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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development
(Fifty-eighth session, 29 to 31 October 2002, Geneva)

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING SINCE THE FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Note by the secretariat

This document contains the discussion on the work of the Working Party and its Specialized Sections held at the sixth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development.

FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee (ECE/TRADE/300, paragraphs 46 to 52):

Item 10 – Agricultural quality standards

Documentation:

TRADE/2002/8

Summary of WP.7 progress achieved since the November 2001 session

TRADE/WP.7/2001/9

Report of the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7)

46. The Secretary to the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7) presented documents TRADE/2002/8 and TRADE/WP.7/2001/9. As additional information to the revised and new standards listed in these documents, he reported that during the last year a number of standards had been updated to adapt them to new trade practices. New standards for pineapples and ovine carcasses and cuts were close to completion. A solution to the mentioning of trade marks in UNECE Standards had been adopted and work on the review of the Geneva Protocol (which defines the context of the Standards) and the harmonization of produce coding had started.

47. The Committee had, at previous sessions, discussed possible support by UNECE for the work on explanatory brochures which is currently done under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Scheme. The secretariat reported that, at present, the UNECE was not able to allocate the additional resources necessary for undertaking this work to the Agricultural Standards Unit, but that the cooperation with the OECD Scheme functioned very well.

48. A seminar on Safe and High-quality Food for International Trade had been co-organized on 4 and 5 April 2002 in New Delhi by the UNECE with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and EAN India, at the invitation of the Government of India. The seminar had focused on building the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises to apply international standards and participate in international supply chains. The seminar was well received and it is planned to organize a follow-up event in 2003 in Bangkok together with ESCAP and, possibly, further seminars, one of which could be in a central Asian member State of the UNECE.

49. The delegation of the European Community said that it continued to consider the UNECE work on agricultural standards as very important and relevant. Many EC standards within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy are based on these UNECE standards. The delegation also indicated its encouragement for making the standards better known in other parts of the world. It noted the excellent cooperation with the FAO and the OECD Scheme. However, it hoped that it would be possible for UNECE to support the development of explanatory brochures to speed up this work in the future.

50. The delegation of Switzerland said that the work of WP.7 and its specialized sections was a positive example of how the UNECE and the Committee could make a contribution that was recognized in international trade.

51. The delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the Chairman of WP.7, Mr. Vilchez-Barros, for his contribution to UNECE work on agricultural standards, which had helped WP.7 become a global forum in this area, with participation of experts from all continents. He particularly stressed the importance for his country of the standards for seed potatoes and meat and the use of UNECE agricultural standards in negotiations with trading partners. He also expressed the wish to see more operational work by the UNECE secretariat, i.e. the organization of training courses on how to apply the standards.

52. The Committee **endorsed** TRADE/WP.7/2001/9 and **noted** TRADE/2002/8. The points raised by the European Community and the Russian Federation would be discussed by the WP.7 bureau.