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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT
Sixth session, 28 and 31 May 2002
Item 20 of the provisional agenda

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON TRADE FACILITATION
SIMPLER PROCEDURES FOR WORLD TRADE GROWTH**

29-30 May 2002

PROGRAMME*

This document is being presented for **information only**.

* Subject to change

GE.02-30845

TRADE FACILITATION

*Recognizing the case for further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and the need for enhanced technical assistance and capacity building in this area, we agree that negotiations will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus, at that Session on modalities of negotiations. In the period until the Fifth Session, the Council for Trade in Goods shall review and as appropriate, clarify and improve relevant aspects of Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT 1994 and identify the **trade facilitation** needs and priorities of Members, in particular developing and least-developed countries. We commit ourselves to ensuring adequate technical assistance and support for capacity building in this area.*

From the Ministerial Declaration of the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, Doha, Qatar, 9-14 November 2001, paragraph 27.

The link between trade facilitation and competitiveness in the international economy has become increasingly close. At a time of concerns about both the slowing down of the world economy and security in the movement of goods around the world, especially after the tragic events of September 2001, practical measures making international trade procedures simpler and more reliable are an urgent necessity. In response to this challenge, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which has a long experience in developing trade facilitation instruments, will organize on 29-30 May 2002 an International Forum on Trade Facilitation in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and all United Nations regional commissions, the secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and other organizations with an interest in trade facilitation. The objective is to provide a neutral forum in a United Nations setting, where decision-makers from industry and Governments will meet and exchange views on the possible way to advance trade facilitation in the new global environment. The Forum will aim at a balanced representation of all regions in the world, bringing together a wide range of organizations and businesses with an interest in trade facilitation, and is expected to make an input to the multilateral negotiations on trade. Speakers and participants will include government Ministers and other senior officials responsible for trade policy, customs and other relevant fields; senior decision-makers in the business community, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; and prominent experts in trade facilitation, e-business and transport issues. Key speakers will include the Minister of International Trade and Investment of the United Kingdom, the Director-General of WTO and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

Forum participants are also invited to attend the plenary sessions of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) and of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), as well as the Round Table on Trade Facilitation in Transition Economies on 31 May 2002.

Schedule for the UNECE Trade Facilitation week, 27-31 May 2002							
	Day 1 Monday 27 May	Day 2 Tuesday 28 May		Day 3 Wednesday 29 May	Day 4 Thursday 30 May	Day 5 Friday 31 May	
a.m.	Plenary Session of the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)	Annual Session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED)		International Forum on Trade Facilitation	International Forum on Trade Facilitation	Round Table on Implementing trade facilitation in transition economies. Adoption of Forum recommendations	UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) meeting
p.m.	UN/CEFACT plenary session	CTIED session	UN/CEFACT plenary session	International Forum on Trade Facilitation	International Forum on Trade Facilitation	Committee session report approval	CSG meeting

Round Table on the Implementation of Trade Facilitation in Transition Economies

Following the International Forum on Trade Facilitation, a two-hour Round Table on the Implementation of Trade Facilitation in Transition Economies, will be held on the morning of 31 May under the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development. The Round Table will identify and prioritise relevant trade facilitation issues for transition economies in the light of current experiences and the increasing importance of trade facilitation in development. Requirements for implementation assistance will also be examined, taking into account existing initiatives in this region.

The panel for the Round Table will include speakers from the Czech Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. Ample time will be provided for discussion of the points raised by the speakers.

The Round Table is also open to the public.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Time	Wednesday, 29 May 2002	Time	Thursday, 30 May 2002
8:30	<i>Registration / Coffee</i>	9:15	<i>Coffee</i>
9:30	Opening Session	10:00	Session IV: Achieving an Open and Inclusive Environment: the Role of the International Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical measures for future trade facilitation • New instruments simplifying trade procedures • Trade-related technical assistance • Public-private cooperation • Trade facilitation in the multilateral trade negotiations
10:15	Session I: Defining the Trade Facilitation Agenda for the 21st Century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade facilitation and globalization • Facilitation in the new world environment • Trade facilitation – Everyone wins! • The challenges of facilitating the flow of commerce in a tightened security environment • Trade facilitation in a developing country 		
13:15	<i>Lunch</i>	13:15	<i>Lunch</i>
15:00 - 18:00	Session II: Setting the Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs and benefits of trade facilitation • Trade facilitation and post-conflict confidence-building 	15:00 - 18:00	Session V: (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade facilitation, reducing transaction costs and improving security • The specific problems of landlocked countries
	Session III: Implementation: the Role of the Business Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to achieve maximum trade facilitation in a regulatory environment • The impact of trade facilitation on a standard supply chain • Solutions, standards and best practices in the triangle: manufacturer - express carrier – retailer • The need for standardization in a global corporation 		Closing Session: The way forward and recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade facilitation as a prerequisite for successful e-business • Recommendations for action to facilitate international trade

OVERVIEW OF THE FORUM

BACKGROUND

Trade facilitation measures are intended to speed up the movement of goods and trade information across borders, thus bolstering economic growth, while enhancing security controls. These measures involve traders, Customs authorities, forwarders, banks, insurers and other actors engaged in international trade. Recent studies show that up to 15% of transaction costs can be saved by trade facilitation. In this context, the International Forum on Trade Facilitation will provide an opportunity for Governments, international organizations and businesses to raise practical concerns, specific to their field of activity and geographical area. They will address the specific problems of developing, transition and landlocked economies and of small and medium-sized enterprises. The Forum will contribute to a broader understanding of trade facilitation, beyond purely customs or market access matters, acknowledging that various definitions of the scope of trade facilitation exist. In addition, it may address such issues as: transparency and integrity in international trade; the role of rules and codes; trade facilitation techniques in ports; harmonization of electronic data interchange standards; the contribution of trade facilitation to confidence building; and the cost and benefit of implementing trade facilitation.

In the current economic climate of slowing economic growth and increased security concerns, the need for efficient, simple and reliable international trade procedures (information flows and official controls involved in the movement of goods across borders) in an open and inclusive trading system has taken on dramatically increased importance. Parallel advances in both enhancing control efficiency and the need to further facilitate legitimate trade movements have the potential to strengthen each other for a safer and more reliable trading environment in support of global economic growth and poverty reduction. Concerns have been raised regarding the interoperability of standards and procedures and the growing gap among countries in this important area. The Forum will focus on an interactive discussion on these issues. It will look for ways to enhance the efficiency and

transparency of trade procedures and the overall climate for investment. It will assist developing and transition economies in defining priorities and needs for capacity building, and the donor community in defining steps that need to be taken. With these objectives in mind, the Forum will review the main policy implications, against the perspective of prospective multilateral trade negotiations. A background concept paper will be prepared and distributed prior to the Forum. It will serve as a focal point for discussion.

OBJECTIVES

The Forum is expected to define new practical measures and adopt policy recommendations that would affect the progress of trade facilitation in the future. Innovative approaches are even more necessary in times of uncertainty to curb the negative effects of recession and increasing costs of moving goods across borders. In particular, the Forum will:

- enhance the understanding of the benefits of trade facilitation for the public and private sectors, particularly: (a) economic benefits; (b) job creation; (c) promoting transparency; (d) enhanced government revenue; and (e) improved competitiveness;
- promote mechanisms for enhancing capacity building in developing and transition economies to give substance to the Doha WTO development agenda;
- underline the multidimensional aspects of trade facilitation;
- highlight the role of trade facilitation and its use of ICT in supporting e-business;
- identify areas where new instruments, including standards, are needed;
- identify opportunities of better cooperation among Governments, international organizations and the private sector;
- stress the need for coordination among inter-governmental organizations to take advantage of their respective competences and make the best use of scarce resources;
- suggest harmonized methods for measuring progress and “knowledge sharing” in the implementation of trade facilitation;

- decide on follow-up action and implementation.

A publication containing the policy recommendations and papers produced for the Forum will be prepared.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The Forum targets the following groups:

- government policy makers;
- leaders of the business community;
- representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, donor agencies, national trade facilitation bodies, and trade associations;
- academics and experts in trade facilitation

The Forum will encourage greater participation of developing and transition economies in the global trade facilitation debate.

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND

The expected benefits of the Forum are:

- for *policy makers*, participate in the process of defining the practical steps to facilitate trade thus enhancing world economic growth; possibility to meet major actors in this process, gathered for the first time; and, consequently, transform the recommendations for practical steps in trade facilitation into national trade policy;
- for *leaders of the business community*, voice their concerns in the preparation of the agenda for action in developing simpler and efficient trade procedures; meet key decision-makers in Governments with whom they deal in their business practices; interact with major players in trade facilitation; make their companies better known to the international community;
- for *intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations*, become involved in a wide, cross-sector gathering of government and business

representatives, and carry out a “reality check”; progress inter-institutional cooperation in preparing the next steps of trade facilitation; promote the idea of an open and inclusive environment for trade facilitation;

- for *academics and experts*, become part of the development of concepts and strategy for future trade facilitation.

Participants will be able to meet with experts from all over the world and discuss exciting opportunities for enhancing world trade and economic growth, become acquainted with the latest trade facilitation techniques and regulatory developments and gain insider knowledge of policy issues in trade facilitation.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND FOLLOW-UP CAPACITY-BUILDING PLANS

The Forum is expected to:

- adopt and promote the implementation of a number of recommendations on the necessary practical measures for trade facilitation in the future;
- propose a practical United Nations initiative fostering trade facilitation around the world, focused on recommendations for action by Governments, the business community and international organizations;
- provide guidance for publishing an overview of the achievements to date in trade facilitation;
- contribute to developing the political will for implementing trade facilitation in the various groups of countries;
- provide input to the multilateral negotiations on trade facilitation;
- contribute to the public-private partnership in trade facilitation.

DAY ONE, Wednesday, 29 May

8:30 Registration

9:30 Opening Session

Executive Secretary, UNECE

Mr. Mike MOORE
Director-General, WTO

Mr. Rubens RICUPERO
Secretary-General, UNCTAD

Mr. Michel DANET
Secretary-General, WCO

Ms. Maria LIVANOS CATTALAI
Secretary-General, ICC

Session I: Defining the Trade Facilitation Agenda for the 21st Century

Chairperson:

Mr. Maxim MEDVEDKOV
Deputy Minister of Economic Development
and Trade, Russian Federation

Rapporteur:

Ms. Vivianne VENTURA DIAS
Director, International Trade and Integration
Division, ECLAC

Speakers:

Trade facilitation and globalisation

Mr. José-Maria FIGUERES-OLSON
Managing Director, World Economic Forum,
and former President of Costa Rica

Facilitation in the new world trade environment

Mr. Pascal LAMY
Trade Commissioner, European Commission

Trade facilitation – Everyone wins!

Baroness SYMONS
Minister of State for International Trade and
Investment, United Kingdom

Trade facilitation - a catalyst for change

Dr. Mohammed NAHAVANDIAN
Trade Envoy Plenipotentiary,
Islamic Republic of Iran

The challenges of facilitating the flow of commerce in a heightened security environment

Mr. Michel DANET
Secretary-General, WCO

13:15 – 15:00 LUNCH BREAK

Session II: Setting the Framework

Costs and benefits of trade facilitation

Mr. Anthony KLEITZ
Head, Trade Liberalisation and Review
Division, OECD

Trade facilitation and post-conflict confidence- building

Dr. Erhart BUSEK
Special Coordinator, Stability Pact for South
Eastern Europe and SECI Coordinator, former
Vice-Chancellor of Austria

Session III: Implementation: the Role of the Business Community

Chairperson:

Ms. Maria LIVANOS CATTALAI
Secretary-General, ICC

Rapporteur:

Mr. Patrick GANNON
Chief Executive, OASIS

Speakers:

How to achieve maximum trade facilitation in a regulatory environment

Mr. Rolf M. JEKER
Société Générale de Surveillance SA (SGS)

The impact of trade facilitation on a standard supply chain

Mr. Vratislav KULHANEK
Chairman of the Board, Skoda Auto

Solutions, standards and best practices in the triangle: manufacturer – express carrier – retailer

Mr. Julian OLIVER
Director-General, International Express
Carriers Conference (IECC)

Supply chains and facilitation of payments

Mr. John HAMMOND
Head, Supply Chain Services, Standard
Chartered Bank

Community networks for trade facilitation – an implementer's experience

Mr. Raymond WEE (discussant)
Former Manager, Mauritius Network Services

18:30 COCKTAIL RECEPTION

at the Restaurant des Délégués,
Palais des Nations, 8th floor
All participants are invited

DAY TWO, THURSDAY, 30 MAY

10:00 Session IV: - Achieving an Open and Inclusive Environment: the Role of the International Organizations

Chairperson:

Mr. Rubens RICUPERO
Secretary-General, UNCTAD

Rapporteur:

Ms. Esperanza DURAN
Director, Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC)

Speakers:

Practical measures for future trade facilitation

Mr. Octavio MAIZZA-NETO
Assistant Director-General and Director,
Strategic Planning, Coordination and
Inter-Agency Affairs, UNIDO

Mr. Barry CABLE
Director, Transport Division, ESCAP

New instruments simplifying trade procedures

Mr. Michel Vanden ABEELE
Director-General, Taxation and Customs
Union, European Commission

Trade-related technical assistance

Mr. John WILSON
Lead Economist, Development Research
Group, World Bank

Public-private cooperation

Mr. Georg KELL
Executive Head, United Nations Global
Compact

Trade facilitation in the multilateral trade negotiations

Mr. Andrew STOLER
Deputy Director-General, WTO

Session V: The Stake of Developing and Transition Economies in Trade Facilitation

Chairperson:

Lord BHATIA
Chairman, Simpler Trade Procedures Board
(SITPRO)

Rapporteur:

Prof. Patrick MESSERLIN
Director, Groupe de l'Economie mondiale,
Fondation nationale des Sciences politiques,
Paris

Speakers:

Capacity-building for trade facilitation

Vice-minister of Trade, China
(to be confirmed)

Mr. Alexander M. AREVAL
Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Customs and
Head of the Management Information System and
Technology Group

Developing countries' priorities on trade facilitation

Dr. Ahmed El-GUWEILY
Secretary-General, Council of Economic
Unity, former Minister of Trade, Egypt

Mr. Peter GAKUNU
Economic Secretary, Ministry of Finance,
Kenya

13:15 - 15:00 LUNCH BREAK

Session V (continued):

Trade facilitation, reducing transaction costs and improving security

Mr. Nikolay VASSILEV
Minister of the Economy and Deputy Prime
Minister, Bulgaria

The specific problems of landlocked countries

Mr. KELDIBEKOV
Vice-Minister of Finance, Kyrgyzstan

The way forward and recommendations:

Chairperson:

Amb. Luzius WASESCHA
Delegate of the Swiss Government for Trade
Agreements

Rapporteur:

Mr. Christian FRÜHWALD
Chairman, UN/CEFACT

Speakers:

Trade facilitation as a prerequisite for successful e-business

Mr. Bernard VERGNES
Chairman Emeritus, Microsoft, EMEA

Recommendations for action to facilitate international trade

Ms. Carol COSGROVE-SACKS
Director, Trade Division, UNECE

END OF FORUM : 18:00 on 30 May

REGISTRATION AND ENQUIRIES

The Forum will be held with simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian. There are no charge fees for registration. Participants are responsible for arranging their own travel and hotel accommodation in Geneva.

*As places are limited, completed **registration** forms should be sent as soon as possible and **no later than 10 May 2002** to:*

Mrs. Dominique Rames
Trade Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Tel.: (+41 22) 917 2481
Fax: (+41 22) 917 0037
E-mail: dominique.rames@unece.org

*For further information and hotel reservations, please see the website
www.unece.org/forums*

*Please consult the web page of the Forum as soon as possible for preferential hotel rates:
www.unece.org/trade/forums/forum02/registration/hotel_info.htm*

ACCESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS PREMISES

Security at the Palais des Nations has been significantly increased. Participants must first obtain their personal security badges, which will have been already prepared at the Villa Les Feuillantines, located near the Palais des Nations (see attached map), and only then they can be allowed to enter the United Nations premises.

Therefore participants are requested to complete the Conference Registration Form overleaf and return it to the secretariat not later than **10 May 2002**. An electronic version of the Form is available on request or can be downloaded from the Forum website www.unece.org/forums

ENQUIRIES about participation should be addressed to the Forum Coordinator:

Mr. Mario Apostolov
Trade Division, Office 437
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10

Tel. (+41 22) 917 11 34
Fax. (+41 22) 917 00 37
E-mail: mario.apostolov@unece.org
<http://www.unece.org/forums>



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

Please return to the
UNECE Secretariat
Fax: N°: +41-22-917 0479

REGISTRATION FORM

I will be representing: State/Organization/Agency

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Participant	Family Name	First Name
Mr./Ms.		

I will be participating in the following event(s):
(please indicate your status of participation for each event)

1.	International Forum on Trade Facilitation			29 and 30 May 2002	
	Head of Delegation		Are you based in Geneva as a representative of your Permanent Mission? YES NO	Observer Organization	
	Delegation Member			NGO (ECOSOC Accredited)	
	Observer Country			Other (please specify (University, Private Sector, etc.))	
2.	Plenary session of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)			27 and 28 May 2002	
	Head of Delegation		Are you based in Geneva as a representative of your Permanent Mission? YES NO	Observer Organization	
	Delegation Member			NGO (ECOSOC Accredited)	
	Observer Country			Other (please specify (University, Private Sector, etc.))	
3.	Annual session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED)			28 and 31 May 2002	
	Head of Delegation		Are you based in Geneva as a representative of your Permanent Mission? YES NO	Observer Organization	
	Delegation Member			NGO (ECOSOC Accredited)	
	Observer Country			Other (please specify (University, Private Sector, etc.))	

Participation dates	From:	To:
Organization/Enterprise:		Title in Organization/Enterprise:
Passport or ID Number:		Valid until:
Official Telephone Number: +		Fax: +
E:mail Address:		URL:
Permanent Official Address:		
.....		
City:	Postal Code:	Country:
Address in Geneva:		

