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Standardization Policies

Eighteenth session
Geneva, 3-4 November 2008
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND PRIORITIES OF THE WORKING PARTY

Evaluation of the Symposium on Trade Rules, Regulations and Standards: Different Levels of Rulemaking and their Impact (October 2007); the seventeenth session of the Working Party and of its International Seminar in November 2007

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In 2005, the Bureau of the Working Party requested that the secretariat initiate a self-evaluation as part of the Working Party restructuring process. Delegations found the self-evaluation useful and the Working Party agreed to continue this practice. Since the previous evaluation, the Working Party held the following events: (i) a Symposium on “Trade Rules, Regulations and Standards: Different Levels of Rulemaking and their Impact” (23 October 2007), jointly organized with the Committee on Trade (CT) and held back to back with the CT Annual Session; (ii) its seventeenth session (5-7 November 2007); and (iii) its International Seminar on “Product Safety and Counterfeiting (5-6 November 2007).

This paper presents an evaluation of the three events listed above, based on an analysis of replies to questionnaires distributed during the meetings.

I. SYMPOSIUM ON “TRADE RULES, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS: DIFFERENT LEVELS OF RULEMAKING AND THEIR IMPACT”

1. The Symposium on “Trade Rules, Regulations and Standards: Different Levels of Rulemaking and their impact” reviewed a very wide range of specifications, requirements, standards and technical regulations and discussed their impact on the production and exchange of products and services. The presentations illustrated standards-setting and implementation activities at a national, regional and international level.
2. Table 1 below is based on the 27 replies received by the secretariat. Only 21 per cent of the registered participants completed the evaluation form.
3. Participants – as Table 1 shows – rated the meeting as being of very good overall quality and especially praised the quality of the presentations and the discussions.

Table 1: Level of satisfaction, by item, for the Symposium

<i>Items</i>	<i>Poor</i>			<i>Excellent</i>			<i>Average</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	
Format and organization of the Symposium	0	0	2	10	7	8	3.78
Did the Symposium meet your objectives?	0	1	1	10	12	3	3.56
Quality of Presentations	0	0	2	6	14	5	3.81
Quality of discussions	0	0	2	6	14	5	3.81
Overall Symposium Quality	0	0	2	7	12	6	3.81

4. Looking in particular at whether participants found the meeting useful (Did the meeting meet your objectives?), there are two participants which did not find it useful and 25 which did. Hence, the percentage of respondents who found the meeting useful is 92.6 per cent.
5. Replies to more detailed questions indicated that the meeting would be useful for the attendees’ functions and that the information gathered at the meeting would be relayed. Some participants regretted that there was not enough attendance by developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and that stakeholders’ balance was not attained. This resulted from the meeting being organized on a minimal budget, so that most speakers and all participants had to cover their own travel expenses, which severely constrained the secretariat’s liberty in the choice of speakers and only allowed participations at own expense.

**II. SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY AND ITS
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON
“PRODUCT SAFETY AND COUNTERFEITING”**

6. The seventeenth session of the Working Party and its International Seminar on “Product Safety and Counterfeiting” were attended by 154 participants. Table 2 below shows the breakdown of participants, by delegation.

Table 2: Representation, by delegation, for the 17th Session and its International Seminar

<i>Delegations</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
UNECE member States	34	43.6
United Nations Member States under article 11 of the UNECE Terms of Reference	9	11.5
United Nations Organizations	1	1.3
United Nations Family	4	5.1
Intergovernmental organizations	3	3.8
Non-governmental organizations (official)	3	3.8
Non-governmental organizations (not official)	6	7.7
Others (Association and private sector) invited by the UNECE secretariat	18	23.1
Total	78	100

7. Table 2 below is based on the 28 replies received for the seventeenth session of the Working Party and the 27 replies for the international seminar. Only 18 per cent of the participants completed the evaluation form overall.

8. Table 3 below shows the perceived degree of usefulness of the two events for participants.

Table 3: Usefulness of the 17th session of the Working Party and its International Seminar

<i>Relevance (degree of usefulness of the two events to you)</i>	<i>17th session Rating (*) from 1 to 5</i>	<i>Seminar Rating (*) from 1 to 5</i>
Relevance of subject to your work/area of expertise	4.5	4.5
Knowledge and skills obtained for your future work	4.1	4.1
Providing a forum on exchange of information with other participants	4.5	4.4
Providing an opportunity to establish new useful contacts	4.4	4.3
Identification of good practices and lessons learned	4.3	4.3
Importance of product safety and counterfeiting in your country	N/A	4.5
Overall Relevance Rating	4.36	4.35

(*) The ratings above refer to a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) with the corresponding levels: 1 = Not useful; 2 = Somewhat useful; 3 = Useful; 4 = Very useful; and 5 = Extremely useful.

9. Overall, the two meetings were regarded as very useful, in that they were relevant to the area of work of the participants and provided a forum for the exchange of information among delegates.

Table 4: Quality of the 17th Session of the Working Party and its International Seminar

<i>Quality of Meetings</i>	<i>17th session Rating (*) from 1 to 5</i>	<i>Seminar Rating (*) from 1 to 5</i>
Clarity/quality of presentations	4.2	4.1
Quality of discussions	4.1	4.1
Quality of written material circulated by the secretariat	4.2	4.1
Organizational arrangements for and during the meetings	4.4	3.5
Overall quality of meetings	4.5	4.1
Overall Relevance Rating	4.28	3.98

(*) The ratings above refer to a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) with the corresponding levels: 1 = Not useful; 2 = Somewhat useful; 3 = Useful; 4 = Very useful; and 5 = Extremely useful.

10. Table 4 above shows the participants' evaluation of the quality of the two meetings. Overall, ratings are very high, reflecting the satisfaction of participants with the secretariat's preparation and servicing.

11. Delegates also made other suggestions for improvement of future meetings and sessions: in particular they wished that more of the documents be available in Russian and that presentations be uploaded on the WP.6 website, if possible before the meeting.

12. They also suggested that the WP.6 continues to focus on and develops its work on counterfeiting and piracy, through the implementation of Recommendation "M".

13. Finally delegates suggested allocating more time to practical and sectoral debate; for example, to discussions in small groups on specific topics.

III. CONCLUSION

14. The results of the survey were presented to the meetings of the WP.6 Bureau and rapporteurs/coordinators (held in March 2008), and were used in preparing the provisional agenda for the current session of the Working Party (e.g. break-out sessions, panel discussion).
