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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
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Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Meeting of Experts on Coordination of
Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Forty-fifth session, Geneva, 26 to 29 November 1999

REPORT OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Executive summary:

Participation: The session was attended by 26 national delegations, the European Community and several organizations.

Apples and Pears: Work on the text of the standard was finalized and will be proposed to the Working Party for adoption as a UN/ECE recommendation for one year. Work on the list of varieties will be finalized at the next session and annexed to the standard.

Asparagus: Amendments to the standard based on the amendments to the draft Codex standard were agreed and will be transmitted to the Working Party for inclusion in the revised UN/ECE standard for Asparagus.

Broccoli: Several corrections were made to this standard and will be transmitted to the Working Party.

Citrus Fruit: A revision of the standard was agreed and will be proposed to the Working Party for adoption as a revised UN/ECE standard. Maturity requirements and green skinned oranges will be discussed in a working group and at the next session.

Cultivated Mushrooms: Work on the revision of the standard continues in an informal working group; a revised consolidated text will be discussed in a working group session in France at the beginning of 2000.

Kiwifruit: Work on the revision continues in an informal working group.

Peaches and Nectarines: Italy will for the time being stop the experiment of bulk transport because of lack of participation from the trade.

Plums: An amended list of varieties will be transmitted to the working party.

Table Grapes: The issue of trade marks and names of varieties was discussed and several amendments to the list of varieties were agreed and will be transmitted to the Working Party.

Pineapples: It was decided to propose to the Working Party to create a UN/ECE standard for Pineapples. A working group coordinated by COLEACP will prepare a draft text.

Miniature Fruit: A new proposal was discussed which will be further developed at the next session.

Operational activities: Possibilities to assist south eastern European countries and countries in transition were discussed.

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 26 to 29 October 1999. It was chaired by Mr. David Priester (United States). The session was opened by the Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division, Ms. Carol Cosgrove-Sacks.
2. The Director informed delegations that the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development earlier this year had welcomed the reports of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7) and its specialized sections and confirmed the importance of this work. The Chairman of WP.7, Mr. Miguel Vilchez-Barros served now also as Chairman of the Committee. She said that in the next year the Committee would once again review its working priorities and therefore it was important that each Specialized Section conveyed the importance of its work through the Working Party to the Committee.
3. The Director also informed delegations of other work of the Commission especially with regard to assistance to the south-eastern European region, cooperation with the World Trade Organization, new activities in the area of intellectual property rights (which might be of relevance to the standardization activities) and regarding electronic commerce.
4. The Director wished the group success in their deliberations and expressed the hope that the standard on Apples and Pears would be finalized and progress would be made in the area of citrus fruit in a spirit of compromise.

Participation

5. The session was attended by delegations of the following countries: Austria; Belgium; Chile¹; Côte d'Ivoire¹; Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Mexico¹; Netherlands; New Zealand¹; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and United States of America.
6. The European Community was also represented.
7. The following specialized agency of the United Nations was represented: Food and Agriculture Organization, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
8. At the invitation of the secretariat, a representative of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables participated in the session.
9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations participated in the session: C.L.A.M. (Comité de Liaison de L'Agrumiculture Méditerranéenne), COLEACP (Comité de Liaison - Europe - Africa - Caraïbes - Pacifique - pour la promotion des fruits tropicaux, légumes de contre-saison, fleurs, plantes ornementales et épices), E.U.C.O.F.E.L. (European Union of the Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale, Import and Export Trade) and FIPA (Fédération Internationale des Producteurs Agricoles).

¹Participating under Article 11 of the Commissions terms of reference. This article regulates participation of non-ECE member States and is mentioned here for administrative reasons only. According to the working procedures of WP.7 and its specialized sections any member State of the United Nations can participate in their work with the same rights as UN/ECE member states.

Adoption of the agenda

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/1

10. The provisional agenda as contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/1 was adopted with the following changes:

- Documents TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/6, -/1999/9 and -/11/Add.1 were withdrawn by France.

The following documents were added to the agenda:

- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.1 (United States) on Table grapes
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.2 (United Kingdom) on Miniature Produce
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.3 (Germany) on Broccoli
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.4 (South Africa) on Plums
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.5 (Côte d'Ivoire) on Pineapple
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.6 (Secretariat) on acceptances
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.7 (European Community) on Asparagus
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.8 (Thailand) on Asparagus
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.9 (CLAM) on Citrus Fruit
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.10 (EMGG) on Cultivated Mushrooms
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.11 (Secretariat) on Results of the Working Groups
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.12 (Spain) on Citrus Fruit
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.13 (Germany, Israel) on Citrus Fruit
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.14 (Denmark) on Citrus Fruit
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.15 (Secretariat) on Pineapples
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.16 (Working Group) on Cultivated Mushrooms
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.17 (Secretariat) on Pineapples
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.18 (Germany, Israel) on Citrus Fruit
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.19 (Secretariat) on Asparagus, Plums and Table Grapes

11. The delegation from Spain suggested that item 10 of the provisional agenda could be phrased in broader terms and called: Operational Activities, thus including all kinds of activities connected to technical assistance.

Matters of interest arising since the forty-second session

12. The Meeting took note of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/2 summing up the relevant discussions of the Working Party at its 54th session and the third session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development.

Consideration of proposals for revisions of standards

Apples and Pears

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/3 (New Zealand) - Revised text of the standard
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/4 (New Zealand) - List of varieties
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.11 (Secretariat) - Results of the Working Groups

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 para. 61 to 67.

13. Document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/3 was prepared by the UN/ECE/OECD working group on apples (Belgium, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). The group introduced a few minor amendments to the text agreed at the last session and also deleted the table of correspondence between weight sizing and diameter sizing which was not agreed at the last session.

14. The document was discussed in the working group session on 25 October 1999 (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.11) where some additional changes were introduced. The chairman of the Working Group introduced the documents and proposed that the Specialized Section agree the text contained in -1999/3 as amended by -1999/INF.11 and transmit it to the Working Party for adoption as a UN/ECE Recommendation for a one-year trial period. The Specialized Section agreed to this proposal.

15. The Specialized Section also agreed that the working group should finalize the list of varieties, especially to complete the text on russetting. Delegations were invited to assist the working group by sending comments on names, synonyms and colour groupings as contained in -/1999/4 directly to New Zealand. The list will be annexed to the standard and reviewed regularly by the Specialized Section without having to revise the standard.

16. The delegation of Spain proposed to consider to split the standard into a standard for apples and a standard for pears because this would simplify the provisions especially on sizing (weight sizing mainly used for apples) and facilitate future revisions of the standard. There were no objections to this proposal and it was decided to add this question to the work programme of the Working Group.

17. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed the Specialized Section that the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 23rd Session (Rome, 28 June-3 July 1999) had approved the elaboration of a worldwide Codex standards for apples, tomatoes and table grapes as new work for the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. With regard to apples, Uruguay was named to develop a Proposed Draft Codex Standard for this produce. She expressed the hope that, as in the past, there would be good cooperation between the UN/ECE and Codex during the elaboration of this Codex Standard.

18. The delegations of the European Community and Spain said that they regretted that the CCFFV had taken this decision while the work on the revision of the UN/ECE standard remained uncompleted. The delegation of the European Community recalled that the countries of the European Union had unanimously opposed this decision. He expressed the hope that now that the decision had been taken there would be close cooperation between the groups to ensure harmonization of the standards.

19. The delegation of New Zealand said he hoped that the CCFFV would consider adopting the standard as proposed by the UN/ECE/OECD working group.

20. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme noted the decision of the 43rd Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that *"In regard to cooperation between UN/ECE and Codex in the elaboration of fresh fruits and vegetables standards, the need for close cooperation in order to avoid duplication of work was reiterated and the suggestion was made that UN/ECE standards should be used as a starting point for Codex standards where appropriate"* and that, *"relevant UN/ECE standards be distributed as working documents for the CCFFV when like produce were being considered"*. However, as an international standardization body, the Codex Alimentarius Commission had to take into account the needs of all of its member countries which are not necessarily members of the UN/ECE region and therefore, there might be a need to adjust some provisions of the UN/ECE standard in order to meet the needs of its other member countries.

21. The delegation of the United States said that at the 8th CCFFV the United States had offered to serve as co-rapporteur to liaise with Uruguay and ensure that the standards would be harmonized.

Asparagus

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/5 (Secretariat) - Decisions taken at 8th CCFFV
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.7 (European Community) - Proposal
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.8 (Thailand) - Position paper
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.19 (Secretariat) - Agreed text

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 paras. 57-60.

22. The standard was discussed at the last session. The problem was how to include provisions on asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions in the standard. At the last session a number of principles were agreed and on the basis of these the Codex and UN/ECE secretariats had prepared a joint proposal for the 8th CCFFV. At the 8th CCFFV a new text for the sizing table was drafted by an ad hoc working group. This text was agreed and the standard moved to step 5. Document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/5 summarizes the changes to be made to the UN/ECE standard in order to harmonize it with the new Codex text.

23. Document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.7 by the European Community was also based on the decisions taken at the 8th CCFFV with some differences:

- no specific provisions for the compactness of the tip of green slender asparagus were proposed in the definitions of the three quality classes. It was mentioned that the differences could be shown in an explanatory brochure.
- the word “rust” was maintained.
- no provisions allowing measuring of the diameter at the cut end for green uniform asparagus were proposed. It was mentioned that for “uniform” asparagus the point of measurement did not matter and the measurement at mid-point should be maintained as a unique way of measuring diameter to avoid different figures for the same shoots.
- The sizing table was simplified and harmonized for the different colours and sizes.

24. It was decided to adopt the proposal contained in -/1999/INF.7. The amendments (as contained in -/1999/INF.19) will be included in the UN/ECE standard and proposed to the Working Party for adoption as a revision of the UN/ECE standard for Asparagus.

25. Document -/1999/INF.8 was not discussed because it related to the proposal from France in -/1999/6 which had been withdrawn.

Broccoli

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.3 (Germany) - Corrections

26. The delegation of Germany proposed amendments to the UN/ECE standard on Broccoli to correct errors made in connection with the revision of the standard last year. The Specialized Section agreed the amendments. They will be transmitted to the Working Party for inclusion in the UN/ECE standard on Broccoli.

Citrus Fruit

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/1998/9/Add.1 (Secretariat) - Text of the standard in force
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/7 (Greece) - Position paper
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/8 (Secretariat) - Decisions of the 8th CCFFV
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.9 (CLAM) - Position paper, statistics
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.11 (Secretariat) on Results of the Working Groups

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.12 (Spain) - Position paper

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.13 (Germany, Israel) - Revision of the standard

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.14 (Denmark) - Botanical names

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 paras. 25 to 60.

27. The discussion was held on the basis of TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.13 which had been prepared by the rapporteurs, Germany and Israel, on the basis of the text of the standard in force.

28. The delegations of CLAM, Greece and Spain explained in their documents that they would like to maintain the existing standard in most areas because it has in the past facilitated trade of citrus fruit and thus contributed to the success of this industry. They were supported in their position by the delegations of Italy and Portugal. Other delegations stated that they would like to update the standard including provisions for internal quality of the fruit. In the very constructive discussion it was possible to make progress on several items, whereas others will be rediscussed at the next session.

29. The updated version of the standard containing the decisions taken at this session will be forwarded to the Working Party for adoption as a revision of the UN/ECE standard for Citrus Fruit.

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

30. The delegation of Denmark proposed in -/1999/INF.14 to review the botanical names used in the definition using GRIN, the United States Department of Agriculture's national database for plant nomenclature as a reference because it was exhaustive and easily available through the Internet (www.ars-grin.gov).

31. It was agreed in principle to amend the text as proposed in -/1999/INF.14. To allow for further discussions of delegations with their experts it was decided not to include it in the present revision of the standard but to rediscuss it at the next session.

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

A. Minimum requirements

32. The editorial changes proposed in -1999/INF.13 were agreed.

B. Maturity requirements

33. The general section for maturity requirements as proposed in -1999/INF.13 were agreed with the exception of the minimum sugar/acid ratio.

34. The delegation of Spain said that if maturity requirements should be included in the standard then the sugar/acid ratio was not a good indicator because the ratio could be high even when there was no acidity which is a typical characteristic of citrus fruit. It would be better to look at the acid content separately and also define other maturity indicators.

35. The rapporteur from Israel maintained that the sugar/acid ratio was an important indicator for the internal quality of the fruit but was open-minded with respect to discussing other possibilities. He entered a reservation stating that the parameter of sugar/acid ratio should be included in the standard.

36. It was agreed to form a working group on maturity requirements. Comments and proposals should be sent to the rapporteur from Israel.

Limes

37. The new value for the minimum juice content (42%) was agreed and the reservation from Chile and the United States was deleted.

Oranges

38. The rapporteurs proposed to include a footnote allowing green skinned oranges provided the maturity requirements conform to certain parameters (minimum juice content 38%; minimum sugar/acid ratio 6.5:1).

39. As at the last session opinions diverged on this question for the reasons stated there (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17).

40. The delegation of Spain proposed as a compromise solution to amend the definition of produce, such as to exclude green skinned oranges from the application of the standard. This exclusion would be similar to the exclusion of citrus fruit for industrial processing because green skinned oranges were mainly used for juice production and not for direct consumption. If this was done green skinned oranges could be traded. If necessary a separate standard for this fruit could be created.

41. The Chairman said that the UN/ECE standard was already a combination of six different citrus fruit standards. Creating a new standard was thus equivalent to creating a separate section for green skinned oranges in the standard and to define specific maturity requirements for this fruit.

42. The delegate of the European Community said that he would prefer the solution proposed by the rapporteurs. Additionally he proposed a higher value for the minimum juice content (40%) and the inclusion of special marking requirements for the green skinned tropical oranges.

43. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed the Specialized Section that the 23rd Session of the Commission agreed the Draft Codex Standards for Limes, Pummelos and Grapefruits as new Codex Standards, with the understanding that the sections in square brackets (Section 2.1.2 Minimum Juice Content for Limes, and Section 3 Provisions concerning Sizing for Limes, Pummelos and Grapefruits) would be further discussed at the next session of the CCFFV. As regards oranges, the draft was being currently circulated for comments at Step 6. It was also noted that the Draft Codex Standard for Oranges contained a footnote allowing green skinned oranges. She hoped that it would be possible to align the UN/ECE standard with the Codex standard in this respect.

44. Because no consensus could be found on any of the proposals the delegation of Israel entered a reservation into the standard with the text of the footnote he had originally proposed. The delegations from Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom entered the same reservation. It was decided to come back to this question at the next session.

45. The delegate from Spain proposed to ask the Working Party about the interpretation of the reservation placed taking into account that some of the countries who had entered it did not produce citrus fruit. The secretariat answered that any country (regardless of its status as producing, exporting or importing country) had the right to disagree with the group and express this by entering a reservation.

46. The delegation of Israel entered a reservation stating that a minimum sugar/acid ratio of 6.0:1 for oranges and 5.5:1 for pigmented oranges should be included in the standard.

Grapefruits

Pummelos (Shaddock)

47. The proposed minimum sugar content for oroblanco and pummelo was agreed.

Other changes

48. The other changes proposed by the rapporteurs in -/1999/INF.13 were mainly editorial and were agreed by the Specialized Section.

49. The elements of the standard where no consensus could be reached will remain on the agenda for the next session.

Cultivated Mushrooms

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.10 (EMGG) - Revised text of the standard
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.16 (Working Group)

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 paras. 57-60.

50. An informal working group composed of France, Ireland, Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany as rapporteur met in the Netherlands earlier this year to draw up a consolidated proposal based on documents presented at the last session. The group did not finalise any proposal before the meeting of the Specialized Section but met during the informal session on 25 September 1999 and later during the session of the Specialized Section. The group took into account the proposal made by EMGG (European Mushroom Growers' Group) in -/1999/INF.10 and developed a revised consolidated text for the standard (see -/1999/INF.16). Countries were invited to send comments on this text to the Netherlands before 1 January 2000.

51. The delegate from France said that his country will host a session of the Working Group in the centre of France in the first quarter of 2000.

Kiwifruit

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/11 (New Zealand) - List of varieties
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.11 (Secretariat) - Results of the Working Groups

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 para. 24.

52. Document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/11 was prepared by a small working group (Chile, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, United States) in cooperation with the International Kiwi Fruit Organization (IKO). The document was discussed in the working group session on 25 October 1999 (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.11). In this discussion it became apparent that further work was necessary on the following topics: definition of maturity indicators, wording for sizing methods and creation of a list of varieties.

53. The group proposed to leave the standard unchanged for the time being. It would continue its work in liaison with IKO and come back to the next meeting of the Specialized Section with a new proposal.

Peaches and Nectarines

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 paras. 19 to 23.

54. The delegation of Italy reported that the experiment to transport Peaches and Nectarines in bulk had not been successful because of lack of participation from the industry. He suggested to suspend this project for the time being and to resume it in the future if more interest was shown by the importers and exporters.

55. The Specialized Section agreed to this proposal and thanked Italy for the work done on this project.

Plums

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/12 (Germany) - List of varieties
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.4 (South Africa) - List of varieties
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.19 (Secretariat) - Agreed text

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17 paras. 16-18

56. At the last session the list of varieties was split into large fruit varieties of *p. domestica* and *p. salicina*. It was felt by several delegations that this list needed more work before it could be integrated into the standard. In TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/12 Germany and Italy proposed a new list. No comments on this list were received from other countries. In TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.4 South Africa proposed further additions to the list.

57. It was agreed to integrate the list proposed by South Africa in the list of varieties (see -/1999/INF.19) and to transmit it to the Working Party for inclusion in the UN/ECE standard on Plums. Countries were invited to submit any further comments on the list to the delegation of Germany.

Table Grapes

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.1 (United States) - Trade marks
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.19 (Secretariat) - Agreed text

58. The delegation of the United States introduced the document. The problem is that in the list of varieties under the variety "Sugraone" the synonym "Superior Seedless" is listed. The Californian company Sun World owns the trade mark for this synonym and is opposed to the mention of it in the standard for fear that this will facilitate illegal use of the name. He proposed in order to avoid immediate legal problems to add a "TM" to the names "Superior Seedless" and "Early Superior Seedless" and to add a footnote "TMRegistered trademark."

59. The delegation of Ireland said that this was a horizontal problem concerning other varieties and synonyms and also other standards that include lists of varieties. It would therefore be preferable to find a harmonized solution to this problem.

60. It was agreed that it was necessary to put this question on the agenda for future meetings and in the meantime to collect information from other organisations dealing with this kind of problem. The secretariat will contact UPOV and OIV to get their list of varieties. It was also mentioned that another group within the UN/ECE dealt with this question. The secretariat will provide more information on this group for the next session.

61. To fix the immediate problem with Sun World it was decided to adopt the proposal made by the United States. A few further amendments were made to the list (see -/1999/INF.19) . The amendments will be submitted to the Working Party for inclusion in the UN/ECE standard on Table Grapes.

Consideration to elaborate a UN/ECE Draft Standard for Pineapples

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/14 (Cameroun) - Proposal for a new UN/ECE standard
 TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.5 (Ivory Coast) - Position paper
 TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.15 - Codex standard
 TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.17 (Secretariat) - Comparison between the proposal from
 Cameroun and the Codex standard

62. The proposal to elaborate a UN/ECE standard for Pineapples was first made at the 40th session of the meeting of experts by COLEACP and the Ivory Coast for the purpose of facilitating the development of trade between African producer/exporters and European markets. At that time a draft standard adopted by 7 African pineapple producing countries was presented. They were informed by the meeting that a Codex standard for Pineapples existed (adopted 1993) and that a request could be made directly to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for revision of the present Standard to take into account African pineapple production. This was done and led to work on a revision of the Codex standard.

63. At its fifty-third session, the Working Party decided to ask the Meeting of Experts to consider the elaboration of a Draft Standard for Pineapples taking into account the work undertaken by the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. The request had been submitted by COLEACP and was initiated by the Côte d'Ivoire and other West African countries.

64. The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire explained that the delegation from Cameroon regretted not to be able to participate in the session but that she was speaking on behalf of six African pineapple-producing countries (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Togo) whose export shipments represented 70% of the pineapple trade in Europe. She explained that Côte d'Ivoire alone exported 200,000 tonnes of pineapple per year. She said that this dynamic and productive sector contributed to the economic development and ensured the social stability not only of a region but also of the whole country. She explained that the present request was made because the revision of the Codex standard on pineapples was deemed insufficient for the trade of the countries she spoke for.

65. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed the Specialized Section that the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted a Draft Revised Codex Standard for Pineapples as a new worldwide Codex Standard for Pineapples on the understanding that the Section on Maturity Requirements would be further discussed at the next session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The Specialized Section was also informed that the revision of the current Codex Standard for Pineapples was done on the basis of a proposal originating from COLEACP.

66. In view of the existence of an international Codex Standard for Pineapples, the Representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme expressed the view that, if certain member countries of COLEACP, which were full member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and, therefore, of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, had some concerns in relation to this Codex Standard, it would be preferable for them to participate in the work of the CCFFV and not to propose the elaboration of a UN/ECE Standard for Pineapples which would not have the international recognition of Codex standards and might potentially create a technical barrier to trade.

67. She was of the opinion that the current Codex Standard for Pineapples was flexible enough to allow for different ways of trading pineapples in order to truly reflect current marketing practices on the international market, and not only from certain producing countries to the European market. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, while recognizing the high technical level of UN/ECE standards, recalled that the TBT Agreement encouraged member countries to align their national standards and regulations with international

standards and that, in this sense, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations recognized that, although UN/ECE standards operated *de facto* internationally, Codex standards were *de jure* international standards.

68. The delegation of Spain welcomed the proposal to develop a UN/ECE standard for pineapples. He said the finalised revision of the Codex standard was not satisfactory for suppliers and did not reflect European trade practices. He said that the successful working procedures between the UN/ECE and Codex should work both ways i.e. that in the case that a UN/ECE standard was developed for a product where a Codex standard existed the Codex standard would be taken as a starting point to avoid duplication of effort and any differences would be reflected. He recalled that the UN/ECE had been granted observer status in several WTO committees (among those TBT) and was thus recognized as an international standard-setting body where all member States of the Commission and the United Nations in general could participate with equal rights. He also pointed out that decisions in the UN/ECE groups were taken on a consensus basis.

69. The delegation of the European Community said that in his view there was only one question to be decided at present, whether a UN/ECE standard on pineapples should be adopted. The question which standard should be adopted could be answered at a second stage. He said that the European Community believes that it would be useful to adopt a UN/ECE standard for pineapples.

70. The Chairman said that the main goal of international standardization was in his opinion to seek the widest possible input and expertise at all stages of development of a standard. He said there were about 10 delegations present in Geneva which could for several reasons not usually be represented in Mexico. If the Specialized Section decided to develop a standard and thus gave the opportunity to 10 more countries to give their input and expertise which would be positive and should be welcomed by all organizations. He said it was certain that the Codex standard would serve as a starting point for discussions in the UN/ECE. Once the standard was completed it would be transmitted to the CCFFV for harmonization.

71. The Specialized Section decided to propose to the Working Party to create a UN/ECE standard for Pineapples.

72. The delegation of COLEACP suggested to create a working group for the elaboration of a draft standard and agreed to coordinate this group as a rapporteur. The delegations of France, Spain and possibly Mexico and the United States offered to participate in that group.

73. The delegation of Mexico said that a lot of time and effort had been put into the revision of the Codex standard for Pineapples. She hoped that there would be a close cooperation between UN/ECE and Codex during this work to ensure transparency and to avoid any confusion in the trade that might result from two different standards.

74. The Chairman welcomed the proposal to have a working group. He recalled that the group would have to give reasons for any changes they proposed to the existing Codex standard.

Proposal to include provisions for miniature fruit and vegetables in UN/ECE Standards

Document: AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/R.146 (Germany, United Kingdom, Secretariat)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.2 (United Kingdom) - Proposal

75. At the forty-first session of the Meeting of Experts on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (paras 55 to 62 of the Report) it was decided that further discussion was needed on: definitions of these products (in use by the EU and other countries); which products should be covered; whether the criteria should be included in an annex to specific

Standards or in the Standard Layout; and what the products should be called. Document AGRI/WP.1/R.146 presents a proposal on how the EU's "Gentleman's Agreement" could be clarified and incorporated within UN/ECE Standards. Owing to time constraints this document has never been discussed. The original proposal was updated by the United Kingdom on the basis of comments received in -/1999/INF.2.

76. In document -/1999/INF.2 the United Kingdom proposes a list of products for which miniature products should be allowed and a number of provisions to include these products into the existing UN/ECE standards.

77. Several comments made on the document:

- in the provisions for marking, the possibility to mark several countries of origin should be included;
- it was suggested to include fennel in the list of products;
- several countries were opposed to include strawberries on the list of products. They felt the problem should be handled within the provisions of the existing standard;
- for avocados it was mentioned that parthenocarpic fruit were already excluded from the standard and other miniature avocados were undersized fruit and not appropriate to be marketed; it was also mentioned that some varieties (e.g. Hass) could be picked very small and still reach maturity;
- it was discussed whether the existing provisions for cucumbers should be maintained or eventually replaced;
- it was discussed whether some sizing provisions e.g. maximum size for miniature fruit should be included in the standards;
- the drafting on uniformity was improved.

78. In general it was felt that the document was a good approach but needed further consultations. Countries were invited to send comments to the delegation of the United Kingdom, who would present a new document at the next session.

Establishment of a list of countries using code marks

79. At the forty-second session it was agreed to discuss the issue of establishing a list of countries using code marks on a proposal by the delegation of Canada.

80. No Canadian delegation was present at the session. The Chairman proposed to get in touch with Canada and find out more about their intentions concerning their proposal.

81. The delegation of Chile said that there was an international organization (EAN International) harmonizing codemarks and keeping a full list of the codes used.

Exchange of information on non-conformity cases

82. The delegation of Germany said that a system for the exchange of this information was used by Member States of the European Union and the OECD scheme.

83. The delegation of the OECD Scheme said that the scheme has developed a document on this question based on EU material for the exchange of information. She offered to provide this document to the secretariat who would distribute it for the next session.

Drafting of a circular letter to increase participation

84. The secretariat informed delegations that in the course of the preparation of this session invitation letters have been sent to several South American and African countries as well as to other regional commissions of the United Nations (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCWA, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)) in order to increase participation.

85. The contact to South American countries was greatly facilitated by the cooperation of the Government of Spain who had provided unofficial translations into Spanish for several UN/ECE standards and will provide more translations in the future.

86. The Chairman of the Working Party and the secretariat participated at an expert group meeting organized by UN/ESCWA earlier this year. Twenty-five UN/ECE standards were translated into Arabic in preparation of this meeting and were currently being discussed for possible adoption by the ESCWA members.

87. The secretariat said that further efforts would be made in the next year to establish a cooperation with ECA.

88. Delegations are invited to make any further proposals on this question.

Acceptances

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.6 (Secretariat)

89. The secretariat had prepared a consolidated document listing by country which standards have been accepted. This document is based on information received from countries. Countries were invited to send comments on this document to the secretariat.

90. The delegation of Spain welcomed this document because the real interest of UN/ECE standards was that they are used in practice. He said that every effort should be made by countries that accurate information was given. He suggested that the document could be included in a revised form on the secretariat's website. He also suggested that a working group should be formed to discuss equivalences between UN/ECE standards and United States grade standards because knowledge about these would facilitate trade.

91. The delegation of the United States said that work on this question had begun in his service but progressed slowly because of other tasks.

Italian Fruit and Vegetables Directory

92. The delegation of Italy provided the Specialized Section with a booklet containing information about products, statistics on production, export and production regions as well as addresses of producers, organizations and authorities.

93. The Specialized Section thanked Italy for this very useful information.

Operational activities - assistance to south eastern European countries and countries in transition

94. The Director of the Trade Division informed delegations on the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) which had been initiated by the United States and supported by the European Union, Switzerland and Turkey to implement temporary measures to restore the economies not only of the countries directly affected by military activity but also countries like Bulgaria and Romania whose economies have suffered because, through the conflict, they lost many of their existing transport links.

95. She said that because south east Europe was a large producer of fresh fruit and vegetables the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development felt that the expertise of the Specialized Section could be helpful. She clarified that the group was not asked to come up with definitions of large scale long-term programmes but to try to identify bottlenecks in trade which can be removed through concrete, practical measures which are easy to implement. As an example she mentioned the UN/ECE initiatives in the area of border crossing.

96. Delegations expressed their interest in assisting south eastern European countries and also gave information on possible ways of doing this or informed about projects in which they were already involved:

- Israel will take the message back to its Government to try to find ways of how to get involved.
- United Kingdom is already involved in training of control services in countries in transition and could envisage doing the same in south eastern Europe.
- Sweden has recent experience in building up a control service in their own country and provided training to Latvia and Lithuania and would treat any request for assistance positively.
- Spain suggested providing logistical help in the implementation of standards, that the secretariat could maintain a database of experts, and that technical visits could be organized for the trade of these countries.
- Greece has been invited to participate in a EU project on quality standards in Bulgaria.
- Belgium proposed to keep an inventory of what was already done so that it could be better analysed what was still necessary.
- Italy is involved in training programmes in Poland and Bulgaria through the PHARE programme.
- Chile suggested having a scholarship programme to train young people from south eastern European countries in companies/farms in other countries, and having joint ventures between companies.

97. The delegation of the European Community said that besides the established EU technical assistance programmes there was a new programme, SAPARD, designed to deal with problems of countries intending to join the EU in the future.

98. The delegation of the United States said that the United States was involved in a programme to create a quality control system in Ukraine. He said that during the training of grade standards he had explained what is done at UN/ECE and Codex. He said that having the UN/ECE standards available in Russian was a useful tool for communicating with the local experts. He said that in some countries not only computers but also communication links were missing. If computers were provided then it would be helpful to have the standards available on CD-ROM.

99. The representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed that an updated version of a CD-ROM containing all Codex standards in English, French and Spanish was being published and that a copy would be distributed to each member country of the Commission through the Codex Contact Points.

100. The delegation of Denmark said that it was important that the trade in these countries knew UN/ECE standards in order to know what is acceptable on European markets.

101. The delegation of Romania said that while in her country all UN/ECE standards for fresh fruit and vegetables had been translated and legislation was in place, the problem of implementing the standards remained

because the old structures in place before the changes in 1990 had been destroyed. She said it was necessary to have a special programme to create a new quality control system in Romania.

102. The delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the delegations for the information given. She said she would provide it to her services. She suggested to have a list of existing projects for assistance so that people in her country were better informed about what was possible. She said that providing travel funds to Russian specialists to enable them to participate at external meetings or training would be helpful.

103. The Director said that she was very pleased with the constructive discussion. The secretariat would discuss a possible follow-up especially how to promote best the implementation of UN/ECE standards in these countries. The secretariat will contact delegations to maintain a database of experts and an inventory of assistance already given.

Future work

104. Work on individual standards:

- Apples and Pears (New Zealand)
- Maturity requirements for Avocados (Spain)
- Beans (European Community)
- Citrus Fruit (Israel)
- Cultivated Mushrooms (Netherlands)
- Kiwifruit (New Zealand)
- Pineapples (COLEACP)
- Plums (Germany, South Africa)
- Table Grapes (European Community)

(In revisions for standards, new text should be underlined and deleted text should be crossed out)

105. Other work:

- Issues concerning trade marks and names of varieties
- Operational activities
- Acceptances
- Provisions for miniature fruit and vegetables (United Kingdom)
- Establishment of a list of countries using code marks
- Exchange of information on non-conformity cases
- Promotion of the work of the Specialized Section
- Information from other international organizations
- Other business

Date and place of the next session

106. At present the next session of the group is scheduled to take place in Geneva from 22 to 25 May 2000. Because of the good experience of having an informal session of working groups on the first day, the secretariat will check whether it is possible to hold the formal session from 23 to 26 May and have an informal session (possibly with interpretation) on 22 May.

Preparation of the 55th session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

107. The following texts will be transmitted to the Working Party for adoption:

- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/3 as amended by -/1999/INF.11 (revised standard on Apples and Pears (excluding list of varieties) for adoption as a UN/ECE recommendation for a one-year trial period)

- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.3 (revised standard on Broccoli for adoption)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.18 (revised standard on Citrus Fruit for adoption)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1999/INF.19 (containing changes to the UN/ECE standards on Asparagus, Table Grapes and Plums for adoption)

Election of officers

108. The Specialized Section unanimously re-elected Mr. D. Priester (United States) as its Chairperson and Ms. U. Bickelmann (Germany) as its Vice-Chairperson.

Adoption of the report

109. The Specialized Section adopted the report of its forty-fifth session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

Annex

LIST OF FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Action	Responsible
Comments on maturity requirements for Citrus Fruit to be sent to the rapporteurs (Germany, Israel)	all interested delegations (before 1 January 2000)
Comments on -/1999/INF.16 (revision of the standard for Cultivated Mushrooms) to be sent to the Netherlands.	all interested delegations
Comments on the list of varieties for Apples and Pears and Plums	all interested delegations
Proposal to revise the standard for Cultivated Mushrooms	Germany, with France, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom
Proposal to revise the standard for Kiwifruit	New Zealand (with Chile, Germany, Italy and the United States)
Distribute lists of varieties for table grapes from OIV and UPOV	secretariat
Proposal for a new UN/ECE standard for Pineapples	COLEACP (with France and Spain)
Comments on provisions for miniature fruit and vegetables in UN/ECE Standards to be sent to the United Kingdom	all interested delegations
Contact the delegation of Canada concerning code marks	Chairman
Comments on document -/1999/INF.6 to be sent to the Secretariat	all delegations
Information on maturity requirements for Avocados	Spain
Proposals on Beans and Table Grapes	European Community
Document on exchange of information on non-conformity cases	OECD
Operational activities: contact delegations to establish a list of experts; establish an inventory of projects already done	secretariat

NOTE by the secretariat: Deadline for documents for the next session is 13 March 2000.