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Item 15 of the provisional agenda

**OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**

Note by the secretariat

This document has been prepared for information. It describes the operational activities undertaken in support of the work programme of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development between 1 March 2000 and 15 March 2001. With the exception of the two projects found at the beginning of this document, operational activities are listed in chronological order taking into account that some dates overlap.

### **Project for Assistance in the Implementation of Trade Facilitation Measures**

1. Assistance in the area of trade facilitation has been provided by the Czech Republic and the UN/ECE since 1997 in the framework of a project entitled, “**Support to Trade Facilitation Measures and UN/EDIFACT Implementation in Selected Eastern European Countries.**” Funding for this project was first approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in 1996 and, subsequently, has been regularly extended on a yearly basis.

2. This project has been implemented in cooperation with Czech experts (specifically, the Czech national trade facilitation body - FITPRO), UN/ECE trade facilitation experts and specialists from the beneficiary countries. During the last 12 months, Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine were among the project beneficiaries. Seminars, consultations, and an exchange of experience and information targeted at government officials and representatives of the private sector, as well as an international conference on electronic business, were organized both in the Czech Republic and in beneficiary countries.

### **Project for Capacity Building to Improve Trade Finance and Investment Prospects for the Russian Timber Sector**

3. The project is implemented in the Arkhangelsk and Leningrad Oblasts of the Russian Federation. Extension of the project to other regions of the Russian Federation is envisaged, notably the Far East (Khabarovsk Krai and Primorsky Krai), and the Black Sea region.

4. The project consists of the following activities:

- Sustainable management practices for the Russian timber industry
- Improved trade procedures in the timber industry
- Innovative trade financing techniques
- Capacity building for improved foreign investment
- Timber port operations

5. The project has proved to be an excellent way to extend the Trade Division's norms, standards, and recommendations for the benefit of the private sector. Seminars and workshops held under this project during 2000 and early 2001 were:

#### **2000**

St. Petersburg, 3-10 February:	Roundtable on timber port logistics and Customs cooperation
Rotterdam, 21-25 February	Forum on timber port logistics
The Hague, 23 May	Roundtable on timber trade
Arkhangelsk, 26-30 June	Roundtable on timber trade
St. Petersburg, 3-4 July	Roundtable on timber trade
Arkhangelsk, 4-7 September	Workshop on logistics of sustainable use of biomass
St. Petersburg, 11-12 September	Roundtable on timber trade logistics
The Hague, 24 November	Roundtable on timber trade

**2001**

Arkhangelsk, 27 Feb.- 2 March	Conference on Biomass Logistics
St. Petersburg, 5-6 March	Sustainable development and certification

More details of this project can be found in document TRADE/2000/9.

**Institution building in Support of Arbitration in Southeast Europe**

(Vienna, 18 February 2000, Ljubljana 7 July, 9 October 2000 and 19 January 2001)

6. The secretariat is providing support to the arbitration project of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). The objective of this project is to strengthen the commercial dispute resolution capacities and institutions in that region. So far, support has included: organizing a half day's discussion on the SECI project during the meeting of the UN/ECE Advisory Group on International Commercial Arbitration in February 2000 (which concluded with an agreement to provide input to and review the guidelines and evaluation framework which are planned outputs from the SECI project); assisting the SECI secretariat in recruiting group members and drafting various working documents; and providing technical input during the Group's meetings.

**Real Estate Markets and Trade Promotion**

(Geneva, Switzerland, 2-3 March 2000)

7. A seminar to which local authorities from transition economies were invited was jointly organized with FEDRE (the Foundation for the Economy and Sustainable Development of the Regions of Europe). The seminar was entitled, "Trade and Investment Promotion from a Local and Regional Perspective" and emphasized the role of local authorities in the development of effective real estate markets and an investment friendly environment.

**Intellectual Property Rights Country Support: Estonian Pilot Project**

(Country consultative meeting: Tallinn, 6-7 April 2000)

8. The objectives of this project were to facilitate the sustainable enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in Estonia; to create a climate favourable to indigenous technological development, and foreign and local investment and to develop a methodology for use in subsequent country support projects.

9. To implement its objectives, the Advisory Group, with assistance from the secretariat:
- produced a report on the status of intellectual property protection in Estonia;
  - held consultations with high-level Government officials;
  - met jointly with Estonian experts to draw up recommendations for the Estonian Government;

**Workshop on ISO 14000 environmental management system (EMS) standards in the chemical industry**  
(Budapest, 28-29 March 2000)

10. This Workshop was organized jointly by the UN/ECE Ad hoc Group of Experts on the Chemical Industry and the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies in cooperation with and at the invitation of, the Government of Hungary. Some 70 participants from 18 countries took part in the event, which was designed to use the chemical industry as a model for introducing ISO 14000 and its related EMS standards to countries in transition.

**Lectures on international standardization of perishable produce**  
(Beirut, 27-29 April 2000)

11. The secretariat gave a lecture to an expert group meeting in Beirut on the application of UN/ECE standards as a means of trade facilitation and market development.

**Practical Aspects of Eliminating Obstacles to Efficient Trade Finance in Transition Economies**  
(Riga, 26-27 May 2000)

12. This Seminar was intended to: identify barriers to the unobstructed financing of trade in transition economies; identify practical solutions to existing problems, including new export finance schemes; and produce recommendations for the governmental bodies concerned. The Seminar was developed in collaboration with the private sector and, in particular, the Riga-based Baltic Transit Bank which co-sponsored the event. The proceedings have been prepared and will be published as ECE/TRADE/267.

**CIS Support: Technical Harmonization and Standardization**  
(Tbilisi, June 2000) and (Lvov, October 2000)

13. The secretariat took part in the sessions of the CIS Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology in Georgia (Tbilisi, June 2000) and Ukraine (Lvov, October 2000) and made presentations on UN/ECE standards-related activities. The Chairman of the CIS Interstate Council took part in the tenth session of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies: 6-8 November 2000) and praised the importance of issues of concern to CIS which were raised and discussed by the Working Party.

**Industrial Development: Steel**  
(11-12 September, Budapest)

14. The secretariat organized for the ad hoc Group of Experts on Steel a Seminar on "Trends in steel consumption - Responding to Market Needs" in Budapest. In attendance were 140 experts from 31 countries, 95% coming from the industry. The Seminar aimed at consolidating, at a global level, the main trends in steel consumption in order to anticipate the types of investments required in the eastern and central European steel sector

**Collaboration on E-Macedonia for All**

(Skopje, 2-3 October 2000)

15. At the request of the President's Office of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the secretariat developed a framework for assistance to the national "E-Macedonia for All" programme to be developed further under the auspices of the UN/ECE Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development. The UN/ECE secretariat will assist in the development of a Centre for the Digital Economy, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN/ECE regional conference on digital economy will be organized in Skopje in June 2001.

**1st UN/ECE Regional Conference: Digital Economy and Internet Enterprise Development in Romania and South East Europe**

(Bucharest, 10 October 2000)

16. The secretariat organized this conference for 300 national and regional participants in collaboration with the Romanian Ministry of Industry and Trade in order to raise awareness of the impact of e-business on the economy and to identify the currently available government policy instruments relevant to the development of the digital economy, as well as the status of those instruments. The Ministry requested the UN/ECE secretariat to organize a follow-up conference in 2001 or 2002 in Romania

**Industrial Development: Steel**

(China, 15-22 October 2000)

17. The UN/ECE ad hoc Group of Experts on Steel organized a study tour of the Chinese steel industry. Participation included 40 experts from 20 countries, 85% coming from the industry. The study tour aimed at providing input to countries in the UN/ECE region that are currently facing the necessity of restructuring heavy industries by informing participants about China's experience in restructuring its steel industry, the resulting quality level of Chinese capacities and measures it implemented to face the consequences of restructuring.

**Collaboration on the Digital Economy and Internet Enterprise Development in Georgia**

(Tbilisi, 20-25 October 2000)

18. The secretariat contributed a presentation on the economic potential of Internet enterprise development in the region to a Workshop on E-Commerce for Georgia. The secretariat also identified an institutional collaborative framework for a project for development of the digital economy to be carried out by the UN/ECE Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development in close cooperation with the Government of Georgia. A joint regional conference on e-business is being considered in collaboration with the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> South-Eastern European E-Commerce Conference**

(Sofia, 24-26 October 2000)

19. At the invitation of the South Eastern European Digital Economy Project (SEED) of the European Commission, the secretariat gave a presentation on e-development issues relevant for the region at the above conference. A follow-up activity was suggested as a joint effort between the SEED programme and the UN/ECE Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development and the Bulgarian delegation has indicated that they plan to submit such a proposal to the Team of Specialists at its March 2001 session.

## **Agricultural Quality Standards**

(Moscow, 24-27 October 2000)

20. The Russian Federation has gradually become more active in this aspect of UN/ECE's work during recent years. To further encourage their participation and that of other CIS countries, a meeting of rapporteurs on standardization of seed potatoes was held in Moscow from 24 to 27 October 2000 following an invitation from the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technologies. It was attended by delegations from seven countries, accounting for more than 80% of world production, and also by the EU. The meeting was organized by the UN/ECE secretariat Agricultural Standards Unit.

## **Joint Project on Internet Startup Development in transition economies**

(Brussels, 3-5 November 2000)

21. The UN/ECE secretariat agreed to collaborate with the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Commission on an Internet Startups project as a joint programme element for the development of the digital economy in transition economies to be carried out with the Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development. Further collaboration is also being pursued with the European Commissions' directorates general on the Information Society and on Enterprise.

## **Lecture on Trade Facilitation**

(Beirut, 8-10 November 2000)

22. The secretariat gave a lecture on trade facilitation to the UN/ESCWA Expert Group Meeting on Trade Facilitation and E-Commerce but informal discussions were also held on the Mediterranean project.

## **Intellectual Property Rights Country Support Projects: Latvia and Lithuania**

(Riga, 13-14 November 2000 and Vilnius, 16-17 November 2000)

23. These two country support projects took the same format as the Estonian pilot project carried out at the beginning of April.

**The Digital Economy and Internet Enterprise Development in Belarus**

(Minsk, 17-19 January 2001)

24. At the invitation of the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Investments of Belarus, the UN/ECE secretariat undertook a fact-finding mission to Minsk with the goal of assisting the Government in establishing an Advisory Council on the Digital Economy and a Centre for Internet Enterprise Development. The secretariat made a preliminary assessment on the Teleinternet project of the Ministry and forwarded recommendations concerning e-society development issues. It was agreed that the Ministry would present its proposal for further collaboration at the 20 March 2001 session of the Team of Specialists.

**The Digital Divide, the Internet and Intellectual Property Rights**

(London, 1-3 March 2001)

25. At the invitation of the US/UK Patent and Trademark Offices, the UN/ECE secretariat contributed to a three-day Conference on the Internet and Intellectual Property Crime held in March, in London. A follow-up activity is envisaged to be developed by the Team of Specialists in close collaboration with the Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The latter body has expressed interest in taking part in the forthcoming activities of the Team of Specialists and, in particular, those related to regional conferences.

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