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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**
Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Item 12 of the provisional agenda
Ninth session, 12 – 13 May 2003

**REPORT OF THE FIRST UN/CEFACT FORUM
9-13 SEPTEMBER 2002**

Submitted by the secretariat *

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* This report was adopted at the closing plenary session of the UN/CEFACT held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 9-13 September 2002.

Item 1 - Opening of the UN/CEFACT Forum

1. The opening session of the first UN/CEFACT Forum began at 10:00 on Monday, 9 September 2002. The Chairman of UN/CEFACT welcomed participants and thanked the UNECE secretariat and the interim Forum Coordination Team (iFCT) for their organization work.
2. The Director of the Trade Division of the UNECE welcomed participants, pointing out the increasing relevance of the work on UN/CEFACT and congratulating them on the functional result of UN/CEFACT restructuring. She then introduced the members of the secretariat who had organized the Forum and requested the participants to start preparing for the 9th Plenary session in May 2003, for the accompanying trade facilitation week and for the 2nd International Forum on Trade Facilitation: Sharing the Gains of Globalization.
3. She also invited the participants to commemorate the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Two minutes of silence were scheduled at the exact time on the first anniversary of the event.

Item 2 - Adoption of the provisional agenda

4. The Chairman of the interim Forum Coordination Team (iFCT) introduced the provisional agenda (document TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/1). He pointed out that the parallel timing of the plenary sessions of the five Forum groups had been thoroughly discussed by the iFCT who had not found any alternative owing to coordination difficulties, although it was felt that this timing was generating difficulties.
5. The delegation of France requested clarification regarding the procedure for electing the Chairperson of the Forum Coordination Team (FCT). The iFCT noted that, out of the candidates for the post of the FCT Chair, only those not elected as officials of a Forum Group would be eligible to stand for the FCT.
6. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Forum **adopted the preliminary agenda** for the Forum.

Item 3 - Reports of the Chairman of the UN/CEFACT and the Chairman of the UN/CEFACT Steering Group

7. The Chairman of UN/CEFACT presented the vision and the new structure of UN/CEFACT as adopted by the 8th plenary session in May 2002. He noted that Siemens, for which he was working, used UN/EDIFACT as the standard for internal EDI messages within the global supply chains of the company. More generally, standardizing business processes would lead to a significant reduction of costs, as process costs constituted up to 40% of overall costs. He also stressed the role of the promotion and policy groups in increasing the awareness of UN/CEFACT in the user communities. The decision of the UN/CEFACT Plenary in May 2002 to establish the UN/CEFACT Forum had been necessary in order to improve coordination. At the same time, referring to the discussions of the International Forum on Trade Facilitation organized by the UNECE in May 2002, he pointed out that fundamental work on trade facilitation and not only progress on ICT was required in some developing countries.
8. The CSG Chairman invited participants to take into account a balanced geographical representation in the work of the UN/CEFACT groups. He also stressed the practical impact of the UN/CEFACT recommendations on all countries (industrialized, developing and transition economies) and for all sizes of companies. He went through the history of trade facilitation and work on e-business achieved by WP.4 and its successor, UN/CEFACT. He pointed out that the programme of work of the Centre also included activities on modelling business processes. The objective of the UN/CEFACT Forum was to increase the flow of information and knowledge across the groups within the Centre and thus increase synergies. The iFCT strongly encouraged all groups to meet at least twice a year at the same

place (the UN/CEFACT Forum), but it was emphasized that the groups would also be able to meet independently on an interim basis.

9. Developing effective processes for trade facilitation involved a variety of issues such as policy initiatives, work on procedures and information technology. To stress the importance of trade facilitation, it was noted that 65% of the people in the world had never made a single telephone call and 40% had no access to electricity. Thus, classical trade facilitation would need to be taken into account in the work of UN/CEFACT in order to ensure the relevance of the work of the Centre.

Item 4 - Group mandates and project presentations

10. The Chairman of the iFCT presented the functions of the Forum Coordination Team as well as the Mandate, Terms of Reference and Procedures of the Forum. The Forum would need to decide the places and dates for the next two Forums and set up lists of working groups and project teams as well as respective web pages. Amongst other issues to be examined would be the Support Service Provider (SSP), the resources of FCT members in the heavy load of meetings and questions related to IPR policy.
11. The interim Conveners of the five UN/CEFACT Forum Groups then introduced the draft mandates of their respective groups and their suggested project portfolios:

Applied Technologies Group (ATG), (TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/2)

12. The Convenor noted that ATG had been established to provide the technology to enable e-business and international trade and listed areas such as the creation and maintenance of document structures and the delivery of solutions to support business requirements. Rules and guides for businesses were developed in technical specifications. Work in ATG encompassed four specific technologies, viz. UN/EDIFACT, UN Locode, UneDocs and ebXML. The reference model used was the basic reference published by the ICG.
13. The basic agenda items for the group during the Forum week were the production of the new UN/EDIFACT directory, UN/EDIFACT Syntax structures, as well as XML assembly/production rules.

Information Content Management Group (ICG) (TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/3)

14. The Convenor noted that, with the expertise of the group in the field of information and modelling semantics, the ICG would be the body responsible for maintaining the UN/CEFACT metadata and libraries. The ICG programme of work covered UN/CEFACTS libraries, code lists and recommendations.

Legal Group (LG), (TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/4)

15. The Convenor presented the mandate of the group and noted that this was not the first time that the Legal Group was meeting together with the other UN/CEFACT groups. The geographical structure of the group was based on regional sub-groups in Europe, North America, the AFACT region, Latin America and Africa. Although the programme of work and functions of the LG would not change significantly in the new UN/CEFACT structure, the LG would increasingly respond to requirements from the other groups. The responsibility of the LG fell within two basic areas: work on legal issues in trade facilitation and work on legal issues in e-commerce. The group was responsible for Recommendation 26 on the Commercial Use of Interchange Agreements for EDI, Recommendation 31 on Electronic Commerce Agreement, as well as Recommendation 32 on e-Commerce Self-Regulatory Instruments (Codes of Conduct).

16. During the week, the group was working on new deliverables in online dispute resolution (ODR), RosettaNet's TPA and cross-border certification. It was also involved in legal issues related to ebXML with a particular view to maintaining repositories and contract formation. The Convenor noted that issues related to the ownership of intellectual property rights still constituted an impediment to the development of new standards.
17. The group had also designed a tie as a promotional material which would be shared with other groups.

International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG), (TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/5)

18. The group had revised its mandate based on the proposal of the UN/CEFACT Plenary session and on the comments of the groups that would constitute the TBG.
19. The history of UN/CEFACT work on business processes was presented. At the last EWG meeting, it had been planned that the separate groups would join their work plans and form one single group. To that end, an integrated schema of TBG projects had been prepared.

Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG), (TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/6)

20. The group presented the mandate of the group composed of the former TMWG and the eBTWG, and highlighted its agenda for the Forum week. The TMG would look at its projects and create new Working Groups on the basis of the workload.

Item 5. Meeting logistics and administrative items (TRADE/CEFACT/FORUM/2002/7)

21. The secretariat introduced the logistics arrangements and related administrative matters for the week and reminded the Forum that each group would have to nominate a Rapporteur who would prepare a report for the closing plenary session to be held on 13 September 2002 starting at 12 a.m.
22. After the closing remarks of the interim chairman of the Forum Coordination Team, the plenary session was adjourned at 1 p.m. and reconvened at 5.30 p.m.

Item 6. Introduction of the elected chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the mandated Forum groups

23. The Forum Groups introduced the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons who had been elected in the preceding first group plenary sessions:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>Vice-Chairperson</u>
ATG	Ms. Margaret Pemberton	Mr. Anders Grangard
ICG	Mr. Mike Conroy	Mr. David Dobbing
LG Marsh		Mr. Rob van Esch Mr. David
TBG	Mr. Ralph Berwanger	Mr. Mike Doran Ms. Sue Probert
TMG	Mr. Klaus-Dieter Naujok	Mr. Christian Huemer

Item 7. Election of the Chairperson of the Forum Coordination Team

24. Ms. Melanie McCarthy (USA) was elected Chairperson of the Forum Coordination Team (FCT) for a first three-year mandate.
25. The Plenary session of the first UN/CEFACT Forum was then adjourned until 3 p.m. on Friday 13 September 2002.

Friday, 13 September 2002

26. Ms. Melanie McCarthy, as Chairperson of the Forum Coordination Team, reopened the final plenary session at 12.10. In her statement, she thanked the secretariat for having been able to organize the Forum in difficult circumstances, during the European summer holiday period.
27. She also hoped that the week-long Forum had been successful for all participants. One of the tasks of the Forum was to help and avoid duplication of efforts. Many experts had been strained by the fact that they had to attend too many meetings. Thus, unification of efforts would eliminate this problem as well as many other difficulties in more substantive areas. To this end, a proposal would be made later in the session to the UBL community.
28. On behalf of the UN/CEFACT secretariat, Mr. Hans Hansell, Deputy Director of the UNECE Trade Development and Timber Division thanked the staff responsible for the organization. He congratulated all newly elected Forum officers and the interim Forum Coordination Team without whose support the secretariat would not have been in a position to organize the Forum.

Item 8. Report of the Forum Coordination Team

29. The Chairman of the UN/CEFACT Steering Group, Mr. Ray Walker, introduced a proposal to join the work of the OASIS Technical Committee (TC) on the Universal Business Language (UBL) and that of the UN/CEFACT on core component and related syntax activities under the UN/CEFACT Applied Technologies Group (ATG). The Forum and its participants believed there was significant commonality between the UN/CEFACT core component work and the OASIS UBL work, and as the OASIS UBL TC leadership and its participants had expressed an interest in having the UBL specifications adopted and maintained within the international realm, it was suggested that UN/CEFACT should establish an organizational structure within the Forum that would be supportive of the goals and objectives of the core component/UBL work.
30. The TMG agreed to relocating both Core Component projects under ATG if the OASIS UBL community agreed to working under the ATG and decided that the UBL project would not require compliance to the Universal Modelling Methodology (UMM) as related to the construction of business documents, since the purpose of the UBL project was to define a common XML library for business documents such as purchase orders, invoices, and advance shipping notices, an activity that did not require the use of UMM.
31. The Chairperson reminded that a Joint Coordination Committee with OASIS was in place. The TMG Chairperson pointed out that UN/CEFACT should recognize the agreement with OASIS and that infrastructure was falling under OASIS' responsibility while UN/CEFACT was coordinating technical issues. It was also noted that a joint technical liaison team had been established. This new team, in addition to some other groups, was ensuring close cooperation with OASIS. The legal patent issue related to work provided by IBM should be borne in mind. A royalty free licence had been issued for versions 1 and 2. Since a coordination group existed between UN/CEFACT and OASIS, it was felt that no further legal issues would be necessary.

32. The Chairperson of the Forum Coordination Team then reported on the work of the FCT during the first Forum week. The role of the FCT was to coordinate future meetings and the submissions of new project proposals as well as their assignment to Forum teams and groups.
33. During the first Forum, the FCT had accepted to undertake five new projects:
- The Generic Business Document Header (ATG) would determine the minimal semantic content for a standard business document "generic header". The generic header would be used by Enterprise Application Integration and Business-to-Business infrastructure to "look up" profile information and determine processing options. The minimal elements of a generic standard header would include, for example, a logical sender id, a logical recipient id, and a "datatype" id for the business "payload";
 - The Transport Core Components Task Force (TBG3) would continue to identify and define the Core Components for documenting the business data in transport messages, their context and data structure;
- The Transport Business Process Modelling Task Force (TBG3) would create Business Process Models as a means for documenting the business processes in the complete cycle of transport and logistics;
- A Revision of the UN/ECE Recommendation 20 on Codes for Units of Measure used in International Trade (ICG/TBG). The project will finalize and issue the 6th revision of UN/ECE Recommendation 20;
 - Migration of the maintenance and management of the UNCL to ICG (ICG/ATG). The project will migrate the UN/EDIFACT Code List Directory (UNCL), the components of which will be inserted into the UN/CEFACT Library of code lists.
34. The FCT had also kept one proposal for further consultation. The proposals would be placed on the Forum website after the Forum week and all interested parties were invited to contact the relevant project managers for additional information and encouragement of participation.

Item 9. Reports of the Forum groups

Applied Technologies Group (ATG)

35. The Group had revised and adopted its mandate at its plenary session. ATG was responsible for UN/EDIFACT, syntax structures, XML design rules as well as UML/UMM for EDIFACT design rules. Other technologies included the UN Layout Key and UneDocs. The following tasks were falling under the scope of the work of the ATG:
- design assembly and production of syntax specific solutions based on the identified technical requirements;
 - technical assessment and maintenance of syntax specific solutions;
 - development and maintenance of design and production rules and guidelines;
 - liaisons with appropriate bodies responsible for syntaxes used by UN/CEFACT.
36. The ATG plenary was responsible for modelling assessment, DMR and related syntax issues. Development work was divided into two groups as follows: ATG1 was responsible for UNSM Design Rules, UNSM Design and ISO/9735 and related technical assessment. ATG2 covered XSD Design Rules, XSD Design and related technical assessment.

37. ATG worked actively with several other international organizations, such as ISO Technical Committee 154, JSWG, ISO/IEC/JTC1 SC32, OASIS, W3C and the EAN International. ATG work was supported with contributions from EAN.UCC, CNAMTS and SWIFT. Functional support was also donated by LMI, TIE and DISA.
38. During the first Forum, the UN/EDIFACT Directory had been reviewed with 141 changes accepted, and 46 changes accepted with modifications.
39. The Head of Delegation of India reminded the Forum that 60 per cent of the world did not have access to the Internet or other modern means of communication and thus, strongly recommended that the UNECE continued the issuance of the layout key on paper. The Chairperson of the Forum replied that the secretariat would look into the possibilities.
40. The next meeting of the ATG would be an interim meeting to be held in Washington, DC, on 20 – 24 January 2003.

Information Content Management Group (ICG)

41. The Group had revised and approved its Mandate. The purpose of the Information Content Management Group was to ensure the release of quality technical specifications for e-business. To achieve this aim ICG would be responsible for:
 - the management of the UN/CEFACT information repositories and libraries for electronic business and the UN Recommendations that fall within its scope;
 - the validation and registration of the UN/CEFACT business requirements specifications;
 - the normalization and maintenance of the syntax neutral information components that serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
 - the audit and registration of the syntax compliant versions of the business requirements and information components.

In this work, the key deliverables of the ICG were:

- a series of coherent, consistent and normalised reference libraries comprising the business requirements, information objects and code lists aligned with the domain reference models and serving as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
 - the audit and release of the syntax specific information objects and syntax specific information components;
 - the processes and procedures for the maintenance of the libraries;
 - the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the library contents;
 - the UNECE Recommendations related to codes.
42. During the Forum, the ICG had set up two new projects. The ICG would finalize the 6th revision of UN/ECE Recommendation 20 on Codes for Units of Measure used in International Trade in cooperation with TBG. A joint project with ATG would migrate the maintenance and management of the UNCL over to ICG.
 43. Further work had been initiated on the interface specification with TBG. The Group had also approved the following release of UN/ECE Recommendation 28 on Codes for Types of Means of Transport, which would be made available on the UN/CEFACT website in the following weeks.

Legal Group (LG)

44. The Legal Group was responsible for legal issues within UN/CEFACT, including Recommendation 26 on the Commercial Use of Interchange Agreements for EDI, Recommendation 31 on Electronic Commerce Agreement, as well as Recommendation 32 on e-Commerce Self-Regulatory Instruments (Codes of Conduct).

45. The Group had revised its mandate and had added a new item on methodology committing all work to the open development process and recommended to all groups to follow suit.

46. The current programme of work included the following items:

- RosettaNet TPA
- Online Dispute Resolution
- Cross border certification
- Legal issues related to ebXML
- Legal issues related to IP ownership within UN/CEFACT

47. A subsequent meeting of the Legal Group would take place in Copenhagen two weeks after the Forum followed by another session later in the year in Tunis at the invitation of the Tunisian member.

International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG)

48. The International Trade and Business Processes Group comprised 17 working groups in areas such as international trade facilitation, business process analysis, harmonization, MOP, entry point and business domains. With two projects adopted at the Forum, the TBG list of projects amounted to 16 existing projects and 12 proposed ones.

49. Chair and Vice Chair elections had been held in some working groups while other groups had chosen to re-conduct previous leadership until new terms of reference became available.

50. The Vice Chair of the International Trade Facilitation Group (TBG15) made a short presentation on the current work on business procedures for international trade from a horizontal perspective. While other TBG groups were looking at specific issues and domains, TBG15 concentrated on three points:

- best practice;
- needs of modern economies such as the single window approach and benchmarking for trade facilitation and trade facilitation in the service sector;
- trade facilitation recommendations.

51. TBG15 worked closely with a number of organizations at regional and international levels, such as UNECE and the other United Nations regional commissions, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Customs Organization (WCO).

Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG)

52. The Techniques and Methodologies Group had processed the comments received from the eBusiness Architecture specification group review. The next revision for group review was envisaged by mid-October 2002. Similarly, the next revision of the core component technical specification (CCTS) was ready for public review.

53. The highest priority was attached to the Simple Guide for the Universal Modelling Methodology (UMM). A programme of work had been agreed with a deadline for external audiences in early 2003.

54. TMG had agreed to relocate both core component projects under ATG if the OASIS Technical Committee on UBL became part of ATG. It had also decided to support the spirit and intent of OASIS UBL - CEFACT consolidation, and asked for consideration that work products in transitional documentation would be introduced with the wording "UN/CEFACT incorporating UBL..." as new work would evolve during the 1st phase of UBL published documentation.

55. TMG had also organized two “lunch and learn” sessions. The materials would be placed on the Forum website.
56. TMG also requested the Forum and UN/CEFACT as a whole to consider how to better ensure adequate participation in UN/CEFACT work. Overlap in some programme areas should be avoided and internal Forum schedules as well as teams and projects schedules between Forums should be coordinated so as to allow members to maximize their contribution with minimal time and financial inputs. During the Forum week, TMG had felt a significant loss of participants due to the economic situation but also to market perception and competing standards efforts.

Item 10. Actions requiring Forum approval

- Programme of action of the UN/CEFACT Forum for the European Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Bucharest, Romania, 7-9 November 2002
57. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division presented a one-page document describing the work on the World Summit. The UNECE was assisting the government of Romania in organizing the European preparatory meeting in November 2002 and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in organizing the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in November 2003 where an action plan would be adopted. In 2005, a second summit would be organized in Tunisia to discuss development issues.

Item 11. Any other business

58. The Chairperson thanked Mr. Lin of the AFACT secretariat for the reception offered on 12 September 2002.
59. In the closing remarks, the Chief of the Policy and Government Cooperation Branch pointed out that the mandates and programmes of work of the policy and communications groups of the Forum would be discussed at the CSG meeting in Berlin 21 – 25 October 2002.
60. The next Forum would be organized at a location on the west coast, North America, either starting on 10 or 17 March 2003 (Since confirmed as San Diego starting March 10th). The third Forum would take place in Seoul 21 – 28 September 2003 and the fourth one in Europe in March 2004. The chairs and facilitators of groups and teams were asked to communicate their room and equipment needs to the TBG Chair for the March 2003 meeting.
61. The Chairperson thanked all participants, the secretariat and the interpreters for the quality of their work and closed the first UN/CEFACT Forum on 13 September at 15.00 hours.
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