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Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Seventy-seventh session

Geneva, 14–16 (a.m.) November 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Revised annotated provisional agenda *

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11. Preparations for the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
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* Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online as soon as possible at <https://indico.un.org/e/wp7-2022>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by e-mail (olga.kharitonova@un.org). Documents for the meeting will be made available at <https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.7-Meetings/events/363457>.



14. Terms of Reference and Working Procedures of the Working Party
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16. Election of officers
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II. Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Working Party will adopt the agenda.

Documentation: Provisional agenda and annotations (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/1)
Revised annotated provisional agenda
(ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/1/Rev.1)

2. Matters arising since the last session

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

The secretariat will present developments at the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards having an impact on the work of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7).

(b) Recent developments in other organizations

Other organizations active in the area of agricultural quality standards will provide information about their activities.

3. Capacity-building and promotional activities

The secretariat will introduce the online e-learning course on agricultural quality standards and food loss reduction in fresh produce supply chains developed under a United Nations Development Account (UNDA) COVID-19 response project. Delegations are invited to report on capacity-building and promotional work over the past year, inform of upcoming events and trainings as well as available e-learning and other resources for capacity-building. The Working Party is invited to propose other capacity-building activities and discuss related resource mobilization. Delegates are also invited to make requests for capacity-building.

4. Analysis of the impact of agricultural quality standards on the trade of fruit and vegetables

The work on a joint Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-ECE study to assess the impact of agricultural quality standards on the trade of fruit and vegetables was initiated following discussions at the 2021 session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. Following a presentation of preliminary results at the 2021 session of WP.7, the Working Party is invited to take note of the joint OECD-ECE study.

Documentation: Results of the study (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/INF.1)

5. Electronic quality certificates for fresh fruit and vegetables

During 2020–2021 under a UNDA project, the secretariat in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) developed the functional specifications (i.e. standardized business process) for an electronic certification system for fresh fruits and vegetables, including support for using an electronic version of the e-quality certificate. The functional specifications were completed in November 2021 and submitted to WP.7 for review, with comments received from Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United States of America. The specification is now ready to be used by Governments who are interested in developing or enhancing their ICT systems. The secretariat will update the Working Party on the progress and possible implementation modalities of electronic quality (e-quality) certificates. Delegations are invited to discuss possible ways forward.

6. Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1)

In 2022, the Specialized Section held one regular session in hybrid mode.

The Specialized Section submitted the following documents for adoption by the Working Party:

Documentation: Report of the seventieth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/2)

Revised standard for asparagus (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/3)

Revised standard for cherries (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/4)

Revised standard for leafy vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/5)

Revised standard for pomegranates (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/6)

Certain small fruits (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/7)

Revisions to the explanatory brochure on the standard for persimmons (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/8)

7. Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2)

In 2022, the Specialized Section held one regular session in hybrid mode. The Specialized Section submitted the following documents for adoption by the Working Party:

Documentation: Report of the sixty-ninth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.2/2022/2)

Standard Layout for Standards on Dry and Dried Produce (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/9)

Standard for dried persimmons (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/10)

Standard for raw and roasted inshell peanuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/11)

Standard for raw and roasted peanut kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/12)

Recommendation for inshell pecans (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/13)

Recommendation for pecan kernels (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/14)

8. Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6)

In 2022, the Specialized Section held one regular session in hybrid mode, and several meetings of rapporteur's groups to work on revising the seed potato standard and a draft guide on minitubers.

The Specialized Section submitted the following documents for adoption by the Working Party:

Documentation: Report of the forty-ninth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.6/2022/2)

9. Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (GE.11)

In 2022, the Specialized Section held one regular session in hybrid mode, which included an international seminar on sustainability, as well as three meetings of the rapporteur's group on alignment of the Economic Commission for Europe cut codes with the Harmonized Commodity Descriptions and Coding System.

The Specialized Section submitted the following documents for adoption by the Working Party:

Documentation: Report of the thirtieth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2022/2)

Alignment of the Economic Commission for Europe standards and the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/17)

Proposal for how Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System codes could be included in the Economic Commission for Europe Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/18)

10. Sustainable development, food systems and resource efficiency: food loss and waste prevention and reduction

Over the past few years, the Working Party has increased focus on improving sustainable production and trade, particularly through its focus on the prevention of food loss and waste, in direct support of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 12.3 on halving food loss by 2030. The work has included the organization of awareness-raising events and the development of studies, tools and guidance documents, including the UNECE Code of Good Practice, the UNECE Food Loss and Waste Measuring Methodology for Fresh Produce Supply Chains, and the development of a Minimum Quality Specifications for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. At its 2021 session, the Working Party decided to include in its future work the elaboration of four brochures on the practical application of the Code of Good Practice, and the organization of a roundtable to exchange experiences on the implementation of the Code.

To take stock of the work done and discuss activities going forward, this agenda item will consist of a high-level roundtable on food loss and waste, followed by a discussion on potential future work of the Working Party on food loss and waste prevention and reduction and other trade-related aspects of sustainable food systems.

The Working Party is invited to discuss future work in these areas and to guide on resource mobilization. It is also invited to take note of the leaflets on good practices, and to provide guidance on the usefulness of developing such material for other products or groups of products.

Documentation: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe work on food loss and waste (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/19)

UNECE Code of Good Practice – reducing food loss and ensuring optimum handling of fresh fruit and vegetables along the value chain (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/INF.2)

Good practices in harvest and post-harvest handling of floral vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/3)

Good practices in harvest and post-harvest handling of immature fruit vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/4)

Good practices in harvest and post-harvest handling of leafy vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/5)

Good practices in harvest and post-harvest handling of root vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/6)

11. Preparations for the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

At its 119th meeting on 16 December 2021, the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) decided that the cross-cutting theme of the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, to be held in April 2023, will be “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region”. It also decided to “invite relevant subsidiary bodies of ECE and the secretariat to consider how they may contribute, as appropriate, to the cross-cutting theme of the seventieth Commission session within their respective mandates, ongoing work and existing resources, and while making full use of the existing nexuses”.

In line with the EXCOM decision, the Working Party is invited to consider potential contributions, action items, and draft proposals for consideration by the Commission related to the theme of its seventieth session in 2023.

12. Future work

The Working Party will decide on its future work.

13. Programme of work of the Working Party for 2023

The secretariat will present the Working Party’s draft annual programme of work for 2023, which is based on the programme of work of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and related decisions.

Documentation: Programme of work of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards for 2023 (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/20)

14. Terms of Reference and Working Procedures of the Working Party

The Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards were last changed and adopted by the Working Party in 2018, along with the amended Working Procedures. As per its Terms of Reference, the Working Party shall review its Terms of Reference every five years and submit it to for approval to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and the Executive Committee of ECE. In preparation for the 2018 revision, an open working group was set up at the 2017 session of the Working Party to review the Terms of Reference. With the next revision due for consideration at its 2023 meeting, the Working Party is invited to consider the process for reviewing its Terms of Reference and Working Procedures in preparation for consideration at its seventy-eighth session in 2023.

15. Other business

Delegations will be invited to take up other issues not previously addressed during the session.

16. Election of officers

The delegations will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair. At its 2021 session, the Working Party elected Ms. Agnieszka Sudol (Poland) as Chair and Mr. Bucky Gwartney (United States of America) as Vice-Chair.

17. Adoption of the report

The Working Party will adopt its report, which will be issued as document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/2.

III. Tentative timetable

Monday, 14 November	11:00–13:00	Items 1 to 5, and 9
	15:00–17:00	Items 6 to 8
Tuesday, 15 November	11:00–13:00	Item 10
	15:00–17:00	Items 11 to 14
Wednesday, 16 November	11:00–13:00	Items 15 to 17
