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Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

**Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation
and Standardization Policies (WP.6)**

Thirty-third session
Geneva, 23–24 November 2023
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
Matters arising

Report from the Bureau of Working Party 6

Submitted by the WP.6 Chair

Summary

The objective of this report is to shortly highlight some work that the Bureau for the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) has undertaken in 2023 to better navigate given the ever-increasing challenges presented in the field of technical regulation for industrial goods.

Document (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/INF.1) is submitted by the WP.6 Chair to the thirty-third annual session for information.

I.   Overview of activities

1.   Leading up to the 32nd Annual Session, the Bureau of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) worked towards coordinating the workflows within the different subgroups, clarification of objectives and identifying the challenges foreseen in the coming years. This was reported in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/INF.1 and also resulted in a revised Terms of Reference of WP.6 in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11.

2.   Following up on this work to harmonize and streamline the work of WP.6, the procedures within WP.6 have been clarified in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/12, outlining how experts participate in the work, how deliverables are developed through projects and how elections for the subgroups are coordinated. The terms of references of each of the subgroups, presented in the annexes of the programme of work in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/14 have also been slightly adjusted in order to be harmonized and consistent.

3.   One of the key challenges identified that quality infrastructure will face in coming years is the compliance of products with embedded technologies such as artificial intelligence. Work had been proposed within the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) a few years ago. This work is of transversal nature throughout WP.6, so a project was proposed directly under the Bureau on the topic in order to enhance participation of each of the subgroups.[1] The result of this project is presented in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/9; it is also the subject of the panel discussion conference during the 33rd Annual Session. The project team plans to continue this work with further guidance and eventually with the development of perhaps a common regulatory arrangement based on the *Recommendation L on an International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice* and/or recommendation and/or a declaration and/or a convention. Member States will be asked during agenda item 9 of the 33rd Annual Session provisional agenda to advise on their preferences.

4.   During this period, there have been four other projects launched, in conformity with the Programme of Work.

- Revision of *Recommendation K on Metrology Assurance of Conformity Assessment and Testing*, under the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS)

- Revision of *Recommendation M on the Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users against Counterfeit Goods*, under MARS

- Integrated risk management in single window systems, under GRM

- Gender and salutation code lists, under the Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (GRS)

5.   WP.6 also featured a number of webinars during this period:

- 21 February 2023, "Market surveillance role in combatting counterfeit products"[2] under MARS

- 1 March 2023, "Bringing standards to supply chain experts"[3] under the START Education on Standardization Initiative

- 22 May 2023, "Back to Basics of Quality Infrastructure"[4]

- 24 May 2023, "Achievements and challenges in implementing gender action plans"[5] under GRS

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[1] https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/377620
[2] https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/373523
[3] https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375094
[4] https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375795
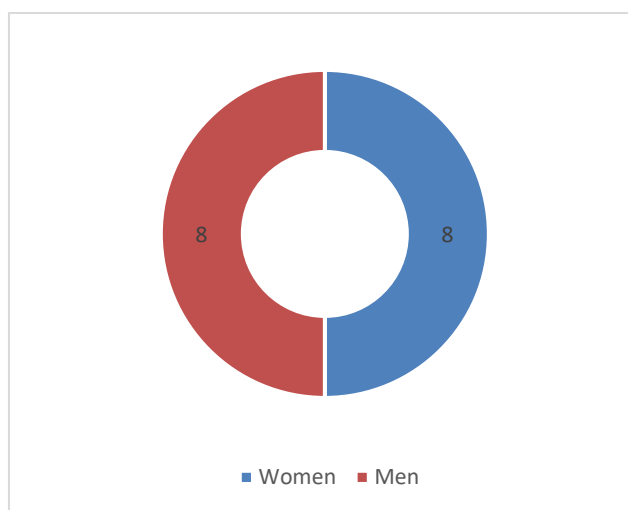[5] https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375801

- 25 May 2023, "Risk management in regulatory systems"[6] under GRM

- 26 May 2023, "Exchange on best practices in market surveillance"[7] under MARS

- 27 September 2023, "Standards and circularity: Incorporating a gender perspective in standards for sustainability"[8] under GRS
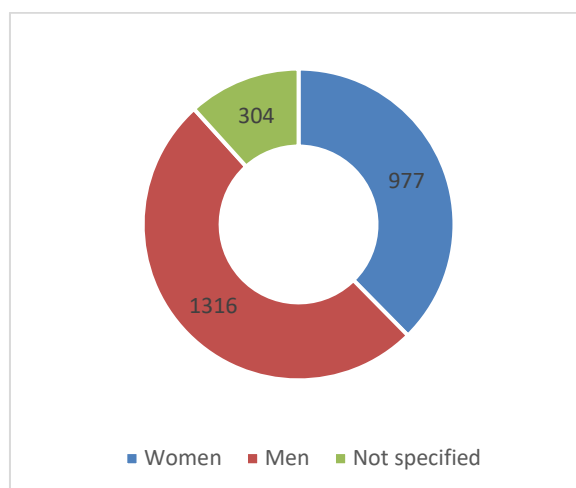
II.   Reporting on gender balance within WP.6

6.   The WP.6 Bureau during this period was comprised of one chair and two vice-chairs, all three are women.[9] At the annual sessions of all of the subgroups, the new chairs and vice-chairs were nominated. There are four subgroup chairs, two are women and two are men. There are a total of nine vice-chairs between these four subgroups, three are women and six are men.

Graph 1: Proportion of women in the leadership of WP.6 (Bureau and its subgroups) as of October 2023.

7.   There are over 2500 experts registered an interest in and following the work of WP.6. There are 977 women, 1316 men and 304 who have not disclosed their gender.

Graph 2: Proportion of women experts registered in WP.6 as of October 2023

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6   https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375802
7   https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375804
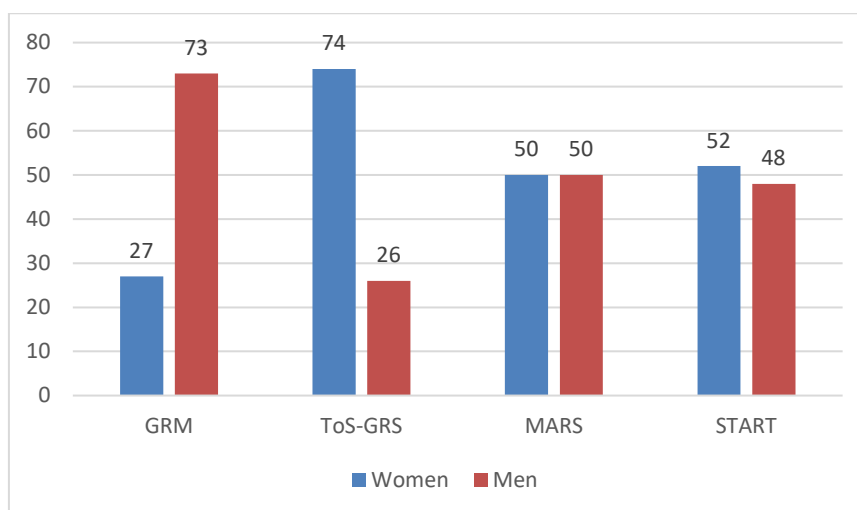8   https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375760
9   The WP.6 Bureau held a leadership meeting (WP.6 Bureau and the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Coordinators of all the subgroups) on 14 April 2023 and held a dedicated WP.6 Bureau meeting to prepare the WP.6 33rd Annual Session on 12 July 2023.

8.   The Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) held an annual meeting,[10] and four working meetings during this period[11]. There were on average 22 experts at the working meetings and around 45 experts at the annual session. The percentage of women at these meetings was 27 per cent.

9.   The Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards (ToS-GRS) held an annual session[12], 5 working meetings[13] and 2 webinars (see above) during this period. There were on average 25 experts at the working meetings, and around 60 experts at the conferences. The average percentage of women at these meetings was 74 per cent.

10.   The Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) held an annual meeting[14] and a webinar (see above) during this period. There were on around 40 experts at each of these meeting. The average percentage of women at these meetings was 50 per cent.

11.   The Ad-Hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START) held one meeting during this period.[15] The Education on Standardization Initiative held one meeting[16] and one webinar (see above) during this period. There were on average 30 experts at these meetings. The average percentage of women at these meetings was 52 per cent.

Graph 3: Proportion of active women experts (participating in meetings and webinars) in the subgroups of WP.6 during the period November 2022 to October 2023.

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[10]   GRM Annual Session, 25 May 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375802).

[11]   GRM met on 19 January 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/373624), 16 March 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375137), 6 July 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375762), and 14 September 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375763). The GRM Bureau also held organizational meetings online on 30 June 2023, 13 July 2023, 26 July 2023 and 12 October 2023.

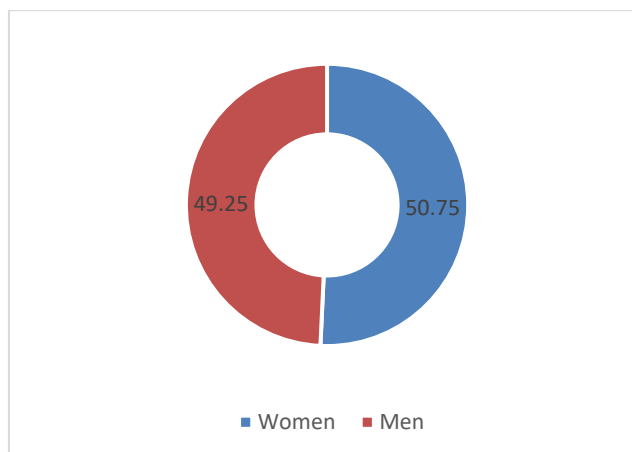[12]   ToS-GRS Annual Session, 24 May 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375801)

[13]   ToS-GRS met on 14 December 2022 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/373467), 8 February 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/374685), 18 April 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375758), and 5 July 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375759). The ToS-GRS Bureau also held organizational meetings online on 6 April 2023 and 25 September 2023.

[14]   MARS Annual Session, https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375804.

[15]   START met on 23 May 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375800); this meeting was continued on 12 July 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/379351). The START Bureau also held an organizational meeting online on 26 September 2023.

[16]   START Education on Standardization Initiative met on 26 May 2023 (https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/375805).

Graph 4: Overall proportion of women experts actively participating within all activities of WP.6 (participating in meetings and webinars) during the period November 2022 to October 2023.

Annex

Key deliverables of WP.6 and its secretariat

I. Deliverables during the period November 2022 – October 2023

- Revised Recommendation K on Metrological Assurance of Conformity Assessment and Testing in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/5

- Paper on gender and salutation code lists in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/11

- Paper on regulatory compliance of products with embedded artificial intelligence or other digital technologies in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2023/9

- Guidelines on Developing Gender-Responsive Standards in document ECE/TRADE/472

- Glossary of Market Surveillance Terms in document ECE/TRADE/389/Rev.1

- Why Gender-Responsive Standards are Better for Everyone in document ECE/TRADE/474

II. Liaison activities during the period November 2022 – October 2023

- 17 November 2022, Capacity building meeting with Namibia organized by National Board of Trade of Sweden, Geneva

- 21 November 2022, Fundraising meeting on gender-responsive standards project organized by UNECE WP.6 and UN-Women, Geneva, https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/372944

- 1 December 2022, "Standards and the Triple Planetary Crisis" organized by the Geneva Environment Network and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Geneva, https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/events/standards-and-the-triple-planetary-crisis/

- 2 December 2022, "Innovation and Data-Driven Responses to End Gender-Based Violence" jointly organized by Armenia, Argentina, Cyprus and Finland, Geneva, https://switzerland.mfa.am/en/news/2022/12/05/innovation-and-data-driven-responses-to-end-gender-based-violence/10953

- 14 February 2023, Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, World Trade Organization (WTO), hybrid Geneva

- 8–10 March 2023, WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Committee (TBT) meeting, hybrid Geneva

- 21 April 2023, Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, WTO, Geneva

- 22 April 2023, Annual meeting of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) Joint Strategic Advisory Group (JSAG), Stockholm, ToS-GRS Chair speaker on ToS-GRS work

- 3 May 2023, Workshop on Quality Infrastructure organized by the Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)

- 4 May 2023, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Gender-Responsive Standards session, online only, ToS-GRS Chair and WP.6 Secretary speakers on ToS-GRS work, https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/en/Agenda/Session/476

- 11 May 2023, "Integrated Risk Management and Single Window System" presentation at the Forum of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), Geneva

- 17 May 2023, Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy - Working Group on Consumer Protection and Gender, organized by the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), GRS-ToS Chair speaker on gender gap in standards development

- 31 May 2023, Webinar on the ECOWAS Online Empowerment Programme for National Trade Facilitation Committees for Liberia, organized by the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), WP.6 Secretary speaker on gender and trade

- 6 June 2023, Webinar on the ECOWAS Online Empowerment Programme for National Trade Facilitation Committees for the Gambia, WP.6 Secretary speaker on gender and trade

- 20 June 2023, WTO TBT Committee thematic session, Geneva, WP.6 Chair speaker on regulatory uncertainties with artificial intelligence

- 11 July 2023, INetQI meeting, online only

- 13 July 2023, WTO Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) side event during the Sanitary Phyto Sanitary Committee meeting, WP.6 Secretary speaker on gender-responsive standards and SPS requirements

- 26 July 2023, the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) update on gender-responsive standards, online only, WP.6 Secretary speaker on mainstreaming gender in standardization

- 14 August 2023, World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), university students' training, Geneva, WP.6 Secretary speaker on standards in support of sustainable development and functioning of an ECE working party

- 24 August 2023, COPANT Taller Intercambio 9: Inclusion de Genero en la normalización, online only, WP.6 Secretary speaker on ToS-GRS work

- 22 September 2023, WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, Geneva, WP.6 Secretary speaker on gender-responsive standards and ToS-GRS work

- 3 to 5 October 2023, International Organization for Standardization, Technical Committee on Risk Management (TC 262) plenary meeting, online only

- 6 October 2023, INetQI meeting, online only

- 23 October 2023, WFUNA, university students' training, Geneva, WP.6 Secretary speaker on standards in support of sustainable development and functioning of an ECE working party

III. News pieces

- 18 November 2022, "How can digital and green transformations improve quality infrastructure in trade," https://unece.org/media/trade/wp.6%20meetings/news/373108

- 12 January 2023, "Promoting the role of market surveillance to combat counterfeit goods," https://unece.org/media/trade/wp.6%20meetings/news/375036

- 1 February 2023, "Bringing standards to supply chain experts," https://unece.org/media/trade/wp.6%20meetings/news/375618

- 27 April 2023, "UNECE to discuss challenges of products with integrated artificial intelligence," https://unece.org/media/trade/wp.6%20meetings/news/378024

- 19 May 2023, "Quality infrastructure is centre stage at UNECE WP.6 for World Metrology Day," https://unece.org/media/trade/wp.6%20meetings/news/378858