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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Technical Harmonization and
Standardization Policies

Tenth session, 6-8 November 2000

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TENTH SESSION
(including the provisional programme for the Workshop on 7 November)

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 6 November**

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|----|---|--|
| 1. | Adoption of the agenda | TRADE/WP.6/2000/3 |
| 2. | Election of officers | |
| 3. | Matters arising from the fifty-fifth session of the Economic
Commission for Europe and from the third and fourth sessions of
the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development | ECE/TRADE/231 |
| 4. | Workshop on the Role of International Standards and Technical
Regulations in International Trade | TRADE/WP.6/2000/4 |
| 5. | Review of developments in standardization activities and in the
field of regulatory cooperation at international, regional and
national level | TRADE/WP.6/2000/5 |
| 6. | Coordination
- ECE Standardization List | TRADE/WP.6/2000/6
TRADE/WP.6/2000/7 |

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|-----|---|--|
| 7. | Harmonization | |
| | (a) Role of international standards in international harmonization. | ECE/TRADE/231 |
| | (b) UN/ECE project “International Model for implementing good regulatory practice in the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards” | TRADE/WP.6/2000/8
TRADE/WP.6/2000/9 |
| 8. | Conformity assessment | |
| | (a) Review of developments in conformity assessment at international, regional and national level | TRADE/WP.6/2000/10
TRADE/WP.6/2000/11 |
| | (b) Problems experienced by economies in transition relating to conformity assessment procedures | TRADE/WP.6/2000/12 |
| | (c) Quality policy issues | TRADE/WP.6/2000/13
TRADE/WP.6/2000/14
TRADE/WP.6/2000/15 |
| | (d) Workshop on the Use of ISO 14000 Environmental Management System Standards in the Chemical Industry in the UN/ECE Region | TRADE/WP.6/2000/1
TRADE/WP.6/2000/2
TRADE/WP.6/2000/2/Add.1 |
| 9. | Metrology | |
| | - Standardization of test methods | TRADE/WP.6/200/13
TRADE/WP.6/1999/16 |
| 10. | Draft international agreement among UN/ECE member States on technical harmonization issues | TRADE/WP.6/1999/16
TRADE/WP.6/1999/16/Add.1
TRADE/WP.6/2000/17 |
| 11. | Programme of work | TRADE/WP.6/2000/18 |
| 12. | Other business | TRADE/WP.6/2000/19 |
| 13. | Adoption of the report | |

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Delegations are kindly requested to take note of the following provisional timetable for discussion of agenda items. This was prepared at the request of delegations with a view to making the organization and conducting of the meeting more flexible and allowing experts to concentrate on different work areas:

DAY ONE	6 November	Items 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9
DAY TWO	7 November	Item 4 (workshop) and items 6, 7, 10
DAY THREE	8 November	Item 4 (conclusions of the Workshop) Items 11, 12, 13

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ANNOTATIONS

Introduction

1. The provisional agenda has been drawn up by the secretariat on the basis of: (a) the programme of work of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies; (b) the relevant decisions adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe at its fifty-fifth session (May 2000), the Working Party at its ninth session (May 1999), the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its third session (June 1999); and (c) the agreements reached by the office-bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs at their meeting in Budapest in April 2000.

Item 1 - Adoption of the agenda

2. In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item on the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

Item 2 - Election of officers

3. In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party is expected to elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. It is recalled that Mr. C. ARVIUS (Sweden), Mr. V. KORESHKOV (Belarus) and Ms. M. SAUNDERS (United States of America) were elected Chairman and vice-chairpersons, respectively, of the ninth session.

Item 3 - Matters arising from the fifty-fifth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the third and fourth sessions of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

4. The Committee at its third session in June 1999 supported the Working Party's activities in areas of international standardization and technical harmonization. It endorsed results of the ninth session, including conclusions of the Workshop, approved establishing the ad hoc Team of Specialists on Regulatory and Standardization Techniques, and praised the Working Party's initiatives regarding cross-sectoral cooperation and its closer links with the private sector (document ECE/TRADE/231).

5. The secretariat will report orally on the discussions held and the decisions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-fifth session (May 2000) and on the results of the discussions held during the fourth session of the Committee (21- 23 June 2000). The report of the fourth session will be available to delegations.

Item 4 - Workshop on the Role of International Standards and Technical Regulations in International Trade

6. At its eight session, the Working Party decided to organize a series of workshops to exchange views on the implementation and application of international standards in specific sectors with representatives of national standardizing bodies, authorities and economic operators. Such a workshop was organized in conjunction with the ninth session (its conclusions can be found in annex 2 to the report of the ninth session, document TRADE/1999/WP.6/18).

7. At the meeting of office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs in Budapest in April 2000, it was agreed to organize a Workshop during the November 2000 session of the Working Party.

8. The purpose of the Workshop will be to look into the current situation and the problems faced by business operators which are due to differences in technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures in different markets. Representatives of international, regional and national standards organizations and bodies, of regulatory authorities and of business associations will present their views on how, on the one hand, to ensure health, safety and environmental protection, and, on the other, on how to minimize technical barriers to trade; how to harmonize regulatory objectives and how to use international standards in this context.

9. The Workshop will also provide an opportunity to exchange views on the UN/ECE project on the draft "International Model for implementing good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards", which was prepared by the ad hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization And Regulatory Techniques ("START" Team). (for details see agenda item 7(b) "Harmonization").

10. The Workshop will also be an occasion to recall the results of the Working Party since its establishment in its current form in 1990 (10th anniversary) and in general of the UN/ECE work on standardization policy matters since January 1970, when the first meeting of the Governmental Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies was held (30th anniversary).

11. The provisional programme of the Workshop is attached as annex I.

12. Representatives of international standardizing organizations and national standards bodies and officials from national and regional regulatory authorities and business persons from UN/ECE member States will be invited to take part in the discussions. Recommendations of the Workshop will be presented to the Working Party for approval.

13. As background documents for this agenda item, the Working Party will have the provisional agenda of the workshop (TRADE/WP.6/2000/4) and submissions and presentations on international, regional and national experience on technical harmonization and the draft text of the "International Model" (document TRADE/WP.6/2000/9).

Item 5 - Review of developments in standardization activities and in the field of regulatory cooperation at international, regional and national level

14. International and regional organizations and groupings (including the European Commission and the Commonwealth of Independent States) and national delegations are invited to report on their standardization and regulatory activities. Insofar as such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/5.

15. The secretariat will compile information previously received from some national delegations on topics including national legislation, administrative procedures and systems for technical harmonization. Other delegations are invited to submit similar information.

Item 6 - Coordination

ECE Standardization List

16. The Working Party will have before it a draft of the fifth revised version of the ECE Standardization List, incorporating comments to the List submitted at the ninth session of the Working Party (document TRADE/WP.6/2000/6). The Rapporteur on Coordination will report on comments received from interested organizations and countries since the latest session with a view to deciding on the fifth revision of the List at the forthcoming session.

17. At the meeting of office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs in April 2000 it was proposed to suggest to Governments to consider the feasibility of expanding the Standardization List by adding to it an annex of sectors or product categories where Governments consider useful to have further international cooperation on regulatory objectives. Such indications will help to identify potential areas for harmonization of technical regulations; in particular, by making recourse to international standards. These issues would be also considered in the context of discussions under agenda item 7(b) "Harmonization".

18. Submissions from organizations and national delegations will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/7.

19. The Working Party may wish to set up an ad hoc group to finalize of the fifth revision of the Standardization List.

Item 7 - Harmonization

(a) Role of international standards in international harmonization

20. It is recalled that at its seventh, eighth and ninth sessions the Working Party discussed ways of establishing transparent systems for the national transposition of international standards. From the analysis of information received it seemed that many of the international standardizing organizations had no specific systems for follow-up of the national transposition of the standards developed by these organizations.

21. Thus, at its ninth session, the Working Party stressed that international standardizing organizations should be encouraged to reinforce and apply mechanisms applicable to their members in relation to transposition as well as to transparency in the transposition of their standards.

22. The Working Party will have before it the UN/ECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.3). Rapporteurs and coordinators will prepare proposals concerning possible further action for the effective review and implementation of existing UN/ECE recommendations based on the discussions and recommendations at the Workshop on the Implementation and Use of International Standards held during the May 1999 session of the Working Party.

23. Following conclusions of the May 1999 workshop, the Working Party, at its ninth session, suggested that national organizations which are members of international and regional standardizing organizations and which vote for the adoption of concrete standards or recommendations consider the possibility of taking on obligations for providing information on whether (or to what extent) these adopted standards etc. are transposed and used in their countries. Such obligations would show the level of commitment of national organizations and their members to the transposition and use of international standards as a tool for facilitating international trade. The Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development, at its third session in June 1999, agreed in particular on this as a recommendation to UN/ECE subsidiary bodies.

24. The Committee also agreed on the importance of reducing divergences between international, regional and national standards which can create barriers to trade. It endorsed the conclusions of the Workshop and annexed them to the report of its third session (ECE/TRADE/231, annex 1).

(b) UN/ECE project “International Model for implementing good regulatory practice in the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards”

25. It is recalled that, at its last session, the Working Party agreed that as a framework for technical harmonization at the global level, technical regulations should, in general, be limited to the essential requirements needed to meet regulatory objectives. As a complement to these regulations, the preferred means for setting out detailed requirements should be recognized international standards.

26. With this in mind, the Working Party decided to establish an ad hoc group of experts to examine how technical regulations can make wider use of international standardization. This proposal was also endorsed by the Committee in June 1999.

27. An ad hoc Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (“START” Team) was formally established in September 1999. The work of the Team is intended to provide guidance for good regulatory practice and act as a mechanism for voluntary cooperation between regulatory authorities, standardizers and industry, so that legislation can make appropriate use of standards.

28. Such mechanisms were tentatively called an “International or Global Model for implementing good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via international standards”. An outline of the “Model” was prepared and sent to Governments for information and comments in February 2000. The outline was also presented, for information, to the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade at its session on 25 February 2000 and at the OECD special meeting on technical barriers to trade on 16 and 17 March 2000.

29. The idea of the “Model” has been supported by a number of countries and organizations which expressed their interest in cooperating with the UN/ECE secretariat in the further preparation of such a project.

30. The START Team held four meetings from September 1999 to April 2000 and the first working draft of the “International Model” was prepared in May 2000. The Team plans to organize informal hearings on the draft with interested governmental bodies, international organizations and representatives of business associations in June 2000 in order to include all relevant comments in the draft document to be presented for consideration and discussions at the tenth session (document TRADE/WP.6/2000/8).

31. International and regional organizations and national delegations are invited to submit their comments on the draft document of the “International Model”. Submissions will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/9.

Item 8 - Conformity assessment

(a) Review of developments in conformity assessment at international, regional and national level

32. International and regional organizations and national delegations are invited to report on developments in conformity assessment at the international, regional and national level. Insofar as such information is available sufficiently in advance of the meeting, it will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/10.

33. The Working Party will be presented with suggestions (TRADE/WP.6/2000/11) for future strategies in the UN/ECE region in this area by the Rapporteur on Conformity Assessment.

(b) Problems experienced by economies in transition relating to conformity assessment procedures

34. It is recalled that during discussions at the ninth session the Working Party noted a number of problems in the area of conformity assessment faced by transition economies.
35. In view of the importance of these issues and at the request of the Working Party, the Rapporteur on Conformity Assessment presented a paper on major problems and concerns in this area within the UN/ECE region at the WTO Symposium on Conformity Assessment (June 1999, Geneva).
36. The Rapporteur on Conformity Assessment will present a paper on mutual recognition and the role of accreditation in international trade (in particular on issues relating to recognition of ISO 9000 certificates)- (TRADE/WP.6/2000/12).

(c) Quality policy issues

37. National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to report on their experience in introducing and using different quality policies (TRADE/WP.6/2000/13).
38. Following participation of the secretariat at the international conference "Quality-99" held in Minsk in November 1999, the secretariat (in cooperation with the UN/ECE Regional Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs) is studying a request from Belarus for technical assistance for establishing a Commonwealth of Independent States Quality Centre to be based in the existing Information Centre of the CIS Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology. The secretariat is currently considering the preparation of a project proposal for such a centre.
39. Rapporteurs on Quality will present a paper on a future strategy in the UN/ECE region on quality policies (TRADE/WP.6/2000/14) and a paper on new environmental management standards prepared by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (TRADE/WP.6/2000/15).

(d) Workshop on the Use of ISO 14000 Environmental Management Standards in the Chemical Industry in the UN/ECE Region

40. It is recalled that at its eight and ninth sessions the Working Party discussed a project prepared in cooperation with the UN/ECE ad hoc Group of Experts on the Chemical Industry. Under this joint project, which was supported by both of these UN/ECE subsidiary bodies, a questionnaire on the use of ISO 14000 standards was prepared (TRADE/WP.6/1999/13) and disseminated among member States and a Workshop was prepared. Responses to the questionnaire are summarized as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/2. Add.1.
41. The International Workshop on the Use of ISO 14000 Environmental Management System Standards in the Chemical Industry in the UN/ECE Region was held in Budapest from 30 to 31 March 2000. The purpose of the Workshop was to promote the exchange of views, experience and information between countries with different levels of development in the use of ISO 14000 standards in the chemical industry. The Workshop was attended by more than 60 delegates from 20 countries (including transition economies). Participants noted the usefulness of such meetings and asked for further UN/ECE activities in this area. The report of the Workshop is available as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/2.

Item 9 - Metrology

Standardization of test methods

42. It is recalled that, at the ninth session, the Rapporteur for Metrology submitted a draft document on guidelines on methodology for measuring procedures (document TRADE/WP.6/1999/15). The idea of preparing such guidelines was supported by COOMET (Cooperation in Metrology). The Working Party asked the rapporteurs on metrology to continue to work on that draft in consultation with interested international and regional organizations.

43. The Working Party will have before it a new revised draft of the proposed guidelines on methodology for measuring procedures prepared by the rapporteurs on metrology (TRADE/WP.6/2000/16).

Item 10 - Draft international agreement among UN/ECE member States on technical harmonization issues

44. It is recalled that discussions at the Working Party's previous sessions on the scope and format of an international agreement on technical harmonization resulted in the decision to favour the option of preparing a framework agreement with horizontal obligations to be complemented by sub-agreement protocols on specific subjects. This approach was also endorsed by the Committee at its second session in June 1998.

45. Drafts of the agreement (document TRADE/WP.6/1999/16) and of the first set of protocols (document TRADE/WP.6/1999/16/add.1) were submitted to the ninth session. Discussions showed that a number of delegations would like to see how the proposed future agreement could be more closely linked to concrete technical harmonization problems in particular sectors. With this in mind the Working Party decided to continue to work with the texts of the agreement and of its protocols, as well as to explore future potential areas which might be covered by protocols to the draft agreement.

46. At the meeting of office-bearers, rapporteurs and coordinators of the Working Party in Budapest in April 2000, it was suggested to consider two options concerning the development of an "International Model". First - to link its preparation with the international agreement so that the "Model" might become one of the protocols to this agreement. The second option was - to regard this as a separate initiative.

47. Among other possible subjects for inclusion in protocols to the draft international agreement is a proposal for a UN/ECE quality trademark for meat. The idea of this joint project between WP.6 and WP.7 (Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development) was discussed by the Working Party at its ninth session.

48. Details of this project were further discussed at the meeting of WP.7 Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat in May 1999 (document TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/5) and endorsed at the WP.7 session in November 1999 (document TRADE/WP.7/1999/7). As a result of discussions, it was suggested that rapporteurs of the Specialized Section on the Standardization of Meat would prepare a draft of a protocol on the meat quality trade mark which then will be submitted to WP.6 for consideration. Should such a document be ready for the tenth session, it will be submitted for consideration.

49. National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to submit their comments on drafts of the international agreement and of its possible protocols (Submissions will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2000/17).

Item 11 - Programme of work

50. The Working Party will have before it for approval and completion a draft programme of work prepared by the secretariat, taking into account the decisions of the Working Party at its ninth session and the agreements reached by the office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs at their meeting in April 2000 (TRADE/WP.6/2000/18).

51. It is recalled that the Commission requested all principal subsidiary bodies to rank in order of priority the programme elements in their work programmes. The secretariat will also report on the results of the prioritization of sub-activities of the Committee to be undertaken at its fourth session in June 2000.

Item 12 - Other business

52. In October 1999 the Working Party received a request from the Commonwealth of Independent States asking for information on western experience in control over implementation of standards and regulations (document TRADE/WP.6/2000/19). The Working Party may wish to consider how this request could be met, e.g. on organizing a special workshop. National delegations might wish to provide information on their experience related to questions raised in the above document.

53. It is recalled that at its ninth session the Working Party decided to consider possible functions and responsibilities for a Coordinator for Laboratory Accreditation. At the meeting of office bearers, rapporteurs and coordinators in April 2000 it was suggested that the area of laboratory accreditation should be assigned to the Rapporteur on conformity assessment.

54. Provisional arrangements have been made to hold the eleventh session of the Working Party in Geneva from 22 to 24 October 2001.

Item 13 - Adoption of the report

55. In accordance with established practice, the Working Party will adopt the report of its tenth session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

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Annex I

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME Workshop on the Role of International Standards and Technical Regulations in International Trade

**Tuesday 7 November 2000, 10 a.m.
Palais des Nations, Geneva**

Purpose of the Workshop:

1. To gather information regarding how technical regulations are prepared at national and/or regional level by regulatory authorities and to what extent the authorities use international standards in this process.
2. To address legitimate concerns of countries (health, safety, ecology) when preparing/introducing new technical regulations.
3. To analyse different means which might be used by countries in protecting consumers, workers, etc.
4. To discuss possible means to promote increased use of international standards in the preparation of national technical regulations so as to further facilitate the conditions for international trade and market access.
5. To look into how the process of harmonization of regulatory objectives at an international level can be further pursued.
6. To consider the objectives in the ECE Standardization List in relation to the process of regulatory cooperation.
7. These questions will be discussed in the light of the draft text of the “International Model for implementing good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption, and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards”. It is expected that discussions will allow an evaluation to be made of different features of the “International Model” and will help to further develop the concept of international technical harmonization.
8. **Moderators and speakers will include:**
9. Representatives of international standardizing organizations (International Standardization Organization (ISO) and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)) and of the World Trade Organization (WTO);
10. Chairmen of some of the UN/ECE subsidiary bodies engaged in standardization activities (World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations – WP.29; Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development – WP.7);

11. Officials from national and regional regulatory authorities in the UN/ECE region
12. Representatives of western and eastern European companies.
13. Participants will also include delegates from regulatory and standardization bodies and agencies in the UN/ECE region, representatives of international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations (including: WTO, ISO, IEC), the European Commission, officials from Geneva-based permanent missions and representatives of the business community in Europe and North America.

Issues to be addressed

General

14. What constitutes a “technical regulation”; possibilities of classifying technical regulations; which of them might have the potential to be harmonized at an international level
15. Existing international standards in specific sectors. How are standards drawn up by international standardizing organizations used today in the preparation of technical regulations at different levels?
16. Availability of any potential “mechanisms, models” and “best practices” for harmonization of technical requirements (“regulatory objectives”) of technical regulations? Reference to national or international standards in used technical regulations?
17. Progress in alignment and convergence in eastern European countries to international and European standards and regulations. Any specific difficulties or problems in this regard at a local level and in relations with foreign partners?
18. Level of concordance between international and regional standards and its influence on national or regional technical regulations (experience of CIS, EU)?
- 19. UN/ECE project on the “International Model for implementing good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards” – possible means for international harmonization of regulatory objectives?**
 - (1) identification of the need
 - (2) elaboration of common regulatory objectives
 - (3) internationally recognized standards
 - (4) assessing and attesting conformity with common regulatory objectives
 - (5) market surveillance

Findings/conclusions/follow-up

20. Information provided, problems and proposals raised by participants will be considered in the work on international standardization, technical harmonization and conformity assessment matters within the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies with the view to identifying suitable proposals for further action in this area.

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