internet publication of standards (once a year)

- 2 standards publications

(d) Standard for Seed Potatoes

8. The Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6) will:

- (i) Revise and update the standard for seed potatoes
- (ii) Revise the list of diseases, the pests list and standard test methods
- (iii) Develop a prototype training course for seed potato certification
- (iv) Define the complete control procedure for the certification of seed potatoes
- (v) Study issues related to further development and application of the standard (e.g. the concept of “variety”, the impact of genetically modified organisms on the standard, sizing issues, handling practices and quality assurance methods, dispute settlement procedures)

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Revised standard
- Revised Internet publication of the standard (once a year)

(e) Standards for Eggs and Egg products and for Cut Flowers

9. The secretariat will review current use of these standards.

(f) Practical application of standards

10. Subject to approval of the transfer of work from OECD, a Specialized Section for Heads of National Inspection Agencies will be created. This section will:

- (i) Promote harmonization of the application of UNECE standards
- (ii) Help countries resolve problems arising from the use of UNECE standards for the inspection of products
- (iii) Support mutual recognition of inspections based on UNECE standards
- (iv) Provide information on new inspection methods and tools

*Outputs:*

- 2 annual sessions
- Guidelines for national inspectors

## 2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

11. To ensure that its standards and best practices are developed within a higher-level policy framework, the Committee on Trade will provide a platform for dialogue to:

- (i) Examine and link the work of the subsidiary bodies to policy objectives
- (ii) Identify potential for synergies between the subsidiary bodies

- (iii) Support the development of trade facilitation tools to make worldwide delivery of goods more expeditious and reliable
- (iv) Improve regulatory cooperation to simplify the requirements of export markets for producers; share best practice in setting up a “trader-friendly” regulatory and administrative environment
- (v) Guide the development and practical application of internationally harmonized standards for agricultural produce
- (vi) Promote the UNECE norms and standards in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)

*Target Audience:* Governments, private sector.

*Outputs:*

- 2 Committee forums
- 2 forums on regulatory cooperation (in conjunction with WP.6 sessions)
- 1 forum on agricultural quality standards (in conjunction with WP.7 sessions)
- UN/CEFACT policy forums (see ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/27)

### **3. CAPACITY-BUILDING**

12. The Committee will promote UNECE standards, norms and best practice recommendations and will help less-developed countries in the region build capacity for using them.

#### **3.1 Trade Facilitation and e-business**

13. Details on the capacity-building activities under UN/CEFACT can be found in document ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/27.

#### **3.2 Standardization and Regulatory Harmonization**

14. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies will:

- (i) Promote the principles of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, particularly in countries acceding to the WTO
- (ii) Develop proposals on how to use the “International Model for Technical Harmonization” for regulatory convergence in sectors of interest for Governments
- (iii) Promote the “International Model” in the UNECE and other regions (subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds)

*Target Audience:* Regulatory and trade authorities, private sector, consumers

*Outputs:*

- Workshop on regulatory and standardization matters in an EECCA or SEE country (2008)
- Workshop on regulatory and standardization issues in a country outside the UNECE region (subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds) (2009)

### **3.3 Agricultural Quality Standards**

15. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, in cooperation with partner organizations, will:

- (i) Promote the use of internationally agreed standards for agricultural produce
- (ii) Contribute to training of quality inspectors
- (iii) Help countries build capacity for the application of standards

*Target Audience:* Governments, traders, inspection agencies.

*Outputs:*

- 2 workshops to promote agricultural quality standards
- Workshop for trainers of quality inspectors
- Joint UNECE/OECD/EAN workshop on implementation of quality control and electronic export certification
- Seminar on managing the global food-supply chain

### **3.4 Regional advisory services**

16. Through its regional advisory services, the UNECE will:

- (i) Promote UNECE recommendations, standards and tools, particularly those on trade facilitation and electronic commerce
- (ii) Support trade policy development in EECCA and southeast European countries
- (iii) Develop and promote a subregional strategy for trade facilitation for the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus (drawing on the fifth tranche of the United Nations Development Account project and on the UNECE/Czech Republic technical assistance project)
- (iv) Develop trade facilitation projects in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and other EECCA countries
- (v) Assist trade facilitation and e-business networks in southeast Europe in applying UNECE recommendations, standards and tools

*Target audience:* Governments, business associations, private sector.

*Outputs:*

- 3 trade facilitation workshops in countries covered by the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)
- 2 new networks for trade facilitation in SPECA countries (subject to the demand and available funds)
- 3 trade facilitation workshops in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other EECCA countries

#### 4. COMMUNICATIONS

17. The Committee and its subsidiary bodies will inform the general and specialist public about their activities and outputs. To explain the practical usefulness of UNECE standards, norms and best practice recommendations for trade facilitation and trade-related economic cooperation, the Committee and its subsidiary bodies will:

- (i) Present their activities and outputs at the international forums (held back-to-back with the annual sessions)
- (ii) Use the “Multiplier Point” network in member countries to disseminate UNECE norms, standards, recommendations and other information
- (iii) Maintain the UNECE Trade Promotion Directory to help enterprises and investors find the organizations and information they need for trading or investing in the region
- (iv) Produce publications and information brochures

*Target audience:* Governments, private sector, civil society.

*Outputs:*

- Operational Multiplier Point Network
- Trade Promotion Directory (updated annually)
- Compendium of Norms, Standards and Best Practices for International Trade and Business, CD-Rom publication
- Information brochure on business-friendly regulatory frameworks (2009)
- Information brochure on agricultural quality standards (2009)
- 2 awareness-raising seminars on regulatory, standardization and market surveillance issues
- Publication on promoting trade facilitation in EECCA and southeast European countries (2008 or 2009)
- UN/CEFACT communications outputs (see ECE/TRADE/CEFACT/2006/27).