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**Meeting with the Chair of the Steering Committee on
Trade Capacity and Standards**

Report by the Chair

Report by the Chair of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS)

I. Achievements since the last session

Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade

1. Since the last session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards in September 2015, UNECE completed a study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade at the request of the Government of Albania. The Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Albania is currently using the recommendations for increasing the country's competitiveness in export markets.

2. UNECE also undertook a study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade at the request of the Government of the Republic of Moldova. In this study, UNECE looked into the status of standardization, regulatory cooperation and trade facilitation practices with a focus on the emerging needs, including ensuring compliance with the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. The preliminary results were presented to the second session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards. The study will be completed in late 2016 after a validation workshop with all stakeholders in Chisinau.

Promoting agricultural quality standards

3. The following meetings of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) and its four Specialized Sections were held since September 2015:

- WP.7 annual session, 2 to 4 November 2015, including an International Conference on Traceability of Agricultural Produce on 3 November 2015;
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (18-21 April 2016);
- Specialized Section on Dry and Dried Produce (27-29 June 2016)
- Specialized Section on Meat (with a 2nd meat symposium on quality, food safety and public-private cooperation in 28-30 September 2015; a 3rd meat seminar on trends in meat markets and standards in 29-31 August 2016; a meeting on eating quality; and a rapporteurs meeting on eggs);
- Specialized Section on Seed Potatoes (31 August – 2 September 2016) with 2 technical meetings in Finland and South Africa).

4. The Working Party adopted 7 new or revised standards in 2015, and will consider 20 new or revised standards for adoption at its 2016 meeting. In addition, it produced the draft UNECE guides on: Seed Potato Tuber Inspection; Operating a Seed Potato Certification Service; and Explanatory Brochures for Persimmons and for Walnut Kernels.

5. In celebration of the International Year of Pulses, an exhibition and culinary lunchtime event was held on 19 April 2016, jointly organized with FAO and five Permanent Missions in Geneva, on the occasion of the meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

6. Experts from the Working Group on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections contributed as speakers to the conference and symposiums mentioned above as well as to capacity building activities on agricultural quality standards.

7. Participation in the meetings of the Working Party and its Specialized Sections has increased over the year, with an overall increase of 63% from 2014-2015, which included a tripling in the number of participants in the Working Party. Of particular note is the increased interest and participation from non-ECE developing countries in the Working

Group and Specialized Sections, including delegates from Iran, Kenya, Namibia, Tanzania, and the Philippines.

8. Member States participating in the work on agricultural quality standards have also been looking into new topics on cross-cutting areas such as eating quality, food waste and traceability, where such work can add value to the work on the standards. Traceability of Agricultural Produce was a topic of a WP.7 conference in November 2015, following which the Working Party has continued discussions on the issue.

9. The priority for the coming years is to synchronize the work with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly:

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

10. UNECE's agricultural quality standards are used worldwide by governments. Emerging exporting countries use UNECE standards at export and import control stage and to train farmers in quality production, while traders and retailers sometimes use them as a unique global reference standard (e.g. seed potatoes or cashew nuts) and sometimes as the basis for other product quality requirements. Since 2012, UNECE and its WP.7 partners have trained over 1,600 participants in the use and scope of UNECE standards and related inspection procedures.

11. As a result of this increased participation, strengthened collaboration with partners (both intergovernmental and non-governmental), as well as increased participation from interested countries outside the region, the Working Party has been able to maximize its impact and optimize resources.

12. Further information on the activities and accomplishments of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards can be found in the WP.7 report on UNECE's website (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2015/2).

Promoting regulatory cooperation and internationally agreed standards

13. UNECE's work on regulatory cooperation and standardization policies focuses on five areas:

Forum for dialogue: to enable and empower Governments, standards organizations and UN partners to discuss and identify best regulatory approaches and best practices in the use of standards in support of the public good. *In January 2016, UNECE and several of its intergovernmental bodies actively participated in the UNISDR¹ Science and Technology Conference on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk where UNECE participated in discussions on plans of action for disaster risk reduction. Also in support of this work, the UNECE and UN/HABITAT are co-conveners of a task force under ISO TC 292 on «Security and resilience».*

Regulatory cooperation: to engage member States in national, regional and international efforts to remove technical barriers to trade in specific sectors. The ad hoc team of specialists on STandardization And Regulatory Techniques (START) Team revised the UNECE's Recommendation L on the International Model for Technical Harmonization Based on Good Regulatory Practice for the Preparation,

¹ The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Adoption and Application of Technical Regulations via the Use of International Standards and this revision was approved at the 2015 WP.6 session. Also, in 2016, the Team initiated the revision of two conformity assessment related recommendations: G on Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Results; and F on the Creation and Promotion of International Agreements on Conformity Assessment.

WP.6 also contributed to the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC) meeting in Baku during June 2016 where feedback from EASC conformity assessment sub-group was solicited in revising recommendations G and F. UNECE also cooperated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to foster the contribution of international organizations to international trade rules (with a focus on regulatory issues). A UNECE case study was prepared and will be finalized later in 2016. WP.6 also cooperates with the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) in their “Strengthening the Global Trade and Investment System for Sustainable Development (E15 Initiative)” and the Initiative’s Task Force.

At the end of 2015, WP.6 co-organised a side event at the WTO 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi “Delivering on the Trade Facilitation Agreement: The role of standards and regulatory frameworks” which promoted regulatory cooperation efforts both regionally and internationally.

Market surveillance: to support member States' efforts in fighting the proliferation of counterfeit and non-compliant goods on the markets. The Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS Group) has been working on the *mapping of market surveillance networks (global and regional); developing a template for the request of data or assistance to other authorities or to other stakeholders outside of a jurisdiction; updating the MARS global database of market surveillance authorities;* and connecting with other WP.6 groups in order to exchange information and identify areas for joint work. As a result of the latter, a new recommendation will be proposed at the next MARS Group meeting on product-based surveillance activities in collaboration with the Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM Group).

Risk Management in Regulatory Frameworks: for safer and more resilient communities and eco-systems. After the UNECE guidelines on Risk Management in Regulatory Frameworks was published in 2012, WP.6 has continued to promote the concepts behind risk management and to help member States to adapt complex Risk Management (RM) tools to the work of national authorities. A bi-lingual (English and Russian) publication on “Standards for Disaster Risk Reduction, showing the potential that voluntary standards have in the prevention and management of disaster risks” was published in December.

Education on standards-related issues: to bring a toolbox of standards to Universities and professional education programmes in order to promote best practice. To support this objective, WP.6 participates in the cooperation work of the ISO/IEC/ITU/University of Geneva. It also maintains a database on education-related initiatives. Recently, discussions have also been held with the Cooperation League of European Research Universities (LERU). During a meeting in January 2016 of LERU Vice-Rectors for Learning & Teaching, the WP.6 Secretary gave a presentation on the UNECE Initiative on Education in Standardization.

II. Major activities planned for the coming year and beyond

14. The secretariat is preparing to undertake further studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, based on requests from member States. In addition, the secretariat

continues to support implementation of the recommendations from the previous studies. Below is a brief description of the remaining planned activities under the Steering Committee. Further details can be found in document ECE/CTCS/2016/9 “Inter-sessional implementation plan for the programme of work”.

UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)

15. WP.6 will hold its twenty-sixth session on 30 November-2 December 2016 in Geneva.

During its annual session, WP.6 will hold mini workshops on “Contribution of standards and regulations to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, “Risk management in regulatory systems” and “International Regulatory Cooperation”. The session will also feature discussions on gender mainstreaming in standardization.

16. The fourteenth meeting of the Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS Group) was tentatively planned for Turkey during 2016 but had to be transferred to Geneva for security reasons. This meeting will promote an integrated and coherent approach to market surveillance based on best practices and international standards, with a special emphasis on best practices for countering sub-standard and counterfeit goods, and the exchange of best practices between the region’s market surveillance authorities.

UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7)

17. WP.7 will hold its seventy-second session on 9-11 November 2016 in Geneva. The session will feature its first ever conference on food loss in relation to agricultural standards on 10 November 2016, to discuss the links and potential contribution of agricultural quality standards to Sustainable Development Goal number 12.3 which aims to “*By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses*”.

18. Six additional meetings will be organized during the coming year in order to support the development of agricultural quality standards as reflected below:

- Specialised Section on Seed potatoes: 31 August-2 September 2016 and 29-31 March 2017
- Specialised Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: 2-5 May 2017
- Specialised Section on Dry and Dried Produce: 19-21 June 2017
- Specialised Section on Meat: 5-7 July 2017
- Working Party 7 annual session: 6-8 November 2017

19. In addition, the secretariat is working with experts to finalize two new draft UNECE guides, one on Seed Potato Tuber Inspection, and one on Operating a Seed Potato Certification Service.

III. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

20. The SCTCS was established in March 2015 and had its first session on 31 August and 1 September 2015, and second session on 26-27 May 2016. No changes are currently foreseen.

IV. Follow-up to the 2015 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

21. In accordance with Commission Decision A (65) and the subsequent decision by the EXCOM, the former Committee on Trade was abolished after its sixth session in 2014 and replaced by a new Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards with a revised mandate (see documents ECE/EX/22 which is copied in ECE/CTCS/2015/3).

V. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

22. UNECE's Trade Sub-programme is actively involved in the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs' (ECESA) "Trade Cluster", and the United Nations Inter-Agency cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity. Both of these clusters are led by UNCTAD. They both work to ensure coordination on trade issues within the UN and the second one also works to ensure that trade-related issues and those pertaining to productive sectors are properly addressed and adequately taken into account in the "Delivering as One" coherence process.

Agricultural Quality Standards and Trade Facilitation

23. UNECE's WP.7 secretariat is actively collaborating with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in implementing a United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains.

VI. Technical cooperation activities

24. This chapter provides highlights from SCTCS document ECE/CTCS/2016/6 "Report of the capacity-building and technical assistance activities" where a full description of the work undertaken can be found.

Agricultural supply chains

25. UNECE is leading a United Nations Development Account (UNDA)-financed project with, as its partners, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Codex Alimentarius Commission and bilateral donor agencies (with contributions in kind).

26. The project, "Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains", aims at enhanced understanding and increased capacity among public and private sector stakeholders to apply agricultural standards and best practices for efficient regulation, improved information exchange, and quality control, including national and sectoral strategies. The project targets countries with economies in transition and developing countries from the Western Balkans, Central Asia, South Asia and South East Asia, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the selected target countries to improve the planning, management and regulation of cross-border agricultural food supply chains as a prerequisite for enhancing competitiveness and improving food security conditions.

27. The targeted countries were selected following a demand-driven approach, with a priority given to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in these sub-regions. The selected countries from the UNECE region include:

- Western Balkan countries: Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as UNMIK/Kosovo.
- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

28. Activities in 2016 included a sub-regional workshop for Central Asian countries on “Cross-Border Trade of Nuts and Dried Fruit” in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 11-13 July 2016, organized together with UNDP and GIZ as partners to ensure synergies, and increase outreach and on-the-ground impact. The workshop increased the knowledge of how to increase countries’ competitiveness based on international best practice; food safety; quality and its assurance; UNECE marketing standards; and improved business processes. It will be followed by focused follow-up training tailored to specific national requirements organized at national levels with local partners and aid agencies. A similar workshop in 2015 led to concrete decisions by Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to adopt UNECE standards for nuts and dried fruit and to gradually pool their productions for improved joint export potential.

29. Experts from the Working Group on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections have contributed to capacity building activities as trainers in these activities, including in the Workshop on Cross-Border Trade of Nuts and Dried Fruit; the Conference on Traceability; the annual seminars on Meat; as well as the study tour and workshop organized by the European Commission in Brazil.

30. Intermediate outcomes have already resulted in an improved awareness by governments and specialized agencies from transition economy and developing countries (including Afghanistan, Albania, Namibia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) of available instruments in the area of quality assurance, sampling and conformity assessment for nuts and dried fruit as well as food safety and export requirements (legal and commercial).

31. UNECE will connect and establish sub-regional, regional and international networks of experts (with, among others, the support of the United Nations Network for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) platform) to ensure continuity beyond the project’s life-cycle. Planned activities for 2016 and 2017 are as follows:

- Two sub-regional workshops on Agri-food supply chains in cross-border trade of fresh fruit and vegetables (venues and dates to be decided)
- Sub-regional workshop organized by ESCAP for targeted countries from Central Asia (venue and date to be decided)
- Regional workshop on agri-food supply chains (target countries, venue and date to be decided).

Strengthening the national capacity of trade-support institutions of Kyrgyzstan

32. A technical cooperation project on “Strengthening the national capacity of trade-support institutions of Kyrgyzstan” was approved in June 2006 by EXCOM as follow up to the recently finalized UNECE trade needs assessment and its main activities will be, among others, developing training materials on export and import procedures, supply chain management, single window facilities, risk management in regulatory systems, conformity assessment and market surveillance and also on women’s entrepreneurship. The project will also include translation and publication of training materials, organization of a train-the-trainer course and five awareness-raising and training workshops in Kyrgyzstan. The project will run for two years until mid-2018.

Follow-up on completed studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade

33. Follow-up on completed studies will involve assisting the Governments of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to implement the recommendations emerging from the national

studies, within the context of a technical assistance project titled, “Removing Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan”, for which extrabudgetary financing was received from the Russian Voluntary Fund. In addition, UNECE stands ready to help the Governments of Albania and the Republic of Moldova prepare projects to address the concrete recommendations made in the area of trade facilitation, standardization and regulatory cooperation.

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

34. In addition to the cooperation highlighted in Sections V and VI above, the Steering Committee cooperates with a number of partner organizations. Below is a brief description of UNECE’s cooperation with other organizations. Further details can be found in document ECE/CTCS/2016/7 “Cooperation with other ECE bodies and other organizations”.

World Trade Organization

35. Through WP.6, the UNECE is a permanent observer at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). WP.6 participates in all the meetings of the WTO TBT and provides the TBT Committee members with updates on its activities and the emerging needs of UNECE member States with transition and developing economies. The WTO Secretariat has also taken part in the annual sessions of the Working Party and other relevant meetings organized under the SCTCS.

36. Under the WP.6 Telecom Initiative, an exchange of correspondence between the Chair of WP.6 and the Chair of the “WTO Non-agricultural Products Market Access” negotiations (NAMA) has contributed to raising awareness in WTO of the potential relevance of Recommendation L for ongoing negotiations within the WTO.

Standardization Organizations

37. WP.6 collaborates closely with relevant organizations within the context of its “sectoral initiatives”, which advance practical ways to support across-the-board as well as sector-specific regulatory cooperation. In this context, the Working Party has established a partnership with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and its System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmospheres (IECEX).

38. In another example, WP.6 works closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and, in particular, its Conformity Assessment Board and three Conformity Assessment Systems. The Working Party works closely with the ISO and its Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) as well as several ISO Technical Committees (ISO/TC). In addition, WP.6 is a member of the Strategic Alliance and Regulatory Group (STAR), which provides strategic advice to ISO CASCO.

39. In addition, cooperation has continued with relevant ISO Technical Committees to support sectoral initiatives. The Chairperson of ISO/TC 127 is the coordinator of the Sectoral Initiative on Earthmoving Equipment.

40. The *Bureau International des Poids et Mesures* (BIPM) participates actively in the meetings of the WP.6 and is evaluating a possible use of UNECE Recommendation L in the field of legal metrology.

41. Since 2010, the Working Party has been an active member of the Network on Metrology, Accreditation and Standardization for Developing Countries (DCMAS).

Metrology and other areas of Standards, Quality and Metrology infrastructure

42. The *Bureau International des Poids et Mesures* (BIPM) participates actively in the meetings of the WP. 6, and is evaluating a possible use of the Recommendation L in the

field of legal metrology. Since 2010, the Working Party has been a member of the Network on Metrology, Accreditation and Standardization for Developing Countries (DCMAS), which includes the following organizations: Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM), International Committee of Weights and Measures (CIPM), International Accreditation Forum (IAF), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC), International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), International Committee for Legal Metrology (CIML), ISO, ITU and UNIDO.

Regulatory Cooperation

43. WP.6 collaborates closely with relevant organizations within the context of its “sectoral initiatives”, which advance practical ways to support across-the-board as well as sector-specific regulatory cooperation. Most recently, and within the sectoral initiative on “equipment used in environments with an explosive atmosphere”, the secretariat of the Working Party has established a partnership with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and its System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmosphere (IECEX). This partnership is supported by the German government through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

44. The secretariat was also invited to participate in OECD’s work on “International Regulatory Cooperation: the Role of International Organizations”, which involves collecting evidence on internal procedures and impacts of the rule-making activities of international organizations.

Collaboration in Risk Management in Regulatory Systems

45. The Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) brings together experts in specific risk-related areas from regulatory bodies, the business community, and international organizations (IEC, ISO, ITU and the World Bank Group), as well as academics and independent consultants. During 2015-16, the GRM strengthened its partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) by taking up the responsibility for a task force, within ISO TC 292, to coordinate UN organizations’ contributions to the development of standards needed in the context of the implementation of the “Sendai Framework for Action” as agreed at the Third WCDRR (World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction).

Partnerships with regional organizations in regulatory cooperation and standardization policies

EASC and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

46. The International Model on Regulatory Harmonization, a set of tools developed by UNECE to help regional trading blocs approximate their regulatory policies, is used extensively by the CIS in their regulatory cooperation efforts, which are led by the Interstate Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC).

The Eurasian Customs Union

47. The Eurasian Customs Union (CU) used WP.6 “Recommendation L” as a basis for developing common technical regulations. Representatives of the CU regularly report on the progress of the implementation of their common regulatory work to the meetings of the MARS Group and to the WP.6 Annual Session. Currently, the WP.6 Vice Chair is the Minister of Technical Regulations of the Customs Union.

48. A representative of the UNECE WP.6 secretariat also attends the Annual Meetings of the EASC – the Interstate Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification of the Commonwealth of Independence States (CIS).

The European Commission

49. The European Commission (EC) continued to support UNECE activities in the areas of standardization policies and regulatory cooperation. The EC contributed to the UNECE work in the sector of equipment used in environments with an explosive atmosphere, which it regards as international best practice.

50. The Commission also continues to participate in UNECE activities related to market surveillance and inspections, where UNECE has become the platform for the exchange of expertise between the EU and other member states. Finally, the European Commission was an active partner in the work of the newly established Group of Experts on risk management in regulatory framework.

51. The European Union Technical Barriers to Trade (EU TBT ACP) has recently agreed on the implementation of the GRM methodology on «Risk management in regulatory frameworks in the sector of fisheries». The African Regional Standardization Organization (ARSO) has proposed Namibia and Uganda as pilot countries for developing tools for cooperation between customs and enforcement authorities.

Partnerships in the area of agricultural quality standards

52. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) works closely with the European Commission to maintain the complete harmonization of marketing standards with UNECE standards.

53. It cooperates with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables to facilitate the common interpretation of UNECE standards and their application in international trade.

54. It cooperates with the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables as well as the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables in developing new and maintaining existing commercial quality standards and coordinating and harmonizing the work.

55. Cooperation has also taken place with FAO in the organization of the exhibition on Pulses and the conference on food loss and standards; with UNDP and GIZ in capacity building in Central Asia; and with the International Trade Centre of UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) on including ECE's standards in the ITC Standards Map, as well as through the provision of ECE training materials on ITC's Sustainability Xchange online platform.

Partnerships related to the Studies on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade

56. UNECE cooperates closely with international and regional organizations in designing action-oriented recommendations for removing regulatory and procedural trade barriers identified through the studies. The BIPM and OIML provided valuable comments that were integrated into the most recent study on regulatory and procedural to trade in Albania. Representatives from the two organizations, IEC and ILAC contributed to the inter-governmental discussions on removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Albania and the Republic of Moldova, which were held in May 2016 during the Steering Committee's High-Level Segment.

57. In addition, UNECE is working closely with UNDP in order to integrate the recommendations of the trade needs assessment studies into national UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and/or One UN processes. It is also working closely with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) to ensure complementarity.

VII. The holding of back-to-back meetings with the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

58. In its Decision document ECE/EX/22, the Executive Committee established the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and approved its Terms of Reference. Para 5 of the Terms of Reference stipulate that the annual 1.5 day sessions “shall be held back-to-back with the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships”.

59. After two sessions held (the first 31 August–1 September 2015 and the second on 26–27 May 2016), the Bureaux of the two bodies have carried out an analysis of the participants in their sessions and the feasibility of the back-to-back sessions. This analysis is attached in Annex II for the information of the Executive Committee.

60. As there is no common stakeholder community between the two bodies and as it is increasingly difficult for the UNOG Conference Services to identify meeting rooms for the back-to-back meetings at the Palais des Nations, the two Bureaux would like to suggest to the Executive Committee to reconsider the need for back-to-back meetings.

Annex I

Analysis of Delegates at the SCTCS and CICPPP Sessions for 2015 and 2016

BACKGROUND:

1. This annex summarizes the findings of an analysis of delegates attending the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity (SCTCS) first and second Sessions and the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP) ninth and tenth sessions in 2015 and 2016. The 2 Committees have met back-to-back for two years pursuant to the Commission Decision A(65) as reflected in document E/ECE/1468. Paragraph (g) of the said document states “that the Trade Committee and the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration will, from 2013 onwards, organize their two-day annual meetings, back to back, in the same week”.

2. In view of logistical and organizational issues related to holding the sessions back to back in the same week, both the SCTCS and CICPPP requested (SCTCS Decision 2016 – 7.2 and CICPPP Decision 2016 – 9.2) that their bureaux undertake an analysis of the delegates who have attended both Committees. The purpose of the analysis is to determine the impact, if any, of organizing the two sessions back-to-back. Both bodies also requested that the results of the analysis be reported to the UNECE Executive Committee for discussion.

3. The combined total number of delegates for SCTCS and CICPPP sessions in 2015 and 2016 was 320². Of these 17 delegates attended both sessions in 2015. There was no delegate who attended both sessions in 2016. Of the 17 delegates from 2015, eight travelled from outside Geneva. Of these, six were from the private sector, academia and NGOs and two represented government agencies from Romania and Ukraine. Among the nine other common delegates, eight represented the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva and one a Geneva-based international organization (the International Trade Centre).

Number of delegates that attended only one Committee session	Number of delegates that attended both Committee Sessions				
	17				Number of common delegates that travelled from outside Switzerland
303	Number of delegates from the Permanent Missions	Number of gov't. delegates from the capitals	Number of delegates from the private sector/ NGOs/ Academia	Number of delegates from int'l organizations	
	8	2	6	1	8

Source: Final list of participants of CICPPP and SCTCS sessions

² None of the UNECE secretariat staff were included in the analysis.

4. In 2015 and 2016, the theme of the SCTCS sessions was centred on ‘Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the UNECE region’, with a focus on Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 2015 and on Albania and Moldova in 2016. At the CICPPP sessions in 2015 and 2016, delegates discussed the role of Public-Private Partnerships and Innovation in Sustainable Development. Topics included PPP projects in France and Lebanon and national strategies for sustainable development in Kazakhstan, Switzerland and Ukraine. A ‘High level international conference on unlocking the economic potential for sustainable development’ was organized jointly by the two Committees in 2015.
5. There were no speakers who spoke at both Committees either in 2015 or in 2016. No speaker came from the same country or organization in a particular year.
6. Logistical and organizational problems related to organizing back-to-back sessions include:
- Difficulties in reserving a full week of meeting rooms (CICPPP 2-3 days and SCTCS 1.5 days). The UNECE’s quota is a maximum of three simultaneous meetings with interpretation per day for eight subprogrammes; therefore, it is very difficult to find a week when a sufficient number of days are available for back-to-back sessions. This means that the first two back-to-back sessions have been organized at times when there was no heavy meeting schedule, i.e. periods when many delegates do not wish to travel to Geneva (the first week of school and during the annual WHO meetings). In 2016, the lack of available meeting rooms resulted in the SCTCS having to be organized at the Swiss Centre International de Conférences de Genève, which, in turn, caused extra costs, even if the rent of the premises were covered by a kind contribution from the Swiss Government.
 - More limited resources for meeting preparations and additional pressure on secretariat staff due to simultaneous planning, consultations and document preparation for identical deadlines for two major meetings.
 - Significant difficulties/impossibilities to facilitate the flow of results in a timely and effective manner among expert and inter-governmental bodies³ (i.e. from project teams up to Teams of Specialists and Specialized Sections to Working Parties and then to the CICPPP and the SCTCS) due to scheduling requirements and number of bodies involved. Examples of problems this has caused are: having an SCTCS meeting 2-3 months before the meetings of its subsidiary bodies (as in 2015) so that it is reviewing reports and requests that are almost a year old or having to move the planned meeting of one of CICPPP’s Teams of Specialists so that their meetings are not in the same month (as in 2016). Many smaller missions also expressed concern that back-to-back meetings were difficult to cover as some are delegated also to cover various portfolios in parallel.

³ The CICPPP has two subsidiary Teams of Specialists, one of which has two meetings of project teams per year which “feed results” into the Teams of Specialists. The SCTCS has two subsidiary Working Parties, one of which has 4 subsidiary bodies that present results to it (WP.7 on Agricultural Quality Standards) and one of which has 3 Teams of Specialists which present results to it (WP.6 on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade).

Annex II

The organizational structure of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

