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Economic Commission for Europe**Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards****Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards****Seventy-fifth session**

Geneva, 19-21 November 2019

**Report of the Seventy-fifth session of the Working Party on
Agricultural Quality Standards****I. Introduction**

1. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Agnieszka Sudol, Chairperson of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7).
2. The Chief of the Market Access Section of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) opened the seventy-fifth session of WP.7. He congratulated the Working Party on its 75th session and expressed his appreciation for the Working Party's valuable work over many years and thanked the delegates for their attendance and the time and efforts they dedicated to the work of Working Party 7 and the Specialized sections. This work drives a very important international agenda for sustainable international trade, production and consumption, also through the food loss and waste work.
3. He highlighted the long-standing partnerships with other organizations including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Codex Alimentarius, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU), aid agencies, other UNECE Divisions (reinforced through the nexus approach), academia and the private sector. Without these partnerships, he stressed, delivering the work and results would not yield expected impact.
4. Looking forward he noted that the newly adopted WP.7 Terms of Reference (TORs) and the Programme of Work set the stage for new focus, new directions and more coherence among the 4 Specialized Sections. This supported even more the delivery of Agenda 2030 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at international level and addressed many of the pressing issues related to the climate change, biodiversity, population challenge and the food security challenge. He also mentioned the linkages at UNECE level of the work of WP.7 with the nexus approach to sustainable natural resource management and the many interlinkages of the work on food loss and waste with other areas. He thanked the delegations for supporting UNECE in organizing many special events throughout the past years including expositions, conferences, rapporteur's meetings, and workshops.



II. Attendance

5. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

6. The following international organizations, specialized agencies and programmes, and intergovernmental organizations participated in the session: Codex Alimentarius, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations SDG Lab, World Food Programme (WFP).

7. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, companies, academia and independent experts participated in the session: Canton Luzern - Office for Environment and Energy, Impact Hub Geneva, International Nut and Dried Fruit Council (INC), Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Republican R&D Enterprise "Centre for Identification Systems", SUN Movement.

III. Adoption of the agenda

8. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda.

IV. Matters arising since the last session

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

9. The Chief of the Market Access Section reported that the Working Party's revised Terms of Reference (TORs) and its Programme of Work had been endorsed by the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards in May 2019 and adopted by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) in June 2019. He also explained that the Secretary General of the United Nations had undertaken a global reform process of the United Nations Secretariat and its operations. As part of this, a review of the work of the Regional Commissions had been launched and a report had been presented to the General Assembly in September 2019. The role of Regional Commissions will be discussed in more detail in the coming months.

10. He also noted that the current cash-flow shortage of the United Nations budget had led to some immediate measures, including the blocking of travel, consultancy, operational, staffing and project funds. He also explained that the Executive Secretary of the UNECE had launched an internal review of activities, emphasizing more need for synergies or collaboration among the various themes within the organization. This had been enhanced by cross-sectoral collaboration in nexus areas. The work under the Working Party was included in the Nexus on 'Sustainable use of natural resources area' albeit being related to all other nexus areas as well (i.e. Sustainable and smart cities; Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity; as well as Measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals). Currently, the nexus teams are tasked to draft in their respective areas an overview study focused on the ECE region.

(b) Recent developments in other organizations

11. The representative from the Codex Alimentarius Commission informed delegates about the latest developments on the standardization of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables (including spices) since the last sessions of the Committee on Fresh Fruits and

Vegetables (CCFFV) and the Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH). She noted that the work on processed fruits and vegetables was conducted by correspondence, had a dedicated online platform on the Codex website to hold virtual meetings, and included, amongst others, work on a standard for dried fruits. She emphasized that for fresh fruits and vegetables, CCFFV had forwarded the standards for kiwifruit, garlic and ware potatoes for final adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) in July 2020. Detailed information on the work of these committees can be found on the dedicated pages on the Codex website as follows:

- CCFFV: www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/detail/en/?meeting=CCFFV&session=21
- CCPFV: www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/detail/en/?meeting=CCPFV&session=29
- CCSCH: www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/detail/en/?meeting=CCSCH&session=4

She also mentioned that requests for comments (circular letters) on standards being proposed for final adoption or for further consideration by these committees can be found at: www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/resources/circular-letters/en/.

12. The representative from OECD thanked UNECE for helping to organize an informal OECD meeting to discuss the explanatory brochures. He noted that during the last years, the OECD had organized workshops in Asia and Latin America to disseminate the explanatory brochures and the standards. He informed the meeting that OECD was getting requests for information on its explanatory brochures and standards from Asian and Latin American producers. He suggested to hold bilateral discussions with UNECE on how to engage more non-European producers in the work of the organizations and address their concerns. This could result in a win-win situation and reinforce the international reach of UNECE standards and the global standing OECD brochures.

13. He informed delegates that at its December 2019 Plenary session, OECD will be discussing the first drafts of the passionfruit, cauliflower, papaya and banana brochures, and noted that the root vegetables and berry fruits brochures were expected to be approved by the end of 2019. The OECD will also discuss the following items: internet sales of fruit and vegetables, Brexit implications (the United Kingdom, Spain and the Netherlands will share the measures put in place by their governments to deal with fruit and vegetables trade after Brexit), tolerances (presentation by the United States) and climate change effects on fruit and vegetable quality (presentation by South Africa).

14. The delegate of Germany (and Chair of the Specialized Section on Fruit and Vegetables) took note of the information provided by OECD and suggested that countries having comments on UNECE standards should be referred to the UNECE secretariat. Should the personal attendance at the meeting in Geneva not be possible, comments should be submitted in writing. She stressed that the Working Party and its Specialized Sections took into account all comments received, discussed them and reflected the decisions in the report.

15. The representative from the INC introduced the work and scope of the International Nut and Dried Fruit Council which included more than 800 companies in over 75 countries. She briefly outlined the INC's work on health, nutrition, production statistics, trade, consumption, food safety, government standards and regulations including agricultural quality standards. In support of a sustainable growth in the global nut and dried fruit industry, the INC acted as an international source of information, cooperated with national and international institutions; promoted scientific research on the health benefits of nuts and dried fruit consumption, and worked on production, trade and consumption trends worldwide. As an observer, the INC collaborates with the UNECE on quality standards for tree nuts and dried fruits and participates in regular sessions and UNECE workshops.

16. She also highlighted INC's work on its Technical Information Kits (see INC web site: www.nutfruit.org/industry/technical-info-kits) for buyers, importers, processors, manufacturers and the food service industry which provided recommendations on processing, storage, packaging, transportation, quality requirements, food safety parameters, and standards. The kits for cashews, macadamias, peanuts, pine nuts and Brazil nuts included

UNECE standards' provisions, as the internationally recognized minimum requirements for dry and dried produce. She also informed that in December 2019, the INC will launch its first annual call for scientific proposals (funding of up to 150,000 EUR) to promote research contributing to the safe and sustainable production and processing of nuts and dried fruits.

V. Sustainable Development Goals and the work under the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards - Updates

17. The secretariat briefly presented the work of the Specialized Sections on SDGs. She highlighted the focus of this year's meeting on Sustainable Development Goal 5 – “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and reviewed the inclusive, gender-oriented approach. The Working Party took note of the presentation on the work on gender inclusiveness (SDG5) for future work.

18. On Sustainable Development Goal 12 – Target 12.3 (“halving food loss and waste by 2030”): the secretary introduced a non-exhaustive overview list of some action strategies, plans and legislation by international organizations and individual governments related to this topic. The Working Party took note of the information presented for future work.

19. The delegate of the Netherlands presented the findings and implications of the latest study by the University of Wageningen on “Cosmetic aspects in specific marketing standards for fruit and vegetables”. She explained that food loss and waste reduction was a priority on the political agenda in her country since the summer of 2018 when the Dutch parliament in a resolution had asked to remove cosmetic requirements from the marketing standards in order to reduce food waste. It was therefore decided to commission a study on how to approach this request and how this would impact producers and consumers and the actual food waste reduction numbers. The focus of the research was limited to the four most grown products in the Netherlands, and criteria including shape, colour deviation and skin. It examined three scenarios (i.e. 1. Uniform cosmetic requirements for all classes by setting them at Class II level, i.e. The cosmetic requirements for Class I (and Extra) are replaced by those of Class II. 2. Temporary derogations from “Class I cosmetic requirements”. 3. Extension of the cosmetic requirements for Class II where cosmetic requirements for Class II are relaxed to allow products with shape, skin, or colour defects to be made available to the fresh market).

20. The delegate from the Netherlands outlined the findings for each scenario noting the positive and negative implications of the three options. The research had identified scenario 3, i.e. lowering the cosmetic requirements in Class II as the best option to contribute to the reduction of food waste. She noted that this proposal will be presented by the Netherlands to the Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and had been submitted to the EU in its ongoing evaluation of marketing standards.

21. Several delegations pointed out that revising the tolerance for Class II had also been discussed at UNECE level for several years with similar conclusions. The Specialized Section had decided to lower the requirements in Class II on a case-by-case basis. It was also pointed out that most fruit currently marketed as “Ugly fruit” already fit into Class II. Increasing the total tolerance allowed within Class II to 20 per cent (as proposed by the United Kingdom in 2018) might result in a greater number of produce within this class. While this proposal was not supported in 2018, it might be reconsidered during the scheduled discussions on the Standard Layout by the Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in May 2020. Several delegations stressed that food waste and extreme weather conditions impacted the availability of produce. Therefore, allowing smaller sizes and greater defects could not only improve the situation but reduce waste and increase income opportunities at the same time. Many delegations opined that it was up to government authorities to determine such measures and ensure the food availability and security in their countries and increasing the tolerance level to allow even more produce in Class II could have a signal value.

22. Several delegations suggested that supermarkets and retail chains needed to be included in the discussion on lowering requirements. Currently, supermarkets not only imposed stricter requirements than public standards but additional ones. Whether lowering requirements in public minimum standards such as the UNECE or EU standards had any

effects on private standards remained doubtful. In some EU countries, for example exemptions allowed under EU legislation had not changed the stringent requirements imposed by retail chains and supermarkets. Many delegations informed the Working Party of the studies carried out in their countries, often over several years. They had shown that the the root cause of the problem was not public standards, but the much more severe private standards used by the retail sector.

23. In addition, delegations also noted that the study presented by the Dutch delegation had shown the extent to which Class II produce was underrepresented in the overall sales and that Class I was the most sold class in European supermarkets. It was therefore uncertain whether lowering the requirements for Class II (which is the lowest sold class) would be an effective way to reduce food loss and waste, knowing that preparing Class II produce required the same economic input as Class I but rendered a lower selling price at producer level – especially, as the produce was of lower quality. Having this in mind, lowering Class II might not have an economically positive effect for the producer. Therefore, producers might not be interested in lowering the Class II requirements.

24. Many delegations also noted the need for more awareness raising and educational measures at distribution and consumer level and focused also on ways to change traders' and consumers' perception of the value of food. This, it was stressed, was a political question as well as an educational decision which needed to be approached jointly with all actors of the supply chain and to include the public and private sector. Many delegations thought this could be a more effective way of preventing and reducing food loss and waste.

25. Several countries outlined the measures taken by their governments which included food waste prevention and reduction policies, studies and measurements on food waste and the role of retailers and consumers, analysis of the effects of marketing standards, more focused and continuing education of consumers, clear obligations for food sellers and transfer of produce as donations, educational campaigns and fees for food waste.

26. Many governments acknowledge the direct link between removing or lowering standards and how this could negatively affect the income of producers who have geared their production towards attaining certain classes and quality levels to reach their required income levels.

27. It was also noted that even in countries where standards were not mandatory like the United States (and only checked when the produce was presented with a grade indication) food was lost and wasted. In many cases, poor handling practices, use of "sell by" dates by the retail sector - particularly for fresh fruit and vegetables - or consumer behaviour were at fault. Interventions should therefore target the entire trade process. The UNECE Code of Good Practice on Handling Fresh Fruit and Vegetables provided a new tool for increasing the awareness in the retail, trade and production sectors and fosters continuous improvement.

28. The 2019 session of the Working Party included on its second day the fourth UNECE-FAO conference on "Food (Waste) for Thought food loss -policy perspectives for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" with presentations on subjects of interest to all four Specialized Sections. The programme and the presentations are available at: www.unece.org/index.php?id=52666.

VI. Capacity-building and promotional activities

29. The secretariat reviewed its capacity-building activities including those under the United Nations Development Account project (UNDA-11) which included in 2019 the following: UNECE-UNDP training on "Sustainability of national production and consumption patterns in agriculture trade" (23 - 24 September 2019), Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with participants from Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; meeting of the Central Asian Working Group on Quality Standards (25-26 September 2019), as well the conceptualization of a food-loss marketplace application. She also outlined activities funded by partner organizations such as the BLE-International Meeting on Quality Control of Fruit and Vegetables, Bonn, March 2019; UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy, Geneva, July 2019; Commonwealth Connectivity

Week, London, September 2019; WTO-Public Forum, Geneva, October 2019; UNDP High-level Regional Conference on Productive Capacities, Trade and SDGs in Central Asia, Tashkent, November, 2019; and ESCWA - Green Technologies for Addressing Food Loss and Waste, Regional Meeting, Arab Region”, Amman, November 2019.

30. She also informed delegation of the translation of several guides for seed potatoes into Spanish (funded by Potato USA); the in-kind contribution of a seed potato disease and pest guide App (Australia) and the translation of UNECE guides and posters into central Asian languages and Russian (Hilfswerk Austria International, GIZ).

31. The secretariat thanked all delegations whose experts had supported UNECE in the capacity-building and promotional activities in 2019. She also informed the Working Party about the progress made by the Central Asian region with regard to the adoption, use and implementation of UNECE standards and the development of guidance material. She outlined the activities of the Central Asian Working Group (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) on the promotion of the use and the implementation of UNECE standards in the region.

32. The Working Party noted with appreciation the activities undertaken and expressed its gratitude to the secretariat for the impact-oriented capacity-building in 2019. The Working Party commended the secretariat on the work accomplished in Central Asia where in cooperation with local United Nations agencies and aid agencies, a lot of positive results had been achieved. Currently, UNECE, UNDP, GIZ and Hilfswerk Austria International were undertaking an impact assessment until mid-December 2019 whose results would be shared with the Working Party in due course.

33. Concerning future training activities, the delegation from Turkey invited delegations to the June 2019 Workshop on sampling nuts and dried fruit to be held in Izmir, Turkey. The workshop would be combined with the meeting of the Specialized Section on Dry and Dried Produce. The delegation from Slovakia informed meeting participants that the next international training course would be held in Mojmirovce, Slovakia, in September 2020.

VII. Electronic quality certificates for fresh fruit and vegetables

34. The secretariat updated the Working Party on progress made on the eQuality certificate for fresh fruit and vegetables developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). She noted that the agricultural domain of UN/CEFACT had finished its work on the Business Requirements Specifications and the Requirement Specification Mapping as well as the eQuality XML Schema. The latter defines the structure of the eQuality certificate, i.e. the data elements that must be included in the electronic document, the hierarchy and the data types. This very technical document is used by software engineers to compose eQuality messages. It will be included in the upcoming CCL19B publication and available on the internet for downloading. She noted that currently work was in progress on an eCert implementation guide which summarized among others how countries could establish electronic permit exchanges, deal with electronic signatures or authentication, and the type of agreements needed between government agencies. The Implementation Guide will also include the eSPS, Certificate of origin and the eCites documents. She informed delegates that at the May 2020 session, a representative from the CEFACT secretariat will provide further guidance on possible implementation steps.

35. The Chair of the Working Party thanked the UN/CEFACT agricultural domain group for this work and asked WP.7 delegates to transmit the information to their IT departments.

36. The Chairpersons of the Specialized Sections presented the work of their sections over the past year, as well as their current and future activities. The presentations are available on the UNECE website at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50606>.

VIII. Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

37. In 2019, the Specialized Section held a meeting in Potsdam, Germany, as well as an international symposium on “Meat quality for a sustainable future: International meeting on

eating quality, standards and innovative solutions for trade”. The symposium focused on standards, sustainable livestock, gender issues and the SDGs as well as progress in the area of eating quality. It had been organized back to back with the International Congress of Meat Science and Technology (ICoMST) and had attracted many participants. The Chair of the Specialized Section on Meat could not participate in the Working Party session but had prepared a report presented by the secretariat on his behalf. The report provided information on the Specialized Section’s work on meat standards and eating quality which had resulted in the first training sessions for Chiller Assessors this year in Europe (Wales and France). The report also noted that delegates had been updated on the use of the standards by countries in the UNECE region and beyond and the important role of the standards and the included cut descriptions in the international trade and inspection of meat worldwide. The report also outlined in detail the discussion on the possible development of a UNECE marketing/quality standard for fish meat for which the Specialized Section had decided to gather further information.

38. The report also highlighted further discussions on the possible alignment of the very well-functioning and widely used international trade codes defined by UNECE in its meat standards with the less detailed HS codes used by customs authorities. It was decided to study the feasibility of such a project until the 2020 Session of the Specialized Section. The report also outlined an update by the delegation from Australia on an amendment to the UNECE standard for ovine meat used at national level which would be discussed at the 2020 Specialized Section.

39. The Working Party discussed several issues highlighted for their consideration, namely the alignment of HS customs codes with the meat cut descriptions contained in UNECE meat standards and the possible development of a marketing standard for fish meat. On the former item, while some, delegations cautioned about the possible implications of aligning HS codes with technical produce description codes and noted that in their view the (World Customs Organization?) (WCO) would be best placed to undertake such an exercise, others welcomed this opportunity to provide technical expertise to facilitate a possible alignment exercise.

40. The Working Party also deliberated in detail on the possible development of UNECE marketing standard for fish meat, Given the existence of a relevant Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP - adjourned sine die but operating electronically), as well as widely used private standards in the international trade of fish, delegations opposed the development of a UNECE standard.

41. The Working Party requested the secretariat to inform the Specialized Section’s Chair and the Specialized Section on the Working Party’s endorsement of the work on scoping a potential project on HS code alignment with meat cut codes as well as the Working Party’s non-endorsement of the development of a UNECE marketing standard for fish meat.

42. The Working Party thanked the Specialized Section for its excellent work throughout the year.

IX. Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

43. The Specialized Section held one regular session this year. The Chairperson of the Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables presented in detail the work of the Section including the revised standards and the “UNECE Code of Good Practice for Reducing Food Loss in Handling Fruit and Vegetables”. She also previewed on-going and new work. She informed delegations that the Specialized Section was in the process of preparing minimum marketing quality guidelines in an effort to reduce food loss and to develop local markets, where needed.

44. The prevention and reduction of food loss and waste guided the Specialized Section’s standards’ revision work. While this was an important contribution to the reduction of food loss and waste, it continued to be very important for all delegations to take holistic approaches on stressing the value of food at all levels from farm to consumers. The delegation from the

United States, while not opposing the adoption of the revised standard for Root and Tuberle Vegetables, suggested that in the future the term “normal peeling” used in several standards should be better defined.

45. The Working Party adopted:

- Report of the sixty-seventh session
- Revised standard for Cherries
- Revised standard for Cauliflower
- Revised standard for Broccoli
- Revised standard for Annonas
- Revised standard for Avocado
- Revised standard for Berry fruit
- Revised standard for Onions
- Revised standard for Root and Tuberle Vegetables
- Revised standard for Table Grapes
- Revised standard for Watermelon
- Reducing food loss in handling fruit and vegetables - UNECE Code of Good Practice

46. The Working Party took note of the newly developed UNECE Food Loss Methodology, which complemented the Code of Good Practice (www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/FoodLossChallenge/FoodLossWaste_QuantificationMethodology.pdf).

47. The Working Party requested the secretariat to publish and print the UNECE Food Loss Methodology and the Code of Good Practice. Delegates also discussed the possible promotion and dissemination thereof via various media and channels. It was suggested that social media, easier access to information on the UNECE web page, regular newsletters or information messages could enhance the visibility of this work. In addition, delegations also suggested to give more prominence to the food loss work in the UNECE web page hierarchy. The delegation from Bangladesh proposed a more collaborative approach to allow countries absent from meetings to submit their comments.

48. A very important channel would be via the private sector both at international (Freshfel) and national levels. In addition, promotional material (posters for the three dedicated sectors) as well as practical application by well-known partners could underscore the usefulness of the Code. These findings of the tests and trials could be presented at the next session and highlighted on the web page.

49. Further channels could be other international governmental and non-governmental organizations present in Geneva or in the field as well as agencies working on food issues such as the WTO, FAO, WFP, UNDP or COLEACP.

50. The Working Party thanked the Specialized Section for its excellent work throughout the year.

X. Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

51. The Chairperson of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce reviewed in detail the work of the Specialized Section and presented the revised standards and recommendations submitted for adoption. In 2019, the Specialized Section had held one regular meeting and organized an international symposium and a tasting event in Geneva on “Sustainable natural resources and their value chains: nuts”. He thanked all contributors and the secretariat for the excellent organization of the symposium. This year’s focus on biodiversity and sustainable economic gains from forest nuts had demonstrated the

importance of sustainability in the international trade of these products and the relevance of the Specialized Section's work for producing countries worldwide. The subject was particularly important for the Central Asian producers who had also submitted changes to the UNECE standard for walnuts to include wild walnuts from walnut forests. He also noted that capacity-building might be provided to help them apply the UNECE standard and increase income in the local communities derived from these forest products.

52. He also informed delegates that the sampling plan initially submitted for adoption would be reviewed once again at a dedicated workshop to be held in Izmir, Turkey, in June 2020 and supported by the delegation from Turkey. The adoption and publication of the sampling plan was proposed to be postponed pending the result of this practical workshop in 2020. He thanked the delegation from Germany for preparing the nearly final sampling plan and the INC for offering to prepare a training video.

53. The Chair of the Specialized Section thanked the secretariat for their work in Central Asia noting that it produced concrete results and engaged Central Asian countries in UNECE's standardization work. The result of the currently ongoing impact assessment initiated at the request of the Specialized Section in June 2018 would be shared in due course. This assessment was launched to survey the concrete impact achieved during the past years including inflowing investment, trade, export, adoption and use of standards, increased? employment and income generation.

54. He noted that the work on the explanatory posters had progressed well and thanked all rapporteurs for their excellent work. The poster for inshell pistachio nuts and inshell walnuts had been finalized. The posters for walnut kernels, dried figs, and dried grapes were close to finalization and their adoption is proposed via an intersessional adoption procedure pending their finalization which was mainly editorial. He also informed the Working Party that the delegation from Tajikistan had presented the Central Asia Explanatory Brochure for Dried Apricots at the last session of the Specialized Section. As concerns had been raised by some delegations on photos and interpretative text, he suggested to review the brochure in detail during the next months and address pending issues at the 2020 workshop and meeting of the Specialized Section.

55. Following an invitation by the delegation from Turkey, the next meeting of the Specialized Section will be held back to back with the Sampling Plan Workshop in Izmir, Turkey, from 15 to 17 June 2019. Any decisions reached at that meeting would be validated by the Specialized Section in November 2020 in a session prior to the Working Party session.

56. The representative from the International Nuts and Dried Fruit Council (INC) will inform the Working Party on their possible development of explanatory posters for cashew nuts.

57. The Working Party adopted:

- Report of the sixty-sixth session
- New UNECE standard for Dried melons (DDP-30)
- New UNECE standard for Dehydrated coconut kernel pieces (DDP-31)
- New UNECE standard for Dried ripe papayas (DDP-32)
- Revised standard for Inshell Walnuts
- Extension of the trial period Recommendation for Prunes
- Explanatory poster for inshell pistachio nuts
- Explanatory poster for inshell walnuts

58. The Working Party agreed to the request for inter sessional adoption procedures for the explanatory posters for walnut kernels, dried figs, and dried grapes, and thanked the Specialized Section for its excellent work throughout the year.

XI. Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

59. In 2019, the Specialized Section had held one regular session and a Rapporteurs meeting (Bozeman, USA) in September 2019. The Chairperson of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes reviewed in detail the work of the Specialized Section and the recent Rapporteurs meeting.

60. She outlined the results of the virus survey exercise undertaken by the Specialized Section in 2018 and 2019 which had resulted in a high response rate, a detailed and rich data set and results published on the UNECE web site (www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/potatoes/pot_e.html).

61. She reported on the ongoing work on bacterial testing methodologies, and the Guide on minituber production. She highlighted that the Seed Potato Disease Guide Application had been published and expressed her gratitude to the delegation from Australia for this very valuable contribution. She also briefly reviewed the large range of guides covering many topics, produced by the Specialized Section.

62. She also noted that discussions on true potato seed as well as on different pests and virus diseases were continuing and possibilities for capacity-building were being explored. She previewed the future work of the Specialized Section including substantial and promotional work.

63. The Working Party adopted:

- Report of the forty-sixth session

and thanked the Specialized Section for its excellent work throughout the year.

XII. Future work

64. The Working Party decided to consider the following items for its future work.

Focus on visibility and promotion of UNECE guides including the Code of Good Practice

Test and trial with subsequent analysis and feedback of the Code of Good Practice

Organization of a roundtable on food loss, food waste and private standards together with the private sector.

Organization of an educational event on alternatives to food not traded in major supply chains, food loss prevention and simple technologies converting certain produce into a value-added product.

Capacity building and outreach

65. Further topics of interest to the Working Party should be sent to the secretariat in the coming months.

XIII. Other business

66. The following meetings are planned for 2020:

- Specialized Section on Seed Potatoes: 16–17 March
- Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: 6–8 May
- Sampling Workshop and meeting of the Specialized Section on Dry and Dried Produce: 15–17 June
- Specialized Section on Meat: 2–4 September
- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: 16–17 November

67. Possible changes in venue and dates will be communicated in due course.

XIV. Election of officers

68. The delegations elected Ms. Agnieszka Sudol (Poland) as Chair and Mr. Guy Lambrechts (Belgium) as Vice-Chair.

XV. Adoption of the report

69. The Working Party adopted the report of its seventy-fifth session (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2018/2).
