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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Eighth session, 27-30 May 2002

**Proposal for Future Structure and Organization of the UN/CEFACT
Permanent Working Groups**

Submitted by the Head of the United Kingdom Delegation *

The present report is being submitted to the Plenary for information.

* The present document is reproduced in the form in which it was received by the secretariat.

This document is the result of a number of discussions with colleagues from home and abroad. While we are content that the proposals represent valuable progress, we feel that it is important to reinforce this direction in order to ensure that UN/CEFACT moves as rapidly as is practicable towards an even clearer structure focused on the cost-effective delivery of tangible benefits in trade facilitation and electronic business.

- 1) The primary focus of UN/CEFACT needs to be on Trade Facilitation and the improvement of Business Processes. i.e. on tangible economic benefits to business and government. We should therefore make it clear that the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG) is the key group reporting to the Plenary, and that the other groups exist to support it.
 - 2) The TBG has the responsibility to work for the –
 - identification and resolution of trade facilitation issues (including the key non-tariff barriers to trade ; benchmarking to establish best practice; simplification and standardisation of how authorities collect and disseminate information on trade and border activity; metrics for performance at borders; coping well with differences of geography and culture, etc.)
 - definition of simple, standard, speedy, certain and low cost trade, business and administrative processes (using agreed techniques and methodologies)
 - definition of standard documentation and information used to support the trading processes. (including TOPFORM and UN.e.docs)
 - definition of how electronic business should be used to enable the agreed trade and business processes. This includes identifying the key requirements to standardise data, codes, messages, master data, etc. according to the principles of Simpl.e.business.
 - 3) We need to ensure that we have more involvement by people with direct and substantial experience in the areas of trade, business and administration. Hence we need a small Policy Group with such experts to support the Plenary and its Chair. Also, we need to ensure that the same skills are active within the TBG.
 - 4) The Information Content Management Group (ICG) supports the TBG by doing the detailed work on data definitions, core components, coding systems, messages, master data, etc, independently of technology issues, to ensure that these are simple and standard, practicable and cost-effective, across all industries, countries and applications.
 - 5) The Applied Technologies Group (ATG) translates the work of the TBG and the ICG into the main agreed technological standards such as UN/EDIFACT and ebXML.
 - 6) The Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMG) supports these groups by identifying and defining the best practice techniques, methodologies and technologies for the IBG to approve.
 - 7) The Legal Group (LG) advises these groups and the Plenary on legal matters.
 - 8) Ultimately there should be one executive committee/board to act at the direction of the Plenary when it is not in session. This will require representation from both the Plenary and the TBG.
 - 9) We need to make best use of the time of people with the relevant (scarce) skills. We need to be clear where decisions are taken in an efficient and democratic manner. We need to be focused on serving the key needs of business and government in an integrated and cost-effective manner. Hence, we should build on the good progress made to date by clarifying a little further our direction and means of advance.
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