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REPORT OF THE UN/CEFACT STANDARDS LIAISON RAPPORTEUR

Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Standards Liaison Rapporteur *

* This document is **for information** and for distribution to the Tenth UN/CEFACT Plenary. It has been submitted without any formal editing.

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines key activities by UN/CEFACT's Standards Liaison Rapporteur with other standards setting organizations.

1. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING MANAGEMENT GROUP (MoU MG)

2.1 Eleventh meeting of the ISO IEC ITU UN/ECE MoU MG

The full minutes of the 24-25 November 2003 MoU MG meeting can be found at http://isotc.iso.ch/livelink/livelink/fetch/2000/2489/Ittf_Home/MoU-MG/Moumg166Rev1.pdf

UN/CEFACT used this MoU MG meeting as a public venue to re-iterate a UN/CEFACT commitment and continued support for current ebXML, UN/EDIFACT and other UN/CEFACT work. At the same time, we presented the forward looking UN/CEFACT CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) Draft e-Business Vision on formal business process modelling which advocates technology independence and implementation neutrality.

During the MoU MG meeting, there was a frank discussion within the general group on the OASIS – UN/CEFACT relationship, specifically ebXML related work. The conclusions of these discussions include:

- The MoU MG noting the clear commitment of UN/CEFACT to support ebXML as one of the core technologies for implementing their vision for a business collaborative framework.
- The MoU MG encouraged the development of UN/CEFACT Core Components to support multiple implementation techniques, including ebXML and Web Services.
- The realization of a need to provide more clarity in the current MoU Charter document which today only explicitly binds the four (4) de jure standards bodies (ISO, IEC, ITU, UN) to agreeing to non-duplicative work, as a condition of MoU membership. Invited International User Groups, including OASIS, OAGI, AIAG and others are not explicitly bound to those same conditions of non-duplicative work. UN/CEFACT will be proposing changes to the MoU Charter document Appendices at the next MoU MG meeting.

During the MoU MG meeting, OASIS reported that they have submitted the OASIS Universal Business Language (UBL) specifications to ISO TC154 for ISO Fast Track Approval. UBL specifications take a direct dependency on UN/CEFACT Core Components. OASIS gave no commitment with regard to transferring their UBL work program to UN/CEFACT. The UN/CEFACT position, to-date, remains committed to cooperating closely with OASIS on UBL.

The MoU MG meeting elected Howard Mason (ISO) as Chair from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005. Gabriel Barta (IEC) will be Secretary from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005.

2.2 Twelfth meeting of the ISO IEC ITU UN/ECE MoU MG

The twelfth meeting of the MoU MG will take place on 22-23 April 2004, after the writing of this report. A verbal summary of the twelfth meeting will be given during the Plenary.

3.0 OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 New UN/CEFACT Liaisons

In addition to current UN/CEFACT liaisons, new communications liaisons were established with the OASIS Web Services Business Process Execution Language (BPEL4WS) Technical Committee, and also the Web Services Interoperability consortium (WS-I). In addition, we established a communication liaison with the Content Reference Forum (CRF), an open effort to facilitate the global digital content market.

3.2 Impact of current UN/CEFACT Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) developments

Recent events concerning achieving clarity, preciseness and legal enforceability of UN/CEFACT's present and future IPR policy has and continues to have a negative effect on current and new liaisons. Several new enquiries for liaison have been received, such as from W3C, but the uncertainty of UN/CEFACT's IPR policy development is inhibiting new liaisons from being established. It is unfortunate to have to report that UN/CEFACT have already received formal messages from some current liaisons, such as the Content Reference Forum (CRF), who have informed us of discontinuing their liaison with UN/CEFACT.

We must remain committed to keeping open communication with all parties and once a new UN/CEFACT IPR policy has been established, all efforts must be made to re-establish good liaison with all organizations. Effective communication of UN/CEFACT's new IPR policy will be essential.

3.3 OASIS Relationship

UN/CEFACT's goal with an OASIS relationship should be to establish a cordial, open, non-competitive relationship based on the avoidance of duplication of each other's respective work programmes; ideally done in such way which does not require large degrees of effort to coordinate. To do so, UN/CEFACT and OASIS need to very clearly identify the main focus of the work programmes, re-build trust between the organizations, and enter into a clearly articulated binding agreement with mechanisms in place to avoid and /or eliminate duplication of work in either organization.

With the assistance of the Secretariat, dialogue with the OASIS Executive is taking place as of the time of writing this report.

3.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to facilitate the maintenance of current and the creation of new UN/CEFACT Liaisons with other organizations. As discussed during the last CSG meeting, there is an issue of UN/CEFACT empowerment to the ISO IEC ITU UN Memorandum of Understanding Management Group (MoU MG). All UN representatives should operate with a single voice, and the signatory to the MoU MG is UNECE and not UN/CEFACT or the Groups. There should be a standard liaison operating policy to always have a pre-meeting session, before any MoU MG, to clear the UNECE and the secretariat positions with UN/CEFACT.

Productive liaisons at UN/CEFACT working group levels, directly between participants, should be encouraged for efficiency. Clear working procedures covering the standard practice of forming and operating liaisons, ensuring that current and new Intellectual Property (standards, studies, reports, whitepapers jointly developed) are required to ensure an open and transparent liaison management process. The development and publication of standard UN/CEFACT Liaison policies and guidelines should be considered a priority work. Enlisting the support of a future SSP, with technical infrastructure, will facilitate the communication and awareness of current and pending Liaisons.
