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### ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT  
Third session, 8-10 June 1999  
Item 6(b) of the provisional agenda

#### TECHNICAL HARMONIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION

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

#### Note by the secretariat

1. This document summarizes the work done by the Working Party on the Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development and its related specialized sections since the last session of the Committee.

#### **54th session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development, held in Geneva from 9 to 11 November 1998**

2. The 54th session reviewed the reports of the specialized sections on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, Meat, Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit) and Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

*29th session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, held in Geneva from 9 to 12 February 1999*

3. A revision of the UN/ECE Standard on Seed Potatoes was adopted and a discussion on the future direction of this work was initiated and will be continued at the next session.

*7th session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (Porcine, Bovine and Poultry), held in Geneva from 11 to 13 May 1998*

4. Work on a standard on bovine carcasses and cuts continues. This includes the discussion of "best practice" and research on the creation of a UN/ECE quality trade mark.

*46th session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit), held in Grenoble from 15 to 19 June 1998*

5. UN/ECE Recommendations on Hazelnut Kernels and Inshell Hazelnuts were adopted for a two-year trial period. A new UN/ECE standard on Dried Apples was adopted. The trial period for the Recommendations on Cashew and Walnut Kernels was extended for one year. It was agreed to review the standards on Pistachio Nuts. Work on a multilingual dictionary on defects continues.

*44th session of the Specialized Section on Coordination of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, held in Geneva from 2 to 6 November 1998*

6. Revisions to the following standards were adopted: Beans, Carrots, Citrus Fruit, Garlic, Melons, Shelling Peas, Plums, Watermelons, Avocados and Broccoli.

7. Maturity requirements and sizing provisions for Citrus Fruit were discussed but will be rediscussed at the next session as no consensus could be reached.

8. Principles for the inclusion of asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions were adopted. A proposal will be drawn up by the Codex and UN/ECE secretariats.

9. Informal working groups were formed on the following subjects:

- review of the proposals for amendments to the standard on Cultivated Mushrooms;
- revision of the standard for Kiwi Fruit.

10. Several proposals made by the UN/ECE/OECD working group on Apples were adopted in principle, including the revision of the list of varieties. Opinions differed on the inclusion of an alternative method for sizing. The group invited proposals and comments from delegations and will present a new proposal for the next session.

11. The usefulness of sizing provisions was discussed in principle.

*Future work of the Working Party*

12. Future work will include a review of the working procedures of the Working Party and its Specialized Sections. A proposal will be drawn up by the United States.

**Specialized Section Meetings to be held after the Working Party and before the Committee session**

*14th session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes, held in Geneva on 1 and 2 February 1999*

13. The UN/ECE standards FFV-30 and 31 on early and ware potatoes were reviewed. No amendments were deemed necessary. It was decided not to include a list of varieties in the standards. Each delegation present indicated the use of the UN/ECE standards in its national legislation. The definition of long varieties was discussed and proposals for improvements were invited.

14. It was decided to await the publication of RUCIP 2000 before deciding whether to revise the UN/ECE General Conditions of Sale for Potatoes.

*Other specialized section meetings*

15. 8th session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (Porcine, Bovine and Poultry) to be held in Geneva from 10 to 12 May 1999.

16. 47th session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit) to be held in Geneva from 7 to 10 June 1999.

**Cooperation with other international organizations**

*European Union*

17. The EU working group continues to take UN/ECE standards into account when discussing EU standards and to harmonize EU and UN/ECE standards. If during this work the need for amendments to UN/ECE standards arises, the group proceeds as follows:

- if the amendments are minor or less strict than the UN/ECE standard, then they are adopted by the EU working group and sent to UN/ECE for harmonization;
- if necessary, they are first presented to UN/ECE before being adopted by the EU working group (e.g. as in the case of melons).

*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Scheme*

18. The future of the OECD Scheme on the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables is still uncertain after the decision

by the United States, United Kingdom and Denmark to no longer participate in the work. The Committee will be informed of any new developments in this area.

*Codex Alimentarius Commission*

19. The UN/ECE secretariat continues to make every effort within its responsibilities to cooperate closely with the Codex secretariat to avoid any duplication of work. Nevertheless, it has to be recognized that these efforts can only be effective if similar efforts are made by the countries deciding on the work programmes of the different international organizations.

20. At its 8th session, the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables harmonized several provisions of draft Codex standards to those of the relevant UN/ECE standards. Important differences remain on the question of the inclusion of provisions for green skinned oranges. A draft compromise solution for the inclusion of provisions for slender green Asparagus into the Codex standard was found, which will also be discussed in the UN/ECE Specialized Section in November 1999.

21. At the same session, the Codex Committee decided to draw up draft standards for Apples, Tomatoes and Grapes. The UN/ECE standard for Apples and Pears is currently under discussion in a Joint OECD/UN/ECE Working Group. UN/ECE standards for Tomatoes and Grapes exist and will be provided to the Codex secretariat.

**Homepage**

22. The secretariat has created a homepage documenting the work of the Working Party and its specialized sections. This page allows delegates to download meeting schedules, documents for meetings and texts of standards. The page is accessible at the following address:

***<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>***

Comments and suggestions to the presentation and contents of the page are invited and should be sent to: [tom.heilandt@unece.org](mailto:tom.heilandt@unece.org)

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