

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
12 July 2010

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Working Party on Agricultural Quality StandardsSpecialized Section on Standardization
of Dry and Dried Produce**Fifty-seventh session**

Geneva, 28 June -2 July 2010

**Report of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry
and Dried Produce on its fifty-seventh session****I. Introduction**

1. The meeting was opened by the Director of the Trade and Timber Division and was chaired by Mr. Dorian LaFond (United States of America).

II. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: France, Germany, Hungary, India, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, United Republic of Tanzania, Turkey and the United States of America.

3. A representative of the following non-governmental organization participated in the meeting: International Nut and Dried Fruit Council Foundation (INC).

4. A representative of the following intergovernmental organization participated in the meeting: OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.

III. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: Provisional agenda and annotations (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2010/1)

Request for additional agenda item by France
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.9)

5. Delegations adopted the agenda with the addition under agenda item 9 (Other business) of a discussion on the revision of CODEX Standards on Dry and Dried Produce for which UNECE standards existed.

IV. Matters of interest since the last session

(a) UNECE and subsidiary bodies

Documentation: Report of the Working Party (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/24)

Interoffice memorandum

6. The delegations took note of the advice from the Senior Adviser of the United Nations Office at Geneva to restore the term "UNECE" in the titles of the standards. It was the Adviser's "... considered opinion that the legal advice offered by OLA in 1988 would be very similar if not identical if sought and provided at the present time. In particular, point (b) of OLA's opinion [Member countries having agreed on standards at a global level, in the framework, for example, of FAO, which are not necessarily identical with UNECE Standards may oppose the renaming of UNECE Standards] could be invoked in the present situation. It was the CODEX Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, an expert body which is affiliated with FAO, which formulated a request to examine the implications of the WP's proposed change in the title of UNECE Standards to UN Standards. This implies that the CODEX Committee and by extension, FAO and its Legal Counsel, had some doubts about the practicality of the WP's proposal. In that particular constellation, it is difficult to see how OLA could come to a different conclusion than in 1998, i.e. that a change in the name of UNECE Standards to UN Standard would unlikely be approved by ECOSOC."

7. The Specialized Section briefly discussed the proposed option of keeping or removing the reference to "United Nations Economic Commission for Europe" at the top of the cover page of the standards, noting that the UNECE standards for dry and dried produce were more and more widely and globally applied. The option of amending the Note on page 2 of the standards by adding "United Nations Economic Commission for Europe" under the title "NOTE" was also considered. As the delegation of the United States had voiced concerns as to a deletion of UNECE from the cover page and needed time to reflect on the issue, their answer would be provided at the Working Party's session in November 2010.

(b) Other organizations

8. The representative of the OECD Scheme reported that the explanatory brochure on inshell hazelnuts was available in electronic format. Work on the explanatory brochure on hazelnut kernels would be finalized by December 2010. Both would be printed in early 2011. He also mentioned that OECD brochures were now distributed with a USB key containing hyperlinked, high-quality electronic versions of the publications. The Scheme had made progress on the Guidelines on Quality Inspections and had organized several Inspector's Training sessions and reviews of quality inspection systems, and scheduled others. He also mentioned that the OECD secretariat had discussed with the Codex Alimentarius secretariat possible areas of cooperation, such as work on brochures, guidelines, capacity-building activities and the development of distance learning tools. He invited delegates to participate in the next OECD sponsored International Training Course in Slovakia in September 2010.

9. The representative of INC provided an update on its recent activities, especially its successful Congress held in China in May 2010. He stressed the economic importance of the tree nut and dried fruit sector, noting its global production and consumption character. He also reported on INC statistical research on the import and export of tree nuts and dry and dried fruit around the world, and briefly described the Council's recently launched research project co-financed by the European Union on the health impacts of cashew nuts notably on the actual impact of aflatoxin in the field. He underlined his continued support for the work of the Specialized Section on Dry and Dried Fruit and stressed the importance of helping producer countries to meet quality requirements. He agreed to help to promote UNECE Standards even further and invited the Chair and UNECE to speak at the next INC Congress, which will take place from 21 to 23 May 2011 in Budapest.

V. Revision of Standard Layout

Documentation: Standard Layout (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/17)

Marking of the crop year on packages for dried fruit (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.2)

10. The Specialized Section reviewed a request by the delegation of France for a preliminary discussion on the indication of the crop year on packages¹ (in French "colis") to collect the views of other delegations. In France, research had been initiated to determine the influence of the crop year on the "best before" date, and consultations with industry were ongoing. Spain supported the importance of the crop year and its mandatory inclusion in the Standard Layout.

11. Other delegations, namely Germany, the United States, Turkey and INC stressed how difficult it was to check at points of entry and shipping whether the indication of the crop year on the package was correct. Turkey noted that standards defined quality very clearly and therefore, quality should be more important than the crop year, which was difficult to indicate and check. INC added that with production taking place also in the southern hemisphere, products were marketed all year round. Packaging and cold storage had changed the necessity of indicating the crop year as well.

VI. Review of UNECE Recommendations

(a) Inshell Macadamia Nuts

Documentation: Revised documentation for a new Standard for Inshell Macadamia Nuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/22)

12. At its 2009 session, the Working Party adopted the revised text of the Recommendation for Inshell Macadamia Nuts for trial use until the end of 2010. The Specialized Section reviewed the text and introduced several changes, which are reflected in the post-session document.

13. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the revised text for approval to the Working Party in November 2011 and for adoption as a new UNECE Standard for Inshell Macadamia Nuts.

¹ As defined in OECD Regulation 1518/2007 Annex VI.

(b) Macadamia Kernels

Documentation: Revised documentation for a new Standard for Macadamia Kernels (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/23)

14. At its 2009 session, the Working Party adopted the revised text of the Recommendation for Macadamia Kernels for trial use until the end of 2010. The Specialized Section reviewed the text and adopted several changes, which are reflected in the post-session document. After brief discussions, the provision under B. Moisture Content was revised to read, “the macadamia kernels shall have a moisture content not exceeding 2.0 per cent.” The Specialized Section also reduced the tolerance for foreign matter to 0.25 per cent in all classes.

15. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the revised text for approval to the Working Party in November 2011 and for adoption as a new UNECE Standard for Macadamia Kernels.

(c) Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels

Documentation Proposed new Standard for Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/18)

The Recommendation (DDP-10: Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels)

16. At its 2009 session, the Working Party returned the text of the proposed new Standard to the Specialized Section to review the differing interpretations of the term “Gülic” green. The Specialized Section agreed to change the term to “yellowish green” (“vert-jaune” in French”) and change to read: “(ii) Yellowish Green, The inside longitudinal section must be yellowish green in colour....” Furthermore, it was decided to remove the square brackets in table A. Quality Tolerances “Insect damage”. These changes are reflected in the post-session document.

17. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the revised text for approval to the Working Party in November 2010 and for adoption as a revised UNECE Standard for Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels.

(d) Hazelnut Kernels

Documentation: Revised Standard for Hazelnut Kernels (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/19)

The Recommendation (DDP-04: Hazelnut Kernels)

18. At its 2009 session, the Working Party returned the text of the revised Recommendation for Hazelnut Kernels to the Specialized Section to reconsider provisions on minimum requirements as requested by the delegation of Turkey. The Working Party had extended the trial period until November 2010.

19. Having taken note of the nature and effects of cimiciato damage and after lengthy deliberations, the Specialized Section reached a compromise and adopted the following amendment under A. Minimum requirements to read, “free from damage caused by pests, including the presence of dead insects and/or mites, their debris or excreta. However, pest damage caused by cimiciato is allowed, provided that there is only one spot on the kernel that does not exceed 3 mm in diameter by 3mm in depth”. The changes are reflected in the post-session document.

20. The Specialized Section agreed to submit the revised text for approval to the Working Party in November 2010 and for adoption as a revised UNECE Standard for Hazelnut Kernels.

(e) Dates

Documentation: Revised Standard for Dates (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/21)

The Recommendation (DDP-08: Whole Dates)

21. The Specialized Section reviewed in length the revised Recommendation for Dates and included several changes, which are reflected in the post-session document. Detailed discussions focused on the Table of Tolerances and it was decided to include a new individual tolerance for “blemished, discoloured, blacknose, sunburnt, cracking of the flesh” at 3 per cent for Extra Class, 5 per cent for Class I and 7 per cent for Class II. The tolerance for “sour, decayed or mouldy fruit” was reduced in Class II to 1 per cent. With these changes introduced, the delegation of Switzerland removed its reservation in footnote 4.

22. The overall “Tolerances for produce not satisfying the minimum requirements” was changed in Class I to 10 per cent. The tolerance for “Damage by pests” was reduced to 6 per cent in Class I and 10 per cent in Class II. The delegation of Switzerland announced that they needed time for further consultations and a decision on their reservation contained in footnote 5 could only be announced at the November 2010 session of the Working Party. The UNECE secretariat was requested to check with the delegations of the United Kingdom and Poland whether their reservations also contained in footnote 5 could be removed.

23. The Specialized Section decided to submit the revised text for approval to the Working Party in November 2010 as a revised UNECE Standard for Dates.

VII. Revision of UNECE Standards

(a) Dried Pears

Documentation: UNECE Standard for Dried Pears (DDP-13: Dried Pears)

Proposals by the Rapporteur (United States)
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.1)

24. The Specialized Section reviewed the revised Standard for Dried Pears, which had been aligned with the new Standard Layout. All changes are reflected in the post-session document. After lengthy discussions, it was agreed to include high moisture dried pears with a moisture content between 25 and 40 per cent, provided they are labelled as soft fruit/high moisture fruit or equivalent. Substantial changes (placed in square brackets to allow consultations with industry experts) were introduced in the provisions concerning sizing and it was decided that the tolerance for foreign matter in the tolerance table required further reflection. The term “gritty” was placed in square brackets both in the table of quality tolerances and minimum requirements in order to clarify that grittiness was a defect while granulated texture could be characteristic to the variety. It was therefore necessary to find adequate terminology to distinguish between the two. The Specialized Section decided to remove the tolerance for “fragments of unripe fruit” as it was practically impossible to tell which pears had been unripe before dried.

25. The Specialized Section decided to submit the revised text to the Working Party in November 2010 as a UNECE Recommendation for Dried Pears for a one-year trial period.

(b) Dried Apples

Documentation: UNECE Standard for Dried Apples (DDP-16: Dried Apples)

26. The delegation of France will align the Standard for Dried Apples with the new Standard Layout and with the revised text of the Standard for Dried Pears for the next session of the Specialized Section in June 2011.

(c) Cashew Kernels

Documentation: UNECE Standard for Cashew Kernels (DDP-17: Cashew Kernels)

Proposals for the revision of the Standard for Cashew Kernels
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.4)

Comments from Cashew Export Promotion Board of India
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.6)

AFI Specifications for Cashew Kernels
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.7)

27. The Chair reported that two very active and successful informal working sessions had taken place during the course of the week and the Standard for Cashew Kernels had been revised. The revised text will be available as a post-session document. The work that had been initiated this week was a fundamental revision and would be continued by a working group led by India and the INC; the United Republic of Tanzania and Germany agreed to participate. The Chair thanked India, the United Republic of Tanzania and the INC for their substantial contributions.

(d) Inshell Walnuts

Documentation: UNECE Standard for Inshell Walnuts (DDP-01: Inshell Walnuts)

Inshell Walnuts - Proposals by the Rapporteur (Germany)
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.5)

Inshell Walnuts - comments by France
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.8)

Inshell Walnuts - comments by California Walnut Commission
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.10)

UNECE Standard for Inshell Walnuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/16)

28. At the 2009 session of the Specialized Section, it was agreed that the 2002 version of the Standard for Inshell Walnuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/16) would remain in force and that within five years, including the trial period, the text would be aligned with the new Standard Layout. The delegation of France stressed that these five years were necessary before an aligned standard could be adopted. The delegation of Germany reported that difficulties had emerged with regard to the defined mix of varieties. Since 1 July 2009, the European Union had no more product-specific standard for inshell walnuts and either the general marketing standard for Inshell Walnuts applied or, at the request of traders, the UNECE standard. As the latter did not contain a definition of varieties in mixtures (which had been previously included in the EC Standard), Germany made the proposal to align the existing standard with the new Standard Layout. It was agreed that until the alignment was finalized, to ask every producer country to submit to the UNECE secretariat a list of

mixtures of varieties, which would be annexed to the current standard. It was decided that work on the alignment would start in 2012.

VIII. New UNECE Standards

Whole Dried Chilli Peppers

Documentation: Draft proposed Standard for Whole Dried Chilli Peppers (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2010/6)

29. The Specialized Section discussed in length the proposed draft Standard for Whole Dried Chilli Peppers, which had been prepared by the delegation of Mexico. To advance the development of the standard and its alignment with the new Standard Layout, a working group had prepared a revised draft, which will be available as a post-session document. Delegations were asked to comment on the list of commercial types, the issue of verification of pungency-optional and the tolerances allowed. Comments should be sent to the secretariat and to the delegation of Mexico. The latter would finalize the draft for the next session of the Specialized Section in June 2011. If possible, the draft should be discussed at an informal meeting before the formal session.

30. With regard to an intervention by the delegation of France regarding the relevance of footnote 4 (revised Standard Layout), France was requested to submit a formal proposal for discussion of the Standard Layout.

IX. Draft UNECE Explanatory Brochure for Walnut Kernels

Documentation: Draft UNECE Explanatory Brochure for Walnut Kernels (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.3)

31. The Specialized Section reviewed the first draft Explanatory Brochure for Walnut Kernels, which had been prepared by the delegation of the United States. It was agreed to follow the layout of the UNECE explanatory brochure format (see UNECE Explanatory Brochure for Sweet Peppers). This would require, for instance, moving pictures from the annex to the body of the text and including more pictures showing the maximum limit of the defects allowed for each defect in each class on individual kernels. These pictures would then have to be paired with the relevant explanatory text. It was also agreed that the colour gauge and the relevant parts of the Glossary of Terms would be included in the Explanatory Brochure. At this stage, the work should focus on the English version of the Brochure. UNECE with the help of the French delegation would translate the text into French once the English version had been finalized.

32. It was suggested that the Rapporteur (United States) should take photographs during the harvest and processing season and send them to the UNECE secretariat for circulation to all delegations. The dates of a working group meeting to review the new draft brochure prior to June 2011 would be communicated two to three months in advance. The Specialized Section thanked the delegation of the United States for their work and efforts.

33. The delegation of Germany expressed the view that in parallel to the work on the brochure, the Standard for Walnut Kernels should be aligned with the revised Standard Layout.

X. Sampling and inspection procedure for dry and dried produce

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2003/15/Add.2

34. The Specialized Section decided to continue the work on new sampling procedures, one for tree nuts and one for dried produce. The Rapporteur (Germany) together with other interested delegates including France, United States and INC, would prepare new drafts and circulate them for comments as post-session documents by the end of September 2010. The OECD Scheme, where a sampling plan for fruits and vegetables was currently being revised, would be kept informed. Discussions on the sampling plan would be included in the agenda of the next session in June 2011 and accompanied by a practical workshop.

XI. Other business

Documentation: Working Procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/INF.12)
Request for additional agenda item by France
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/INF.9)

35. The Specialized Section took note of the Working Procedures and the amendments on inter-sessional approval proposed in new paragraphs 19 and 20. Comments on the working procedures should be sent to the secretariat and formalized for discussion at the next session of the Working Party in November 2010. This applied also to an intervention by the delegation of France, which referred to the inclusion of the term “unanimous consensus” instead of “consensus”, as well as to a revision of indent 4 (new paragraph 19) to ensure that approval by the Bureau took place after publication and not before. The Chair stressed that these issues could be discussed only at the level of the Working Party.

36. The delegation of France drew the attention of the Specialized Section to the intention of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables to revise its standards on Dried Apricots (CODEX STAN 130-1981), Dates (CODEX STAN 143-1985), Dried Raisins (CODEX STAN 67-1981) as well as Pistachio nuts, unshelled (CODEX STAN 133-1981). As UNECE had more recent and updated standards and in order to avoid duplication and the co-existence of several international standards, it was agreed that the UNECE secretariat with the support of the Chair would approach the Codex Committee and the Codex secretariat to explore ways to cooperate and if possible to harmonize the standards.

XII. Future work

37. The Specialized Section agreed on the following items for future work and inclusion in the agenda of its next session in June 2011:

- Revision of the Standard for Dried Apples (Rapporteur: France).
- Revision of the Standard for Cashew Kernels (led by India and INC with Germany and the United Republic of Tanzania)
- Review of the Recommendation for Dried Pears (Rapporteur: United States).
- Review of the UNECE draft Explanatory Brochure for Walnut Kernels (Rapporteur: United States).
- Discussion on new Sampling Procedures for tree nuts and for dried produce (Rapporteur: Germany) accompanied by a practical workshop session

- Continuation of the development of a new UNECE Standard for Whole Dried Chilli Peppers (Coordination: Mexico, United States and INC) together with the development of a draft explanatory brochure
- Development of a new UNECE Standard for Brazil Nut Kernels (Coordination: INC, together with Brazil)
- Development of a new UNECE Standard for Pine Nuts (Coordination: INC, together with France, Spain, Turkey, United States, as well as, if possible, Canada, China, Italy, Mongolia, Pakistan, Portugal, or Russia)
- Development of a new UNECE Standard for Dried Mangoes (Coordination by the Chair)
- Coordination with the Codex secretariat in the area of nuts and dried fruit.

38. Delegations were invited to work in open working groups and circulate their drafts for comments by all delegations as early as possible.

39. Place and date of the next session: the next session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively scheduled for 27 June to 1 July 2011.

XIII. Election of officers

40. At its fifty-seventh session the Specialized Section group elected Mr. Dorian LaFond (United States) as Chair and Mr. Joaquim Bellmunt (Spain) as Vice-Chair.

XIV. Adoption of the report

41. The Specialized Section adopted the report of its session.
