



United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 366 — 5-9 April 2010

## **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ACCOMPANIES SECRETARY GENERAL IN HIS FIRST VISIT TO CENTRAL ASIA**

*31 March - 7 April*

Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, is accompanying the Secretary General in his first official visit to five countries of Central Asia from 31 March to 7 April.

Topics for discussion during this visit include regional cooperation, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, water and energy, climate change, the environment, and ongoing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. UNECE is actively engaged in various programmes in the region, notably in water, energy, transport and the environment. UNECE, together with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), provides support to the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), which was founded by the Presidents of five Central Asian States and the Secretary-General in 1998.

The Secretary General's first stop was Turkmenistan, where he met President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and visited the U.N. Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights. He then continued to Kyrgyzstan where he met President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and the foreign minister, and addressed parliament.

The third stop was in Uzbekistan where the Secretary General witnessed the effects of the deterioration of the ecology of the Aral Sea. In Tashkent, he delivered a lecture at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy and held talks with President Islam Karimov. He then headed to Tajikistan for meetings with President Emomali Rahmon and other officials. His final stop was Kazakhstan, where he visited the former nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk on 6 April. On 7 April, he will meet with President Nursultan Nazarbayev as well as with representatives of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan and members of the Parliament. □



## **INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION WORKSHOP ON COMMERCIAL QUALITY STANDARDS FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES** *Cape Town, South Africa, 20 - 22 April*

UNECE is organizing an International Harmonization Workshop on Commercial Quality Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables for Countries of Africa, in Cape Town, South Africa, from 20 to 22 April 2010. This workshop is organized in partnership with the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department (DAFF) and the Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) of South Africa.

Compliance with international standards is essential for trading on major international markets today. This capacity-building workshop will focus on the harmonized application of product standards across Africa. UNECE experts, together with product specialists from South Africa's PPECB, will lead theoretical discussions and hands-on training for products of high export potential for African countries, such as citrus fruit, apples, table grapes, sweet peppers and onions. The workshop will be attended by more than 100 experts from 25 countries. The event will include a technical visit to a table-grape, a citrus-fruit farm and pack houses.

This is the seventh in a series of UNECE development-related activities, financed from the United Nations Development Account and the Russian Voluntary Contribution Fund, and the third for African countries. □

*The programme is available at:*

[http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/promotion/2010\\_CapeTown-Programme.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/promotion/2010_CapeTown-Programme.pdf)

*For more information, please contact Serguei Malanitchev at [agrstandards@unece.org](mailto:agrstandards@unece.org)*



*Not an official record - For information only*

## POTATO PRODUCERS CAN AVOID LOSS OF YIELD BY APPLYING UNECE STANDARD

The Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes met at its annual session in Geneva on 15-17 March. Delegates from 25 countries worked on amendments to the [UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes](#). Which ensures that seed potatoes produced for international markets comply with agreed norms.

A major outcome of this year's annual meeting of the Specialized Section was a common position on a serious bacterial disease known as "blackleg", which is found in temperate regions throughout the world and causes potato crops to rot.

Under adequate conditions for potato cultivation, blackleg incidence is usually lower than 2%. However, even this low percentage can hugely affect production levels. As the disease cannot be treated, prevention is the only solution. Certified seed potatoes should be free of the disease.



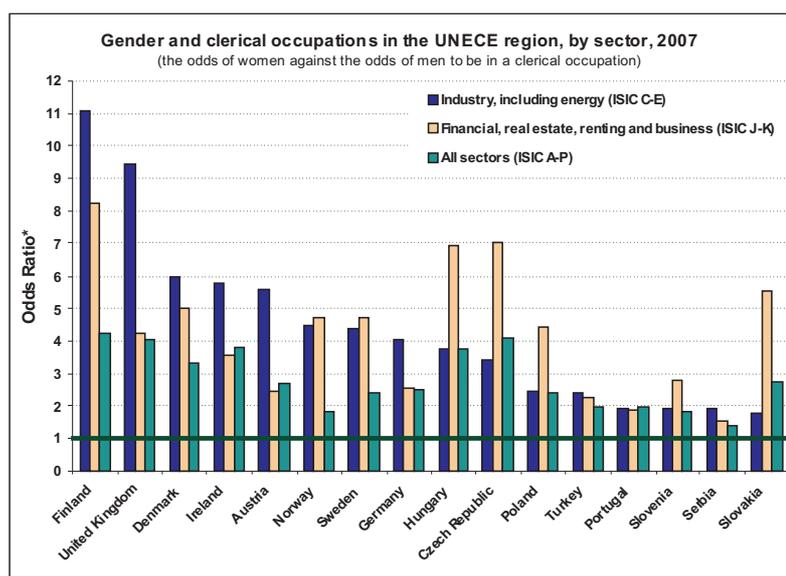
The participating experts transmitted the following message to the potato industry:

- Blackleg occurrence in seed potato crops is an important indicator of quality. In the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes, strict tolerances for blackleg in the growing crop and at lot inspection underpin, as part of the rot tolerance, the control of this disease in certified seed.
- Disease expression in the progeny crop is not always directly related to either inspection findings or bacterial loading in mother tubers. This is due to the importance of the environmental and agronomic influences in the epidemiology of this disease. However, regular inspections remain an effective tool to limit the spread of the disease.
- Conditions which favour blackleg, particularly excessive moisture and in the case of *Dickeya*, high temperatures, can lead to spread of the disease. For the time being, enforcing strict tolerances at certification continues to be the best available regulatory mechanism to control blackleg in marketed seed potatoes.
- Good agronomic practices, such as forced ventilation immediately after harvest, removal of diseased tubers prior to planting, allowing mother tubers to fully deteriorate prior to harvest, are all important in blackleg control.

Over the past years, development of the Standard has been complemented by worldwide promotion. The Standard was promoted, for example, at the international "POTATO RUSSIA 2007" congress in Moscow, as well as at UNECE workshops in Kislovodsk, Russian Federation, in 2008, for CIS countries, and in Cairo in 2009, for countries of Africa and the Middle East. The next major event will be a workshop for Asian countries to be held in Indonesia in October this year. □

To download the Standard, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr> or contact [agristandards@unece.org](mailto:agristandards@unece.org)

## ARE WOMEN MORE LIKELY TO BE WORKING AS CLERKS?



Source: UNECE Statistical Database ([www.unece.org/stats/data](http://www.unece.org/stats/data))

\* An Odds Ratio of 1 means that the odds of women are the same as those of men

The odds ratio tells us how many times one sex is more likely than the other to be working in certain occupations, as opposed to the other, within specific economic sectors. In this case, where the odds ratio is higher than 1, it signifies that, within that sector, women are more likely than men to be working in clerical occupations. As the graph shows, throughout all sectors, even in industry and finance, the occupants of clerical posts are invariably more likely to be women than men in the UNECE region. □

<sup>1</sup> Using the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) and the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC)