



Economic Commission for Europe**Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards****Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards****Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables****Sixty-seventh session**
Geneva, 13-15 May 2019**Report of the sixty-seventh session of the Specialized Section
on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables****I. Introduction**

1. Ms. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany) chaired the meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

2. The Chief of the Market Access Section of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Mr. Mika Vepsäläinen, welcomed the delegates. He thanked all former delegates who had moved to other positions or retired during the past year for their support over the years. He noted that this Specialized Section was a very active group owing to large number of standards, and its new work which covered many related and highly relevant areas. He stressed the importance the United Nations attached to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and highlighted the secretariat's strengthened efforts on food loss made possible with the Specialized Section's support. This, together with increased support at the national levels, provided the basis for developing solutions to prevent food loss and waste and directly contributed to the Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3 i.e. to halve food loss and waste by 2030. He noted that the secretariat was finalizing the first phase of an online food loss management system Application for food that is currently being wasted. This system included blockchain-enhanced traceability and a methodology for the systematic recording of losses which helped governments in their policy planning and prevention efforts and allowed the private sector to capitalize on new business opportunities. He thanked the United Nations Office for Information and Communication Technology (OICT) in Bangkok for its technical support.

3. The Chief of the Market Access Section also reported on the intensified cooperation between the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome and UNECE, with FAO inviting UNECE to participate in the Community of Practice on Food-Loss Reduction; the global convener and a knowledge integrator of post-harvest loss reduction for all stakeholders, relevant networks, projects and programmes on post-harvest management. He stressed the importance of this opportunity, especially in light of the possibility of the year 2020 being declared the international year of food loss. He also thanked delegates for the opportunities to promote the work of the Specialized Section, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) and the secretariat on food loss, including at the 32nd International Meeting on Quality Control of Fruit and Vegetables held in Bonn, Germany, in March 2019. He noted that for the first time

this year, the Specialized Section would discuss the link between climate change, changing agricultural production and agricultural trade.

4. He mentioned that Ms Ivonne Higuero, the former Division Director, had been appointed Secretary General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat. He thanked all delegates for their active participation throughout the year and their willingness to help advance the quality, food loss and climate change agendas worldwide to contribute to the sustainable development of all countries.

II. Attendance

5. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

6. The European Commission was also represented.

7. A representative of the following intergovernmental organization participated in the session: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.

8. A representative from the following private sector organization was present at the invitation of the secretariat: Freshfel Europe.

III. Adoption of the agenda

9. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda with an oral amendment.

IV. Matters arising since the last session

(a) United Nations, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and subsidiary bodies

10. The Chief of the Market Access Section explained that the Secretary-General of the United Nations had undertaken a reform process of the United Nations development system, the United Nations secretariat and its operations. He noted that as part of that process, a review of the work of the Regional Commissions has been launched with the results to be presented to the General Assembly in September 2019. In addition, the Executive Secretary of UNECE has launched an internal review of the organization's activities to achieve more synergies and collaboration among the various themes within the organization. The Executive Secretary had also developed a framework to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration through four dedicated nexus areas which-under the "Sustainable use of natural resource" nexus-included the work of WP.7 and its Specialized Sections. He noted that all nexus areas were supporting the member States in their implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

11. He provided information on the November 2018 WP.7 session and the symposium on food loss held during that meeting. He also noted that the Working Party had revised its Terms of Reference and adopted a new Programme of Work which include the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, which will convene in May 2019, will be asked to endorse those new documents.

12. He also highlighted that on 14 May 2019, a "Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards" would be signed (see <https://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/tradewp6/thematic-areas/gender-responsive-standards-initiative/gender-responsive-standards-declaration.html>).

(b) Recent developments in other organizations

13. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme had sent regrets and a report on the activities of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables available on the UNECE web site at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50593>.

14. The representative of the OECD thanked the UNECE for the invitation and commended the work of UNECE's WP.7. He noted that OECD used the UNECE standards to prepare their explanatory brochures and interacted often with producers and traders of fruit and vegetables who rely on UNECE standards in their trade. He stressed that clear and common standards were essential for producers and UNECE's work played a significant role in facilitating trade. He also updated delegates on OECD's latest work highlighting that OECD had approved and will publish by the end of May 2019 explanatory brochures on tomatoes and leeks (prepared by the rapporteurs Netherlands and Germany respectively). He also mentioned the ongoing work on passion fruit, berry fruits and root vegetables. These brochures are expected to be finalized and adopted by the end of 2019. The OECD will start new work on brochures for papayas, cauliflower and green bananas. The representative of the OECD also mentioned that OECD was working on the internet sale of fruit and vegetables and had established a sub-working group (Belgium, France, Germany, Kenya, Netherlands and Spain) to report to the Plenary Meeting in December 2019.

V. Revision of standards

15. The Specialized Section decided to keep open the following in-session amendments to standards for consultation by member States until 1 July 2019: citrus fruit; onions, watermelons, and any other draft text, if necessary. All agreed changes are included in the post-session documents at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50593>. Comments should be sent to the secretariat by the deadline to allow for circulation and for negotiations with other delegations. As customary, silence means agreement; reaching of a consensus will mean that the draft will be submitted to the Working Party for adoption in 2019; otherwise, the draft will be placed on the 2020 agenda of the Specialized Section.

(a) Citrus fruit

16. At its 2018 session, the Specialized Section had reviewed and approved several changes to the Standard for Citrus Fruit as part of the standard's a full review. To facilitate discussions, the document was presented in separate parts for each species. In its final version, these parts will be assembled in the current format of the standard. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposed changes and deleted all comments and obsolete remarks throughout the document.

17. The Specialized Section discussed in depth the inclusion of "hybrids thereof" for each species in the "Definition of produce". While many delegations approved the proposal to remove this reference, the delegation of Spain requested more time to consult with its industry sector.

18. The Specialized Section reviewed in detail the provisions on maturity, namely the minimum skin colour requirements and degreening, as well as the proposal by the delegations from South Africa (pointing to the effects of climate change) and the United States to remove any mention of colour requirements. It was noted by some delegations that colour was not a reliable maturity requirement while the delegation from Spain opposed this change and expressed the view that colouring requirements should be kept in the standard as it is a parameter of maturity. According to retailers in Germany, for example, more consumers seemed to accept green citrus fruit. Moreover, traders of organic produce complained that degreening by means of ethylene was not allowed and produce meeting all minimum characteristics as to juice content, Brix and/or sugar/acid ratio but not the minimum colouring were not allowed in trade. Some delegations expressed the opinion that it was also important to consider the food waste aspects when opting for the continued inclusion of minimum

colouring requirements or degreening and the condition and the shelf life of the produce at the point of destination. Many delegations supported this proposal as well as the deletion of the reference to “degreening”. Attention was drawn to the fact that removing the reference to degreening did not mean that degreening was not allowed. A second option that was proposed was to leave the reference to degreening in the text and revise the wording (see post-session document). The same two options were also retained for approval for lemons, oranges and the mandarin group. The delegation from Spain requested time to consult with their industry sector.

19. The Specialized Section also discussed the determination of the flesh colour of pomelos. Further information with regard to pink and red colour and its determination would be given by the United States delegation at the 2020 session of the Specialized Section.

20. The delegation from Spain outlined their proposal to include in the Commercial specification section, after “count”, more detailed information, i.e. the size codes or the size range. While this was a general issue valid for many products, the Specialized Section discussed in detail the issue under this item. Several delegations supported the proposal; others noted that the indication of size codes or a size range was not necessary (and was referred to under “Provision concerning sizing”) or should be optional. The Specialized Section decided to establish an electronic working group (South Africa, Spain, Turkey, United States) to collect data on citrus fruit sized and packed by count and report at the 2020 session on how uniformity in sizing by count could be addressed.

21. The delegation from Turkey proposed to amend the commonly traded minimum size for Persian limes from 42 to 40 mm which the Specialized Section accepted. At the suggestion of the French delegation, the common name for limes of “citron vert” would be added in the French version of the text. It was also decided to refer to the mandarin group as “mandarins” throughout the Standard (all references to “easy peelers” would be deleted). For the various species of citrus fruit, discussion took also place whether in Classes Extra and I as well as in section V.A. on uniformity, the characteristics of “commercial types” should be taken into account in addition to the variety. After a review of the draft, the Specialized Section noted that only grapefruit/pomelos had commercial types which were based on the flesh colour and, therefore, was added in the draft. For limes, lemons, the mandarin group and oranges there were no defined commercial types. Therefore, in addition to the variety, the mention of “species” would be added, in the mandarin group. The marking provisions of the mandarin group were amended to stipulate the labelling of the common name of the species. The draft was amended to include two sizes codes for mandarins and the corresponding diameter, which the delegation from Spain noted were included in the Standard for Citrus fruit but had been omitted in the current draft. The delegation from Spain proposed to eliminate the reference “blood oranges” in the provisions concerning marking, as it is not a common name of the specie, being a kind of variety. The delegation of Italy asked to maintain that reference, as it is very important for Italy. The reference to “blood oranges” was retained.

22. The Specialized Section approved the amendments provided delegations-after consultations with their industry-can agree with the proposed changes and, particularly, with the maturity requirements and skin colour taking into account: changing production conditions owing to climate change; consumers’ increased acceptance of green citrus fruit; the food loss aspect linked to the use of ethylene for degreening and the organically produced fruit. Comments should be sent to the secretariat by 1 July 2019. If agreed, the final revised draft would be submitted to the November 2019 session of the Working Party for adoption as a Recommendation for a 1-year trial period.

(b) Cherries

23. At its 2018 session, the Working Party did not adopt the proposed changes to the minimum size of cherries in Extra Class. The delegation of Turkey informed the Specialized Section that they could now agree to the proposed increase to 22 mm minimum size in Extra Class. The delegation of the United Kingdom informed the Specialized Section that they agreed with this increase except for the commercial type “Picota”, a smaller type cherry; and

requested the minimum size remain at 20mm-for this type, to which the Specialized Section agreed.

24. The Specialized section adopted these changes and decided to submit the revised standard for adoption to the 2019 session of the Working Party.

(c) Broccoli

25. At its 2018 session, the Working Party did not adopt the proposed changes (inclusion of new varieties longer than the current maximum size) to the Standard for Broccoli. The delegation from France expressed concern that the deletion of the maximum size could lead to fraud at the consumer sales stage. Therefore, the delegation from France welcomed the proposal by the delegation from Sweden to exempt only the trademark “Broccoloco” from the maximum length requirement. The Specialized Section decided to replace the trademark “Broccoloco” by the commercial type “long-stemmed type broccoli” in the sizing provisions and the section on “D. Commercial Specifications”. The Specialized Section approved the exemption of these types of broccoli from the sizing provisions.

26. The Specialized Section decided to submit these amendments to the standard to the November 2019 session of the Working Party for adoption.

(d) Cauliflower

27. At its 2018 session, the Working Party did not adopt the proposed changes (exemption of the varieties of sprouting cauliflower) to the Standard for Cauliflower. The delegation from Germany proposed to exclude loose-headed long-stem varieties from the sizing and the marking provisions. Discussion on the colour requirements in the Classification section and their possible deletion were inconclusive; therefore, the colour requirement in the classification section (all three classes) was amended to specify that they referred to the white varieties. All other varieties were covered by the provision “they must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type”. At the request of the French delegation, it was clarified that miniature varieties were already included in the standard. In addition, the term “cauliflowers” was placed in singular “cauliflower” throughout the English version of the standard.

28. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amendments to the 2019 session of the Working Party for adoption.

(e) Table grapes

29. At its 2018 session, the Specialized Section had postponed to the 2019 session discussions on labelling requirements for table grapes. The delegate of South Africa presented the proposal to align the table grape marking provisions with those used in the labelling provisions of the UNECE Apple Standard, i.e. to present the name of the variety as a synonym.

30. South Africa also proposed to prepare the first draft of an informal list of varieties to be published on the UNECE web page. Delegations were invited to provide their already existing varietal lists to South Africa’s delegate. The consolidated list will be circulated to all delegations in early September. The variety list should include the following categories: variety, synonym, trademark, berry colour and seedless/or seeded.

31. A further amendment proposed by South Africa was the proposal to allow “slight skin defects” in Class I and “skin defects” in Class II. The delegation from Turkey opposed those changes. The Specialized Section asked the delegation from South Africa to provide photos to illustrate the proposed changes at the OECD plenary meeting in December. Subsequently, the proposal and the photos would be presented to the 2020 session of the Specialized Section.

32. Additionally, the delegation from South Africa drew attention to the information contained in document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2019/7 which presented a short summary on the effects of climate change and global warming on food production and how these affected the freshness of produce as well as colour requirements in trade standards. This, he stressed should be taken into consideration in standard development and revision processes.

33. The Specialized Section decided to submit for adoption by the Working Party at its November 2019 session the change in the labelling requirements. Discussion on the skin defects will continue at the 2020 session of the Specialized Section.

(f) Annonas

34. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals by the German delegation on improving the current wording in the section on sizing tolerances in the Standard for annonas.

35. The Specialized Section approved option 1 contained in document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2019/8 to amend Section IV, Provisions concerning tolerances - B. Size tolerances, and align it with the Standard Layout to read: "For all classes: a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of fruit not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed."

36. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the amendment to the Working Party for adoption.

(g) Fresh figs

37. The Specialized Section reviewed the comments by Freshfel Europe on the inclusion of sizing provisions by weight in the Standard for fresh figs. The representative from Freshfel outlined the reasons for the proposed amendment, stressing that this reflected current trading practice both at business-to-business and at consumer level. Several producing countries present at the Specialized Section session indicated that they currently used sizing by diameter but mentioned that some in the trade additionally used sizing by weight. The representative from Freshfel Europe asked the Specialized Section to consider this proposal and to develop a solution.

38. The Specialized Section took note of the request and the subsequent discussion and comments and decided to ask its members and Freshfel to evaluate how the sizing provisions by weight could be included in the standard. The item will be placed on the 2020 agenda of the Specialized Section for further discussion.

(h) Onions

39. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposal by the German delegation to amend the Standard for onions and approved the deletion of "smoked onions" from the standard to align the UNECE provisions with those of the Codex Standard, where smoked onions were considered a processed product.

40. Further proposed amendments related to the tolerances for visible shoots and the inclusion of visible shoots in the minimum requirements. Several delegations drew attention to the rapid development of visible shoots and, therefore, considered the proposed Class II tolerance of 20% for externally visible shoot growth for firm onions too high; particularly for exporting countries shipping to far destinations. While many countries seemed to apply a tolerance, it was also pointed out that allowing a high tolerance and a limitation of 1 cm at wholesale level might shift the problem to the retail stage where shoot growth would be even higher and cause food waste. Currently, the standard included a tolerance of 10% in Class II and no tolerance in Class I. Several delegations agreed on the inclusion of a new minimum requirement "free from externally visible shoots" and a 1 % tolerance in Class I as well as a 10% tolerance in Class II. During the consultation period, those new provisions would be reviewed by delegations. The Specialized Section also

discussed and adopted several other proposed changes which are included in the post-session document.

41. The Specialized Section decided to submit the changes for consultation until 1 July. Should the changes be accepted, they will be submitted to the Working Party for adoption at its November 2019 session.

(i) Root and tuber vegetables

42. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals by the German delegation for amending the Standard for Root and tuber vegetables, i.e. on damage or bruising and to distinguish between the bruising and damages allowed in Class I and Class II. Lengthy discussion took place on how the extent of bruising and damage could be determined. The delegation of the United States explained that in the United States this was done by weighing the removed defective part. The latter was allowed to amount up to 5% (Class I) and 20% (Class II) of the total weight of the vegetable. It was also pointed out that only root vegetables were peeled and that it was difficult to objectively determine what the meaning in the standard of the current wording “normal peeling”.

43. In the Classification section, it was decided to combine the two indents on “Bruising and damage” (Class II); to add in Class I “the flesh must be perfectly sound” and in Class II “the flesh of roots and tubercles must be free from major defects”. The delegation of the United States did not approve of the chosen wording.

44. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amendments to the Working Party for adoption.

(j) Other standards

Avocados

45. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposals to amend the marking provisions of the size of avocados in the current standard. It was decided to retain the option of labelling the count and to add a provision on marking sales packages (pre-packages).

46. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amendments to the Working Party for adoption.

Berry fruits

47. The delegate of Slovakia proposed to include mixed packages in the standard for berry fruits which were currently not covered. The Specialized Section accepted the proposal and amended the Uniformity, Marking and Origin of produce sections

48. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the amendments to the Working Party for adoption.

Watermelons

49. The delegation from Morocco proposed to amend the uniformity requirement under the sizing provisions for watermelons to read “This uniformity in weight is not compulsory for watermelons presented in bulk in pallet boxes/bins and in the transport vehicle.”

50. The Specialized Section decided to submit the changes for consultation until 1 July. Should the changes be accepted, they will be submitted to the Working Party for adoption at its November 2019 session.

VI. Standard Layout for United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

51. The Specialized Section briefly discussed proposed amendments of the Standard Layout. Given that no written document had been prepared prior to the session and that several issues were raised by delegations, it was decided to ask delegations to send their proposals to the secretariat by 1 February 2020. The consolidated document would be reviewed at an informal working session prior to the 2020 formal session of the Specialized Section.

52. The Specialized Section also briefly reviewed the marking of addresses on consignments. In most countries present at the session, delegations said a post box could not be the only indicated address and that only a physical address was allowed to be on the labels; in some countries the post box could be mentioned but only in conjunction with a physical address. The delegation from Kenya noted that some of its traders used post boxes as the sole address indication. He said that he would look into this issue. The Specialized Section decided that the requirement to allow the marking of post box addresses only in conjunction with a physical address should be included in the Standard Layout and, eventually, in all standards.

VII. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices: Food loss and food waste

53. The secretariat presented an overview of the activities of the Specialized Section, WP.7 and the secretariat geared towards the achievement of the SDGs and real, measurable impacts. Those included the development of a Code of Good Practice to address food handling practices and reduce food loss; the development of (voluntary) minimum marketing quality guidelines; the development of an online and mobile Food Loss Marketplace Application (food loss management system); the November 2018 UNECE-FAO Conference on Redefining the Food Loss - Challenge for Sustainable impact: Prevent, Reuse, Repurpose, Redistribute" by WP.7; the creation of a dedicated web page on UNECE and the Food Loss Challenge (<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/unece-foodlosschallenge.html>); the secretariat's participation in dedicated conferences (32nd Meeting on Quality Control of Fruit and Vegetables, March 2019); the final REFRESH workshop on Integrated Policies for Food Waste and Sustainable Food Systems in the Circular Economy; the participation in the UNECE Commission session on Food waste in cities (April 2019); as well as the participation in the "Goals on the Road" promotional travelling exposition with the SDG 12 container presenting UNECE's food loss work (April to December 2019).

54. The delegate from Kenya gave a detailed overview of the food loss management system (App) on which he advises the secretariat and explained its rationale, aim and functioning. He also stressed the many advantages of using such a tool for governments who will be able to obtain systematically data on food loss and food loss hotspot.; Such information can help in the planning, policy development and extension services to farmers. The built-in traceability function of the App as well as the link to certification and the requirement to comply with national legal provisions also helped address food safety concerns. While the food listed on the App might have fallen off the mainstream supply chains, it was stressed that it was imperative that such food complied with the food safety requirement of the country of use and often already had the required certification. The App was for business-to-business as well as business-to-government transactions and, at this stage, not the final consumer. It was explained that the App was for local/national implementation and not yet for use in a cross-border scenario. The secretariat informed delegates that so far three pilot countries had been identified, with potential new ones lined up in the European Union region.

55. The secretariat also highlighted the closer collaboration between the FAO and UNECE, noting that FAO had invited UNECE to participate in the Community of Practice on Food Loss Reduction (global convener and integrator of knowledge related to post-harvest loss reduction) to facilitate linkages and information-sharing amongst stakeholders and

relevant networks, projects and programmes on post-harvest management. The secretariat informed delegates that a launch meeting was planned for October 2019 and at the WP.7 session in November 2019. The secretariat also noted that the year 2020 might be declared the international year of food loss and this offered a multitude of opportunities to promote and raise awareness on food loss prevention and WP.7's work.

56. The Chair of the Specialized Section stressed that awareness raising was an essential part of preventing food loss. She also noted that it was important to highlight that marketing standards contributed to preventing food waste and helped maintain quality through the supply chain.

Minimum marketing quality guidelines

57. The Rapporteur of the working group (Germany) presented the scope of the revised draft minimum marketing quality guidelines. Discussion took place on the use of the guidelines, as some countries expressed concern of potential conflict between existing standards for a produce and the guidelines. It was decided to clarify in the text that they should only apply to produce or countries that did not have a marketing standard system in place i.e. the guidelines cannot be used in place of an applicable standard. Like all UNECE tools, the guideline would be voluntary and come into effect only once integrated into national or regional legislation. The application of such a guideline should not compete with produce-specific standards. The requirements of the importing country would always supersede guideline-specific recommendations or provisions. The Specialized Section therefore amended the section entitled "Scope" accordingly.

58. The Specialized Section also amended the text of the guideline and agreed to add a section providing guidance on sizing. All optional marking provisions were removed. Delegations also discussed how traders could indicate that the produce presented complied with the guidelines. Some countries suggested to use a logo or a short note ("Traded under the MMQG") on the box or label; this will be discussed further.

59. The Specialized Section agreed to continue developing the guidelines and decided to review them at its 2020 session. Delegations were invited to send their comments and additions to the secretariat by 1 February 2020.

Code of Good Practice

60. The Rapporteur (Sweden) presented the latest amendments to the Code of Good Practice elaborated over the past two years at the Specialized Section sessions, by the electronic working group and with comments by the private sector. She also noted that the text had been amended in an informal session prior to the formal part of the Specialized Section. She recalled that the Specialized Section had developed the Code of Good Practice to guide and ensure that quality was kept along the entire marketing and supply chain. The guidance provided in the Code was the basis for continuous improvements by all operators worldwide. She stressed that in international trade, bad handling practices in one country impacted the food loss and waste in the destination country.

61. The Rapporteur noted that the draft was now ready for a final round of review and comments. The post-session document would be made available during the week of 20 May 2019. Comments should be sent to the delegate of Sweden or the secretariat by mid-June 2019. The final text would then be shared with Freshfel Europe who had offered to help with the editing.

62. The Specialized Section decided to submit the revised Code of Good Practice to the Working Party for adoption and subsequent publication.

63. The Specialized Section thanked the delegations of Sweden and the electronic working group (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom) as well as private-sector contributors (particularly, Freshfel) for their excellent work.

VIII. Inclusion of fresh fruit and vegetables in Annex 3 of the Agreement on International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP agreement)

64. The secretariat of the UNECE's Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11) provided an overview of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP) and highlighted the current discussions in WP.11 on the inclusion of fresh fruit and vegetables in an annex to the ATP publication. The ATP Agreement is mandatory in its application for all contracting parties. She explained that the ATP certificate certifies that the special equipment used for the transport of perishable foodstuffs can keep the temperature at the required level during the entire journey, in some cases with different external climatic conditions. She noted that WP.11 was hesitant to include fresh fruit and vegetables, as from a safety point of view, it was easy to check the condition of the produce and it was therefore unlikely to pose health risks. Also, for fresh fruits and vegetables, in addition to the temperature, the atmosphere during transport should be controlled, and this was different for each produce. However, as transport was part of the cold chain, appropriate transport conditions could help alleviate or avoid losses of fresh fruits and vegetables. She also explained that WP.11 did not intend to include provisions on fresh fruit and vegetables in a legally binding way, but as voluntary recommendations.

65. The Chair noted that many fruit and vegetables were not very temperature sensitive (at least not during short-distance transport) or required different temperatures, and deterioration of the produce would be visible. However, as ATP certified the equipment is used, the delegate of Sweden stressed that the right equipment ensured the right conditions during the transport of fruit and vegetables and therefore helped avoid losses.

66. The secretary of WP.11 provided the links to the national competent authorities and ATP test stations as well as a list of participants in the October 2018 session of the WP.11. The Chair thanked the secretary of WP.11 for this very useful update and encouraged countries to contact their national delegations.

Competent authorities: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp11/teststationsnew.html>

Reports and list of participants: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp11/wp11rep.html>

IX. Electronic quality certificates for fresh fruit and vegetables

67. The secretariat updated the Specialized Section on the electronic quality certificates and the collaboration with the relevant group of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)-the Agriculture, Agri-Food, Textile and Fishery Domain. She outlined the process and approach taken so far which had resulted in the publication and adoption of the Business Requirement Specifications. Currently, the Domain was working on the XML Schemas and the Implementation Guide, which would be finalized in October 2019. She invited delegations to consult with their national authorities on the implementation of the e-quality certificate. She also mentioned that several countries had already indicated their readiness to proceed with trial implementations. She invited delegations to contact her with any questions and requests and thanked the UN/CEFACT Agricultural domain group for its excellent work. The delegation from Kenya presented a brief summary on how the e-certificates could be implemented and outlined two possible implementation methods – point -to-point and via a hub – and their implications.

X. Promotion and capacity-building

68. The secretariat and delegations provided information about their promotional and capacity-building activities and previewed planned new events and training. The secretariat informed the Specialized Section about the September 2018 Workshop on “Quality matters – sustainable trade of fruits, vegetables and nuts” held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for

Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and co-financed/organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GIZ Hilfswerk International Austria with FAO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). A total of 90 participants were trained for the third time by UNECE experts from Germany, Sweden, Turkey, and the private sector (INC and trader). She also outlined the activities of the Central Asian Working Group (regional initiative) which ensured the implementation of UNECE's work in the region and has become a very active support for UNECE in the area of agricultural standards and food-loss prevention.

69. The secretariat highlighted the result of UNECE's three workshops and expert advisory missions to the Dominican Republic (under a project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)) where over 180 participants were trained, and meetings took place with high-level government officials. This resulted in the recognition of quality as a pillar of export strategies; the development of quality guides for priority export produce; new sales contracts and destination markets and the organization of a young exporters network.

70. She also mentioned that in the fall of 2019, capacity-building activities including coaching, workshops and study tours on the quality and food-loss reduction project would continue and dates would be communicated in due course. To help countries in their efforts to implement standards and improve awareness of UNECE instruments also in the food-loss area, she suggested to establish a roster of delegates willing to help with "E-coaching" on a rotational basis. Delegations are invited to contact the secretariat for further details.

71. The delegation from Germany reported on the International meeting on Quality Control, Bonn, Germany, 25-27 March 2019 in which the UNECE participated (next meeting in 2021). The delegation from Turkey reviewed a recent study tour organized for three Central Asian countries in Izmir, Turkey, which focused among others on inspection methods and the adoption and implementation of agricultural quality standards. The delegation from Kenya reported on the September 2019 capacity-building workshop for fresh fruit and vegetables in which experts from the Netherlands, Germany, and the United States participated.

72. Delegations provided information on the following upcoming capacity-building events:

- Meeting on Harmonization of Standards, Mojmirovce, Slovakia, 11-13 June 2019
- UNDP (co-organized with UNECE) Regional Symposium on Trade for Central Asia, 18 June 2019.

XI. Future work

73. The Specialized Section decided to place the following items on the agenda for 2019:

- Fresh Figs,
- Citrus fruit
- Table grapes
- Standard Layout
- Minimum marketing quality guidelines
- Update on e-quality certificates
- Food loss and waste

74. Any other proposals for future work should be sent to the secretariat as early as possible, preferably by 1 February 2020.

XII. Election of officers

75 The Specialized Section elected Ms. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany) as Chair and Mr. Cyril Julius (South Africa) as Vice-Chair.

XIII. Adoption of the report

76 The Specialized Section adopted the report of the session.
