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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON CITRUS FRUIT

Fourteenth Session

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REVIEW OF THE WORK DONE BY THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON CITRUS FRUIT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Citrus Fruit was created in 1959 and held its First Session in 1960. It has held 13 sessions since then. It is therefore timely to review the work of the Group to date and to discuss strategic directions for its future activities. This document is intended to provide a basis for discussion.

II. THE CURRENT MANDATE OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON CITRUS FRUIT

2. The Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) revised the terms of reference of the IGG at its 56th Session in September 1981. The IGG adopted them at its Seventh Session in November 1986.

The terms of reference state:

- a) *The Group shall study problems affecting the long term equilibrium of production and consumption of citrus fruits and citrus products.*
- b) *The Group shall also study the economic aspects of problems arising from the perishable nature of citrus fruits.*
- c) *The Group shall consider how best to deal with any special difficulties which may exist or may be expected to arise.*

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3. This mandate is very broad. In fact, over its 46 years of existence the Group has addressed a wide range of issues relevant to citrus fruit. At each session, the Secretariat presents to the Group a review of the situation of the world citrus markets and the short-term outlook. It distributes its latest compendium of statistical data on production and trade of citrus and citrus juices. In addition, more specific issues are discussed. Over the past 15 years, between its Ninth Session (Cuba, 1991) and the present one, the Group has addressed issues that fall into the following categories (in descending order of frequency):

- Review of policy developments affecting citrus trade
- Review of project proposals to be submitted to the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)
- Review of activities of regional or international citrus networks
- Studies of specific markets that are important to citrus trade or that have growth potential
- Case studies of citrus-producing countries

4. In addition, the Group has also dealt with the following categories of topics, although less frequently:

- Long-term projections of citrus supply, demand and prices
- Promotion of citrus consumption
- Citrus juices
- Sanitary and phytosanitary issues in citrus trade (last two sessions)
- Nutritional aspects of citrus
- Comparison of costs of production for citrus

5. Delegates may wish to comment on the specific issues listed above and indicate whether they are still of relevance to international citrus trade.

III. FUTURE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE GROUP

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CITRUS SECTOR

6. In recent years, the following issues have attracted increasing attention from the citrus industry, governments and specialized media:

- The impacts of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations on trade in fresh citrus and citrus products
- The effects of Regional Trade Agreements on citrus trade
- Possible gains from multilateral trade liberalization for citrus traders
- Health value of fresh citrus and citrus juices
- Interaction of grapefruit juice with certain pharmaceutical drugs
- New varieties of citrus, in particular new easy-peeler varieties
- Organic citrus cultivation
- Supply-chain oriented private standards (e.g. EurepGap) and their impacts on citrus growers and exporters
- Adding value to citrus products

7. In view of the long term trend of declining citrus prices at grower and exporter level, the last item may be of particular interest to the Group. A number of strategies for adding value to fresh citrus have been explored in recent years. These include:

- Certified organic citrus and citrus products
- Other types of citrus production modes that are environment-friendly
- Fair-trade citrus and citrus juices
- Geographic indications for citrus

8. As for processed citrus products, there has been a partial shift away from frozen concentrated orange juice to not-from-concentrate orange juice. Strategies for adding value to citrus products include:

- Fresh cut citrus
- Not-from-concentrate (NFC) juices
- Juices enriched with vitamins and oligo-elements

9. The Group may wish to discuss whether it would be appropriate to put more emphasis on these new areas and which of them should have priority. In view of the decreasing resources available to the Secretariat, delegates may want to suggest ideas to address the new work areas.

10. Delegates may also wish to consider the extent to which the terms of reference of the Group have been fulfilled, whether they continue to be appropriate, and if this is not the case how they should be modified. The Group may wish to indicate whether they should remain as broad as they are or whether it would be desirable to make them more specific.

IV. FORMAT OF THE IGG SESSIONS

11. Under the present rules, the Group members are governments and intergovernmental organizations. Representatives from the private sector can only attend if they are invited by their government to participate in the national delegation or as observers. This has somewhat limited the direct participation of the citrus industry in the Group's meetings. While it does not seem feasible to change the rules of participation, delegates may wish to discuss the possibilities for holding informal symposia or seminars back-to-back with the Group's sessions to enhance communication and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

12. A seminar on citrus open to all types of participants (e.g. firms, grower associations, trade associations, non-governmental organizations, governments, research institutes, aid agencies) could be held the day before or after a session of the Group. This solution would facilitate wider participation of all the stakeholders in the citrus sector. Given the complexity of organizing such a meeting, the government and the citrus industry of the host country would be expected to play a leading role.

13. Delegates may wish to put forward other proposals to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the Group.

14. The Secretariat presents the above points for discussion purposes only.