

# codex alimentarius commission

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
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**Agenda Item 2(b)**

**CX/FFV 09/15/3**  
September 2009

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

#### **Fifteenth Session**

**Mexico City, Mexico, 19 – 23 October 2009**

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

This document is divided into two parts: Part I refers to the UNECE work in the field of standardization of fresh fruits and vegetables and Part II to the activities of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruits and Vegetables. Matters related to concentrating agricultural quality standards work from the OECD into the UNECE are presented separately in the Annex.

## **PART I: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)**

### **Activities of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards since the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**

#### **Work on standards**

1. The Working Party's Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables met twice since the last session of the CCFFV. At its fifty-fourth session, held from 26 to 30 May 2008, the Specialized Section revised the text of the Standard Layout and recommended that the Working Party adopt it as a new Standard Layout. It submitted to the Working Party the amended texts on early and ware potatoes, apples, pears, lettuce, avocados, tomatoes and cucumbers for approval as revised UNECE standards. It also recommended that the Working Party adopt the revised texts on peaches and nectarines, and apricots as recommendations for trial use until the end of 2009.
2. At its fifty-fifth session, held from 4 to 8 May 2009, the Specialized Section revised again the text of the Standard Layout and recommended that the Working Party adopt it as a new Standard Layout, and decided to partially align the old standards with the revised Standard Layout. It also submitted to the Working Party the amended texts on apples, avocados, citrus fruit, sweet peppers, pears and apricots for approval as revised UNECE standards, and recommended that the Working Party adopt the text on chanterelles as a new UNECE standard
3. The Working Party held its sixty-fourth session from 3 to 6 November 2008. It adopted a revised standard layout for fresh fruit and vegetables and new/revised standards for early and ware potatoes, apples, pears, lettuce, avocados, tomatoes and cucumbers. It also adopted revised texts on apricots, peaches and nectarines as recommendations on trial through 2009.
4. Texts of standards as well as documents with the revisions introduced by the delegations can be found at: [www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm)

#### **Explanatory brochures**

5. The Specialized Section has finalized the first UNECE explanatory brochure on the standard for sweet peppers. Its publication is planned for the end of 2009.

#### **Promotion of standards and capacity-building**

6. UNECE held two regional workshops to promote its standards for fresh fruit and vegetables: (1) International Workshop on Commercial Quality Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables for Countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Africa (Nairobi, 21 - 24 April 2009), and (2) Regional Workshop on Agricultural Quality Standards and the Use of Standards in Technical Regulations (Osh, Kyrgyzstan, 14-17 July 2009). Reports and recommendations of these workshops are available at [www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm) under "Promotion/Capacity-building".
7. UNECE would be interested in holding a joint workshop with Codex, back-to-back with the 2011 session of the CCFFV.
8. At the November 2008 session of the Working Party, the delegations discussed the new draft cover page for UNECE standards suggested by the secretariat. To stress the global character of these standards and bearing in mind that any member of the United Nations can participate, on equal footing, in the activities of WP.7 and its specialized sections, the Working Party decided to remove "United Nations Economic Commission for Europe" from the upper part of the cover page. The words "United Nations" and the emblem in the bottom part of the cover would reflect the global nature of the standards. The Working Party asked the secretariat to publish all new and revised standards under the revised cover page.

## Part I

9. At the May 2009 session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, the representative of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme expressed concern about the removal of “UNECE” from the titles of standards published since November 2008 and questioned if any decision had been made to change the legal status and official titles of standards, from UNECE standards to United Nations standards. He further noted that there was no record of a decision to remove the reference to UNECE in the titles of standards, while the decision had been made to remove “United Nations Economic Commission for Europe” from the upper part of the cover page of standards at the sixty-fourth session of the Working Party. He expressed the concern that the elaboration of worldwide standards might go beyond the mandate of UNECE.

10. The secretariat explained that the Working Party’s decision to remove “UNECE” from the cover pages of the standards was prompted by: (a) the specialized sections who did not want to give the impression that the standards that they develop were meant to be used within the UNECE region only; and (b) the suggested transfer of work of the OECD Scheme, some countries of which are not UNECE member States, to UNECE. The revised Terms of Reference of the Working Party, approved by the Committee on Trade and the Executive Committee of UNECE in 2008, gave equal participation rights to all member countries of the United Nations.

11. It was further explained that the standards developed at UNECE, like those developed at Codex Alimentarius, are only recommendations and cannot be imposed on countries. Countries themselves decide what standards to use at the national or regional level. Many non-UNECE member countries were participating actively in the UNECE work on standards and explanatory material. In view of the global trade in fresh fruit and vegetables and bearing in mind the economic weight of the countries in the UNECE region, more and more countries were taking part in the UNECE work on standards and apply the standards nationally and regionally.

**Restructuring of the Working Party**

12. At its sixty-fourth session, the Working Party decided to start a discussion on restructuring its work, taking into consideration implications of the possible transfer of the OECD activities and of the draft Commission Regulation on marketing standards for fruits and vegetables on the work of UNECE on agricultural quality standards. To accelerate the development and adoption of standards, the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables will meet twice a year. The November 2009 meeting would consist of a two-day session of the Specialized Section, followed by a two-day session of the Working Party.

13. The fifty-sixth session of the Specialized Section will be held from 2 to 4 November, the Monday of 2 November being reserved for meetings of working groups. The delegations will consider the text of the Standard Layout and the standards for: apples, citrus fruit, sweet peppers (including the brochure), pears, apricots, chilli peppers, chanterelles, shallots, berry fruit, lambs lettuce, and peaches and nectarines. The documents for the Specialized Section and the Working Party meetings are available at:

[www.unece.org/trade/agr/meetings/ge.01/2009Nov-in-session.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/meetings/ge.01/2009Nov-in-session.htm) and  
[www.unece.org/trade/agr/meetings/wp.07/2009-in-session.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/meetings/wp.07/2009-in-session.htm), respectively.

**PART II: ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)****Activities of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme since the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables****Member Countries:**

1. The number of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme's Member Countries has increased to 25, as Kenya and Serbia joined the Scheme in 2008.

**Peer Reviews:**

2. The Peer Review of Fruit and Vegetables Quality Inspection System in Hungary was published in 2008. The OECD Peer Review on the Slovak Quality Inspection System was undertaken in 2008 and published in April 2009. The next Peer Review on the Moroccan Fruit and Vegetables Quality Inspection System will be undertaken in 2009.

**Explanatory Brochures:**

3. The OECD Scheme published the explanatory brochures on kiwifruit and cucumbers in 2008. The explanatory brochure on inshell hazelnuts was adopted and the electronic brochure was published on 1 July 2009. It is available on the OECD Scheme's website: [www.oecd.org/tad/fv](http://www.oecd.org/tad/fv) The hard copy of the brochure will be published together with the explanatory brochure on hazelnuts kernel in 2009/10. The explanatory brochures on potatoes, pears were also adopted and will be published in mid-2009. The electronic version of the brochure on citrus fruits will be published in the second half of 2009. Good progress has been made on the brochures on apples, apricots and peaches and nectarines in 2008. The final adoption of these brochures is expected at the 2009 Plenary Meeting.

**Distance Learning Tools:**

4. The Scheme has initiated the work on distance learning tools. The OECD Secretariat is examining the possibility to develop a common project with the FAO.

**OECD Meeting of the Heads of National Inspection Services:**

5. The OECD Meeting of the Heads of National Inspection Services was held in Finland on 2 - 4 June 2009. The Proceedings of this meeting will be available in September 2009.

**Training Programmes:**

6. The OECD sponsored International Training Course (ITC) took place in Slovakia on 30 June -2 July 2009. The report of the Training Course will be available at the 2009 Plenary Meeting.

7. An OECD-Slovakia-USA sponsored Workshop on Fruit and Vegetables Quality and Safety took place in Albania on 11 – 15 May 2009. The report of the Workshop will be available at the 2009 Plenary Meeting.

**Economic Market Analysis:**

8. At the 67<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Scheme, CLAM gave an economic evaluation of the market situation for citrus fruits. The presentation gave an overview of the four main product and forecast of trade for the 2008-2009 season.

9. At the 2009 Plenary meeting, the Scheme's Member Countries will be informed on the economic evaluation of the market situation for apples.

**Other Projects:**

10. The work on the Guidelines on Inspection and Inspector's training as well as the work on Sampling continued in 2008. A Working Group Meeting on Sampling will be held back to back with the the 2009 Plenary Meeting.

## **CONCENTRATING AGRICULTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS WORK IN THE UNECE**

1. The following is an update on the possible transfer of agricultural quality standards work from the OECD to the UNECE, which has been considered in conjunction with meetings of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Section on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruits and Vegetables.

### **OECD**

2. The OECD Task Force continued the work on exploring the feasibility of a possible transfer of all activities of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme to UNECE. The Task Force will prepare a report with a recommendation for the 68<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Fruit and Vegetables Scheme, to be held on 9-11 December 2009, Paris. The Plenary Meeting will discuss the report. Subject to the outcome of the Plenary Meeting, the recommendation will be submitted to the Committee for Agriculture and to the OECD Council. All decision has to be done by consensus.

### **UNECE**

3. The UNECE Task Force on Cooperation with the OECD and the OECD Exploratory Task Force will present a joint report on the feasibility of the transfer, with conclusions and recommendations, to the Specialized Section and the Working Party meetings to be held from 2 to 6 November 2009.