



Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

**Specialized Section on Standardization
of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

Fifty-ninth session

Geneva, 23-27 May 2011

**Report of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh
Fruit and Vegetables on its fifty-ninth session**

Summary

The Specialized Section decided to:

- Submit the text of the revised Standard Layout to the Working Party for approval
- Submit the texts of the revised standards for early and ware potatoes, plums, apples, pears and garlic to the Working Party for approval
- Submit the text of the new standard for fresh chilli peppers to the Working Party for approval as a recommendation for a one-year trial period
- Allow for a final period of consultations on the texts of the standards for apples, cherries, chestnuts and lambs lettuce with the aim of finalizing the standards at the November meeting
- Carry out a survey of national practices in allowing the indication of codes on packages with the aim of providing this information on the UNECE webpage
- Continue work on the explanatory brochure for pineapples and on the glossary of terms
- Work on harmonizing the UNECE and Codex standard layouts

I. Introduction

1. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany).

II. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
3. The European Union was also represented.
4. The following specialized agencies/programmes participated in the session: Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
5. A representative of the following intergovernmental organizations participated in the session: OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.
6. A representatives of the following non-governmental organization also participated in the session: COLEACP (Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee).

III. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2011/1

7. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda with proposed changes and amendments.

IV. Matters of interest since the last session

(a) UNECE and subsidiary bodies

Documentation: 1985 version of the Geneva Protocol

Proposals for revising Geneva Protocol (INF.1, Informal document)

8. The secretariat informed the Specialized Section about the proposed UN-wide budget cuts for 2012-2013. The delegations expressed their full support for the UNECE work on agricultural quality standards and hoped the cuts would not impact negatively on this area of UNECE activities.
9. The delegations considered the draft text of the Geneva Agreement that was meant to replace and supersede the Geneva Protocol of 1985. The text took into account the comments expressed by: (a) the Bureaux of the specialized sections, (b) the plenary session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, and (c) the Working Group of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.
10. The secretariat explained that the purpose of the Geneva Agreement was to provide a flexible framework for all countries members of the United Nations to participate in the UNECE standard-setting activities. The agreement was not meant to be a legally binding document for signature and formal adoption by governments. While providing an open

platform for global work on agricultural quality standards, the Agreement did not imply that UNECE would carry out this work under the global mandate given by the Economic and Social Council.

11. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the revised draft of the Agreement (revised INF.1 post-session document) to other specialized sections and the Working Party for further consideration and approval. It is expected that, if approved, the Agreement will be submitted to the UNECE Committee on Trade and the Executive Committee. The delegations were asked to send to the secretariat their further comments on the draft Agreement by 1 August 2011 so that the text could be finalized and sent for translation in time for the November meeting of the Working Party.

12. The representative of the Codex secretariat suggested that the delegations at the Working Party meeting, while adopting the Agreement, have a discussion on how they understand the UNECE cooperation with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and that the results of that discussion be shared with the Codex member countries at the next meeting of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV).

13. The Specialized Section emphasized that the aim of cooperation should be harmonized technical provisions when CCFFV and UNECE would have standards for the same product. That should be facilitated by harmonized standard layouts, with the understanding that harmonisation would cover their common parts.

14. The differences in working procedures, meeting intervals and the decision-making processes of both bodies should not be an obstacle to amendments to the standards to reflect changes in commercial practices or to correct errors. The bodies could exchange information on the agendas of meetings, documents and reports to enable each body to check whether on their side an initiative would be needed to align the respective standard for harmonisation purposes.

15. The Specialized Section could see no obstacles to both organizations developing new standards for the same products in parallel. The differences in the decision-making should not create problems, provided the two organizations grant each other time to reflect and check the result before approving the new standard. Fundamental revisions of the existing standards could follow the same approach. When the Specialized Section develops an explanatory brochure, the members of CCFFV would be welcome to join the relevant working group. The work on the brochures helps check the practical application aspects and often prompts changes to technical provisions in the standard concerned.

(b) Other organizations

Documentation: Note on 16th session of CCFFC (INF.19, Informal document)

Report from the OECD Scheme (INF.20, Informal document)

Report from the European Commission (INF.21, Informal document)

16. The representative of the secretariat of the Joint/WHO Food Standards Programme informed the meeting about the sixteenth session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables held in Mexico City from 2 to 6 May 2011. Within the Terms of Reference established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, namely “*to elaborate worldwide standards ... as may be appropriate for fresh fruits and vegetables*”, the Committee worked on:

- Draft Standard for Avocado (revision of CODEX STAN 197-1995)
- Draft Standard for Tree Tomato

- Proposed draft Standard for Chilli Peppers
- Proposed draft Standard for Pomegranate
- Proposed Layout for Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Discussion Paper on the Point of Application of Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, including Quality Tolerances at Import/Export Control Points
- Proposals for new work on Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

17. The session was attended by delegates at the level of technical experts, senior administrators and researchers representing 41 member countries, one member organization, as well as observers from the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruits and Vegetables and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

18. The Committee agreed to:

- retain the draft Standard for Avocado while waiting for the finalization of the sizing and sizing-related provisions including the identification of methods of analysis for the determination of dry matter content for consideration at the 17th session of the Committee;
- forward the draft Standard for Tree Tomato and the proposed draft Standard for Chilli Peppers for final adoption by the 34th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 4-9 July 2011);
- forward the proposed draft Standard for Pomegranate to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for adoption and subsequent circulation for comments and consideration by the 17th session of the Committee;
- request the Codex and UNECE secretariats to prepare a revised layout highlighting the main differences between Codex and UNECE layouts, including issues related to point of application and quality tolerances at import/export control points, for consideration by the next session of the Committee;
- request approval of new work on a Standard for Golden Passion Fruit to the 34th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and to continue to request comments on proposals for new work for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

19. As a general matter, the Committee agreed to delete the reference to “carefully picked” from all the Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables carrying this provision, subject to approval by the 34th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

20. The report was issued as REP11/FFV and was available to the public on the Codex website at <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/>. The report would be available in English, French and Spanish.

21. The next session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables was tentatively scheduled for the second half of 2012. The exact date and venue would be communicated in due course by the Codex secretariat through the Codex website and through the Codex Electronic Distribution List (Codex-L) to all Codex Members (Codex Contact Points) and observers (recognized international organizations having granted observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies).

22. A Joint Codex/UNECE Workshop was organized on 1 May 2011, prior to the meeting. The purpose of the workshop was to promote the use of Codex and UNECE standards for fresh fruits and vegetables as international trade references, to show how the standards were interpreted and applied in the European export markets, and to encourage

closer cooperation between Codex and UNECE. The participants found the workshop useful, requested the two secretariats to promote the organization of practical workshops in the future, and stressed the need to harmonize Codex and UNECE standards starting with the harmonization of the standard layouts and asked the secretariats to support and facilitate this process.

23. The Committee noted that efforts for harmonizing the standard layouts could facilitate harmonization of general requirements, so that the Committee could better focus on the provisions particular to the produce that may differ between Codex and UNECE standards.

24. The representative of the OECD informed the meeting about the latest activities of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme. In 2010, the OECD published explanatory brochures on apricots, peaches and nectarines, citrus fruits and apples. They were available in both electronic and hard copy format. In 2011, the OECD would publish an explanatory brochure on hazelnuts, a revised brochure on asparagus and a revised electronic version of the brochure on mangoes. The development of explanatory brochures on melons, onions and watermelons was ongoing. The priority list for future work on brochures was also updated to include garlic, cherries, broccoli, Chinese cabbage, leeks, shallots, fresh figs, as well as an update of the existing brochures according to the new layout.

25. The Scheme approved the Codex Standard on Bananas under the Scheme without Sections 7 and 8 on Contaminants and Hygiene. The Scheme was exploring the possibility of developing an OECD brochure on bananas with the involvement of Codex members, especially of banana-producing countries, and the development of an OECD brochure on pomegranate in parallel with the standardization work at Codex.

26. The OECD adopted and published the Guidelines on Training of Inspectors on Quality Inspection. The electronic version was available on the Scheme's website: www.oecd.org/tad/fv.

27. The Scheme undertook a peer review on the Turkish Fruit and Vegetables Quality Inspection in 2010. The report would be published in the coming months. In 2011, the Netherlands volunteered to undertake a peer review of their national quality inspection system.

28. The Scheme adopted revised sampling procedures and made progress in the revision of the OECD Operating Rules for the Conformity Checks of Produce Exported under the Scheme (inspection methods). In parallel, an OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection were under development. These documents would be discussed at the 70th Plenary Meeting to be held in December 2011.

29. The Scheme supported the cooperation with FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, as well as with UNECE. As regards UNECE, the subjects and format of cooperation were under discussion.

30. The fifteenth OECD Meeting of the Heads of National Inspection Services was held in Budapest in March, 2011. The meeting focused on the new situation and challenges in the international fruit and vegetables trade due to the reform of the EU quality inspection system and on the feasibility of an integrated quality inspection system. The latter was discussed in the context of ongoing work at OECD on this subject and received further support at the Meeting.

31. The representative of the European Commission reported that the EU-specific marketing standards were aligned with the corresponding UNECE standards, which had been revised in 2009 and 2010 in the framework of the recast of Regulation (EC) 1580/2007.

32. The alignment was made for all provisions, except for two issues:
- Maturity requirements for table grapes: provisions which already existed in the current Regulation (12-14° Brix for different varieties with appropriate sugar/acid ratio) were kept because it was not possible for some Member States to follow the requirements prescribed in the UNECE standard (Brix 16° and in particular sugar/acid ratio for Lavallée variety).
 - Citrus standard: Some Member States were not in favour of extending the scope of the EU specific marketing standards (SMS) for citrus fruit to cover grapefruit, limes and pummelos, claiming that this would increase the burden for importers (because of import notifications) and administrations (SMS products have stricter control requirements).
33. The compulsory labelling requirement for post-harvest treatment was also left unchanged in the current Regulation.
34. The Recast of Regulation (EC) No 1580/2007 was adopted on 17 May 2011 and should be published in the coming weeks.
35. The results of the study on marketing standards carried out in 2009-2010 are available on the DG Agri website (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/fruitveg-markets/index_en.htm) The general conclusions of the study were that the 2008 reform of marketing standards had not brought about major changes, either positive or negative, in the market situation for three products examined (cultivated mushrooms, melons, carrots) or in the practice of operators.

V. Clarification of uniformity and marking provisions for mixtures

Documentation: Uniformity and marking for mixtures (INF.5, Informal document)
Indication of variety names (INF.6, Informal document)
Amendments to FFV Standard Layout (INF.7, Informal document)

36. Some delegations pointed out the lack of consistency in the marking provisions for mixtures of varieties (species) and mixtures of commercial types (and/or colours) when the produce was not visible from the outside. Although some countries were in favour of indicating the quantity of each variety in the mixture on the package if the produce was not visible from the outside, the Specialized Section decided not to change these provisions in the Standard Layout.

37. The delegation of France expressed its concern about a possible confusion between "varieties" and "trade marks" referred to in the annex to the Standard Layout. To clarify the use of these terms, the Specialized Section decided to amend: (a) the first paragraph of the annex with the following sentence: "For labelling requirements please refer to section VI of the standard", and (b) the labelling requirements of the standards concerned. The specific wording for these amendments is formulated in the report below relating to the standard for pears.

38. The representative of the Codex secretariat asked why the same marking provisions could not be applied for the produce both visible and not visible from the outside. The delegations gave several reasons: labelling requirements in the marketing standards should not be the same as the general labelling requirements; the industry was in favour of

minimum necessary labelling; there was no need to put additional marking when visual evidence existed.

39. The delegations considered the proposal by the delegation of the United States to change the Standard Layout for fresh fruit and vegetable standards and make it similar to that for dry and dried produce. The Specialized Section was of the opinion that such a shift would make the work on standards more complex, particularly with regard to breaking down the total tolerances into specific tolerances for various defects. The use of the proposed Standard Layout in the development of new standards would also complicate the harmonized application of old and new standards by inspection services.

VI. Revision of UNECE standards

40. The Specialized Section reviewed the changes to standards proposed by countries. These changes were reflected in the post-session versions of the texts of the standards available on the UNECE website together with the documentation for the meeting.

(a) Shallots

41. The Specialized Section decided not to change substantively the provisions on shoot growth. Allowances for shoot growth were moved from the minimum requirements section to the tolerances section during the 2010 revision of the Standard. The delegations agreed to replace, in the English version of the Standard, the term "visible sprouts" with "visible shoot growth" and asked the secretariat to republish it on the website with a new date of issue.

(b) Early and ware potatoes

42. The Specialized Section decided to align the size tolerance with the 10 per cent prescribed by the Standard Layout.

43. The delegations agreed to rectify the provision on uniformity in size with regard to "sales packages up to 5 kg net weight".

(c) Plums

Documentation: Amended list of varieties (INF.9, Informal document)

44. The Specialized Section: (a) approved the amendments to the list of varieties proposed by the delegations of Germany and France; (b) added reference to the section on marking (VI.B) at the end of the introductory paragraph of the list; (c) amended section VI.B to allow for marking specifications in addition to the obligatory indication of the name of the variety.

(d) Apples

45. The Specialized Section decided to add reference to the section on marking (VI.B) at the end of the introductory paragraph of the list of varieties. It would not be appropriate to restart the discussion of the conceptual issues of the list of varieties, as such a discussion had taken place recently and produced acceptable results. However, the list needed to be regularly updated for new varieties, trade names and other apple characteristics.

46. The delegations noted that there were differences in the understanding of the sizing provision "10 mm for Class I fruit packed loose in the package or in sales packages". They

decided to clarify whether the 10 mm allowance applied for all sales packages, irrespective of their type, or only to fruit packed loose. The Representative of the Codex Secretariat drew the attention of the Specialized Section to the uniformity provisions for sizing by diameter in the Codex Standard for Apples which could simplify the corresponding provisions in the UNECE Standard and would provide for harmonization between the two Standards. The Specialized Section decided to put on the agenda for its next session the update of the list of varieties and the question on sizing uniformity.

47. The delegation of South Africa proposed that the requirement for pest damage under the minimum requirements be stipulated as "practically free from damage caused by pests" in addition to the requirement "practically free from pests". If not implemented, very small damage on skin which is hardly seen can lead to rejection of the fruit. It was clarified that in UNECE standards slight pest damage to the skin is covered under skin defects in the classification section. It was further explained that the Standard Layout minimum requirements "free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh" and "practically free from damage caused by pests" were applied to fruits and vegetables with or (practically) without skin, respectively. The Specialized Section may revisit the issue of tolerances at its next session, depending on the requests from countries.

(e) Pears

Documentation: Uniformity sizing, INF.11 (France)

48. The proposal by South Africa to include certain trade names as synonyms to the varieties was covered by the amendments made to the list of varieties and to the provisions on the indication of varieties and trade names. The names proposed by South Africa for inclusion in the list of varieties were considered to be trade names. The marking should always indicate the name of variety and in addition may contain special denominations relating, for example, to colour groups. The Specialized Section agreed that the term "trade name" used in section VI.B was broad enough to cover trade marks or other commercial specifications, in addition to the variety.

49. The Specialized Section decided to amend section VI.B "Nature of produce" with the following paragraph: "The name of the variety can be replaced by a synonym. A trade name can only be given in addition to the variety or the synonym". It also clarified in a footnote the meaning of the term "trade name": "A trade name can be a trademark for which protection has been sought or obtained or any other commercial denomination." In the table containing the list of varieties (English version) the name of the column "Trade names" was changed to "Trademarks". The same amendments were made to the standards for apples and plums.

50. The delegation of France suggested that the size ranges of pears sized by weight be changed for "Extra" Class and Class I and II fruit packed in rows and layers to reflect their national industry practice. Consideration of this proposal was postponed to the next session of the Specialized Section to allow for consultations with the industry.

(f) Table grapes

51. The Specialized Section did not support the proposal by South Africa to merge the two existing maturity requirements into one: "18:1 if the Brix level is greater than or equal to 12.5° and less than 16° Brix". The delegations preferred not to change the existing provisions, as the proposed merge would not significantly simplify the practical use of the Standard.

(g) Citrus fruit

52. The Specialized Section introduced minor editorial changes to the English version of the Standard, including the correct name of the Indian sweet limes, and asked the secretariat to publish the standard on the website with a new issue date.

(h) Fresh chilli and sweet peppers

Documentation: Revised draft Standard for Fresh Chilli Peppers (post-session document INF.4 of May 2010)

Codex text (INF.13, Informal document)

Codex text aligned with UNECE SL (INF.14, Informal document)

53. The delegations considered the text of the draft Standard for Fresh Chilli Peppers agreed on by the Codex CCFFV and aligned with the UNECE Standard Layout. The Specialized Section introduced some minor changes reflected in the post-session document INF.14. The draft standard was amended to: (a) include provisions on mixtures to reflect trading practices in the European markets, (b) indicate the name of commercial type, instead of variety, in the "Nature of produce" section, and (c) expand size specifications in the section on labelling.

54. The Specialized Section decided to submit the draft standard to the Working Party for approval as a recommendation for a one-year trial period. That would allow countries to clarify some technical provisions, e.g. 2 and 3 per cent allowances for skin defects for Classes I and II, to check the botanical names of the species covered by the standard, with a view to harmonizing the UNECE text with that of CCFFV, as well as to verifying the methods for testing pungency.

55. The Specialized Section expressed its willingness to have the UNECE and Codex texts of the standard harmonized as closely as possible. The delegations were asked to inform their national Codex focal points about the countries' need to have additional time to check the provisions of the draft standard with the industry. The preparation of an explanatory brochure would also help clarify the standard provisions. Bearing this in mind, the Specialized Section thought it would be appropriate to ask the Codex Alimentarius Commission to postpone the adoption of the Codex standard for fresh chilli peppers.

(i) Cherries

56. The delegations did not support the proposals by France to introduce a single minimum size of 20 mm and to ensure uniformity by not allowing the range in size between produce in the same package to exceed 2 mm. Both proposals were considered as too restrictive. However, the delegates agreed to check the uniformity proposal with the industry and report the results at the next session of the Specialized Section.

57. The Specialized Section made a correction to the botanical name of cherries in the "Definition of produce" section and asked the secretariat to republish the Standard on the web with a new date of issue.

(j) Sweet chestnuts

Documentation: Standard for Sweet Chestnuts (informal document INF.3)

Sizing of chestnuts (INF12, Informal document)

58. The Specialized Section considered the proposals to revise the Standard received from France and from the Fruit and Horticultural European Regions Assembly (AREFLH).

The delegations wanted to know more about the hybrids of *Castanea mollissima*, the new product suggested for inclusion in the Standard. The Specialized Section decided to amend the provisions on sizing to allow for the size to be determined by maximum diameter. The delegation of France will advise the Specialized Section whether specific uniformity rules for sizing by diameter should be developed. In the classification section, it also specified the requirement for nuts to be marked as "marrons". Since sweet chestnuts are traded by variety, the term "commercial type" was removed from the text of the Standard. If possible, the text of the Standard should be finalized at the next session of the Specialized Section.

(k) Lambs lettuce

59. The Specialized Section decided not to include lambs lettuce into the group Standard for Leafy Vegetables, as some countries considered that this product had specific characteristics that needed to be reflected in a separate standard. The delegations of France and Germany were asked to prepare a draft text of the standard for lambs lettuce for consideration at the next session of the Specialized Section.

(l) Mangoes

60. Since no proposals to reflect mixed sizes/varieties in the Standard had been received, the Specialized Section left the text of the Standard unchanged.

(m) Other standards, upon request from countries

Documentation: Garlic (INF.10, Informal document)

Root and tubercle vegetables (INF.16, Informal document)

Corrections to standards, Germany (INF.17, Informal document)

61. The delegations took note of the decision of the European Court of Justice regarding the definitions of fresh and dry garlic. It was explained that the Court decision concerned the garlic dried by industrial methods and was made to clarify the content of the customs code. The Specialized Section agreed that the decision did not have any impact on the UNECE Standard for Garlic. However, to remove any ambiguity in the definition of the produce, an amendment was made to the Standard making it clear that "Semi-dry" and "Dry" garlic both meant fresh produce.

62. The Specialized Section agreed that special types of trimming leaves of root vegetables, for example leaving part of the stems, were covered by the provisions of the Standard for Root and Tubercle Vegetables and there was thus no need to amend this Standard.

63. The Specialized Section asked the secretariat to introduce minor editorial changes listed in document INF.17 and publish the corrected standards on the website with a new date of issue.

64. The Specialized Section decided to submit the texts of the Standard Layout and of the standards for early and ware potatoes, plums, apples, pears and garlic to the Working Party for approval.

VII. Explanatory brochure for the standard on pineapples

Documentation: Draft brochure

Standard for Pineapples (post-session document INF.15 of May 2010)

Comments by Mauritius (INF.15, Informal document)

Comments by France (INF.18, Informal document)

65. The delegations revisited the text of the Standard reviewed at the May 2010 session of the Specialized Section. The maturity requirement of 12° Brix was left unchanged, as no consensus could be reached to lower it to 10° Brix. To allow the marketing of small fruit, provided they meet the maturity and other requirements, the Specialized Section decided to remove the provision on minimum sizing. The delegation of South Africa will make a proposal on the uniformity in size for the variety "Queen Victoria". The size tolerance was increased from 10 to 15 per cent. The changes introduced to the Standard can be found in the post-session document INF.15.

66. The Specialized Section reviewed the first draft of the UNECE brochure for pineapples. Changes, comments and suggestions made by the delegations are included in the reviewed draft available on the UNECE website. The delegations of South Africa and France were asked to send to the secretariat information on the method of measuring Brix levels for "Queen Victoria" and other varieties of pineapples. COLEACP offered to contribute explanatory notes on colouring, ripeness and degreening of pineapples.

67. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme requested clarification as to whether the UNECE would request revision of the Codex Standard for Pineapples. The representative indicated that the Codex and UNECE Standards in force were very much aligned and that the changes introduced in the revised UNECE Standard would lead to deviations from the corresponding provisions in the Codex Standard. It was noted that this would not facilitate international trade; therefore the need for harmonization was highlighted. The representative further noted that the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables had not been consulted on the revision of the UNECE Standard.

68. The Specialized Section was very much interested in harmonizing the two standards for pineapples. Many United Nations member countries, especially producing and exporting countries, had already contributed substantively to the revision of the Standard and the development of the brochure. The final decision on the adoption of the revised UNECE standard would be taken only after the work on the brochure had been finalized. The Specialized Section invited the Codex members to join the revision process initiated by UNECE.

VIII. Glossary of terms

Documentation: Glossary of terms (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2011/2)

69. The delegations worked on the draft text of the glossary of terms presented by France. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme asked to remove any reference to Codex standards from the glossary, as there was no Codex mandate for UNECE to interpret the terms used in Codex standards. The Specialized Section agreed to review again the text of the glossary at an informal meeting preceding the next session of the Specialized Section.

IX. Promotion and capacity-building

70. The secretariat and delegations exchanged information on capacity-building, training and promotional and other activities that had taken place since the latest session of the Specialized Section or were planned for 2011. The secretariat would update information on the dates and venues of the meetings and capacity-building activities in the international meetings calendar on the UNECE website.

X. Future work

71. The Specialized Section agreed to continue its work on the standards for pineapples and fresh chilli peppers and on the explanatory brochure for pineapple. It would also work on harmonizing the UNECE and Codex standard layouts. The delegations would try to make progress on the issues referred to above on the standards for apples, cherries, chestnuts and lambs lettuce with the aim of finalizing them at the November meeting.

XI. Other business

Documentation: Scheduling GE.1 and GE.2 meetings (INF.8, Informal document)

72. A representative of the Dutch Board for Horticulture made a presentation on the use of a Global Location Number on cartons and consumer packages as identification of the packer for quality control purposes. National practices in allowing the use of codes differed from country to country. To collect information about these practices as well as about the national authorities recognizing the codes, the Specialized Section asked the secretariat to send to countries the following questions:

- "Does your country recognize and allow packers/dispatchers/shippers to use official codes to replace the packers/dispatchers/shippers' name and address?"
- What is the name and address of your national authority recognizing the codes? Please also provide the focal point's address, e-mail address and phone number.
- What is the structure of your code?
- Do you provide for a public access to the codes? Please give the address".

73. The secretariat would summarize this information and present it at the November Working Party meeting. The delegations would decide on the format in which this information should be made available on the UNECE website.

74. An informal meeting took place on the margins of the Specialized Section session to exchange views on the concept and layout of explanatory brochures and to provide guidance to UNECE and OECD on the approaches to producing brochures. A summary report of this meeting is annexed to the present report.

75. The Specialized Section supported the proposal by the United States to coordinate meeting dates for the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1) and the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2), when possible. The representatives of the European Union and Codex Alimentarius preferred to have the GE.2 preceding the GE.1 session, should both sessions be held back-to-back.

XII. Election of officers

76. The Specialized Section re-elected Ms. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany) as Chair and Ms. Kristina Mattsson (Sweden) as Vice-Chair.

XIII. Adoption of the report

77. The Specialized Section adopted the report of the session.

Annex

Recommendations on the concept and layout of explanatory brochures Report of the informal meeting, 26 May 20011 in Geneva

The informal meeting on the concept and layout of explanatory brochures was attended by Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, EU-Commission and UNECE Secretariat. The participants regretted that the Secretariat of the OECD Scheme could not attend the meeting.

The participants exchanged views on the existing explanatory brochures for fruit and vegetables published by the OECD and the UNECE and agreed on the following recommendations on the concept and format for future brochures.

1. Concept of the brochures

It was agreed that:

- the range concept was a good practical guidance for packing stations and a good tool for training;
- the traditional concept of the brochures, showing the limit for the relevant defect and class only, is the right tool for trained persons and inspectors;
- the concept of a simplified brochure (illustration of minimum requirements only), as envisaged by the OECD Scheme was not supported since it would not cover the most important and interesting part of the explanatory brochures – the definition of defect limits for the classes;
- the idea of having different types of brochures (traditional, range or simplified concept) was not supported; all brochures should have the same concept, layout and substantive information content.

The following was proposed for future explanatory material, as it would best meet the requirements for guidance and training, and would best serve both target groups - inspectors and the industry:

- the traditional concept of the brochures was preferred, in both paper and electronic versions;
- electronic versions of the brochures should provide for navigation by means of hyperlinks;
- photos should be produced showing a range for each defect mentioned in quality classes and the limits allowed should be shown;
- PowerPoint presentations should include, where available, the material according to the range concept;
- posters of the defects by quality classes showing the range for each defect should be developed as pdf-files and offered free of charge on the website for downloading and printing.

2. Format of the brochures

It was agreed that:

- there was no need for ring binders, as an update of single pages had never happened because the updates required a special distribution chain that neither OECD nor UNECE had;
- although the spiral binding was convenient in handling, it was found impractical for storing brochures on a shelf and they did not have the title on the spine;
- the cover should be hard, not flexible;
- the brochures should be bilingual, as they were used in international trade, and for practical reasons English should be the reference language: English/French, English/Russian, and eventually English/other language; their layout should allow for that
- the latest version of the standard with clear reference to UNECE (or Codex Alimentarius) should be annexed to the brochure;
- for publication, all photos should have the same background colour (same colour reference code);
- there was no particular preference for either A5 or A4 format, nor for whether the photos should be presented after each section of the standard or at the end of the brochure.

The secretariats of UNECE and OECD were requested to develop:

- common guidelines on brochures
- a common layout for the brochures
- a common layout for the PowerPoint presentations including the range concept
- a common layout for posters
- common guidelines for posters.

The working group emphasized the necessity for both organisations to:

- publish their brochures with the same concept and layout, especially when the UNECE standards were the basis of the explanatory brochures;
- provide access to the electronic versions of all their brochures;
- cooperate in implementing an agreed harmonized concept for the next publications.

The delegations who took part in the informal meeting agreed to submit these recommendations to the UNECE specialized sections on fresh fruit and vegetables and dry and dried produce and to the OECD Scheme for consideration and possible approval.