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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development
Fifty-sixth session, 6 to 8 November 2000, Geneva

Item 2 of the Provisional Agenda

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING SINCE THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION

Note by the secretariat

This document contains the discussions on the work of the Working Party and its Specialized Sections held at the fourth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee (ECE/TRADE/262, paragraphs 32 to 39):

Item 6 - Agricultural quality standards

32. The secretariat introduced the activities of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7) and gave an overview of the work carried out since the last session of the Committee. The Vice-Chairman of WP.7, Mr. David Priester, gave an in-depth explanation of the background and discussions in WP.7 on the elaboration of explanatory material.

33. At the third session of the Committee, the European Community had requested that the secretariat prepare a study on the modalities of preparing explanatory brochures for UN/ECE standards within the framework of WP.7 and its specialized sections. This request had been supported by the United States and agreed by the Committee.

34. The results of this study had shown that the work could be integrated without significantly increasing the number of meeting days but not without increasing existing resources. Specifically, an additional staff member would need to be employed. Because of the 0% growth budget of the UN/ECE this could only be achieved either through the creation of a trust fund with voluntary contributions from countries or through a reallocation of resources within the secretariat.

35. At its last session WP.7 decided to create an ad hoc group to look into this question, while stressing that there should be no duplication of work, i.e. WP.7 would be prepared to take on the preparation of explanatory material only if this work ceased to be done at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

36. Both the delegation of the European Community and that of the United States indicated their interest in seeing this work transferred to the UN/ECE provided that work on explanatory material is discontinued at the OECD and the problem of funding the work at the UN/ECE is solved.

37. The delegation of the European Community stated that while it had taken note of the possibility of funding this activity *via* a trust fund, priority should be given to solving this problem by reallocating resources within the Trade Division. The Committee then **requested** that the secretariat report on possibilities for doing this and provide feedback to the Working Party at its next session in November 2000.

38. The delegation of the Russian Federation said that it placed high priority on the work of WP.7 and its specialized sections, especially Meat and Seed Potatoes. It welcomed the fact that the latter group would discuss genetically modified organisms in the future but requested that work already done by other bodies be taken into account in order to avoid any duplication of work.

39. The Committee then **noted** documents TRADE/2000/5 and TRADE/WP.7/1999/7, which contain further details of the work done by WP.7 during this period.