



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26
22 September 2003

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Forty-ninth session, 17-20 June 2003, Geneva

REPORT ON ITS FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Executive summary:

The following standards were updated and will be recommended to the Working Party for adoption as revised/new UNECE Standards:

- Apples (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.1)
- Artichokes, Onions, Peaches and Nectarines, Pears, Standard layout (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.3)
- Courgettes (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.4)
- Kiwi fruit (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.5)
- Existing UNECE recommendation for Avocados – including new amendments concerning Antillean varieties (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.6)
- Existing UNECE recommendation for Citrus Fruit – including new amendments to align with the draft Codex standard (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.8).
- Existing UNECE recommendation for Table Grapes with some additions to the list of varieties (to be published in an addendum to the Working Party).
- Existing UNECE recommendation for Pineapples with some editorial corrections (to be published in an addendum to the Working Party).

The following texts will be recommended to the Working Party for adoption as UNECE

Recommendations:

- Apples (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.1) (two year trial period) – this new text includes new provisions for minimum sizes and size tolerances.

Executive Summary (cont'd):

- Citrus Fruit (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.8) (one year trial period) – including the possibility to trade green skinned oranges if they have a minimum juice content of at least 45%.

Other work/ discussions

- The standard layout was amended to include a provision on stickers put on fruit.
- A representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) explained the reasons for the development of a global strategy on diet, health and physical activity. The relevance of this work for the UNECE Standards was discussed.
- The Specialized Section agreed to recommend to the Working Party to include discussions on early and ware potatoes on the agenda of GE.1.

Future work:

- Apples: Maturity requirements and size tolerances for weight sizing
A draft template for sending information for inclusion in the list of varieties was created and will be send to Latvia to try it out (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.2). Templates for other fruit will be created in the future.
- Citrus Fruit: A working group on Citrus Fruit was formed (Israel, South Africa, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Turkey and the European Community). The group will further discuss maturity requirements and the simplification of the sizing provisions.
- Kiwi fruit: Maturity requirements
- Peaches and Nectarines: Maturity requirements and size “D”.
- Table Grapes: Maturity requirements – minimum brix values for different varieties.
- Shallots: Definition of produce.
- Truffles, Ceps – review of new draft standards.
- Explore further the proposal to adopt OECD Brochures as official interpretations of UNECE Standards.
- Codification: Apply the code structure to a number of UNECE Standards.

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 17 to 20 June 2003 and chaired by Mr. David Holliday (United Kingdom).
2. The session was opened by the chief of the Trade Policy and Governmental Cooperation Branch of the UNECE Trade Development and Timber Division, Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, who welcomed the delegations to Geneva for their 49th session. During her presentation, she informed the meeting that the solution found by this Specialized Section and the Working Party on the mentioning of trade marks in lists of varieties had been welcomed by the International Trademark Association (INTA), who had also offered to assist with any further questions of this kind in the future.
3. She also invited the group to reflect on how the enlargement of the European Union might influence the work and how countries that will not enter the European Union in the near future could be assisted with implementation of standards so that they also can profit from the European integration process. She said that these discussions could also provide valuable input to the secretariat's cooperation with the other regional commissions of the United Nations.

Participation

4. The session was attended by delegations of the following countries: Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria, Canada; Côte d'Ivoire; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Israel; Morocco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Poland; Romania; Slovakia; South Africa; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and United States of America.
5. The European Community was also represented.
6. The following specialized agencies/programmes participated in the session: Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, World Health Organization.
7. A representative of the following intergovernmental organization participated in the session : The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.
8. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations participated in the session: CLAM (Comité de Liaison de l'Agrumiculture Méditerranéenne); COLEACP (Comité de Liaison - Europe - Afrique - Caraïbes - Pacifique - pour la promotion des fruits tropicaux, légumes de contre-saison, fleurs, plantes ornementales et épices); FRESHFEL, and EAN International.

Adoption of the agenda

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/1

9. The provisional agenda as contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/1 was adopted with the following changes:
10. Documents TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/5, 8,10 to17 and 20 to 23, were deleted from the agenda. Documents 2003/3, 5, 8, 10 and 12 were deleted because their contents had been included in 2003/6. Documents 2003/11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22 and 23 were deleted because they were not received. Agenda item 3 (h) on strawberries was deleted.
11. The following documents were added to the agenda:
 - TRADE/WP.7/2002/8 List of varieties for apples (Latvia)
 - TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2002/9 Kiwi fruit (New Zealand)
 - INF.1 Control certificate / UNECE layout key (Secretariat)
 - INF.2 List of varieties for apples (New Zealand)
 - INF.3 Table Grapes – maturity requirements (South Africa)
 - INF.4 Apples weight sizing (South Africa)
 - INF.5 Traceability update (CPMA/Canada)
 - INF.6 Citrus fruit comments (Israel)
 - INF.7 Apples weight sizing (New Zealand)
 - INF.8 Ceps (Finland)
 - INF.9 Avocados (COLEACP)
 - INF.10 Kiwi Fruit (France)
 - INF.11 List of varieties for apples (France)
 - (INF.12 was cancelled)
 - INF.13 Citrus/green oranges (Secretariat)
 - INF.14 Table grapes (South Africa)

- INF.15 Citrus Fruit (consolidated text) (Secretariat)
- INF.16 Possible amendments to the general texts (Secretariat)
- INF.17 Apples (consolidated text) (New Zealand)
- INF.18 Template for updating the list of varieties for Apples (Germany)

Item 2: Matters of interest arising since the last session

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/2

UNECE

12. Delegations were informed of the outcome of the 6th and 7th sessions of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and the 58th session of the Working Party. The Committee has at both sessions endorsed the work of the Working Party and several delegations had demanded that additional resources be attributed to the work. The Working Party had been invited by the Chairman of the Committee to make a well-founded proposal for increasing the resources to the Bureau of the Committee.

13. The Chairman welcomed this possibility and said that such a proposal should be carefully prepared by the Working Party.

14. At its last session the Working Party had adopted all but one proposals of the Specialized Section. The text proposed for Citrus Fruit was only adopted as a recommendation because several delegations felt that the wording for a number of provisions could be improved. It was stressed that the Working Party agreed with the principle of the consensus on sizing.

Codex Alimentarius Commission and Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

15. The delegation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme said the Codex Alimentarius Commission would meet from 30 June to 7 July 2003 in Rome. At that session several decisions concerning standards for fresh fruit and vegetables will be taken. The agenda and invitations for the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (Mexico City, 8 to 12 September) will be sent after the Commission meeting. The Codex Guidelines for Quality Control of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables are open for comments until 30 July 2003.

European Union

16. The delegation of the European Community reported that five community standards have been amended to align them with the relevant UNECE Standards: Sweet Peppers, Table Grapes, Citrus Fruit, Peaches and Nectarines and Inshell Walnuts. Rules for mixed packing of different fruits and vegetables in the same package were also adopted.

17. There are now nine non-EU countries for which the possibility of accreditation of quality controls in accordance with regulation 1148/2001 has been implemented: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Israel, Morocco, Slovakia, South Africa and Switzerland.

OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables

18. The delegation of OECD reported on the activities of the OECD Scheme. The interpretative brochures for the standards for plums, tomatoes and lettuces, curled-leaved endives and broad-leaved (batavian) endives have been published on paper and in electronic format. In preparation are brochures for citrus fruit, strawberries, kiwis, apples and pears, table grapes, cucumbers, beans and cultivated mushrooms.

19. The Plenary Meeting decided at its last session to revise the guide for quality control of exported fruit and vegetables to include, in particular, sampling methods for the quality control of nuts and the inner quality of fruit and criteria for defining inspection priorities. The document on facilitating information exchange between the national monitoring services of exporting and importing countries concerning the non-conformity of fruit and vegetables is also being revised in order to specify in detail the information it should include.

20. The Plenary Meeting is currently carrying out work on the inner quality of fruit. A discussion took place during the last session of the Plenary Meeting on the appropriateness of determining minimum and/or optimum levels of maturity of fruit and their inclusion in the standards and/or explanatory brochures. Many of the countries taking part in the Scheme indicated that it would be desirable to include such minimum levels in the text of the standards, and even to differentiate taste quality in the text with reference to already existing quality categories (categories Extra, I and II). Lastly, they suggested that the minimum levels to be achieved following the various objective criteria for determining maturity should be discussed product by product, when standards are drafted or revised, and thus only within the UNECE and not the OECD.

21. The Plenary Meeting therefore requested the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards to consider including these concerns in its programme of work. Discussions on methods for determining the maturity of fruit and on sampling methods for inner quality control, should, on the other hand, be held within the OECD only. Decisions on this allocation of responsibilities would testify to the good spirit of cooperation existing between OECD and UNECE and would be consistent with the objective of having work on the drafting of standards within UN/ECE and the interpretation and application of standards within OECD.

22. The 11th session of the heads of inspection services meeting took place from 3 to 5 September 2002 in the Netherlands, at the invitation of the Dutch authorities. The agenda contained items concerning traceability, new methods to determine the maturity of fruit and the joint organization of different types of control that fresh fruit and vegetables have to undergo.

23. Some technical visits also took place to enterprises in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector and participants also had the opportunity to visit the horticultural exhibition 'Floriade'.

24. The 61st session of the Plenary Meeting will take place from 20 to 24 October in Paris.

Item 3: Proposals to revise UNECE Standards

3(a) Apples

Documents: *TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.3 (standard)*
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/3 (New Zealand)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/4 (Secretariat)
INF.2 (New Zealand)
INF.4 (South Africa)
INF.7 (New Zealand)
INF.17 (New Zealand)
TRADE/WP.7/2002/8 (Latvia)

25. The delegation of New Zealand presented the results of the working group meeting where the issues contained in the documents above had been discussed and a consolidated proposal (INF.17) had been prepared containing several changes to be recommended for adoption as a revised UNECE standard and others recommended to be adopted as a UNECE recommendation for a two-year trial period. The following issues were discussed:

- minimum weight, tolerances
- maturity requirements
- amendments to the list of varieties and how to manage amendments in the future.

26. Concerning maturity requirements, more research is necessary and the members of the working group and any other interested party were invited to provide information to the delegation of New Zealand who will prepare a consolidated document for the next session. The delegation of New Zealand will also prepare a discussion paper for next year on the question of whether or not size tolerances for weight sizing should be expressed in percentage or in grammes.

27. The Specialized Section agreed to the amendments proposed by the working group, with some minor changes. The text recommended for adoption as a UNECE Recommendation for a two-year trial period is included in addendum 1 to this report. The text recommended for adoption as a revised UNECE Standard is also included there.

28. The delegation of Belgium stated that they were prepared to accept minimum weights in the standard if those weights ensured that the minimum diameter was complied with as well.

List of varieties

29. The delegation of Germany presented the results of the discussions on the list of varieties:

- The variety Annaglo was moved from Braeburn mutants to Gala mutants.
- The colour group for Cripps Red was changed to "C" with a footnote as follows:
"With a minimum of one-fifth of the surface area striped with red colour in Class I and Class II."
- The synonym GS48 was added for the variety Sciray.
- Red Chief (colour group A and large fruited) was added under the mutants for Red Delicious following a proposal from Russian importers.
- The variety Dalinbel (no russeting, not large, colour group B) was added following a proposal from France.

30. They said that the varieties proposed by Latvia could not yet be included as the information needed (colour group, size group, russeting) was missing while other detailed information about the varieties was included.

31. They suggested to create a template for the information required from applicants, which should contain:

- Name of the variety;
- Synonyms (if any)
- Trade names (if any)
- Parents
- Breeder
- Size group (L or other)
- Colour group (A, B or C)
- Russeting variety or not.
- Economic importance, international trade volume

32. A draft template was prepared by the Working Group (see addendum 2 to this report). The Specialized Section agreed that the template should be tested by sending it to Latvia for their varieties. The final version of

the template will be agreed at the next session and will then be available on the Internet site of the UNECE. Templates for the other standards containing lists of varieties will also be developed.

33. The delegation of Belgium said that mutants that had the status of a variety should be listed independently. It was clarified that this had been discussed before and that the current solution had been chosen for practical reasons.

Comments from Russian producers/ importers

34. The working group discussed the comments contained in 2003/4 and felt that most of them related to the interpretation of the standard and could be clarified through an OECD interpretative brochure. Others might also be related to translation problems.

(b) Artichokes

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)

35. The standard in force was last revised in 1996. In their document the European Community proposed to define the names “Boivrade” and “Bouquet” in the standard. They also proposed to exempt the variety “Spinoso” from the requirement that the stem be cut to be no longer than 10cm and to require this variety to be marked.

36. The Specialized Section agreed to the amendments and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them and to revise the UNECE Standard for Artichokes accordingly. The amendments are contained in addendum 3 to this report.

(c) Courgettes

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)

37. The standard was last revised in 2000 to introduce provisions concerning miniature produce. The main changes proposed by the European Community include the introduction of a maximum size (as a consequence the deletion of a footnote excluding overly developed courgettes), the introduction of an Extra Class and provisions for courgettes sold with the flower.

38. They proposed to split the minimum requirements into those applicable to courgettes and flowers and those only applicable to the courgettes. There was some discussion on the question if the requirement “intact” was not too difficult to reach for the flowers. It was decided to leave the requirement because courgettes sold with the flower are a high price product and also some tolerance was possible for Class II.

39. Following a proposal from Morocco, footnote 2 concerning miniature products was amended to reflect the fact that there are some varieties that can produce normal sized fruit but also miniature fruit (if harvested earlier), which still fulfils all other quality requirements of the standard. The words “*excluding specimens of non-miniature varieties which have not fully developed or are of inadequate size*” were deleted in footnote 2.

40. The Specialized Section agreed the amendments with some minor word changes and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them and to revise the UNECE Standard for Courgettes accordingly. The proposed revised standard is contained in Addendum 4 to this report.

(d) Kiwi fruit

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/7 (New Zealand)
INF.10 (France)

41. The delegation of New Zealand introduced their document and recalled the history of the proposal and the discussions held at the last meeting (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/20, paras. 52 to 57). Notably it had been proposed to modify the maturity requirements for the Hayward variety from a brix value of 6.2% to a dry matter content that could be measured at any point of the supply chain and an appropriate level would ensure an acceptable eating quality. They said that the brix level of 6.2% at harvest had been introduced years back in order to ensure storability and not eating quality and had never been intended to remain in the international standard.

42. Because of comments made at the last session that the equipment for measuring dry matter content might be too costly, they proposed a method of testing maturity at the retail stage consisting of a brix test and a firmness test. They said they were aware of the fact that introduction of criteria at retail level posed questions concerning the applicability of UNECE Standards, which is at the moment at the export-control stage.

43. The secretariat said that introducing such criteria would in effect make a change to the standard layout and the Geneva protocol necessary but that this was possible if there was agreement in the Working Party to do so.

44. The delegation of Canada said that introducing such a change might lead to problems in some countries where the responsibility for retail and import are in different agencies.

45. The delegation of France said that testing at the retail stage did not prevent the problem of fruit harvested too early.

46. The delegation of Belgium said that there are two types of customer, those who prefer ready-to-eat sweeter and softer fruit and those preferring to buy firmer, less sweet fruit with a longer keeping quality.

47. The delegation of Sweden said that introducing maturity requirements for climacteric fruit at retail level was a problem. If the indicators measured were too low this could either be because the fruit had been harvested too early (and would never reach an acceptable eating quality) or because it had been marketed early (and would reach maturity and good eating quality). They said that more important for the purposes of this standard was the correct harvesting time.

48. Several delegations agreed that the issue of requirements for ready-to-eat and not-ready-to-eat fruit might be interesting but that it was important that the fruit at import had the necessary maturity to develop. It was also said that after import, it was the responsibility of the retailer to market the fruit at the right time according to the wishes of the customer.

49. The Chairman summed up the discussion so far and said that it seemed to be difficult to make progress on the issue while relying solely on the industry within the International Kiwifruit Organization (IKO) to make progress in finding a consensus. He said that an active UNECE working group seemed necessary to assist the industry in finding a solution. The existing working group (New Zealand, United States, France, Chile, Italy) should thus be reactivated. He said that at the last session there had been many improvements to the standard proposed by New Zealand in document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2002/9, which were not related to the maturity issue. He suggested that in order to make progress the Specialized Section should review this document to decide if anything could be adopted at present.

50. The working group on kiwi fruit reported their discussions on the document presented by New Zealand last year (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2002/9). They felt that it would be useful to adopt the proposals that were not related to maturity.

51. There was some discussion on the inclusion of a min/max diameter ratio proposed to be included in the definitions of the quality classes. This definition was already included in the OECD brochure and it was felt that it was more transparent to also include it in the standard. Following a question from Sweden, who said that they would find it difficult to exclude or downgrade fruit because of this parameter, it was clarified that the parameter had an influence on the eating quality as too flat a fruit had less of the tasty green flesh. In the end it was decided to include this parameter only in Extra Class and Class I but not in Class II.

52. The Specialized Section did not adopt the proposal to make the marking of the variety mandatory, as this was related to the introduction of different maturity requirements for different varieties, which was not yet finalized. For the same reasons, the list of varieties contained in the document was also not adopted.

53. There was some discussion on how to deal with the maturity requirements in the updated standard, but as before no consensus was reached. In the absence of a better solution it was decided to leave this text unchanged for the time being.

54. To make progress on this issue the working group will try to schedule a joint meeting with IKO and the UNECE Secretariat will write a letter to IKO outlining the importance of making progress on maturity requirements.

55. The Specialized Section agreed to proposals in 2002/9 as amended, and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them and to revise the UNECE Standard for Kiwi fruit accordingly. The proposed text of the standard is contained in addendum 5 to this report.

(e) Onions

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)

56. The standard was last revised 2001. In their document, the European Community proposed to include as had been done in the standard for sweet peppers, the possibility of mixed packing of different types and colours of onions.

57. The Specialized Section agreed the amendments and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them and to revise the UNECE Standard for Onions accordingly. The amendments are contained in addendum 3 to this report.

(f) Peaches and Nectarines

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)

58. In their document the European Community proposed to include a general phrase on maturity in the standard, which is contained in many standards and had been omitted here.

59. The Specialized Section agreed the amendment and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them and to revise the UNECE Standard for Peaches and Nectarines accordingly. The amendment is contained in addendum 3 to this report.

60. It was regretted by several delegations that no progress had been made on the use of size “D” and maturity requirements. The delegation of France said that work was being done in France on the definition of maturity requirements and that they would report on these at the next session. It was decided to discontinue the working group until that time.

(g) Pears

Documents: *TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.4 (standard)*
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/4 (Secretariat)

61. In their document the European Community proposed to amend the definition of scab by including also *Venturia pirina*. They also proposed an amendment clarifying the surface area for defects allowed in the definition of Class II and a clarification to the uniformity requirements.

62. The Specialized Section agreed the amendments and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them and to revise the UNECE Standard for Pears accordingly. The amendments are contained in Addendum 3 to this report.

63. The Specialized Section reviewed the comments made by Russian importers. Some of the comments related to the interpretation of the standards (which could be clarified through training and explanatory brochures) and others to translation issues to be resolved by the UNECE secretariat.

Item 4: Review of UNECE Recommendations

(a) Avocados

Documents: *TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.11 (standard/recommendation)*
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)
INF.9 (COLEACP)

64. In their document, the European Community proposed to include Antillean varieties in the standard but to exclude them from the maturity criteria for dry matter content.

65. The Specialized Section agreed to the new amendments and recommended to the Working Party to adopt them together with the other amendments contained in the recommendation and to revise the UNECE Standard for Avocados accordingly. The proposed revised standard is contained in addendum 6 to this report.

(b) Citrus fruit

Documents: *TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.5 (Recommendation)*
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2002/20/Add.5 (Proposal to the Working Party (2002))
INF.6 (Israel)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/4 (Secretariat)
INF.13, INF.15 (Secretariat)

Background

66. The Working Party at its last session decided not to adopt the text proposed by the Specialized Section as a revised UNECE Standard because of comments from Greece and Israel. It was agreed to adopt the text as a UNECE recommendation for a one-year trial period, which will end in November 2003. It was decided that

to improve the text it should be discussed again in the Specialized Section while maintaining the principle of the compromise concerning sizing.

67. The Specialized Section discussed the standard on the basis of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2002/20/Add.5, where the secretariat had included further proposals for harmonization with the Codex standard.

Minimum requirements

68. It was agreed to align the paragraph on degreening with the Codex text.

Maturity requirements/ green oranges

69. The delegation of CLAM recalled that the revision of the standard had been continuing for several years. They said that the original problem of how to deal with oranges that were ripe but had remained green because of their growing conditions had resulted in long discussions about maturity requirements because the abandoning of the orange colour as maturity indicator would make the inclusion of new, objective maturity indicators necessary, to avoid immature fruit on the market and to guarantee good quality for the consumer.

70. They said that for the purpose of establishing such requirements a comprehensive research project had been started by the Spanish citrus industry on the relationship of sensory acceptance for citrus fruit and objective parameters. The present results of the study showed that while simple parameters such as sugar content and acid content played a role in the acceptance it seemed that the sugar/acid ratio was not a reliable indicator of good taste in oranges. They said that it appeared that the relationship between taste and objective criteria was more complicated and that the present results of the study did not allow them to propose the inclusion of reliable maturity indicators. The report of this project is contained in addendum 7 to this report.

71. The delegation of Israel said that they still considered the sugar/acid ratio as an important maturity requirement, which should be included in the standard. They said that they would therefore maintain their reservations for the time being.

72. The delegation of CLAM said that the citrus industry had understood during previous meetings at UNECE and in the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables that in a number of European countries green oranges were traded even though not included in the standard at present, which was also reflected in the number of reservations at this point to the standard.

73. They said that, in order to make progress on this issue, after long and difficult discussions the industry was prepared to accept a compromise solution. They proposed that the following text, which was in line with the Codex text, should be included in the standard under maturity requirements for oranges:

“Oranges produced in areas with high temperatures and high relative humidity conditions during the developing period having a light green colour exceeding one-fifth of the total surface area of the fruit are allowed provided they satisfy the maturity requirement of a minimum juice content of 45%

74. The Specialized Section welcomed the proposal from CLAM as a very important step forward.

75. The delegations of Germany and the Netherlands stated that they were prepared to agree to the text but felt that it could be simplified. In their opinion the reference to the climatic growing conditions should be deleted since light green oranges that have a juice content of at least 45% should be acceptable regardless of their growing conditions.

76. The delegation of Slovakia suggested calling these orange “juice oranges”. They said that in their country they had some experience with these types of oranges, which had been used for juice production as the consistence of their flesh made it difficult to consume them directly. They also suggested that the OECD Scheme could look into the possibility of preparing a visual aid for colouring of citrus fruit to facilitate quality inspection.

77. The Specialized Section agreed to recommend the text proposed by CLAM to the Working Party for adoption as a UNECE recommendation for one year. The reservation concerning green oranges contained in the present standard was withdrawn from the proposed recommendation.

78. The delegation of CLAM thanked all delegations as well as the Chairman and the secretariat for their cooperation in this matter.

Sizing

79. The delegation of Israel said that the new wording concerning sizing was confusing. They said that within the chapter for sizing, the sentence beginning with “Citrus fruit may be packed by count....” did not seem to have any value as packing citrus fruit by count and in accordance to the size scales was common practice.

80. Several delegations and the secretariat clarified that the sentence had been included as a compromise after long discussions at UNECE and Codex meetings in order to allow a different method of sizing, which is based on packing citrus fruit by count into a standard size container. This method is used in the United States, for example.

81. It was recognized that the present text might not be perfect and could be improved in the future but that it was an important compromise because it integrated all methods currently used in the standard. The Specialized Section assured the delegation of Israel that the change would not have any implications on the way citrus fruit are sized at present in Israel.

82. The delegation of Israel said that with these clarifications they could accept the text.

83. The minimum size for pummelos was aligned with the Codex text (100mm). New size codes 0 for grapefruit and pummelos were included in the standard to align it with the Codex text. Some further minor amendments and corrections were made to the text.

Conclusion

84. The Specialized Section agreed to recommend the amended text to the Working Party for adoption as a UNECE Standard with the exception of the new text concerning green oranges, which is recommended for adoption as a UNECE Recommendation for a one-year trial period. The text is contained in addendum 8 to this report.

85. A UNECE working group on Citrus Fruit was formed (Israel, South Africa, Germany United Kingdom, Spain, Turkey and the European Community). The group will further discuss maturity requirements and the simplification of the sizing provisions.

4(b) Plums

Document: *TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.8 (recommendation/standard)*

86. The text concerning inter-specific hybrids will end its trial period in November 2003. No further information from Chile was received on the correct varietal names for the hybrids as well as the names for the hybrids themselves, which were also trademarks.

87. The delegation of the European Community felt that it was necessary to receive this information before recommending adopting the text as a UNECE standard.

88. The secretariat reported on about a meeting with representatives of INTA, which was formed by industry to protect trademark holders rights. This organization had been pivotal in finding a solution on the trademark issue for table grapes and had offered to assist UNECE in any further questions of this nature. The secretariat has already transmitted the text of the plums recommendation to INTA and is awaiting comments.

89. It was decided to propose to the Working Party to extend the trial period for this recommendation for one further year.

90. The Chairman asked if the group was interested in looking into maturity requirements in the future to explain the phrase “display satisfactory ripeness” through objective criteria. The delegation of Sweden asked if there was a problem with immature plums being marketed motivating this kind of work. The delegation of South Africa said that there were problems with overly mature fruit. The delegation of the European Community said that they were interested in this topic and might come back to it at a later stage.

4(c) Table Grapes

Documents: *TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.9 (recommendation/standard)*

INF.3/ 14 (South Africa)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/4 (Secretariat)

91. The Specialized Section decided to recommend to the Working Party to adopt the text of the current recommendation including maturity requirements and late harvest varieties as a revised UNECE Standard. The text will be published as an addendum to the report of the Working Party.

92. The delegation of Israel said that the maturity requirements should be included under a separate heading under II (b) according to the standard layout. This section should also contain a clear definition of what parameters for maturity should apply.

93. A number of small-berried varieties were added to the exhaustive list of small berried varieties: [Black Seedless,] Centennial Seedless, Crimson Seedless, Dawn Seedless, Eclipse Seedless, Muscat Seedless, Muska, Pirobella, Sharat Seedless (Kishmi Chorni), Thompson Seedless and Mutations, Sundance and Sunred Seedless.

94. The secretariat will include the changes in the text that is recommended to the Working Party.

95. The delegation of South Africa had prepared a list (based on contributions from different countries) where maturity requirements were listed according to the variety.

96. It was felt that this was a valuable list but that further drafting work was necessary before it could be adopted. Delegations were invited to provide the relevant information to South Africa by the end of July 2003, after which a new document will be drafted and circulated, which delegates could discuss with their local industry.

97. The delegation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme said that a drafting group led by Chile was working on maturity requirements for table grapes under the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (CCFFV) and that information should also be provided to them so that the texts could be harmonized and progress could be made at the 11th session of the CCFFV in September 2003, which might facilitate discussions at the next Specialized Section in May 2004.

98. The Specialized Section felt that the questions from Russian importers were related to the interpretation of the standard and could be clarified through the interpretative brochure. The variety Black Seedless will be included in the list after verification of whether or not it is a small-berried variety.

(d) Pineapples

Document: TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.8 (recommendation)

99. The Specialized Section decided to recommend to the Working Party to adopt the text as a new UNECE Standard. At present there is no intention to discuss maturity requirements for pineapples. A number of editorial corrections will be made to the text to align it with the standard layout. The text will be published as an addendum to the report of the Working Party.

Item 5: Proposals for new UNECE Standards

(a) Draft UNECE Standard for Shallots

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/18 (France)

100. The delegation of France said that good progress had been made on the draft text but that no consensus had been found concerning the definition of produce. They felt that some more sessions of the working group were necessary to achieve this. The working group will present a new proposal at the next session.

(b) Proposal for a new UNECE Standard for Truffles

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/19 (France)

101. The delegation of France proposed to create a new UNECE Standard for truffles. A representative of the European association of truffle growers (members: Spain, Italy and France and from next year onwards Hungary) gave an introduction to the produce, the volume of the international market and the reasons for wishing to create an international standard.

102. Truffles are a high-priced mushroom. Between 100 tonnes and 450 tonnes are harvested in Europe yearly and around 180 tonnes move in trade (including EC internal) representing a value of around 25 million Euros. This commodity (prices reach up to several hundred Euros per kilogram) is to a large extent grown in the wild. There are a growing number of plantations, which will increase the volume of truffles marketed in the future. Truffles are grown in different parts of the world and, notably truffles from China have arrived on European markets. The producers wish to create an international standard in order to make the marketing of truffles more transparent and avoid the possibility of fraud.

103. The delegation of Sweden said that they did not at all agree with creating a standard for truffles for the following reasons:

- Truffles are wild products, which are not usually standardized because of the limited influence that a grower has on the quality.

- This issue has suddenly become important because Chinese varieties have appeared on the market, which had not been included in the draft text. Standards should not be used as technical barriers to trade.
- The prescription of marketing dates seems to be a technical barrier to trade.
- The low volume of international trade in this commodity does not justify an international standard.

104. They said that even though they were opposed to creating a UNECE Standard for Truffles they would not block this if all other countries agreed.

105. The delegation of the European Commission said that they found it interesting to create a UNECE Standard for Truffles, which was the only decision to be taken at present. They said that they shared some of the concerns expressed by Sweden but felt that it was the task of the Specialized Section to make sure that no technical barriers to trade were created.

106. The delegation of Germany mentioned a list of problems in the current version of the draft standard and said that some work would have to be done to align it to the standard layout. They said that the standard should be a technical trade description and not create protections for certain producers. If these problems of the draft text could be resolved they would not oppose the creation of a standard for truffles.

107. The delegation of Spain supported the creation of a UNECE Standard for Truffles to put some order into the truffles market. They agreed that the text could be improved.

108. It was agreed that a working group (France, Spain and European Commission) would prepare on a revised draft text. The secretariat will transmit to the Working Party the recommendation of the Specialized Section to create a new UNECE Standard for Truffles.

(c) *Proposal for a new UNECE Standard for Ceps*

Document: INF.8 (Ceps)

109. The delegation of Finland proposed to create a new UNECE Standard for Ceps. This was supported by the delegation of France who said that there was a growing volume of import for this commodity and also a growing number of cases of fraud. They felt that an international standard could be used to develop the market and ensure fair competition.

110. The Specialized Section agreed to recommend to the Working Party, to create a UNECE Standard for Ceps. A working group (Finland, France, Slovakia, Bulgaria) was formed to prepare a proposal for the next session.

Item 6: Amendments to the general texts

TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.12 (existing standard layout)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/6 (European Community)

INF.16 (Secretariat)

TRADE/WP.7/2001/6 (Secretariat)

(a) *Point of application of UNECE Standards*

111. The secretariat introduced the proposal. At the moment the Geneva Protocol and the Standard Layout mention the export control stage as the point of application. The secretariat proposed to delete this requirement from the standard layout to allow for more flexibility for the application and also for defining certain maturity requirements (e.g. ready-to-eat products).

112. A number of delegations agreed to this proposal as the standards were already applied at different stages of marketing by some countries. Sweden expressed concern about this change as products deteriorate and determining the responsibility for non-conformity might cause problems. It was, therefore, felt that if this requirement was deleted some phrase allowing for a certain loss of freshness in later stages of marketing was necessary.

113. Delegations were invited to send comments to the secretariat that will prepare a proposal for the next session.

(b) *Title of the standards*

114. The secretariat introduced the proposal. At the moment each UNECE Standard includes in the title the phrase: "moving in international trade between and to UNECE member countries". The secretariat proposed to delete this phrase to allow for more flexibility. Countries should also be able to use the standard in national trade. Non-member States of UNECE should also have the right to apply the standards in any way they wish.

115. The delegation of Switzerland said that in this case the document on acceptances should be modified to take account of the fact that countries can notify that they apply the standard nationally.

116. The Specialized Section agreed in principle to the proposal and asked the secretariat to prepare an official document for the next session, taking into consideration the comment made by Switzerland. The proposal should also be discussed in the other specialized sections.

(c) *Consumer/sales packages*

117. At present different terms are used in the standards for consumer packages. The secretariat suggests harmonizing the use of this text by including one of the terms into the standard layout. Comments from delegations were invited. The secretariat will make a proposal at the next session.

(d) *Removal of stickers from fruit*

118. The European Community proposed to include a phrase in the standard layout demanding that any stickers that are put on fruit or vegetables can be removed without injuring the fruit. The proposal was agreed and will be forwarded to the Working Party for adoption. The text is reproduced in addendum 3 to this report.

(e) *Revision of the working procedures*

119. The revised working procedures had been adopted at the last session of the Working Party. The secretariat reported that the verification of the text in cooperation with the legal services and the office of the Executive Secretary of UNECE had led to reformatting and some points still needed to be clarified. A new proposal will be circulated among the members of the working group on working procedures and can hopefully be discussed in the Working Party.

(f) *Compatibility of the control certificate and the UNECE layout key for trade documents*

Document: INF.1 (Secretariat)

120. This issue will be discussed at the next session.

Item 7: Working group on internationally harmonized produce coding

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/24 (Secretariat)

121. The delegation of EAN International congratulated the working group, which had proved in its last session that the coding of the information contained in the standards was possible and thus prepared the standards for the electronic age. This code could be used in the EAN/UCC system, which already provides an application identifier for the UNECE codes for meat.

122. The delegation of Sweden said that anything prepared by the Specialized Section should be usable independently of any specific commercial provider.

123. The delegation of EAN clarified that EAN International was a non-profit organization.

124. Several delegations stated that they were still not sure about the objectives of the work of this group and requested the secretariat to distribute consolidated information on the work achieved and further objectives (see addendum 9 to this report.).

125. The delegation of EAN International suggested that the working group should now apply the code developed at the last session to a larger number of standards. On the basis of the work already done, EAN International would prepare for the next session a comprehensive presentation of the status of international codification activities and their use in trade.

126. The delegation of Canada reported that the Canadian Produce Marketing Association would hold a conference (Calgary, 7-8 February 2004) informing the industry of the development of produce codes.

127. The delegation of the United States, also speaking for the Produce Marketing Association and the International Federation for Produce Coding, said that they were very interested in cooperating with Governments and international organizations on this.

Item 8: UNECE Quality Standards and Organic Produce

128. The topic was discussed at the last session of the Working Party. The secretariat reported that due to a lack of time no progress had been made on this matter. It is still planned to send out a call to all participants of the Specialized Section to find out if and where the UNECE standards resulted in problems for organic produce and to contact other organizations who might give input on this question such as the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), as well as consumer organizations.

129. For the time being, the Specialized Section decided to take this issue into account when working on individual standards.

Item 9: Cooperation with the OECD Scheme

130. The secretariat said that the explanatory brochures created by the OECD Scheme and based on the UNECE standards, are important for the harmonized application of the standards. The questions and comments received by the secretariat from users of the standards (e.g. Russia, Ukraine) show that the availability of an official international interpretation of the standards is considered very important, especially in countries that do not regularly participate in the work.

131. The secretariat proposed to consider if OECD brochures could be adopted as official interpretations of UNECE Standards as the practice of adopting OECD texts was already established (e.g. exchange of information on non-conformity cases). This adoption would allow creating an official Russian version, which could either be distributed through the UN publication services or the OECD services.

132. The delegation of Germany said that this proposal was well in line with the approach that the OECD Scheme took towards facilitating the creation of unofficial versions of brochures in other languages. They said that it would have to be worked out how to show that brochure had also been adopted by UNECE.

133. The Specialized Section agreed that this proposal should be further explored.

Item 10: Publications

(a) Compendium of standards

134. The Specialized Section did not feel that it was necessary to create and publish a compendium of standards on paper. This would result in too much work for the secretariat and would also quickly be out of date. It was felt that the present solution of publishing the standards on the Internet was both useful and adequate.

(b) Promotional booklet on the work and achievements of the Working Party

135. The Specialized Section welcomed the idea of creating a promotional booklet on the work of the Working Party and also suggested that the secretariat prepare a new edition of postcards with pictures of fruit and vegetables. All delegations were invited to provide photographs to the secretariat.

Item 11: Follow-up concerning items discussed at earlier sessions

(a) *Exchange of information on non-conformity cases*

Document: TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.21 (*Questionnaire*)

136. UNECE and OECD will work together on the of authorities for the exchange of this information as OECD already had an established list of members of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables which can serve as a basis and is available on the homepage of the Scheme (<http://www.oecd.org>).

(b) *List of countries accepting/not accepting code marks*

Document: TRADE/WP.7/2000/11/Add.22 (*questionnaire*)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/25 (Secretariat)

137. The secretariat has compiled the answers to the questionnaire in document 2003/25 concerning countries that accept or do not accept code marks instead of addresses. Very few answers were received.

138. The delegation of Germany said that more countries were now starting to use codes and that there should be some harmonization in the codes used, for example that each code should start with the ISO country code.

139. It was decided to:

- Examine the current practice in different countries (the secretariat will send out a new questionnaire)

- To discuss the issue in the working group on harmonized produce coding, keeping in mind that there should be no duplication of the work of other organizations (e.g. the World Customs Organization)

Item 12: Application of UNECE Standards

140. Delegations were reminded to check the information on the Internet for accuracy and to send any corrections to the secretariat.

Item 13: Workshops, seminars, training courses and other activities concerning capacity building for the application of quality standards

141. The delegation of Slovakia reported that the annual Slovak international training course (officially sponsored by the OECD Scheme) would be held in Mojmirovce from 21 to 25 September 2003. The programme will consist of training on individual standards (Table Grapes, Plums, Beans, Witloof Chicory, Watermelons), presentations on items of general interest (e.g. risk assessment) and technical visits.

142. The delegation of the United Kingdom informed the meeting that the next Guildford Harmonization Meeting would be held in June 2004.

Item 14: Other business

(a) Work on early and ware potatoes

143. The last session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes (GE.5) had decided that, in the future, discussions on this topic should be held in the framework of another Specialized Section to save administrative effort and travel money for delegations as well as to be able to discuss topics on early potatoes yearly, without having to meet as a separate group.

144. Two options were discussed: To join the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6) or the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables GE.1. The experts left it up to the Working Party to take this decision after consulting with GE.1 and GE.6 and other participants to UNECE meetings on agricultural quality standards.

145. A number of delegations said that issues on early and ware potatoes should be discussed in GE.1 because the standards followed the same layout and a large number of delegates were also responsible for fresh fruit and vegetables.

146. The Specialized Section agreed to recommend to the Working Party that issues related to early and ware potatoes be discussed in GE.1.

(b) Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health

147. The representative of WHO, Dr. Anna Ferro-Luzzi informed the Specialized Section of emerging disease patterns in the world, the reasons why WHO moved into action, what has been done and what will be done. The full presentation and further information about the status of the development of the strategy can be obtained from WHO directly (ferroluzzia@who.int).

148. World health is in rapid transition. Non-communicable diseases (NCD) (e.g. diabetes, cancer, heart disease etc.) are overcoming communicable diseases (CD) as a source of illness and mortality. They have already done so in developed countries and are rapidly doing so in developing countries, which leads to a double burden for these countries where parts of the population still do not have enough food. Factors influencing this trend include: rapidly changing diets, reduced physical activity, population ageing and increasing global influences.

149. Research has shown that the trend could be reversed through a change in behaviour. A fruit and vegetable intake of 400g per day has been identified as one factor to achieve this because fruit and vegetables are nutrient dense but low in energy, low in fat, but high in fibre, a good source of vitamins and minerals and replacement of high-energy food items in diet. This intake of fruit and vegetables is achieved only in few countries at present, which is why the promotion of the consumption of fruit and vegetables will be one part of the global strategy.

150. Challenges to this promotion are:

- Increased horticultural production
- Adaptation of post-harvest technologies
- Longer storage and transport routes
- Refrigeration
- Varietal composition and risk of loss of traditional crop varieties
- Distribution systems
- Marketing infrastructure.

151. A further challenge is that the promotion should be done in harmony with the new paradigm of fruit and vegetable production:

- Favour local, environmentally sound production whenever possible
- Contribute to sustainable development
- Be economically viable
- Be nutritionally sound.

152. After discussion it was agreed that the Specialized Section could support the global strategy through:

- Work on improving the internal quality of fruit and vegetables
- Ensuring that the consumer gets relevant information (through labeling of varieties or regrouping of varieties or commercial types)

153. The Specialized Section thanked Dr. Ferro-Luzzi for attending the meeting and her very interesting presentation. The UNECE and WHO will remain in contact on this matter and the Specialized Section and the Working Party will be informed about any further developments.

Item 15: Future work and meetings

(a) Date and place of the next session

154. The next session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively planned to take place from 10 to 14 May 2004 in Geneva. Working groups will have the opportunity to meet on 9 May.

(b) Future work

155. A draft agenda containing the future work for the Specialized Section is reproduced in the annex to this report.

(c) Preparation of the 59th session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

156. The following proposals/texts will be transmitted to the Working Party for adoption/discussion:
- UNECE Standard/Recommendation (two-year trial) for Apples (see Addendum 1).
 - Amendments to the UNECE standards for Artichokes, Onions, Peaches and Nectarines, Pears and the Standard layout (see Addendum 3).
 - Revised UNECE Standard for Courgettes (see Addendum 4).
 - Revised UNECE Standard for Kiwi fruit (see Addendum 5).
 - Revised UNECE Standard for Avocados (see Addendum 6).
 - Revised UNECE Standard/Recommendation for Citrus Fruit (see Addendum 8).
 - To extend the trial period for the recommendation plums for one further year.
 - To create new UNECE Standards for Truffles and Ceps.
 - To give the authority to change entries in lists of varieties of standards to the Specialized Section.
 - To give the authority to begin work on a draft standard to the Specialized Section.
 - To adopt the present recommendations for Table Grapes and Pineapples as UNECE Standards.
 - To include a provision on removability of stickers put on fruit in the standard layout.
 - To harmonize the use of the term “consumer package” in the standards.
 - To discuss issues related to early and ware potatoes in GE.1.

Item 16: Election of officers

157. The Specialized Section re-elected Mr. D. Holliday (United Kingdom) as Chair and Ms. U. Bickelmann (Germany) as its Vice-Chair.

Item 17: Adoption of the report

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

List of addenda published separately

Symbol	Title
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.1	UNECE Standard/Recommendation for Apples
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.2	Template for apple varieties
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.3	UNECE Standards for Artichokes, Onions, Peaches and Nectarines, Pears, Standard Layout
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.4	UNECE Standard for Courgettes
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.5	UNECE Standard for Kiwi fruit
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.6	UNECE Standard for Avocados
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.7	Relationship of sensory acceptance for citrus fruit and objective parameters
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.8	UNECE Standard/Recommendation for Citrus Fruit
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/26/Add.9	Work of the working group on harmonized produce coding