The terms "side" and "lateral" are used with reference to side walls of the container when the container is viewed from the front in its upright position.

According to present invention there is provided a container for consumer articles. The container comprises a box portion comprising a box front wall, a box rear wall and two box side walls extending between the box front wall and the box rear wall. The container further comprises an inner frame comprising an inner frame front wall and inner frame side walls, wherein the inner frame front wall is arranged parallel and at a predefined distance to the box front wall. The container further comprises an additional flap comprising at least two opposing side edges, the first side edge being attached to an upper edge of the box front wall, the second side edge contacting a lower edge of the inner frame front wall, wherein the additional flap is hingedly connected to the upper edge of the box front wall; and wherein the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is at the same height as the upper edge of the box front wall, such that the additional flap extending between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is oriented orthogonal to the box front wall and the inner frame front wall.

With the container of the present invention, the effective capacity of a container can be easily adapted for packaging a collation of consumer articles having smaller size than the potentially available space inside the container. By modifying the position of the inner frame front wall, the capacity of the container can be easily adjusted to the size of the collation of consumer articles to be packaged in the container. The gap between the box front wall and the inner frame front wall is covered by the additional flap which is provided at the blank of the container. Further modifications of the blanks used for the container of the present invention are not necessary. Thus, already existing conventional machinery equipment can largely be used for manufacture of the container of the present invention.

The contact between the second side edge of the additional flap and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is a direct contact, which means that the additional flap abuts the lower edge of the inner frame front wall. Moreover, the additional flap contacts the lower edge of the inner frame front wall from below, such that the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is the only portion of the inner frame front wall that is in contact with the additional flap.

Preferably the length of the additional flap is designed such that it basically corresponds to the distance between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall. For reasons of stability and ease of handling the additional flap may have a length that is slightly larger than the distance between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall. The length of the additional flap might be for example about 1 millimeter larger than the distance between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall in order to make sure that the second side edge (or the far end) of the additional flap is safely locked beneath the lower edge of the inner frame front wall. In this way it can be prevented that the additional flap is released from under the lower edge of the inner frame front wall when the consumer

frame front wall. In order to increase rigidity further flaps can be incorporated. The additional reinforcing layers need not necessarily be of the same material as the inner frame itself. Additional layers of different materials may be adhered to the inner frame front wall. The layers can be made from cardboard, metal, plastic or any other suitable materials.

The inner frame used in the container of the present invention is less complex and therefore easier to manufacture than the inner frame used in a comparable container as disclosed in US 5,150,720.

Further preferably the container comprises a collation of consumer articles, which is tightly held between the box rear wall and the inner frame front wall. The collation of consumer articles is preferably wrapped in an inner liner so as to provide a bundle of consumer articles.

The present invention is also directed to a process for preparing a container for consumer articles. The process comprises the steps of providing a collation of consumer articles and providing a blank for forming an inner frame, the inner frame comprising an inner frame front wall and inner frame side walls. The steps further comprise forming the inner frame from the inner frame blank and placing, the inner frame on the collation of consumer products. The process further comprises the steps of providing a main blank for forming a container comprising a box portion with a front wall, a rear wall and two side walls extending between the front wall and the rear wall. An additional flap is provided comprising at least two opposing side edges, the first side edge being attached to an upper edge of the box front wall, wherein the additional flap is hingedly connected to the upper edge of the box front wall. The process further comprises the steps of forming a container from the main blank around the inner frame and the collation of consumer products and folding the additional flap such that the second side edge is in contact with the lower edge of the inner frame front wall, wherein the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is at the same height as the upper edge of the box front wall, such that the additional flap extending between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is oriented orthogonal to the box front wall and the inner frame front wall.

Preferably, the additional flap is folded by 90 degrees towards the interior of the container, such that the additional flap covers the gap between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall.

In one alternative of the process of the invention the additional flap is folded by 90 degrees before the box front wall of the container is folded onto the collation of consumer articles and the inner frame. This alternative is particularly useful if the material of the main blank is not flexible and therefore the additional flap must be folded in advance such that the second edge of the additional flap already arrives below the lower edge of the inner frame front wall, when the box front wall is folded onto the collation of consumer articles and the inner frame.

In another alternative of the process the additional flap is folded by 90 degrees after the box front wall of the container is folded onto the collation of consumer articles and the

CLAIMS

1. A container for consumer articles, the container comprising:

a box portion comprising a box front wall, a box rear wall and two box side walls extending between the box front wall and the box rear wall;

an inner frame comprising an inner frame front wall and inner frame side walls,

wherein the inner frame front wall is arranged parallel and at a predefined distance to the box front wall,

wherein the container further comprises an additional flap comprising at least two opposing side edges, the first side edge being attached to an upper edge of the box front wall, the second side edge contacting the lower edge of the inner frame front wall,

wherein the additional flap is hingedly connected to the upper edge of the box front wall; and

wherein the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is at the same height as the upper edge of the box front wall, such that the additional flap extending between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is oriented orthogonal to the box front wall and the inner frame front wall.

2. A container according to one of the previous claims, wherein the length of the additional flap corresponds to the distance between the box front wall and the inner frame front wall.

3. A container according to one of the previous claims, wherein the additional flap comprises at least one protrusion at at least one of its outer corners at the second side edge, which protrusions are located behind the inner side walls of the inner frame, when the additional flap is folded towards the inner frame front wall.

4. A container according to one of the previous claims, wherein the inner frame front wall comprises reinforcing means for increasing rigidity of the inner frame front wall.

5. A container according to one of the previous claims, wherein the reinforcing means is an additional flap attached to the lower edge of the inner frame front wall, the

additional flap being folded by 180 degrees upwards and glued to the inner side of the inner frame front wall.

6. A container according to one of the previous claims, further comprising a collation of consumer products, which is tightly held between the box rear wall and the inner frame front wall.

7. A container according to one of the previous claims, wherein the collation of consumer products is wrapped in an inner liner.

8. A container according to one of the previous claims, wherein the consumer products are cigarettes.

9. A process for preparing a container for consumer articles, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing collation of consumer products;

(b) providing a blank for forming an inner frame, the inner frame comprising an inner frame front wall and inner frame side walls,

(c) forming an inner frame from the inner frame blank;

(d) placing the inner frame on the collation of consumer products;

(e) providing a main blank for forming a container comprising a box portion comprising a front wall, a rear wall and two side walls extending between the front wall and the rear wall, and an additional flap comprising at least two opposing side edges, the first side edge being attached to an upper edge of the box front wall, wherein the additional flap is hingedly connected to the upper edge of the box front wall;

(f) forming a container from the main blank around the inner frame and collation of consumer products;

(g) folding the additional flap such that the second side edge is in contact with the lower edge of the inner frame front wall, wherein the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is at the same height as the upper edge of the box front wall, such that the additional flap extending between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall is oriented orthogonal to the box front wall and the inner frame front wall.

10. The process of claim 9 for preparing a container for consumer articles, wherein the additional flap is folded by 90 degrees towards the interior of the container, such that the additional flap covers the gap between the upper edge of the box front wall and the lower edge of the inner frame front wall.

11. The process of claim 10 for preparing a container for consumer articles, wherein the additional flap is folded by 90 degrees before step (f), i.e. before the container is formed from the main blank.

12. The process of claim 10 for preparing a container for consumer articles, wherein the additional flap is folded by 90 degrees after step (f), i.e. after the container is formed from the main blank.

13. The process of any of claims 9 to 12 for preparing a container for consumer articles, wherein an additional flap is attached to the lower edge of the inner frame front wall, the additional flap being folded by 180 degrees inwards and glued to the inner side of the inner frame front wall.