ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies
Eleventh session, 29-31 October 2001

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE ELEVENTH SESSION
(including the provisional programme for the Workshop on Conformity Assessment Procedures and Trade Facilitation)

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 29 October 2001

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Election of officers

3. Matters arising from the fifty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the fifth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

4. Workshop on Conformity Assessment Procedures and Trade Facilitation

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

6. Coordination
   - ECE Standardization List

GE. 01-31535
7. Harmonization
   (a) Role of international standards in international harmonization. ECE/STAND/17/Rev.3
       TRADE/WP.6/2001/6
       TRADE/WP.6/2001/7

   (b) UNECE project “International Model for technical harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards” TRADE/WP.6/2001/8
       TRADE/WP.6/2001/9

8. Conformity assessment
   (a) Review of developments in conformity assessment at International, regional and national level TRADE/WP.6/2001/10

   (b) Problems experienced by economies in transition relating to conformity assessment procedures TRADE/WP.6/2001/11
       TRADE/WP.6/2001/12

   (c) Quality policy issues TRADE/WP.6/2001/13
       TRADE/WP.6/2001/14
       TRADE/WP.6/2001/15

   (d) UNECE Expert Meeting on Best Practice in the Creation of Quality Assurance Systems for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

9. Metrology
   - Standardization of test methods TRADE/WP.6/2001/16
   TRADE/WP.6/2000/16
   TRADE/WP.6/1999/15

10. Programme of work TRADE/WP.6/2001/17

11. Other business

12. Adoption of the report

* * *
Delegations are kindly requested to take note of the following provisional timetable for discussion of agenda items.

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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-sixth session (May 2001), the Working Party at its tenth session (November 2000), the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its fifth session (June 2001); and (c) the agreements reached by the Working Party 6 Bureau (office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs) at their meeting in Geneva in March 2001.

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. KORESPHKOV (Belarus) and Ms. M. SAUNDERS (United States of America) were elected Chairman and vice-chairpersons, respectively, at the tenth session.

Item 3 - Matters arising from the fifty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Europe and from the fifth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED)

4. The secretariat will report orally on the discussions held and the decisions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-sixth session (May 2001) and on the results of the discussions held during the fifth session of the Committee (June 2001). The report of the fifth session (document ECE/TRADE/280) will be made available to delegations. In particular, information will be provided on the Committee’s proposal of cooperation with the Timber Committee and the Committee on Environmental Policy to strengthen work on sustainable trade in timber, following the decision of the UNECE Annual Session in 2001 to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation.
**Item 4  Workshop on Conformity Assessment Procedures and Trade Facilitation**

5. At its eighth 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 workshops were organized in conjunction with the ninth and tenth sessions (conclusions can be found, respectively, in annex II of the report of the ninth session, document TRADE/1999/WP.6/18, and in annex II of the report of the tenth session document TRADE/WP.6/2000/20).

6. At the meeting of the Working Party 6 Bureau (office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs) in Geneva in March 2001, it was agreed to organize a Workshop during the October 2001 session of the Working Party.

7. The purpose of the Workshop is to identify and discuss trade-related difficulties and problems encountered by authorities and companies in different countries when implementing and applying various conformity assessment procedures.

8. The Workshop will provide an opportunity:
   - to exchange views on conformity assessment practices and on the role of conformity assessment bodies (including accreditation bodies);
   - to distinguish between conformity assessment and market surveillance;
   - to address the practicalities and limitations of conformity assessment tools, in particular in the context of agreements for the recognition and acceptance of conformity assessment results.

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

10. Invited to take part in the discussions will be: regulators, representatives of international, regional and national bodies engaged in standardization and conformity assessment activities, as well as business operators from UNECE member States. Recommendations from the Workshop on how to avoid unnecessary obstacles to international trade relating to conformity assessment matters will be presented to the Working Party for approval.

11. As background documents for this agenda item, the Working Party will have the provisional agenda of the workshop (TRADE/WP.6/2001/2) as well as submissions and presentations on international, regional and national experiences related to the Workshop.

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

12. 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.6/2001/3.
Item 6  **Coordination**

**ECE Standardization List**

13. After discussions on the ECE Standardization List at the tenth session, the Working Party invited those delegations who had been addressed on issues raised by the Rapporteur in document TRADE/WP.6/2000/6 to submit their answers, and all delegations to submit any further proposals on the Standardization List, to the secretariat. On that basis the Rapporteur on Coordination, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Working Party, prepared the final version of the List to be submitted for publication before the eleventh session of the Working Party.

14. The Working Party will have before it the fifth revised version of the ECE Standardization List (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/4).

15. At the tenth session, the Working Party also agreed on the proposal of the Rapporteur on Coordination to select one sub-area from the List, namely “environmental protection: environmental management”, and to conduct an in-depth study of government participation in the standardization work and also of national adoption/implementation of the resulting standards.

16. Based on this proposal, the Working Party’s Bureau meeting decided to ask the secretariat to collect information on environmental protection activities from major standardizing organization and to entrust the Rapporteur on Coordination to compile such information and make comments and proposals to the eleventh session (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/5).

17. It should be noted that information on the use of environmental management standards will be compiled in document TRADE/WP.6/2001/15 (see item 8(c)).

Item 7  **Harmonization**

(a) **Role of international standards in international harmonization**

18. It is recalled that at the tenth session delegations discussed the importance of the use of international standards in member countries and noted difficulties regarding access to information regarding transposition at a national level.

19. The Working Party decided to continue contacts with major international standardizing organizations on matters related to the use and implementation of international standards.

20. During discussions at the tenth session it was also recalled that the Working Party, at its ninth session (May 1999), made proposals on the basis of the conclusions of the Workshop on the Implementation and Use of International Standards held during that session (document TRADE/WP.6/1999/18, annex 2). In particular, it had been suggested that national organizations which are members of international and regional standardizing organizations and which vote for the adoption of concrete standards or recommendations should 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.

21. At the tenth session, the Working Party asked the Rapporteurs on Harmonization, with the assistance of the secretariat, to explore how to follow-up on this recommendation together with other UNECE subsidiary bodies. At the Working Party 6 Bureau meeting in March 2001, it was decided to submit the above-mentioned recommendation to the Committee meeting in June 2001, and to request the Committee to ask other principal subsidiary bodies to explore the possibilities of implementing this recommendation in their areas of activities.

22. The Working Party will have before it the UNECE Recommendations on Standardization Policies (ECE/STAND/17/Rev.3). The Rapporteurs also will prepare proposals concerning possible further action for the effective review and implementation of existing UNECE recommendations drawn up by the Working Party and other UNECE subsidiary bodies.

23. In this context, a representative of the secretariat will report on the UNECE’s trade facilitation activities (namely those of UN/CEFACT- Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business) and will propose potential ways of cooperating with WP.6 for the promotion of their standards and recommendations in the UNECE region.

24. Also at its tenth session the Working Party invited delegations to provide written information on their national horizontal legislation concerning technical regulations, standardization and conformity assessment procedures with a view to compiling such information. A proposal for such a compilation will be developed by the Rapporteurs on Harmonization and issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2001/6.

25. The delegation of Slovakia offered to organize in 2001, in cooperation with the Working Party, a workshop for transition economies on standardization and related activities. The Working Party will be informed of preparations for this Workshop, which is tentatively scheduled to be held in Bratislava in December 2001 (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/7).

(b) UNECE project “International Model for technical harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards”

26. It is recalled that, as a result of discussions at its ninth 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.

27. With this in mind, the Working Party decided to establish an ad hoc group of experts to examine mechanisms for international technical harmonization through a wider use of international standardization.
An ad hoc Team of Specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques ("START" Team) was formally established in September 1999. The purpose of the Team is to provide guidance for good regulatory practice to be used in a mechanism for voluntary cooperation between regulatory authorities, standardizers and industry to obtain international technical harmonization.

Such a mechanism was tentatively called an “International Model for technical harmonization based on good regulatory practice for the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations via the use of international standards” and the first draft of such an “International Model” was presented to the Working Party at its tenth session (document TRADE/WP.6/2000/8).

The scope of the “International Model” was also discussed at the Workshop on the role of international standards and technical regulations in international trade, held in conjunction with the tenth session. Discussions at the Workshop showed that difference in standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures constituted one of the major obstacles to international trade at present. Participants expressed their concern that existing work on international technical harmonization in international and regional intergovernmental forums had not yet been fully utilized with regard to the elimination of technical barriers to trade and facilitating market access.

In this context participants welcomed the project for an “International Model” as a good starting point for further dialogue on international regulatory cooperation and on promoting, whenever possible, regulatory convergence. Private companies and business associations also expressed their appreciation of the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with governmental officials from different parts of the UNECE region on issues of interest to the private sector and to society.

Following these discussions the Working Party agreed to continue working on drawing up principles for international regulatory cooperation and its practical applications in specific sectors and called on interested delegations to nominate experts to the "START" Team to continue this work.

Consequently, the UNECE secretariat sent a request to Geneva-based permanent missions of UNECE member States to disseminate information on the “START” Team activities to their relevant ministries/agencies and to call for further nominations to the Team of national experts in the field of regulatory cooperation.

As a result additional experts were nominated to the “START” Team. The work undertaken by the “START” Team in its new composition (including the results of further elaboration on the draft of an “International Model”) will be presented in document TRADE/WP.6/2001/8.

International and regional organizations and national delegations are invited to submit their comments on the new version of the “International Model”. Submissions will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2001/9.
Item 8 **Conformity assessment**

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

36. 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.6/2001/10.

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

37. At its tenth session, the Working Party continued its consideration of problems in the area of conformity assessment faced by transition economies.

38. In this context, the Rapporteur on Conformity Assessment found that the role of conformity assessment in regulated and non-regulated areas and the role of recognition agreements between accreditors, laboratory and certification bodies needed to be further explored. In relation to agreements on conformity assessment between UNECE member countries, the rapporteur on Conformity Assessment will present a paper on these issues (TRADE/WP.6/2001/11).

39. Following up on the request made at the tenth session that information on common training programmes would be of interest to some transition economies, the Working Party’s Bureau meeting in March 2001 asked the Rapporteur on Conformity Assessment to prepare such a compilation which will be issued as document TRADE/WP.6/2001/12.

(c) **Quality policy issues**

40. National delegations and international and regional organizations are invited to report on their experience in introducing and implementing different quality policies (TRADE/WP.6/2001/13).

41. At its tenth session the Working Party invited delegations to present information to the secretariat on their existing national quality policies and to express any needs they may have for support in formulating and/or implementing such policies (for details see document TRADE/WP.6/2000/14). The Rapporteur on Quality will be entrusted to analyse such information and to prepare any resulting proposals as document TRADE/WP.6/2001/14.

42. A paper on environmental management standards (ISO 14000 series) and their use will be presented for information to delegations as document TRADE/WP.6/2001/15.
43. At its tenth session, the Working Party was informed of UNECE activities on quality issues related to small and medium-sized enterprises. In this context, the Working Party welcomed the proposal to organize a joint meeting on best practices in quality assurance in cooperation with the Regional Advisor on SMEs and Entrepreneurship. An expert meeting on best practice in the creation of quality assurance systems for SMEs will be held on 25 - 26 October 2001 in Geneva and results of these discussions related to governmental quality policy issues will be reported to the Working Party. Delegations wishing to participate in the Expert Meeting or to have more information can find its agenda (document OPA.AC/21.1 of 12 January 2001) and other related documents at the following Internet address: http://www.unece.org/indust/sme/news.htm

Item 9 Metrology

Standardization of test methods

44. It is recalled that, at the ninth session, the Rapporteur for Metrology submitted a draft document on guidelines on methodologies for measuring procedures (document TRADE/WP.6/1999/15).

45. At the tenth session, the Rapporteur presented the document TRADE/WP.6/2000/16 suggesting modalities for further work on the proposed draft guidelines on methodologies for measuring procedures.

46. Following the proposals in this document the Working Party agreed to establish an ad hoc team of specialists on metrology under the auspices of the Working Party to pursue further the work on the proposed guidelines and to request the secretariat to make a request for nominations to this team (interested delegations should consult the secretariat for more information on this project).

47. The Rapporteur will report to the eleventh session of the Working Party on the progress in preparing these guidelines (document TRADE/WP.6/2001/16).

Item 10 Programme of work

48. 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 eleventh session and the agreements reached by the office bearers, coordinators and rapporteurs at their meeting in March 2001 (TRADE/WP.6/2001/17).

49. It is recalled that the Commission requested all principal subsidiary bodies to rank in order of priority the programme elements in their work programmes.
Item 11  Other business

50. Provisional arrangements have been made to hold the twelfth session of the Working Party in Geneva from 4 to 6 November 2002.

Item 12  Adoption of the report

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

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Annex I

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

WORKSHOP

CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND TRADE FACILITATION
Current Status and Future Orientations

Tuesday, 30 October 2001, 10:00 – 18:00
Palais des Nations, Geneva

Purpose of the Workshop:

- To present the fundamentals of conformity assessment as they stand 20 years after the first General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
- To clarify and distinguish the role of conformity assessment and market surveillance activities
- To address the practical implementation and limitations of conformity assessment tools, in particular in the context of mutual recognition agreements
- To identify and discuss trade-related difficulties and problems encountered by authorities and companies in different countries in implementing and applying various conformity assessment procedures
- To examine new approaches to conformity assessment with the objective of further facilitating the conditions for international trade and market access
- To consider the need for new recommendations by the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) in relation to the current work of international standardizing organizations and international/regional organizations of conformity assessment bodies

These questions will be discussed in the light of the following:

- WP.6 activities and recommendations on conformity assessment policies
- Results of the second triennial review of the operation and implementation of the WTO/TBT agreement
- Revision by ISO/CASCO (ISO/Committee on Conformity Assessment) of international standards and guides on conformity assessment
- Coordination of accreditation bodies at international level ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and IAF (International Accreditation Forum) and their relations with the conformity assessment bodies.
Moderators and speakers will include:

Regulators, representatives from international, regional and national bodies engaged in standardization and conformity assessment activities, as well as business operators.

Issues to be addressed

A Conformity assessment and market surveillance

Conformity assessment and market surveillance are to be distinguished. Economic operators are supposed to fulfil the relevant requirements of conformity assessment procedures before placing a product on the market. Regulatory authorities conduct market surveillance activities after a product has been placed on the market, as a necessary complement to having placed the responsibility for pre-market product conformity on economic operators.

The scope and extent of pre-market and post-market requirements will be considered in the context of the general regulatory environment, concerns with suppliers’ rights, and obligations arising from the supply of goods and services. The challenge is to achieve adequate protection while at the same time ensuring the smooth flow of trade.

B Conformity assessment practices

The role of conformity assessment in the regulated and non-regulated sectors will be further addressed. The approach will cover all the activities related to checking or giving assurance that relevant requirements have been met.

The range of activities of conformity assessment bodies (including accreditation bodies) will be identified through the functional approach to conformity assessment systems, as developed by ISO/CASCO, and the common elements for all these activities, in particular the implementation of ISO 9001:2000.

The adequacy of the choice or use of conformity assessment procedures and the existing conflicts of interest between different conformity assessment activities will be discussed. Accreditation of laboratories versus their ISO 9000 certification will be also be examined.

C Agreements for the recognition and acceptance of conformity assessments results

Cooperation between conformity assessment bodies varies to the extent to which such agreements call for the acceptance of results. Some agreements are without a requirement of acceptance of any results, while others require one signatory to use in their entirety the results produced by other signatories, thus avoiding redundant work by a signatory in its decision-making process.
Efficiency of some agreements will be considered

- Agreements between accreditation bodies at regional/international levels

- Agreements between private sector certification bodies for mutual recognition of certified products and/or management systems

- Agreements between testing laboratories and other conformity assessment bodies.

**D Findings/conclusions/follow-up**

Information provided, problems and proposals raised by participants will be considered in the work on international standardization, technical harmonization and conformity assessment matters within WP.6, with a view to identifying suitable proposals for further action in this area.

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Annex II

REGISTRATION OF DELEGATES
Access to the Palais des Nations

Security measures have been strengthened at the Palais des Nations and delegates attending meetings are required to have badges issued by the Security Unit and bearing their names, which will give access to Palais grounds. In order to avoid long waiting lines, delegates are invited to fill in and send to the secretariat the attached registration form before coming to Geneva. Once in Geneva, delegates will be required to collect their badges at the Villa Les Feuillantines (13, avenue de la Paix, see map below, opening hours: 08:00 a.m.-05:00 p.m.) before the meeting. They should plan on about an hour to obtain the badge and reach the meeting room.

Participants have to present themselves in person at the UN Security with a proof of identification in order to obtain the security pass. It is, unfortunately, not possible to mail the security pass.
CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please send not later than 19 October 2001 to: Aruna.Vivekanantham@unece.org
(you can obtain an electronic registration form upon request to Mrs. Vivekanantham)
or fax: (+41 22) 917 0479 or 917 0037.

Kindly complete this form in print to avoid any errors.

Title of the Conference                                                                 Date: ......................


Workshop on Conformity Assessment Procedures and Trade Facilitation, on 30 October 2001

Delegation/Participant of Country, Organization or Agency, Company’s Name

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Occupation (in own country):

Passport or ID Number:

Valid Until:

Official Telephone No. (+country and city codes)

Fax No. (+Country and city codes)

E-Mail Address

Permanent Working Address:

Address in Geneva:

Signature: Date: