



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 June 2022

Original: English

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

Seventieth session

Geneva, 16-18 May 2022

Report of the seventieth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

I. Introduction

1. Mr. Cyril Julius (South Africa) chaired the meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1). He remarked the world is changing, including climate change and changing consumer preferences, and that the standards governed by the Specialized Section need to change to respond to that. He thanked delegates for their contributions to the documents and looked forward to their active participation.

2. The Director of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, welcomed delegates to the seventieth session of the Specialized Section held in a hybrid format with simultaneous interpretation into the three ECE languages. She noted that the Secretary-General of the United Nations referred to the world undergoing a three-dimensional crisis – of food, energy and finance – and that global food security was an especially deep concern. She highlighted the important role of fresh fruit and vegetables in achieving healthy diets. She further emphasized the critical role of trade in ensuring a continuous supply and affordable prices of fresh fruit and vegetables, which had been made even clearer by the recent developments in the region and the increase of prices of agricultural commodities.

3. She emphasized that the agricultural quality standards are essential for supply chains, as they help ensure international trade flows seamlessly. The work of the Specialized Section in developing and updating its standards is an important component of facilitating trade in these important products. She expressed her appreciation to the delegates for their hard work and continuous support, highlighting the successfully held 2021 sessions and commending the progress made despite the COVID-19 pandemic. She underlined the many standards adopted and the important contribution made on the issue of food loss and waste, including the finalization of the second edition of the Code of Good Practice.

II. Attendance

4. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Finland, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain,



Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

5. The European Commission was also represented.

6. The following specialized programme participated in the session: Joint Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Food Standards Programme (Codex Secretariat).

7. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations participated in the session: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables; and the United Nations Development Programme.

8. Representatives from the following non-governmental organizations participated in the session: Comité de liaison Europe-Afrique-Caraïbes-Pacifique (COLEACP); Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); Hilfswerk International.

9. A representative from the following research corporation was present at the invitation of the secretariat: Embrapa Brazil.

III. Adoption of the agenda

10. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda with the following revisions:

- under agenda item 9 (b) instead of a proposed revision to the standard on melons the proposal by France was to discuss commercial types of melons;
- under agenda item 9 (c) the proposal to discuss kitchen-ready products had been withdrawn;
- under agenda item 10 the proposal to discuss a standard on ripened bananas had been changed to a discussion on marking obligations for ripened bananas; and
- an additional item had been added at the proposal of Brazil to develop a new standard for certain small fruits.

IV. Matters arising since the last session

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

11. The Director of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of ECE, Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, provided an overview of the achievements of the Specialized Section over the past years, and of recent and forthcoming inter-governmental meetings and other matters of relevance to the work of the Specialized Section.

12. Since the last meeting of the Specialized Section, the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards had met in June 2021, the Food Systems Summit had been held in September 2021, and the seventy-sixth session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) in November 2021. In preparation for the Food Systems Summit, ECE and the four other regional commissions of the United Nations had produced a joint policy brief highlighting the role of regional cooperation in food systems transformation. A side-event on follow-up to the Food Systems summit had also been organized at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in collaboration with FAO and other partners in the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems.

13. Going forward the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards will be held on 27-28 June 2022; and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards on 14-16 November 2022. The e-learning course on agricultural quality and food loss that had been developed under a United Nations Development Account project will be finalized by mid-2022.

14. Finally, she drew attention to the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, which is to be held in April 2023 and will focus on “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region”, inviting the Specialized Section to consider potential contributions or action items related to the theme.

(b) Recent developments in other organizations

15. The Specialized Section took note of the update provided by the representative of the OECD, including the foreseen meeting of heads of national inspection services in Brazil in autumn 2022; development of guidelines on pandemics and trade disruptive events; development of new brochures on root vegetables, green bananas, and passion fruit (already processed); and brochures on berry fruits, cauliflower, and papayas (to be finalized next year). OECD is also working with COLEACP on joint awareness-raising webinars.

16. The Specialized Section took note of the update from the European Commission, in particular the update related to EU marketing standards. The Commission is currently conducting an impact assessment of the marketing standards, focusing on the alignment with the Lisbon Treaty, the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy. In the second half of 2022 it will do further work on the related legislative texts, which will then be presented to EU member States. Alignment to ECE standards will be implemented after the conclusion of the impact assessment.

17. The Specialized Section took note of the update from the Codex Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme regarding the recent session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (CCFFV) which had been held as a virtual meeting on 25-29 April 2022. The session had agreed to forward three draft standards for adoption (onions and shallots; berry fruits; and fresh dates); it had agreed to recommend approval of two proposals on new work (Castilla lulo and fresh curry leaves); and to recommend approval of an amendment to an existing standard (bananas). It had also updated the layout for Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables and renamed the “glossary of terms” as “definition of terms”.

18. The Specialized Section took note of the update provided by the representative of the Central Asian Working Group (CAWG), covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, including a meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in April, and an upcoming meeting on commercial standards for fresh fruit and vegetables and dry and dried produce.

V. Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and agricultural quality standards for resilient supply chains

19. The secretariat reported on work accomplished on the e-learning course on commercial quality standards and food loss developed under the United Nations Development Account COVID-19 response project. The draft content of the four modules had been circulated to the delegates of the Working Party for peer review after its November meeting, following which it was refined, designed and recorded as video presentations. These will now be edited and made available as videos on the WP.7 part of the ECE website. The secretariat is currently procuring voice-over and translation services to make the videos available in the three ECE official languages.

20. Delegations were invited to advise the secretariat on, and assist with, outreach for the e-learning, as well as to inform about other available e-learning and related material. The Specialized Section was also invited to advise on the development of further material, and to suggest other contributions, including potential financial or in-kind contributions to support voice-over into additional languages.

VI. Analysis of the impact of agricultural quality standards on the trade of fruits and vegetables

21. The representative of OECD informed about progress made on the joint OECD/ECE study on the impact of agricultural quality standards on the trade of fruit and vegetables. The analysis suggests that, of the 39 categories of fresh fruit and vegetables considered, implementation/revision of ECE standards and publication of OECD fruit and vegetable explanatory brochures are associated with substantial increases in international trade across multiple product categories. Based on regression analysis of individual products, the analysis finds conclusive evidence that trade in various types of fresh fruits and vegetables increases, in general, in the post-publication and/or post-revision period.

22. Evidence on the effects of the adoption or revision of ECE standards is comparable to that of the issuance of OECD fruit and vegetable explanatory brochures. Of the 37 new or revised standards examined, the regression analysis finds positive, statistically significant effects on trade in artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, carrots, ribbed celery, citrus fruits, lettuce and endives, mangoes, roots and tubercle vegetables, shallots, and tomatoes, with results ranging between 8-35 per cent increase in trade. The study also showed that trade in the products were higher between countries who had adopted the standards than with other countries. Some caveats exist, notably in terms of data limitations, which limit the type of analysis that can be made. The study is planned to be finalized and made public in the next few months.

23. The Specialized Section commended the study and looked forward to the final results. It suggested to also check the direction of impact, as sometimes increases of trade may come before the adoption of a standard since the standards respond to market needs.

VII. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable practices: Food loss and food waste prevention related to standards

24. An overview of work conducted under a United Nations Development Account project to develop four illustrated leaflets / explanatory materials to support implementation of the Code of Good Practice was provided. The assignment had been to produce four concise, illustrated leaflets of around four pages to be used for training purposes and handy, everyday reference. As proposed by the delegation of Sweden to the WP.7 meeting (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2021/Inf.2), the objective of such leaflets would be to reach actors who would need more practical information adopted to characteristics of the produce. The leaflets have been developed as a pilot and covered four project groups for which the guidelines and recommendations were similar, namely: floral vegetables, immature fruit vegetables, leafy vegetables, and root vegetables.

25. Delegates were invited to provide their views on if it would be useful to cover a wider range of products by similar leaflets and if so, whether to focus on product groups or cover specific products in line with the trade standards.

26. The Specialized Section took note of the leaflets. The delegation of the United States informed that some other organizations such as COLEACP, ACP and USAID had developed material for small farmers that could be useful for such leaflets. Further comments on the content of the brochures as well as suggestions regarding outreach would be welcome to the secretariat by mid-June 2022.

VIII. Electronic quality certificates for fresh fruit and vegetables

27. The secretariat of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) updated the Specialized Section on electronic quality certificates. During 2020-2021 under a United Nations Development Account project, the secretariat in collaboration with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had developed the functional specifications for an electronic certificate management system for fresh fruits and vegetables. The objective of the project was to describe the core process and

business requirements for the development of an electronic fresh fruit and vegetable certificate management system in the context of marketing standards, with focus on the processes for export. The secretariat noted that the import stage was not part of the project, as the export stage was considered more important.

28. 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. The specification is now ready to be used by Governments who are interested in developing or enhancing their ICT systems. Member States could use the specification to develop in-house systems. Other alternative options, subject to funding, could be that UNCTAD's Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) develops an electronic system that can be made available to countries, or that funding is sought for the development of a generic system that competent authorities can use.

29. The delegation of the United States commended UN/CEFACT for the timely document, noting that they look forward to engaging as they are in the process of developing such a system. The Specialized Section noted the potential benefits of introducing electronic conformity certificate management for traders (quick transaction); for competent authorities (to eliminate risks); for government officials (to be able to approve permits at a distance, as well as an opportunity to verify information in the system). It noted that the ECE developed functional specification can be used as a template for development of national systems where they are not in place and serve as an example of international best practice to countries that already have a system in place.

IX. Capacity-building and promotional activities

30. The secretariat provided an overview of information about their promotional and capacity-building activities in the past year, which focused mainly on developing the e-learning course which will be made available in multiple languages.

31. The representative from Germany informed on the upcoming 34th International Meeting for Quality Control for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (held once every two years), planned to be held in-person on 14-16 March 2023 in Bonn. Delegates to the Specialized Section were invited to participate. More information about the meeting would be shared in the fourth quarter and would be advertised through ECE website.

32. The representative of the Netherlands informed about an upcoming meeting on harmonization which would be held in-person on 14-16 June 2022 and invited the Specialized Section to participate.

33. The representative of the Central Asian Working Group asked for support in implementing capacity-building and awareness raising activities, including facilitation of communication with international experts to develop recommendations and training. Specifically, he asked for in-person training, which was deemed to be more efficient. He suggested sending the secretariat the list of needs for checking fundraising options.

X. Exchange of experience on using the ECE Code Mark Registry

34. The Specialized Section reviewed the proposal by Germany (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/7) which proposed adding an explanation to the ECE Code Mark Registry on how inspection bodies proceed if the structure of the code does not match the information provided in the ECE Code Mark Registry or if the country of dispatch is not listed in the ECE Code Mark Registry. The proposal was based on current procedures in Germany. Delegations were invited to discuss how they work with ECE Code Mark Registry in their respective legislations.

35. The Specialized Section exchanged experiences on how they act when the ECE Code Mark shown on packages differs from what is shown in the table. Several delegations said they experience the same problem, and most would then contact the authority of the exporting

country. Clarification was asked on the motives to reject, and it was explained that rejection means the labelling is not correct and the importer would need to add the right label, i.e., packer and shipper with full address. If they can quickly get in contact with the official authorities at this stage, then they would accept the shipment with the corrected labelling. The delegation of Germany also explained that the ECE Code Mark Registry is what they use, and that it is very helpful for daily inspection services.

36. The Specialized Section approved the proposal by the delegation of Germany to add the proposed text to the ECE Code Mark Registry as presented in document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/7.

XI. Revision of standards

(a) Revision of standards (further discussion of 2021 proposals)

37. Following the discussions at its 2021 session, the Specialized Section continued the discussion of proposed changes to the standards for beans/peas, onions, cherries, and berry fruits.

Beans/peas

38. The Specialized Section discussed the revisions to the standards for beans proposed by Belgium. The proposed revisions concerned the definition of intact, with Belgium suggesting that beans, sugar snap peas, etc., should still be considered intact if ends are removed. They further suggested to delete a footnote regarding the degree of damages permitted, as it was felt to be redundant and due to the tolerances established in the standard may cause confusion. Finally, under marking, nature of produce, they proposed to harmonize it with the standard for peas.

39. The delegation of Sweden noted that the discussion on this matter had been going on for a few years, and that these two standards treat the products slightly differently. Last year there were two options discussed. The position of Sweden was that trimming beans causes food loss. In addition to trimming off part of the product, the cut opens up the product to infection which will affect the shelf-life of the product. Thus, for the sake of avoiding food waste, they proposed to not allow the changes, but instead to change the standard of peas.

40. The delegation of France supported this, agreeing that a modification of mange-tout peas was more adequate. The delegation of Poland also supported the position, noting that they had sent their views in 2020 to not allow for cutting of beans and peas. The delegation of the United States recognized that this product is already on the market as a well-established product with cut ends and recommended to either exclude it from the standard or make a provision on what the requirements are if it is accepted. The delegation of Germany noted that it was the same situation as in the last meeting, when the Specialized Section finally agreed on the second option. Germany can accept both options but want to see an alignment between the two standards.

41. The Specialized Section agreed to amend the standard of peas instead of the beans standard. The delegation of Sweden volunteered to take on the work to review the standard and propose revisions to next year's session of the Specialized Section.

Onions

42. The delegation of Spain introduced its proposal to amend the provision on sizing in the standard for onions to increase the range in size between onions permitted in the same package (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/9), explaining that the proposal had been submitted last year but was not agreed upon, and that this was a revised proposal. Some delegates expressed concern about the overlap between the smallest onions and that sizing is not aligned with the standard on the website. The delegation of the United States proposed

introducing an opening sentence and sizing provisions in line with the recently finalized Codex standard for onions and shallots. This was supported by the delegation of Germany.

43. The Specialized Section agreed for Spain to consult its industry and come back with a new proposal next year.

Cherries

44. The delegation of Spain introduced the proposal to amend the standard for cherries (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/10). The delegate reported that there is a confusion between traders on whether they can mark the size or not, and it would be helpful to have it written in the standard that marking of size is optional.

45. Several delegations expressed that marking of size is always possible even if not mentioned in the provisions concerning marking, but that if this was useful for Spain, they would have no objection.

46. The Specialized Section agreed to amend the standard for cherries accordingly. It decided to forward the text of the revised standard to the Working Party for approval.

Berry fruits

47. The delegation of Spain introduced the proposal to amend the standard for berry fruits (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/11), specifically to include a provision for wet, soft or leaky fruit and to increase tolerances within class I and class II.

48. Several delegates found the proposed tolerances too high. Due to the very delicate and perishable nature of berry fruits, they considered that the proposal would not satisfy consumers, and might increase food loss as berries would not last long in the supermarket.

49. The Specialized Section decided to leave the standard as it is and potentially review an updated proposal at the next session of the Specialized Section in 2023.

(b) Revisions (new proposals)

Leafy vegetables

50. The delegation of Germany introduced its proposal for revisions to the standard for leafy vegetables (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/12), namely, to include *Pak Choi* (*Brassica rapa L. subsp. chinensis* (L.)) in the definition of produce.

51. The Specialized Section agreed to amend the standard for leafy vegetables accordingly. It decided to forward the text of the revised standard to the Working Party for approval.

Asparagus

52. The delegation of Germany introduced its proposal for revisions to the standard for asparagus (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/13). The proposal was to remove the last paragraph under definition of produce which read “This standard does not apply to green and violet/green asparagus of less than 3 mm diameter and white and violet asparagus of less than 8 mm diameter, packed in uniform bundles or unit packages.” Their observation of the market shows that no shoots below the minimum size are offered even from foreign origins, and that even the thinnest shoots comply with the prescribed minimum sizes, and thus the paragraph is confusing.

53. The Specialized Section agreed to amend the standard for asparagus accordingly. It decided to forward the text of the revised standard to the Working Party for approval.

Citrus fruit

54. The delegation of Germany introduced its proposal for revisions to the standard for citrus fruit (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/14). The proposal concerned oranges offered to the consumer as juice oranges and came from a concern that in some cases they were not suitable as juice oranges. However, following bilateral consultations on the issue before the meeting, the delegation had concluded that the problem may not be as big as initially perceived, and had decided to withdraw the proposal.

Pomegranates

55. The delegation of Germany introduced its proposal for revisions to the standard for pomegranates (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/15). They recalled that when approving the standard last year, the Specialized Section had decided that it could be relooked at after the first year. The aim of the revision was to make the standard more logical and remove mistakes. The proposed changes included allowing pomegranates to be traded even if the crown is damaged or missing, and not referencing skin colour separately as the variety already reflects the skin colour. In addition, Germany proposed during the meeting that pomegranates can also be traded with dried crowns in classes I and II.

56. The delegation of Spain accepted the proposed changes to the text of the standard but had reservations regarding the proposal regarding the interpretation of skin defects that had been annexed to the proposal relating to the interpretation and the OECD brochure.

57. The Specialized Section agreed to amend the standard for pomegranates accordingly, and to forward the text of the revised standard to the Working Party for approval. Regarding question on skin defects and surface area, it was decided to postpone it to next year.

Commercial types for melons

58. The delegation of France introduced its proposal to discuss the commercial types for melons (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/18), specifically the Charentais melon. Melon producers in France were concerned that the term Charentais was confusing for French consumers as they associate it with the geographical area of Charentes, i.e. there is a confusion between the commercial type of the product and its possible origin, while Charentais melons are now produced in many other places as well. It invited delegates to come up with proposals for an alternative name.

59. While most delegations did not object to the proposal, several expressed a concern that renaming it may be confusing for the consumer, as the name is very well established. They also expressed concern regarding the impacts on the seed sector. The need for a long transition period was also highlighted, should a name change be decided.

60. The delegation of France thanked delegations for their views and suggestions, clarifying discussions with the seed producers is ongoing, and noting and agreeing with the need for a relatively long transition period. It also noted the concern of colleagues of risk of confusion for countries who have not been part of the change, suggesting that a larger consultation with the major producing countries (France, Spain, Maroc) may be needed.

(c) Revisions to the Standard Layout for fresh fruit and vegetables

Proposal by the Netherlands

61. The delegation of the Netherlands presented its proposal to remove the requirement for a physical address and allow P.O box in the Standard Layout under Section VI. Provisions concerning marking, part A. Identification Packer and/or dispatcher/ exporter (document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/16). Examples were presented of product labels on high-quality products that had to be rejected by inspectors only due to only P.O box and no (unique) physical address being included on the label. The proposal could thus have an

impact on reducing food loss and waste. They further proposed to include a footnote in the standard clarifying that the address must trace back to the physical location of the packer and/or dispatcher/exporter, and that the inspection authorities of the country of the packer and/or dispatcher/exporter are the designated authorities to check if the address conforms to the correct address standard of the country concerned.

62. The delegate of Sweden suggested adding both the street number and postal box. The delegate of the United States expressed concerns about negative impact on traceability, highlighting that a company may have the P.O. address, but that a packer/dispatcher must have a physical location and it needs to be possible to trace it back for food safety reasons. Several delegations highlighted that a physical address is a legal requirement in the EU. The delegate from Italy shared that it required its importers to provide a legal address in order to import fruits and vegetables to Italy.

63. In light of the comments, the Netherlands decided to withdraw its proposal and take it back for further work and to come back next year.

Proposal by Sweden

64. The delegation of Sweden introduced its proposal contained in ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/INF.3 to systematically review the Standard Layout and the marketing standards for fresh fruits and vegetables with the aim to identify possible clauses that could contribute to reduce food losses and waste while not affecting the intended purpose of the standards, which is to facilitate trade.

65. The Specialized Section decided to establish a working group led by Sweden and including Brazil, France, Spain, South Africa and the United States. The Group would review the standard layout and 2-3 standards and present its work to the next meeting.

XII. Development of new standards

Sweet potatoes

66. The delegate of South Africa introduced the proposal by Germany and South Africa to develop a new standard for sweet potato (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/17). He informed that the proposal includes classes, and that a comment had been received to not include classes.

67. The United States and several other delegations expressed its support for the proposal. As there were several comments, the Specialized Section decided to form a working group consisting of Germany, France, South Africa, Spain, United States and COLEACP to work on updating the proposed standard and table it at the session next year.

Ripened bananas

68. The delegation of France informed that they were considering developing a national standard for ripe/yellow bananas, as asked countries to share existing regulations and experiences. The delegate of the United States and Brazil offered to share existing material (inspection instructions, national brochure) for bananas with France. The delegation of France thanked all delegates for their inputs and suggestions.

Certain small fruits

69. The delegation of Brazil presented a proposal to develop a new standard for certain small fruits (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/INF.5), encompassing important small fruits technically not classified as berries. This could contribute to increasing trade in this produce and thus improve the resilience of farmers in the Amazon rainforest and other relevant tropical and subtropical biomes by providing them with an alternative source of income. He mentioned that his proposal is a forward-looking alternative for the resilience and protection of the threatened environment. The proposal included nine of the most traded species of small fruits, of an original list of fifty.

70. Most delegations supported the proposal suggesting there is a need for a separate standard as there is a distinct difference between the proposed list of small fruits and berry fruits.

71. The delegation of the United States questioned (i) why a separate standard is being requested when these fruits are part of a Codex Standard for Berry Fruits completed three weeks earlier and (ii) why an amendment to the ECE Standard for Berry Fruits FFV 57 was not requested. After the questions were answered, the delegation of the United States, expressed concern that these small fruits are not seen imported fresh into the United States, and they are not traded internationally in sufficient volumes that warrant the development of a standard; that their physical characteristics and post-harvest handling methods are not sufficiently known to develop a standard that reflect trade practices; and questioned the abilities of members of the Specialized Section to develop a standard for products it knows very little about and therefore it would be difficult to base comments on scientific knowledge.

72. Brazil indicated that it has sufficient information about these fruits to support the development of standards and offered to supply the outcome of studies that had been made in this regard.

73. The draft standard was discussed, and modifications made.

74. The Specialized Section accepted the standard with the changes that had been made in session and agreed to submit it to the Working Party for their adoption as a recommendation for a one-year trial period.

XIII. Revision of explanatory brochures: Persimmon

75. The delegation of Germany introduced its proposal to amend the explanatory brochure for persimmon (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2021/15) by changing the photo illustration for “internal discoloration” in the ECE explanatory brochure for persimmons, as the photos did not accurately depict the text.

76. The Specialized Section agreed to amend the explanatory brochure accordingly. It decided to forward the proposed change to the Working Party for approval.

XIV. Other business

77. The delegate of Spain, Ms. Maria de Armas, informed the Specialized Section that this was her last meeting as she would be changing positions, and introduced the new representative who would take over. The Specialized Section thanked the delegate from Spain and welcomed onboard the new member, Paula de la Cruz.

78. The representative from the Central Asian Working Group informed delegates about an upcoming meeting in July to define products relevant for MSMEs (to be held virtually).

79. The delegate from the United States asked if the secretariat had any information on the use of the Minimum Quality Specifications by countries where there are no other standards on fresh fruit and vegetables. The secretariat will look for information on this and respond to the United States.

XV. Future work

80. The Specialized Section decided to place the following items on the agenda for 2023:

- Sweet potatoes
- Peas
- Food loss and waste – review of standards
- Onions
- Berry fruits

- Pomegranates – interpretation (OECD brochure)
- Review of the recommendation for Certain Small Fruits

81. Any other proposals for future work should be sent to the secretariat as early as possible, preferably by 1 February 2023.

XVI. Election of officers

82. The Specialized Section elected Mr. Cyril Julius (South Africa) as its Chair and Ms. Karen Spruijt - de Gelder (Netherlands) as its Vice-Chair for a one-year period.

XVII. Adoption of the report

83. The Specialized Section adopted the report of its seventieth session (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.1/2022/2) in session.
