



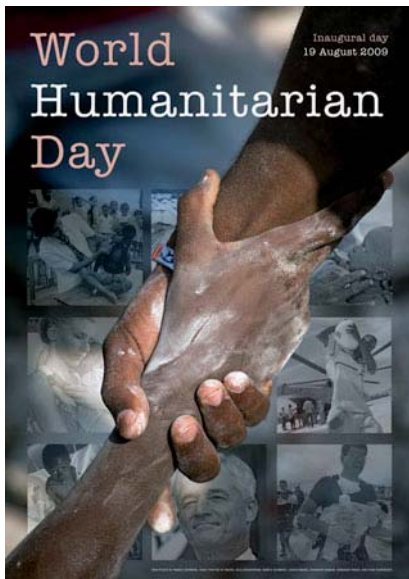
United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 331 — 17-21 August 2009

## World Humanitarian Day - 19 August



19 August 2009 will be the first World Humanitarian Day, as decided by the General Assembly in December 2008. The purpose of this day is to “contribute to increasing public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in this regard”. It also aims to “honour all humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause and those who have lost their lives in the cause of duty”.

The choice of the date pays tribute to the memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary General, and the other 21 colleagues who died in the bombing of Canal Hotel in Baghdad on 19 August 2003.

In the last decade, more than 700 humanitarian workers were killed and thousands more have endured bombing, kidnapping, attacks, hijacking, robbery and rape.

Celebrations will be organized in Geneva and New York and other countries around the world. ■

*For more information visit the website of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) <http://ochaonline.un.org>.*

## Helping Central Asia improve quality and trade of its agricultural produce

On 14-17 July, in partnership with Kyrgyzstan's National Institute for Standardization and Metrology, UNECE held a regional workshop for Central Asia and other CIS countries on “Agricultural Quality Standards and the Use of Standards in Technical Regulations”. The event took place in Osh, in the fertile Fergana valley.

The workshop was designed to promote UNECE's agricultural quality standards and examine how these standards could be made into reference documents in trade contracts between operators in the region by using the UNECE Recommendation on an “International model for regulatory cooperation”.

Around 60 standardization experts, growers and traders from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan learned how UNECE standards could be used to improve the quality of locally produced fresh and dried fruits and nuts.

Inspectors from Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden gave hands-on training courses on how to apply standards for apples, apricots, dried apricots and grapes, pistachios and walnuts. They also discussed the current general and food-safety requirements for exporting agricultural products to the EU,



*Dried apricots at the local market in Osh*

how EU quality inspection services operate and how the inspectors are trained.

The participants were invited to visit natural walnut forests in the mountains near Osh to see growing conditions of walnuts.



*Not an official record - For information only*



## Agricultural produce (continued)



Participants assess the quality of apples

The Russian Federation and Tajikistan have requested follow-up workshops in September 2010 to discuss difficulties that CIS countries are likely to face in implementing UNECE's international standards. These countries need assistance in developing their legal and technical infrastructure to be able to enforce the practical application of standards.

The report of the workshop, with conclusions and recommendations, can be found at <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>

Keep an eye out for information about further regional workshops on agricultural quality standards in UNECE Weekly. ■

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## GHS third revised edition

The use of chemicals to enhance and improve life is a widespread practice worldwide. But alongside the benefits of these products, there is also the potential for adverse affects to people or the environment. As a result a number of countries or organizations have developed laws or regulations over the years that require information to be prepared and transmitted to those using chemicals, through labels or safety data sheets (SDS).

Given the large number of chemicals available, individual regulation of all of them is simply not possible for any entity. Provision of information gives those using chemicals the identities and hazards of these chemicals, and allows the appropriate protective measures to be implemented in the local use settings.

While these existing laws or regulations are similar in many respects, their differences are significant enough to result in different labels or SDS for the same chemical in different countries. For example, through variations in definitions of hazards, a chemical may be considered flammable in one country, but not in another.

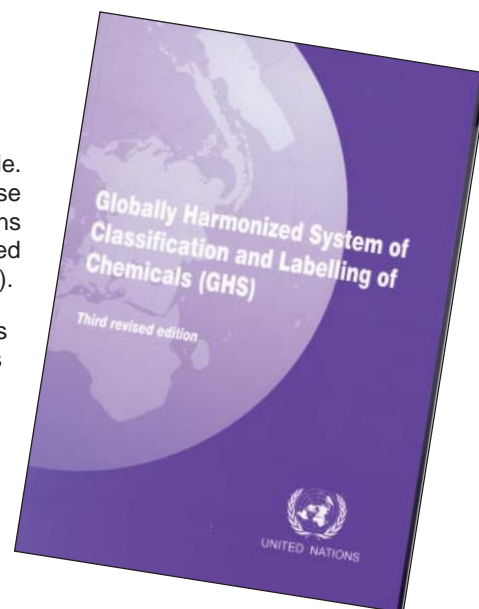


Given the reality of the extensive global trade in chemicals, and the need to develop national programmes to ensure their safe use, transport and disposal, it was recognized that an internationally-harmonized approach to classification and labeling would provide the foundation for such programmes.

Work on the GHS — Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals — therefore began with the premise that existing systems should be harmonized in order to develop a single, globally harmonized system to address classification of chemicals, labels and safety data sheets, and including easily understandable symbols. The first edition published in 2003 contained harmonized classification criteria and hazard communication elements. Guidance was included to assist countries and organizations in the development tools for implementation of the GHS



This third revised edition takes into account all subsequent amendments, concerning among others new provisions for the allocation of hazard statements and for the labeling of small packagings; two new sub-categories for respiratory and skin sensitization; a revision of the classification criteria for long-term hazards (chronic toxicity) to the aquatic environment; and a new hazard class for substances and mixtures hazardous to the ozone layer. ■



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