



Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards**Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables****Sixty-eighth session**

Geneva, 6—8 May 2020

**Report of the sixty-eighth session of the Specialized Section
on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables****I. Introduction**

1. Ms. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany) chaired the online session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. She welcomed the numerous delegations and participants from four continents. She stressed that the online session allowed the Specialized Section to convene and contribute to the ongoing food trade and controls during the COVID-19 crisis. She also highlighted that concerns related to climate change and food loss reduction had become guiding principles of the section's work.

2. The Director of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, welcomed the delegates to the first online standardization meeting of the UNECE's Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, noting that following a one-month consultation period, decisions of the Specialized Section would be approved in an intersessional approval procedure and sent to the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) for adoption in November 2020.

3. She expressed her gratitude to the delegates for their work and support in these difficult times. With COVID-19 having spread worldwide, secure food supply and trade was of utmost importance. In this context, she highlighted the newly established UNECE Food Outlook (see <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/foodoutlook.html>) and thanked the Specialized Section for its ongoing contributions. She also informed delegations that UNECE had joined the United Nations Issue Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems to support United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinators in this crisis and to integrate the development of sustainable food systems with all their dimensions (economic, social and environmental) into national and international food policy agendas.

II. Attendance

4. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

5. The following specialized programme participated in the session: Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
6. The European Commission was also represented.
7. A representative of the following intergovernmental organization participated in the session: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.
8. Representative from the following private sector organizations were present at the invitation of the secretariat: Embrapa Brazil, Eucofel, Freshfel Europe.

III. Adoption of the agenda

9. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda.

IV. Matters arising since the last session

(a) United Nations, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and subsidiary bodies

10. The Chief of the Market Access Section, Mr. Mika Vepsalainen, explained that during the current COVID-19 crisis the offices of the United Nations buildings in Geneva were closed and staff were telecommuting for the time being. Meetings of over 5 persons were forbidden by the Swiss authorities. He also noted that the vacant post in the Agri Unit team had been filled just before the current recruitment freeze and introduced the new staff member, Ms. Kamola Khusnutdinova. He also mentioned that the next meeting of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards would be held as an informal online session on 29 June 2020.

11. Furthermore, he provided information on the 2019 session of the Working Party which included the fourth UNECE-FAO conference on “Food (Waste) for Thought: Food Loss - policy perspectives for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The presentations included many topics of interest to this Specialized Section. He also highlighted that WP.7 had decided to organize at its 2020 meeting a roundtable on food loss, food waste and private standards together with the private sector.

(b) Recent developments in other organizations

12. The Specialized Section took note of the information submitted by the representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme on the activities of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables available on the UNECE web site at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52648>.

13. The Specialized Section also took note of the written update provided by the representative of the OECD, also available on the UNECE web site at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52648>.

V. Revision of standards

14. The Specialized Section was informed that all final decisions on amendments to the standards under review would be taken in a 1-month inter-sessional approval procedure (21 June to 21 July) following the six-week consultation period (12 May to 21 June). All changes and options proposed during the current session are included in the post-session documents available on the UNECE web site at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52648>.

15. The Specialized Section asked the secretariat to organize follow-up online sessions to facilitate the discussions on the standards and other proposals during the six-week

consultation period. During the consultation period, comments should be sent to the secretariat prior to the 21 June deadline to allow for circulation and for negotiation with other delegations. As customary, silence or the absence of comments means agreement. Should consensus be reached during the consultation period, the document will be submitted to the inter-sessional approval process from 21 June to 21 July. If approved, the drafts would be submitted to the November 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption. Otherwise, the proposals would be placed on the 2021 agenda of the Specialized Section. The report of the Specialized Section will be updated once these final decisions have been taken.

(a) Citrus fruit

16. The Specialized Section reviewed in detail the comments by the delegation from Spain made on the proposed amendments of the standard by the Specialized Section as well as open items from the 2019 session. The delegation from Spain stressed its continued support for the 2018 decision by the Specialized Section to keep the current format of the standard and not separate parts for each species.

17. The Specialized Section continued its discussion on the inclusion of “hybrids thereof” in the “Definition of produce”. Importing countries stressed that this would be helpful for inspection to understand that as long as hybrids showed the characteristics of a specific species, the hybrids were considered to fall into this citrus species. (e.g. a grapefruit hybrid which showed the same varietal characteristics as a grapefruit was treated like a grapefruit). In order to clarify this provision, it was decided to include for consultation the wording: “Inter-specific hybrids (thereof) showing {name of citrus fruit variety} characteristics” The delegate of Spain noted that inter-specific hybrids were included in the informal list of citrus fruit varieties which provided necessary guidance. The delegation from Spain voiced its concern. This item together with all other proposals will be reviewed during the consultation period. The delegate of Spain also asked for photos of hybrids that had led to confusion in importing countries.

18. At the request of the delegation of Spain, the minimum requirement “free of damage caused by low temperature or frost” was reintroduced. It had been removed in previous revisions as it stated the cause of the defect without defining the actual defect.

19. The Specialized Section reviewed once again the provisions on maturity, namely the minimum skin colour requirements and the reference to degreening, and the proposal by some delegations to delete reference to these requirements from the UNECE standard. The delegation from Spain (supported by Greece) stressed that the standard with the included skin colour requirements for maturity determination was working well for their trade. Spain also emphasized that no complaints had been received neither by their producers nor by industry. The delegation from Spain stressed that that even in their organic production the use of ethylene was not forbidden. Other delegations pointed to increased impact of global warming and different geo-climatic zones effect on skin colour without affecting the edibility of the produce. This, together with more trade of citrus fruit from tropical countries, had resulted in more greenish skin coloured citrus fruit in international trade. Furthermore, some delegations noted there was a growing demand for non-degreened citrus fruit from both organic and conventional production. Some delegation pointed out that currently this produce, particularly, in the early season or from tropical countries, could not be traded under the UNECE standard. While this excluded produce did not meet the current colour requirements of the standard, it met all other maturity requirements necessary for edibility. The delegate of Spain underlined that the current UNECE standard covers oranges grown in tropical zones and proposed to review how these products are covered by standard.

20. Some countries expressed concern that the currently included provisions could eventually be interpreted as a barrier to trade and this needed to be addressed in an international standard. A revised more open standard for producing countries also faced with severe climate change incidents could be a forward-looking opportunity. Some delegations proposed that opposing delegations could consider including a reservation in the standard to express their disagreement with a possible removal of the colour requirement, should no compromise be found. The Specialized Section also discussed whether degreening affected

the shelf life of citrus fruit with no conclusive result. The delegate from Spain stressed that ethylene is a natural phytohormone. When applied (in the degreening process), it helps to visualize pest damage and to separate those fruits. Therefore, it adds to preventing food loss in the distribution chain. Attention was drawn to the fact that removing the reference to degreening did not mean that degreening was not allowed. However, if the colour requirements remained in the standard, degreening would be used to meet them. The delegation from Spain stressed the need to keep the current wording for degreening as it stated that the treatment is only permitted if the other natural organoleptic characteristics were not modified. The delegation from Spain noted that in its view, the current wording in the standard achieved the goal of high quality, protection of consumer interests and food waste reduction.

21. The Specialized Section, therefore, considered a compromise proposal by the Bureau of the Specialized Section which took note of the concerns of the supplying industries in producing countries and importing countries. This new proposal was included in the post-session document for consultation. The proposal addresses the concerns and allows for both degreening and not degreening produce. It consists of the deletion of the minimum colour requirement in the section on maturity and the inclusion of new provisions reading as follows: "Citrus fruit may not colour naturally due to conditions in the specific growing region. Citrus fruit harvested with greenish skin colour may be marketed in their natural state or be degreened, provided the fruit meets the minimum maturity parameters specified below." The delegation from Spain reiterated its opposition to the deletion of the colour requirements from the Standard.

22. The Specialized Section agreed that more consultations were necessary and would review this proposal during the consultation period. If a solution could not be found, the draft would be placed on the 2021 agenda of the Specialized Section. The delegation from Spain also proposed establishing a working group to advance the finalization of the draft.

23. When discussing the labelling provisions (B. Nature of produce), the Specialized Section agreed to retain the labelling provisions for the mandarin group. For the labelling of oranges, most delegations preferred the provision of the current standard "Name of the variety which may be replaced by the respective variety group in the case of 'Navels' and 'Valencias'". It was stressed that this not only still allowed the labelling of the variety name, if needed, but also reflected current trading practice. The delegation from Spain voiced their concern and it was decided to review this item during the consultation period.

24. The Specialized Section decided to continue the review of the standard at the 2021 session of the Specialized Section in 2021. Delegations were invited to send their comments and proposals to the secretariat by 1 February 2021.

(b) Table grapes

25. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposed revisions to the standard for table grapes outlined and illustrated by the delegation from South Africa. The proposals related to the colour requirements, slight skin defects (in Class I and Class II) and the deletion of the minimum bunch weight of 75 gr.

26. Minimum colour requirements: The delegations discussed the proposals in depth and agreed to amend the standard's provision on colouring in Classes I and II. It was highlighted that the colour requirements and the colour uniformity applied to bunches of grapes, not individual berries. All discussed amendments are included in the post-session document.

27. Skin defects: When reviewing the proposal to amend the provision on skin defects in Classes I and II, the Specialized Section noted that these reflected the current trading practice of accepting e.g. speckled grapes. The meeting also took note of the wording used in the Codex standard. The amendment was included in the post-session document.

28. Minimum size requirements for bunches of grapes: The delegation from South Africa explained that addressing this requirement would help mitigate the food loss problem at production level and accommodate climate change impact with continued drought and berries that were smaller but neither underdeveloped nor immature. Several delegations supported

this view and it was therefore decided to keep the minimum size requirements for bunches in Extra Class and Class I only. Given that most of the trade in grapes was in prepacked packages, it was specified in the standard that this provision did not apply to sales packages and packages intended for single servings. The section on Size Tolerances was amended accordingly.

29. During the consultation period, delegations were invited to consider in C. Classification the paragraph preceding the list of defects to determine whether it was sufficiently clear as to its field of application to bunches or berries.

30. It was also decided to approach the OECD to amend the brochure for table grapes accordingly.

31. All discussed changes are included in the post-session document which was updated during the consultation period. The resulting document was submitted for inter-session approval.

32. During the inter-session approval process, the Specialized Section approved the proposed changes and decided to submit the revised standard for adoption to the 2020 session of the Working Party.

(c) Carrots

33. The Specialized Section discussed the proposals by the German delegation to include provisions on the freshness of leaves of carrots presented with foliage and the possibility to trim the foliage within limits allowed. While many delegations agreed to the proposal, noting that this product was usually more expensive than carrots without leaves, others raised questions as to possible food waste resulting from bunches being eliminated if the foliage was no longer considered fresh.

34. During the consultation period, the Specialized Section was invited to review whether a product presented with foliage required more specific requirements. The proposal was included in the post-session document and no consensus was reached during the consultation period.

35. The Specialized Section decided to continue the review of this standard at its 2021 session.

(d) Persimmons

36. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals by the German delegation to change the currently included marking provision (last bullet point) to guide the consumers in the case fruit was not edible at the firm stage because of astringency. While some delegations agreed to the proposal in principle, they did not approve of the proposed wording. Other delegations considered this to be a marking that retail (not producers) should introduce at the point of sale and not in a standard for international trade. Furthermore, it was stressed, other fruit might not always be immediately edible when bought either. The proposal was included in the post-session document.

37. Delegations were therefore invited to review two options during the consultation period:

Option 1: Inclusion of the proposal with an improved wording;

Option 2: Deletion of the last bullet point in D. "Commercial specifications".

38. The Specialized Section decided to delete the last bullet point and submit the revised standard to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

(e) Updating list of varieties (apples, pears, plums)

39. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals introduced by delegations to amend the list of varieties for apples, pears and plums.

Apples

40. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposed amendments and discussed the proposal by the French delegation to include R (russeting) for variety R201. Several delegations pointed out that more experience was needed to determine the inclusion of R for this variety and it was decided to review the request again at the 2021 session together with more information on the influence of growing conditions or other possible factors.

41. The delegation from Slovakia proposed to include the already listed varieties Rubinola and Topaz in the category “R”. Delegations were invited to review this proposal during the consultation period.

42. The Specialized Section was also invited to review the proposal from the delegation of Belgium to change the colour group of the variety “Ladina” to B instead of A.

43. All proposals were included in the post-session document. During the consultation period and the subsequent intersessional approval period, several proposals were agreed.

44. The Specialized Section decided to submit the approved amendments to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

Pears

45. The Specialized Section was invited to review the amendments proposed by the delegation from Germany during the consultation period. No comments had been received so far.

46. The delegation from Belgium suggested to include the Conference pear variety in the list. As the list was in fact for large fruited and summer pear varieties, delegations discussed whether Conference pears belonged to this group. Several delegations reported that the range of sizes in Conference was so big that large volumes would not meet the minimum size for large fruited varieties. In addition, delegations were invited to check whether the variety “Forelle or Vermont beauty” was a large fruit variety or whether it should be deleted from the list. All proposals are included in the post-session document. During the consultation period and the subsequent intersessional approval period, several proposals were agreed.

47. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amendments to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

Plums

48. The Specialized Section noted that some of the proposed changes had been made available late. Therefore, delegations were invited to review the proposals during the consultation period. During the consultation period and the subsequent intersessional approval period, several proposals were agreed.

49. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amendments to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

(f) Other standards*Beans*

50. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposal to amend the UNECE standard for beans submitted by the delegation from Germany. The latter explained that needle beans were usually presented with ends trimmed, similar to mange-tout peas and sugar snap peas whose trimming was included in the minimum requirement “intact” in the standard for peas. While some delegations agreed to the harmonization between the two standards and noted that trimmed needle beans were a popular ready-to-cook product which, with the appropriate cooling chain, had an adequate shelf life and didn’t cause food loss. Other delegations pointed

to the possibly shorter shelf life caused by the trimming and suggested to also remove the trimming provision for sugar snap peas and mange-tout peas in the standard for peas.

51. Therefore, during the consultation period, delegations were invited to decide on two options (included in the post-session document):

Option 1: Approval of the proposed inclusion of the trimming provision of needle beans under the Minimum requirement “intact” (i.e. harmonization with the same provision already included in the standard for peas (sugar snap peas and mange-tout peas)).

Option 2: Non-inclusion of the new provision in the standard for beans (needle beans) and deletion of the trimming provision under the Minimum requirement “intact” in the standard for peas (sugar snap peas and mange-tout peas).

52. During the consultation period, no consensus was reached. The Specialized Section decided to postpone the discussion of the standard to its 2021 session.

Headed cabbage

53. The Specialized Section took note of the proposals to amend the standard for headed cabbage submitted by the delegation from Germany and decided to approve the proposed amendments. The changes are reflected in the post-session document which was reviewed during the consultation period and submitted for inter-session approval.

54. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amendments to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

Sweet peppers

55. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals to amend the standard for sweet peppers submitted by the delegation from Germany. It was decided that more information about the Scoville units would be helpful to determine the inclusion of the variety “Somborka” in the footnote as a variety with a slightly hot taste. The delegation from Slovakia offered to provide this information and a list of additional varieties which could present a very low-level hot taste (usually not measured). The delegation from Hungary would be contacted for further input. The proposals were included in the post-session document which was reviewed during the consultation period and submitted for inter-session approval.

56. The Specialized Section decided to submit the revised standard to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

VI. Standard Layout for United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

57. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals by the delegation from Germany and agreed to the addition of “dispatch” under “II. - Provisions concerning quality” to read in its second paragraph: “However, if applied at stages following export/dispatch, products may show in relation to the requirements of the standard ...”. Delegations also discussed the proposal by Germany for an increased flexibility of tolerances in Class I. While the delegation from the United Kingdom noted that they were already applying the current provision in their work, it was also pointed out that the proposed new provision could lead to confusion in its practical application, and its impact on the supply chain remained unknown. It was therefore agreed to focus first on the tolerances in Class II.

58. The Specialized Section discussed the proposal by the United Kingdom supported by the Netherlands to increase the total tolerance allowed within Class II from the current 10% to 20% (a proposal already submitted in 2018). The delegate of the United Kingdom explained that this would allow a greater quantity of produce in Class II and help reduce food loss and waste. In addition, he said, the new proposal also included a change to the size tolerances from 10% to 20%. The proposal had been resubmitted following a request by the Working Party in November 2019. The delegation from the Netherlands supported the proposal, provided further information, and proposed additionally a mandatory food loss

assessment for any revision of a standard. The exact criteria would need to be elaborated further by a working group in the coming months.

59. In the ensuing discussions, some delegation expressed their support for this proposal as a contribution to the reduction of food loss and waste and asked the secretariat to include this in their communications if adopted. Other delegations noted the limited impact of opening Class II when their markets traded in Class I produce almost exclusively. Several delegations noted the mixed attitude by industry and inspection services to this proposal and highlighted the possibility of more private standards being used at retail levels to curtail the provisions of the UNECE standards. The delegation from the United States recommended to apply the tolerance on a produce-by-produce basis and to limit the increased tolerance to non-progressive defects (skin, shape, colour) to avoid the occurrence of more decay. A proposal to introduce a new Class III was made. The meeting was reminded this proposal was previously discussed some years ago and was not considered suitable.

60. It was therefore decided that the impending consultations should focus on the possible increase of the Class II tolerance to 20%, or to broaden the allowances for non-progressive defects (as proposed by the United States) and to eventually elaborate a new wording. This could send the right signal and become an acceptable way forward. Attention was also drawn to the new UNECE Minimum Quality Guidelines (MMQG) which would absorb produce not marketable in Class II.

61. The Specialized Section also reviewed two further proposals by the German delegation. The first aimed at clarifying the labelling provisions and the second aimed at simplifying information for the consumer by requiring net weight indications only when the produce was not sold by number of units. Delegations were invited to study these proposals during the consultation period.

62. During the consultation period, no consensus was reached. The Specialized Section decided to postpone the discussion of the Standard Layout to its 2021 session.

VII. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices: Food loss and food waste

63. The secretariat presented an overview of and progress made on activities geared towards the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the creation of real, measurable impact. These included the adoption of the Code of Good Practice to address food handling practices and reduce food loss; the work on (voluntary) minimum marketing quality guidelines; the development of a smart food loss tracing and management system (called FeedUP@UN); a food loss measuring methodology (Simply measuring); events at the November 2019 WP.7 session; as well as at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin (January 2020). In addition, the secretariat also reported that it had become a member of several regional and global initiatives and platforms fostering the development of sustainable solutions and raising awareness, particularly, in collaboration with FAO. The secretariat thanked the Specialized Section for its continued support and invited delegations to join the piloting efforts. The delegation from Germany noted that they would join in piloting the Code of Good Practice and the measuring methodology. Other delegations were asked to contact the secretariat, if interested.

Code of Good Practice – Part II

64. The Specialized Section took note of the publication of the Code of Good Practice and the Food Loss Measuring Methodology and their availability in French and Russian language versions. The delegation from Sweden, noting the successful adoption of the first Code of Good Practice, proposed to develop a similar code geared more towards the situations faced by middle- and low-income countries, transition or developing economies where produce is produced, sold and traded in a different way. The proposal was supported by the delegation from Brazil, which offered to join the working group and help develop the new document that could build on already evolving material in its country.

65. The Specialized Section decided to establish a working group (Brazil, Belgium, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain and the United States) and chaired by Sweden. The working

group would explore the need for a separate Code of Good Practice - Part II or whether additional information on measures for different conditions of production and trade could be included in the existing Code.

Minimum marketing quality guidelines

66. The Rapporteur of the working group (Germany) presented the draft Minimum Marketing Quality Guidelines (MMQG), noting that the United States had submitted editorial and substantial comments. Open questions remained also about the commercial specifications and the labelling of consignments under the MMQG. The secretariat was asked to contact the United Nations legal service to seek advice on the marking of produce presented under the provisions of the MMQG. The Specialized Section will be informed in the coming months. Several delegations indicated that they also had comments and it was decided to continue discussions in the consultation period over the next month.

67. The Specialized Section, in an intersessional approval procedure, agreed to approve the draft and change its title to “Minimum Quality Specifications”. The Specialized Section decided to submit the draft to the 2020 session of the Working Party for adoption.

VIII. Code mark registry

68. The Specialized Section exchanged views on and experiences with the UNECE Code mark registry which provided a frequently consulted and valuable source of information to inspection services. The Specialized Section agreed with the proposal by the delegation from Germany to change the current format to a table format and thus make all information available in one click. The secretariat will change the format and upload the new table format in the coming weeks. The secretariat informed delegations that all information contained therein was published “as received” from the national authorities.

69. Delegations agreed that further reflections needed to focus on the acceptance of codes used and presented on packages; the possibility of identifying focal points to contact in case of questions; and improved reliability. A working group would coordinate efforts with the secretariat in the coming months to address the issues raised.

IX. Electronic quality certificates for fresh fruit and vegetables

70. The secretariat of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) updated the Specialized Section on the electronic quality certificates, noting the finalization of the UN/eQuality XML schema, which had been developed in collaboration with the relevant group of UN/CEFACT—the Agriculture, Agri-Food, Textile and Fishery Domain. With the view of outlining possible ways forward and implementation strategies to dematerialize the currently paper-based quality certificate, the secretariat proposed to organize a webinar in the coming weeks. The informational webinar would address these issues and present possibilities used for other international trade documents such as the eCITES certificates of permits used for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

71. The Specialized Section welcomed this possibility. Many delegations from import and export countries expressed their strong interest in such a webinar. This would also be a first step towards a possible recommendation or endorsement of using the UN/eQuality standard for cross-border exchange. The secretariat will announce the webinar’s date in the coming weeks.

X. Promotion and capacity-building

72. The secretariat explained that the full promotion and capacity -building report was available at http://www.uncece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/meetings/ge.01/2020/PPT_eQuality.pdf.

73. The secretariat outlined the results of a recent impact assessment of UNECE, UNDP, GIZ and Hilfswerk International sponsored training and interventions in Central Asia between 2015 and 2019. The impact assessment highlighted that 90 per cent of participants had indicated they now had an increase in knowledge and capacities and are applying their newly acquired knowledge in their work, in national and local trainings, in government promotion programmes and business scenarios.

74. The immediate result includes the significantly improved quality of the produce and greater small and medium enterprise competitiveness, which has led to increased income generation and created more formal employment, particularly for women. Furthermore, the regional inter-agency sponsored training and interventions led to the creation of regional networks, business opportunities and joint standard promotion and training literature, particularly through the Central Asia Working Group.

75. The secretariat thanked all delegations for their continuous support of these capacity-building programmes which had resulted in real and tangible impacts in Central Asia.

76. In view of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the delegation from Slovakia announced that the September 2020 Meeting on Harmonization of Standards (Mojmirovce, Slovakia), had been postponed to 2021.

XI. Future work

77. The Specialized Section decided to place the following items on the agenda for 2021:

- Fresh figs
- Food loss and waste
- Standard layout
- Citrus fruit
- Carrots
- Beans

78. Any other proposals for future work should be sent to the secretariat as early as possible, preferably by 1 February 2021.

XII. Election of officers

79. The Specialized Section elected Ms. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany) as Chair and Mr. Cyril Julius (South Africa) as Vice-Chair. The Specialized section thanked the outgoing delegate of Belgium and current Vice-Chair of WP.7, Mr. Guy Lambrechts for his many years of service as a delegate and his time as Vice-Chair as well as his much-appreciated support for the work, the events and capacity-building organized by the Specialized Section and the Working Party. The Chair also thanked the secretariat for the excellent organization of the Specialized Section's first-ever online session.

XIII. Adoption of the report

80. The Specialized Section adopted the report of the session in a written procedure.
