

Trade



UNECE adopts first international trade standard for whole dried chilli peppers

UNECE adopted a new international standard for whole dried chilli peppers on 18 June 2013 at the sixtieth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce. The adoption of this new standard will facilitate international trade of dried chilli peppers for both exporters and importers of the good. It will add to the existing 22 standards already developed since 1970 under the aegis of UNECE to facilitate international trade of dry and dried produce.

The new standard, for which preparatory work was initiated by Mexico, primarily seeks to outline the quality requirements of whole dried chilli peppers at the export-control stage, after preparation and packaging. These requirements include provisions concerning quality (such as minimum requirements for whole dried chilli peppers to be intact, sound and clean, etc.), sizing, tolerances for defects, presentation (such as packaging specifications), and marking.

Product quality is of utmost importance for producers, consumers, and the agriculture and food industries. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), worldwide production of dried chillies and peppers was valued at over US\$3 billion in 2011. □

The explanatory brochure on whole dried chilli peppers is available at:
http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/meetings/ge.02/2013/PrePrint-Brochure_DriedChilliPeppers.pdf.

For more information on dry and dried produce standards, please see:
<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/dry/ddp-standards.html>.

Aarhus Convention



Promoting greater transparency and public participation in international processes

A thematic session on promoting greater transparency and public participation in international processes will be held on Thursday 20 June 2013, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It is being organized under the auspices of the Working Group of the Parties to the 1998 UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention).

Forty-six governments, including the European Union, are Parties to the Aarhus Convention. Each of them has a legally binding obligation to promote the principles of the Convention in international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment. Aarhus Parties thus have the opportunity to be ambassadors for more transparent, participatory and effective international environmental decision-making.

The thematic session will discuss concrete actions that Aarhus Parties could take to promote the principles of the Convention in:

- The policy reviews currently being undertaken by the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank;
- The new United Nations Environment Assembly;
- The new High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
- The United Nations Climate Change Conference (Warsaw, November 2013).

The session will also review progress by Aarhus Parties to develop national action plans to systematically promote the principles of the Convention in all international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment in which they take part.

The session will end with proposals by the Chair of the thematic session about possible priorities for future work under the Convention on public participation in international forums. Parties and observers will have the opportunity to discuss the Chair's proposals. □

The provisional agenda and other documentation for the session are available at:
<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp16.html> (see item 7).

UNECE promotes the use of modern technologies in customs transit



The current status and outlook for the use of modern technologies such as electronic seals, GPS tracking and X-ray scanning at customs facilities proved to be the highlight of a roundtable discussion held in Geneva on 13 June 2013. The roundtable was organized by the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) as part of its mandate to ensure high security standards for trucks and counter illegal smuggling across borders.

The event helped to raise awareness on how the modern technologies available to customs transit systems can help to ensure smoother border crossing and improved security conditions. One such technology is GPS tracking, which can be used to monitor and track smuggling networks once contraband has been intercepted at border posts. The roundtable also focused on policy issues, capacity building and best practices with a view to ensuring more efficient border crossing facilitation measures for the optimal implementation of the TIR Convention (1975) and the Harmonization Convention (1982). These UNECE conventions focus on ensuring fewer customs controls at border crossing points.

Demonstrations were given on how modern technologies such as GPS, e-seals and non-intrusive X-ray examination are already being put to good use at many borders, helping to combat illegal smuggling and augmenting the efficiency and security of customs transit procedures. The roundtable attracted more than 70 participants including industry experts and the representatives of governments, the European Union and international organizations, and its success has led WP.30 to investigate how to better adapt UNECE border crossing facilitation conventions to accommodate new technologies. □

For further information on the roundtable please go to:
<http://www.unece.org/trans/events/130613.html>.

With production going global, how can we compile reliable economic statistics?



As production grows more global and fragmented, statisticians need new knowledge on how to compile economic statistics. They also need to review the methods applied by national statistical offices and international organizations. To help them do so, UNECE has set up a special Task Force on Global Production.

The Task Force is developing a Guide on Global Production with conceptual and practical guidance to help countries produce statistics that better reflect today's economic realities. Meeting recently in Geneva, the UNECE Group of Experts on National Accounts reviewed the draft Guide. In addition to the UNECE members, other countries such as China, Chile, India, Mexico and Republic of Korea, which play an important role in global value chains, participated in the meeting.

The Guide, to be issued soon, will deal with specialized topics. These include a typology of global production arrangements; guidance on defining economic ownership in the production chains; and economic ownership of Intellectual Property Products (IPP) inside multinational enterprise groups.

The publication will also examine how to measure goods for processing, transit trade and merchanting in global production chains, including how to identify and measure inventories held abroad.

The work of the Task Force will be an important contribution to implementing the new international standard, the 2008 System of National Accounts. □

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