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Fifth session, 13-15 June 2001
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**WORKING PARTY ON STANDARDIZATION OF PERISHABLE
PRODUCE AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT**

Summary of main activities and developments

Note by the secretariat

This paper summarizes the main activities of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7) since its fifty-sixth session (6 to 8 November 2000).

The Committee will be asked to endorse the report of the Working Party's fifty-sixth session (TRADE/WP.7/2000/11) and to note this document which has been submitted for information.

The report and other documents of the Working Party are available at the following website address:
<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr>

The Working Party will hold its fifty-seventh session in Geneva from 12 to 14 November 2001.

1. This document sums up the work done by the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development and its specialized sections in the year 2000. At the time of preparation of this document, no meetings had been held in 2001. At the session, the secretariat will inform the Committee about any relevant decisions taken at the sessions of the specialized sections (Seed Potatoes, Early and Ware Potatoes, Meat, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetables) taking place in the first half of 2001.

MEETINGS HELD IN 2000

- GE.6: Specialized Section on Standardization of Potatoes (Seed), Geneva, 31 January - 3 February
- GE.11: Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, Geneva, 27-29 March
- GE.1: Specialized Section on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, Geneva, 22-25 May
- GE.2: Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit), Geneva, 19-22 June
- Meeting of Rapporteurs on Standardization of Meat, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 24-27 September
- Meeting of Rapporteurs on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, Moscow, 23-27 October
- Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development, Geneva, 6-8 November

REPRESENTATION OF COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

2. This table summarizes which countries and organizations were represented at the meetings in 2000.

Argentina (GE.11)	Germany (WP.7, GE.1, GE.2, GE.6)	Slovakia (WP.7, GE.1)
Australia (GE.11)	Greece (WP.7, GE.1, GE.6, GE.11)	South Africa (WP.7, GE.1) Spain
Austria (GE.1, GE.11)	Hungary (GE.1)	(WP.7, GE.1, GE.2) Sweden (GE.1)
Belgium (WP.7, GE.1, GE.6)	Ireland (GE.1)	Switzerland (WP.7, GE.1, GE.6,
Brazil (GE.11)	Italy (WP.7, GE.1, GE.2, GE.6)	GE.11)
Cameroon (GE.1)	Netherlands (WP.7, GE.1, GE.6)	Ukraine (GE.1)
Canada (GE.6)	New Zealand (GE.1, GE.11)	Turkey (WP.7, GE.2)
Chile (GE.1)	Poland (WP.7, GE.1, GE.2, GE.6,	United Kingdom (WP.7, GE.1, GE.2,
Côte d'Ivoire (GE.1)	GE.11)	GE.6, GE.11)
Denmark (GE.1)	Portugal (WP.7, GE.1, GE.6) Romania	United States (GE.1, GE.2, GE.6,
Finland (WP.7, GE.1, GE.2)	(WP.7, GE.1, GE.2, GE.6)	GE.11).
France (WP.7, GE.1, GE.2,	Russian Federation (WP.7, GE.6)	European Community (WP.7, GE.1,
GE.6, GE.11)		GE.2, GE.6, GE.11).
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.(WP.7, GE.1)		
OECD Scheme (WP.7, GE.1)		
C.L.A.M. (Comité de Liaison de L'Agrumiculture Méditerranéenne) (GE.1),		
COLEACP (Comité de Liaison - Europe - Afrique - Caraïbes - Pacifique - pour la promotion des fruits tropicaux, légumes de contre-saison, fleurs, plantes ornementales et épices) (GE.1),		
EAN International (GE.11),		

International Nut Council (INC) (GE.2).

WORK ON STANDARDS

3. Standards revised and adopted: Apples and Pears, Aubergines, Beans, Cauliflowers, Citrus Fruit, Courgettes, Cultivated Mushrooms, Fennels, Hazelnut Kernels, Headed Cabbages, Inshell Hazelnuts, Melons, Peas, Seed Potatoes, Sweet Peppers, Table Grapes, and Tomatoes.

The revised standard layout for dry and dried produce (main text) was adopted.

New standard adopted: Bovine Carcasses and Cuts

Recommendations adopted: Avocados, Plums, Walnut Kernels

OTHER RELEVANT DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS

Seed potatoes

4. A meeting of rapporteurs was held in Moscow following an invitation from the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technologies, responsible for food standards. At the meeting it was possible to advance the UN/ECE Standard for Seed Potatoes according to the tasks given by the Specialized Section as well as to assess the situation of potato production in the Russian Federation and to make recommendations.

Meat

5. At the meeting of rapporteurs in Brazil it was possible to advance the draft UN/ECE Standards for Bovine and Poultry meat after receiving relevant input from several South American countries. The UN/ECE Standard for Bovine Carcasses and Cuts will be published in cooperation with Australia.

Trade descriptions and classification codes

6. The International Article Numbering Association (EAN International) operates worldwide in the area of electronic commerce (supply chain management, article numbering, bar codes, modeling) and is very active in the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (e.g. co-hosting the meeting of rapporteurs in Brazil).

7. EAN International has informed the secretariat about the issue of generic coding for fruits and vegetables. In addition to company product-specific codes, both national and quasi-international classification code lists exist. As a result, there is often confusion owing to the variety of codes used. Internationally recognized trade descriptions and classification codes for fruits and vegetables do not exist at present.

8. EAN International suggests to negotiate a code list for fruits and vegetables under the auspices of the UN/ECE. The Working Party was invited to consider whether this issue should be taken up and where and how

it should be dealt with.

9. It was decided to invite EAN International to prepare a document for the next session of GE.1 to evaluate the current practice (codes, trade descriptions), to get clear information about the status of the codes used and to explore possibilities for the international harmonization of these codes.

Exchange of non-conformity cases

10. It was decided to adopt the relevant OECD document on the exchange of information on cases of non-conformity with UN/ECE standards and to publish it on the home page.

Packaging code marks

11. It was decided to prepare a list of countries not accepting code marks (i.e. wanting explicit declaration of the packer or dispatcher's contact information) and to publish it on the home page. A questionnaire will be sent out to collect this information.

Acceptance of UN/ECE standards

12. The Working Party decided that the information available to the secretariat on the acceptance of UN/ECE standards should be published on the home page. The Working Party also decided that all specialized sections should discuss the question of application of their standards (whether they are applied as they are or with amendments in national law, etc.).

Revision of the working procedures

13. The secretariat reported that an informal working group had discussed a draft revision of the working procedures during the last GE.1 session. The document has been updated according to the comments made. It is hoped that an official document can be presented to the next session of the Working Party.

Elaboration of explanatory material

14. The Director of the Trade Division, Dr. Carol Cosgrove-Sacks, informed the Working Party that additional resources had been requested for the work on agricultural standards. She stressed that the secretariat was prepared to support the work according to clear priorities set by the member States.

15. However, given the zero growth in the UN/ECE budget it seems doubtful that there will be any new post in the Trade Division for the support of work on agricultural standards in the near future. The secretariat will inform the Committee about any further developments on this issue.

Cooperation with other international organizations

Codex Alimentarius Commission and Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV)

16. The delegation of the European Community stated that the Codex Procedural Manual contained the possibility for the CCFFV to request WP.7 to prepare proposed draft Codex standards, which means that WP.7 could serve as a rapporteur to the CCFFV.

17. He said that the European Community had proposed to the CCFFV and by analogy to CCPFV (for dry and dried produce) that both these committees could make use of this option in cooperation with the UN/ECE in order to reduce duplication of work. However, this proposal had not been adopted by the Codex committees.

18. The delegate from the Codex secretariat said that according to the Codex working procedures UN/ECE standards were taken as a basis for drawing up proposed draft Codex standards. This would also be the case for dried figs. She further said that the preparation of the Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Apples had already been assigned to a group of countries as was usually the case and the Committee had preferred to keep this assignment. The preparation of the text would be done in close cooperation with the UN/ECE secretariat.

19. The Chairman said that the Working Party was prepared to serve as rapporteur to the Codex committees if this was requested. He stressed that this only concerned the preparation of the proposed draft text which would then be discussed in the Codex committees.

European Union

20. The European Commission and UN/ECE continue to work closely together to ensure harmonization of UN/ECE and EC standards. The work programme for the EU experts includes several items, among them revisions of EC standards in view of the recent decisions of WP.7 (the EU Council requests the European Commission to take into account the UN/ECE standards when drafting EC standards for fruit and vegetables).

OECD Scheme

21. The Plenary Meeting of the OECD Scheme mandated the Chairperson and secretariat of the Scheme to contact the UN/ECE and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) informally with a view to obtaining assurances from ECE and FAO/WHO that they will take note of the following points and undertake to:

- recognize the duplication of effort represented by the resources allocated by the three organizations currently involved in grade standard-setting;
- cooperate to establish a common approach aimed at limiting, to the extent possible, duplication of work in terms of resource allocation.

22. An informal meeting between all concerned organizations has been scheduled for 20 April 2001. The secretariat will inform the Committee of any relevant outcome.

TEXTS PUBLISHED

23. During the period of 2000-2001, the following standards have been published.

TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.1 (Apples and Pears)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.15 (Avocados)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.2 (Beans)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.16 (Plums)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.3 (Citrus Fruit)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.17 (Inshell Hazelnuts)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.4 (Cultivated Mushrooms)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.18 (Hazelnut Kernels)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.5 (Peas)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.19 (Standard Layout)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.6 (Table Grapes)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.20 (Seed Potatoes)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.7 (Melons)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.21 (Non-conformity)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.8 (Aubergines)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.22 (Code Marks)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.9 (Headed Cabbages)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.23 (Information from Codex)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.10 (Cauliflowers)	TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.24 (Information from OECD)
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.11 (Fennels)	
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.12 (Sweet Peppers)	
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.13 (Courgettes)	
TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.14 (Tomatoes)	

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2001

Specialized Section	Session	Location	Date	Document deadline for
Seed Potatoes (GE.6)	31	Geneva	12 - 14 March	1 January
Early and Ware Potatoes (GE.5)	15	Geneva	19 - 21 March	8 January
Meat (GE.11)	10	Geneva	25 - 27 April	12 February
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1)	47	Geneva	14 - 18 May	5 March
Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit) (GE.2)	48	Geneva	18 - 21 June	9 April
Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality	57	Geneva	12 - 14 November	3 September

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