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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Coordination of
Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Forty-eighth session, Geneva, 23 to 26 April 2002

REPORT OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Addendum 14

Note by the Secretariat : The document contains a summary report of the Asian seminar on Safe and High Quality Food For International Trade, which was co-organized by UNECE in New Delhi from 4 to 5 April 2002.

**INFORMATION ON THE ASIAN SEMINAR ON SAFE AND HIGH
QUALITY FOOD FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,
NEW DELHI, 4 TO 5 APRIL 2002**

Organizers and speakers

The seminar was jointly organized by the Government of India (Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry), UN/ESCAP, UNECE, UN/APCTT, EAN International, EAN India, CIFTI (Food wing of FICCI).

Speakers from the organisers as well as from the World Trade Organisation, European Union, OECD, United States Department of Agriculture, EurepGap and several national and international trade organisations participated.

Objectives

- To raise awareness about new developments in international food trade and emerging public and private safety and quality standards.
- To address concerns of the manufacturers in this region related to HACCP compliance, food standards related to quality and safety to achieve harmonization and greater market access.
- To promote value added food exports through access to international supply chains.

Subjects discussed

- Market access for agricultural products
- Functioning of international supply chains.
- Private and public food safety standards and regulations
- Quality: the key to international food markets
- Examples from Global Trade Facilitation
- Workshops were held on Fresh produce and processed foods, Marine products, Meat and Dairy products

Summary of results

The importance of aligning Asian food supply chains through use of international standards and following international best practices was recognized as the key enabler to achieve greater product acceptance and hence market access.

In this context harmonization and traceability were highlighted as the two major elements in facilitating compliance with international requirements with food safety and quality and it was recognized that efficient and cost effective implementation of these could be best achieved by adopting international Identification Standards like EAN-UCC with IT tools like bar coding, EDI etc.

The two-day event was well attended with wide participation from industry, Government, research institutions and food technologists from many countries in the Asia-Pacific region..

Recommendations of the seminar

The organisers and participants of the Seminar recognise the contribution of the :

1. Agricultural sector and trade in fresh and processed agricultural and food products to promoting food security and poverty alleviation through enhanced economic development, which is also consistent with the United Nations Millennium Declaration.
2. Trade in agricultural commodities and food products to facilitating the participation of Asian countries in the international economy, increasing their share of international markets and enabling all countries to benefit from the fruits of globalisation.
3. International standards for food quality and safety to global trade and the need for their dissemination and implementation in the region as a means to add value to agricultural and food products with its contingent benefits of increased employment and income.
4. Alignment of international agriculture and food supply chains for implementing productivity enhancing technologies and standards in partnership with government, the business community and standards organisations.
5. Collaboration between UNECE, UNESCAP and EAN International in the region, who will jointly prepare the programme for follow-up activities to implement these recommendations, and which include a Conference in Bangkok in May 2003.

UNECE contribution

UNECE was invited to participate by EAN India to contribute to the subjects within its mandate: Access to international supply chains, commercial quality standards and trade facilitation.

Additionally the UNECE representatives had the opportunity to meet with high government officials of different ministries and to stress the importance of Indian participation international meetings on food safety and quality.

For UNECE the meeting was an opportunity to widen the cooperation with UN/ESCAP and to add to UNECE's visibility in international trade.

In future events one goal for UNECE will be to include the Central Asian Member States of UNECE in this process and to develop in cooperation with its partners in the region a program of training courses for capacity building in the areas of quality standards and trade facilitation.