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Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

ECE STANDARDIZATION LIST
Governmental Participation in Standardization Work

Note by the secretariat

This concept paper contains proposals for revising the ECE Standardization List. Work on the revision will begin at the fourteenth session of the Working Party.

It is recalled that the most recent (fifth) revision of the List was published in 2002 (ECE/STAND/20/Rev.5).

This paper is presented for discussion and possible comment by delegations.
Background

1. It is recalled that the first ECE Standardization List was prepared in 1978 by the Fifth Meeting of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies (the predecessor body of the current Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)). Since then the List has been used by Governments as a tool for information exchange on the standardization priorities of member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It has been revised five times, the last revision being in 2002. It is now being revised for the sixth time.

2. The major purpose of the List is to inform those international standardizing organizations included in the List about sectors in which UNECE member States would like to see future standardization work carried out.

3. The List also serves as a tool for the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) for promoting the active participation of Governments in international standardization work. It guides Governments in implementing the resulting standards on the national level, and encourages rationalization and avoidance of duplication of work by the responsible international standardizing organizations.

4. The criteria for including sectors and product areas in the List are set out below:

   A. public safety and health
   B. ecological protection
   C. energy efficiency
   D. wherever the lack of harmonized standards creates or might create technical obstacles to international trade.

Sixth revision of the List

5. The Working Party in recent years has intensified its work on promoting the use of international standards. It prepared UNECE Recommendation “L” (“International Model”), one of the basic principles of which is the use of relevant international standards in technical regulations, whenever feasible. It sees the wider use of international standards in national regulations as an important means of improving transnational regulatory cooperation and increasing market access.

6. At the joint meeting of the Working Party Bureau and of the START Team in March 2004, it was thus proposed to explore the possibility of expanding the List by adding a list of priorities for national regulatory development, and based on these, also the sectors or product areas where the regulatory bodies see a need for further international standardization work. In addition, it was proposed that countries suggest areas where they would like to explore the possibility of international regulatory convergence.

* According to information from the CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology, these criteria are also used for setting priorities in inter-governmental standardization work among CIS States.
7. Participants in the joint meeting believed that such information on regulatory priorities would help provide:

- information on regulatory convergence projects under the UNECE Recommendation “L” (e.g. ICT products and earth-moving machinery)

- advance notice on future regulatory work of countries, which might serve as a basis for wider intergovernmental cooperation - resulting in regulatory convergence between interested countries

- information to international standardizing organizations on areas where there is a need for further international standards for regulators’ use in view of their priorities.

8. Information on regulatory priorities, as provided by the 12 CIS States, is contained in document TRADE/WP.6/2004/4.

9. At the UNECE meeting of regulators from south-east Europe (8 June 2004, Ljubljana) participants referred to the lack of information on the regulatory activities of neighbouring countries and agreed that exchanging such information would be very useful.

10. On the basis of the above proposals, the Working Party is invited to:

1. invite delegations to provide by the end of March 2005 information on (a) national regulatory priorities, (b) sectors or product areas where their regulatory bodies see a need for further international standardization work, and (c) areas for possible international regulatory convergence, for inclusion in the sixth revision of the ECE Standardization List.

2. request the secretariat and the rapporteurs to draw up a format for the sixth revision of the ECE Standardization List and to present a proposal for the revision for approval to the Working Party at its fifteenth session.

3. request the secretariat and the rapporteurs to compile and analyse the submissions made by member States concerning participation of governmental bodies in international standardization work in the environmental field and the national implementation of international standards in this field.

4. to request the secretariat and the rapporteurs to begin preparations for an international forum on regulatory cooperation and related international standardization matters, to be held in 2006 - as proposed by the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development at its May 2004 session.

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