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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development
Fifty-fourth session, 9-11 November 1998, Geneva

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING SINCE THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

Note by the secretariat

This document summarizes the relevant outcome of the second session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, the changes in the secretariat and the change in terminology for the meetings of experts.

Second session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

Discussion of the work of the Working Party

1. The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee (ECE/TRADE/222, paragraphs 27 to 32):

“27. The Chairman of the Working Party (WP.7), Mr. M. Vilchez-Barros (Spain), informed the Committee that the Working Party had not met since the last session of the Committee in December. Several meetings of rapporteurs and experts had been held but their decisions would still have to be endorsed by WP.7 at its next session (2-4 November 1998).

28. The Chairman of the Working Party and other delegations expressed their satisfaction with the fact that the post dealing with agricultural standards had now been filled on a permanent basis and also thanked Ms. L. Annovazzi Jakab who had been acting as Secretary to WP.7 and its Meetings of Experts for her excellent work and support during the past years.

29. The Chairman of the Working Party gave a presentation on commercial quality standards for perishable produce and the role of UN/ECE and other international organizations (OECD Scheme, European Union, Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables) in the development of these standards. He also explained the efforts undertaken to harmonize the work of the different bodies.

30. The delegation of the European Community confirmed its continued support for the work of UN/ECE in this area. It noted that EU legislation and UN/ECE standards were already well harmonized and that the European Community advocated that all activities by other international bodies in this area should reinforce UN/ECE standards.

31. The EU representative asked further, if, in view of the uncertainty surrounding the continuation of the OECD scheme for the application of international standards for fruit and vegetables, the Committee could request the Working Party on Perishable Produce and Quality Development to consider if some of the OECD work should be transferred to UN/ECE. The delegation of Turkey said that if additional tasks were taken on by WP.7, additional resources would also be required. In an answer to these remarks, the Director of the Trade Division said that until more information was received from OECD, and before the next session of WP.7, it would be premature for the Committee to discuss this subject in depth. When more information was available, this would be reported to the Committee at its next session in June 1999, which could then, through a reassignment of priorities, decide on the allocation of resources to this work area.

32. The delegate from the Russian Federation announced that he would submit a proposal for a standard on marking of food products to the November session of WP.7.”

Prioritization of the work of the Working Party

3. At the Committee session the work of WP.7 was given an overall “HIGHER” priority and its individual tasks were prioritized as follows (ECE/TRADE/222, annex II, programme activity 04, B.):

“Higher: Setting of new standards and revisions, enlarging participation of both public and private sectors.

Broadening the application of UN/ECE standards and recommendations and the implementation of controls at private and public levels.

Disseminating the texts of UN/ECE standards and recommendations for perishable produce among supplying countries to UN/ECE markets and diffusion among users at different levels: producers, traders, control services, consumers.

Medium: Interpretation and harmonization of standards and control procedures among UN/ECE member countries.

Lower: Cooperation with other international standardization organizations.”

Changes in the secretariat of the Working Party

4. As of 1 July 1998 the secretariat of the Working Party and its subordinate groups will be assured by:

<p>Mr. Tom Heilandt, Food Standards Officer</p> <p>Office 384</p> <p>tel: +41 22 917 2450 fax: +41 22 917 0041 e-mail: tom.heilandt@unece.org agrstandards@unece.org</p>	<p>Ms. Alissa Mayor</p> <p>Office 378</p> <p>tel: +41 22 917 1265 fax: +41 22 917 0041 e-mail: alissa.mayor@unece.org</p>
<p>Address:</p> <p>Trade Division</p> <p>Palais des Nations Avenue de la Paix 1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland</p>	

Change in terminology for the meetings of experts

5. Following a decision taken by the Commission at its last session in April 1998, the meetings of experts working under the Working Party on Perishable Produce and Quality Development have been renamed “specialized sections”. The symbol structure of these bodies will remain the same (TRADE/WP.7/GE...):

GE.1: Specialized Section on Coordination of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

GE.2: Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)

GE.5: Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes

GE.6: Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

GE.11: Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (porcine, bovine and poultry)
