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

Twelfth session

Geneva, 22 – 24 May 2006

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UN/CEFACT FORUMS**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE**

**7<sup>TH</sup> UN/CEFACT FORUM HELD IN LYON, FRANCE (26-30 SEPTEMBER 2005)**

**AND**

**8<sup>TH</sup> UN/CEFACT FORUM HELD IN VANCOUVER, CANADA (13-17 MARCH 2006)**

Note by the UN/CEFACT Forum Management Group

## INTRODUCTION

1. The UN/CEFACT Forum is the operational entity of UN/CEFACT. It consists of five Permanent Groups managed by the Forum Management Group (FMG), which in turn is governed by the Bureau. The UN/CEFACT Forum convenes twice a year in different parts of the world to allow all Permanent Groups, working groups and project teams to meet for one week in the same location.
2. By strengthening our teamwork and clearly outlining UN/CEFACT's programme of work, its products and services for our public, we expect greater participation and support. A user-friendly website will contribute to a global view of UN/CEFACT's products.
3. UN/CEFACT delivered a Core Component Technical Specification (CCTS), a Modelling Methodology, a basic set of Core Components and a number of Business Requirements Specifications. Many organizations, including the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and Global Standards One (GS1), have developed their own standards based on those, which constitutes potential for future harmonized standards.
4. Many other standards organizations are approaching UN/CEFACT. All these groups agree that the CCTS approach leads to the best semantic interoperability at a global level.
5. The UN/CEFACT Forum is an environment where the work on harmonizing the semantics of standardization using the Core Components is carried out, leading to solutions for interoperability that the business community and governments would be able to endorse.
6. The Forum is developing its methodology, its Core Component Technical Specifications, its Core Component Library, the Business Requirements Specifications and the Repository. It is now producing standards for interoperability, which can be adopted by governments and industry, comprising a complete package for capturing and codifying business knowledge for electronic trading.
7. New elections for members of the Forum Management Group will be held on 2 October at the Forum in New Delhi. The two-year term of office ends on 30 September 2006 and the current members are standing for re-election. The Group requests the Plenary to maintain the policy of having two members elected by the International Trade and Business Processes Group. Other nominations from Permanent Groups and the Plenary are also accepted and should be submitted to the UNECE Secretariat before 1 September 2006.

### **7<sup>TH</sup> UN/CEFACT FORUM – LYON, FRANCE**

8. A productive Forum, attended by over 200 experts from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America was held from 26 to 30 September 2005 in Lyon, France. It was organized by EDI France and was sponsored by the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry - the Directorate General for Enterprise (DGE); GS1 France; SAP AG; Harbinger and France Telecom.
9. During the Forum, UN/CEFACT made its final preparations that would allow industry groups to create XML-based business documents. At the opening session, SAP AG explained the

significance of UN/CEFACT's work for its own new Enterprise Service Architecture programme.

10. The first extended list of reusable information components was also published: the Core Components Library. Now, industry and business groups can develop United Nations XML business documents (Standard Schemas) for use in electronic trading and other information exchanges. The Library will be maintained through open and extensive consultations.

11. Meetings were conducted with representatives of GS1, the OASIS Universal Business Language (UBL) Technical Committee and the eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) Group. GS1 is the largest worldwide user of the UN/EDIFACT electronic data interchange standard, and provides substantive input for harmonizing business information.

12. The Forum Management Group recognizes the contribution that the OASIS standard UBL has made to Governments and companies adopting concrete XML-based documents. Together with the UBL Technical Committee, UN/CEFACT will continue to ensure support of this approach.

13. The global standard for financial reporting, XBRL, presented its work to the Forum members. They discussed how a closer cooperation with UN/CEFACT could establish a link between business data and financial reports.

14. The Forum members decided to proceed with the work on e-Government and the Single Window for export and import clearance. The creation of the new UN/CEFACT e-Government working group will allow Governments to benefit from UN/CEFACT's expertise and standards. There was formal support from France, New Zealand, India and Vietnam, and interest from Australia, Austria, United Kingdom and the United States.

15. In view of the international interest generated by the Single Window Recommendation No. 33, and the current move by many countries to establish such Single Windows, a three-day Symposium on Single Window Standards and Interoperability was organized in Geneva from 3 to 5 May 2006. The event targeted operators of existing Single Windows and countries considering establishing such a facility and involved major international organizations.

16. During the Lyon Forum, the Legal Group re-convened and elected an interim Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

#### Work conducted between the Forum Meetings.

17. The Permanent Groups and the Forum Management Group were very active. The following decisions were made during the monthly conference calls and a face-to-face meeting of the FMG in January 2006 in Amsterdam:

- (a) After discussions with a wide range of users and standards development organizations, a policy is needed to discuss collaboration with them
- (b) Additional funding is necessary to meet the demands
- (c) The Open Development Programme is to be extended so that other UN/CEFACT standards can be produced under these rules.

18. Preparations were made for the next Forum in Vancouver (BC), Canada. A Forum Organization Guide was produced to help organize future forums.

### **8TH UN/CEFACT FORUM– VANCOUVER (BC), CANADA**

19. The 8<sup>th</sup> UN/CEFACT Forum was sponsored by the Canadian Government and hosted by Duane Nickull, Vice-Chairperson of the UN/CEFACT Plenary, with the help of more than 40 volunteers. The other sponsors were: Adobe, eBusiness Applications, SAP AG, SUN Microsystems, TIE Commerce and Xenos.
20. Over 230 experts from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America attended the Forum. Lunchtime speakers came from the American National Standards Institute's Accredited Standards Committee X12; the Chemical Industry Data Exchange; the OASIS Universal Business Language and the Open Applications Group. These organizations, among others, are adopting the UN/CEFACT Core Components approach.
21. At the opening session, a number of speakers from the Canadian government expressed the importance of UN/CEFACT for their work. Among them was Mr. Jim Alexander, Chief Information Officer for the Government of Canada, Mr. Ardath Paxton Mann, Assistant Deputy Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Mr. Ed Buchinski, Treasury Board Secretariat, and Mr. Bruce Drake, Executive Director of Industry Canada.
22. The World Customs Organization presented their Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. One hundred and thirty customs administrations have committed to implement this Framework. It also announced the publication of their WCO Data Model version 2. They intend to continue working with UN/CEFACT to coordinate the development of version 3, and to support this, WCO presented UN/CEFACT with a copy of their WCO Data Model 2.
23. Canada, France, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China will begin verification of version 1.0 of the UN/CEFACT Registry Implementation Requirements Specifications. The Registry contains the Core Component Library, Business Requirements Specifications, UN/CEFACT Schemas, UNECE Recommendations and UN/CEFACT code lists.
24. The Forum approved revisions to the following Recommendations for publication:
  - (a) United Nations Recommendation 20: Codes for Units of Measure used in International Trade
  - (b) Recommendation 21: Codes for Types of Cargo, Packages and Packaging Materials
  - (c) Recommendation 23: Freight Cost Code.
25. The Forum announced that the production of XML schemas will be completed for the Cross-Industry Invoice, Cross-Industry Remittance Advice and e-Tendering transactions by the third quarter of 2006. In the future, all UN/CEFACT outputs will be aligned to two publication cycles per year.
26. The Modeller's Reference Initiative (MRI) convened before the Forum, as they had done in Lyon. The importance of this Initiative is now widely recognized and plans are being made for a more permanent group.
27. The next Forum meeting is scheduled for 2 to 6 October 2006 in New Delhi, India.

## **Reports from the Permanent groups**

### Applied Technologies Group (ATG)

28. The Applied Technologies Group convened during the Forum meetings in Lyon, and in Vancouver. It also held meetings in Kongsberg, Norway in June 2005 and Wollongong, Australia in January 2006.
29. Two working groups are defined within the Group: UN/EDIFACT and UN/XML. The programme of work, including the activities of the working groups, can be found on the following site: <http://www.disa.org/cefact-groups/atg/index.cfm>.
30. The XML Naming and Design Rules went through public review. Approximately 300 comments were received and resolved successfully. It went through implementation verification, passed step 6 of the Open Development Process and is now ready for approval by the UN/CEFACT Plenary. This Technical Specification enables UN/CEFACT groups to use the Core Components-based models in XML Schemas and documents. It can be used by other organizations interested in this technology and the Group requests the Plenary to approve it.
31. The Group has completed its work to align the Standard Business Document Header Technical Specification to the Core Components Technical Specifications and the XML Naming and Design Rules. Now the Harmonisation Working group must approve the Core Components harmonization.
32. The EDIFACT Working group met during the two Forums. The Group processed 145 Data Maintenance Requests (DMR) against the UN/EDIFACT D05B Directory and 112 DMRs against the D06A Directory. The UML to EDIFACT Transformation Rules Project was finalized and is ready for implementation verification.
33. The XML Working Group met during the four Applied Technologies Group meetings, and held weekly phone conferences.
34. The next meeting will be held from 5 to 9 June 2006, venue to be confirmed.

### Information Content Management Group (ICG)

35. The Information Content Group has achieved five milestones and completed its regular UN/EDIFACT audit and maintenance activities for the United Nations Recommendation related to codes.
  - (a) In cooperation with the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG) and the Applied Technologies Group (ATG), the first version of the Requirements Specification Mapping document was released. This is a basic working draft to prepare Business Requirements Specifications as electronic documents for electronic interchange.
  - (b) The last release of the UN/CEFACT Registry Specification, version 0.9, was finalized during the Vancouver Forum and was released for its public review in May. This major achievement will enable members and users to build a formal repository to access, maintain and publish specifications and recommendations.
  - (c) An agreement was made with the Government of Ontario, Canada; the National Taiwan Normal University, Chinese Taipei; France Telecom; and the Korea Institute for Electronic Commerce to initialize a proof-of-concept project for the Registry Implementation Specification.

(d) The first Core Components Library was formally audited and the Group authorized its official release to the public. The Library is a key factor for the production of UN/CEFACT business document specifications.

(e) The Group also completed the formal audit of version D.05B of the UN/EDIFACT Directory as well as the public review and the publication of the code lists for three key United Nations Recommendations: Recommendation 20 (Units of Measure), Recommendation 21 (Types of Packages), and Recommendation 23 (Freight Cost Codes).

#### Legal Group

36. During the Vancouver Forum, the Legal Group continued its internal restructuring and strengthened its ties with the other permanent groups. It held meetings with all groups to identify any legal issues and it was apparent that they still struggle with the International Property Rights policy.

37. The Group, together with the Techniques and Methodologies Group, resumed work on the Unified Business Agreements and Contracts (UBAC) project. The first item of work is 'clickable contracts', a joint sub-project with the International Trade and Business Processes Group Working group on Digital Paper (TBG2) and the Aerospace industry (primarily Boeing). Bi-weekly conference calls take place and the requirements documents have been updated. The Project leader is Mr. Anders Tell.

38. In cooperation with the International Trade and Business Processes Group on International Trade Procedures (TBG15), the Group will draft a new recommendation on the legal issues of data exchange within the single window framework.

#### International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG)

39. The Trade and Business Processes Group identified requirements for working on common issues with external partners. The OASIS Universal Business Language (UBL) Technical Committee is progressing with its technical specification. The components defined by them have been submitted to the working group on harmonization.

40. Technical Committee 204 of the Organization for International Standardization (ISO) is engaged in work similar to that of the Transport Working group. A liaison has been established to harmonize the systems.

41. The e-Government Working group met with the OASIS e-Government Technical Committee in order to promote UN/CEFACT e-business solutions.

42. The working procedures established at the March 2004 Forum between the Applied Technologies Group, the Information Content Management Group and the International Trade and Business Processes Group are functioning and will ensure the timely publication of UN/CEFACT directories.

#### 43. Working Group Reports

(a) TBG1 – Supply Chain: The concepts of product and product unit were reviewed and presented to the Agriculture working group. A plan to integrate UBL trade messages was established. A joint working group with UBL e-Procurement was created to conduct a gap analysis between business requirement specifications, class diagrams and UBL 2.0 XML schemas. This analysis will begin with Invoice and Remittance Advice trade documents.

(b) TBG2 – Digital Paper: The UNeDocs project team issued the first e-mapping of two paper documents (one from Senegal and the other from E-Cert). An update of the UNeDocs Core Component Data Model to be based on the D.06A version of the Core Components Library has begun. Customization strategies for the reuse of UNeDocs and the Library are in progress for national, regional or industry implementations, and discussions with other UN/CEFACT groups have begun regarding pre-harmonization of shared core components. The electronic development of the United Nations Layout Key project has started, in collaboration with ISO technical committee 154. The terms of reference for the project have been agreed on, and will be formally ratified by the ISO Technical Committee Plenary. A working draft of the Clickable Contract Business Requirement Specification was completed and will be mapped to the requirements of the Unified Business Agreements and Contracts.

(c) TBG3 – Transportation: The Transportation working group reviewed the International Forwarding & Transport Framework's Business Requirement Specification and decided on priorities for further specifications (container movements and bulk, among others). The Core Components submission was approved and will be given to the Harmonization Working group for final endorsement. A joint meeting with the UBL-Transportation Sub-Committee was held to review the 2.0 draft release and future cooperation. There was a joint meeting with the working group on trade shipment models and dangerous goods business requirements specifications (TBG1), the working group on digital paper (TBG2), the working group on customs (TBG4), the working group on cargo insurance (TBG8) and the working group on business process analysis (TBG14). The sub-group on international transport implementation guidelines processed requests from the Container Seals message (COSEAL) and ship and port facilities security requirements of the International Maritime Organization's ISSP<sup>1</sup> code. An update was completed of the ISO developments on radio frequency tag system architecture to identify moving cargo. The United States Department of Trade made a presentation on its electronic freight management programme as its proof-of-concept of a standards implementation strategy. With regard to cooperation with the UBL sub-committee, the Group acknowledges that its comments on the UBL 2.0 draft release were recognized in the public review, and they agree to cooperate in the second public review.

(d) TBG4 – Customs: The Group met with the trade facilitation group to coordinate activities with Single Window and the data standardization process. It met with the transportation group to review World Customs Organization Data Model 2.0 and its plans for version 3.0. The review in the context of waste disposal was done jointly with the working group on Environment. The International Maritime Organisation Facilitation Forms and the use of WCO Customs Cargo Report and Response Messages (CUSCAR and CUSREP) were also reviewed.

(e) TBG5 – Finance: In a changing environment of payment methods, the Group continues to participate in development projects with SWIFT and the ISO Technical Committee 68, and continues work on convergence between the International Standard UNIFI Financial Repository: Business Process Catalogue & Data (ISO 20022) and UN/CEFACT methodologies. The Working Group participated in cross-domain projects, which are increasingly important in the financial sphere. One of their objectives is to improve the synergies between the working groups on e-invoices and remittance advice, accounting token and eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL).

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<sup>1</sup> Internet Service & Solution Provider

(f) TBG6 – Architecture & Construction: The joint projects between the supply chain and the architecture and construction working groups have been reviewed, including the eCatalog, eTendering (in public and private procurement), the project schedule and cost performance management and the contract financial execution management. The eTendering harmonization of Core Components and Business Information Entities has been finalized. The first XML schemas should be generated by the end of May and audited by the Applied Technical Group and the Information Content Management group during the summer. A list of business needs regarding security will be initiated to help future projects and to establish a map of existing standards.

(g) TBG7 – Statistics, Collection & Reporting: This Working Group has not as yet convened. All of its work is developed externally through the e-business Board for European Standardization (eBES) Expert Group Six and the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange initiative.

(h) TBG8 – Insurance: The Working Group convened in Lyon and Vancouver. Its project work is developed externally through Global Insurance Standards (ACORD), the Centre for Study of Insurance Operations (CSIO) and the eBES Expert Group Seven, although monthly virtual meetings take place to monitor progress. The Working Group is conducting one approved UN/CEFACT project to harmonize its respective dictionaries and to discover generic and/or insurance specific core components. Any generic core components will be submitted to the working group on harmonization.

(i) TBG9 – Travel, Tourism & Leisure: The Travel, Tourism & Leisure Working Group worked on core components for the small-scaled lodging project and has submitted these to the working group on harmonization.

(j) TBG10 – Healthcare: The Healthcare Working Group and eBES Expert Group Nine are working together and liaise with CEN Technical Committee 251 working group 1, ISO Technical Committee 215 and Health Level 7. The Working Group reviewed their Core Components based upon CEN General Purpose Components and Health Level 7 Common Message Element Types regarding the harmonization working group's new requirements. The Healthcare Group also worked with the Customs Working Group (TBG4).

(k) TBG11 – Social Services: The Working Group on Social Services did not convene during these Forum meetings.

(l) TBG12 – Accounting & Audit: The Working Group on Accounting and Audit worked with the Supply Chain Working Group to define the next steps towards integration of the accounting token in the supply chain. The Working Group along with the architecture and construction group agreed to include the Token in e-Tendering Business Processes. The Accounting & Audit Group submitted a new project proposal on Accounting Entry to the Steering Committee. The Group and the XBRL delegate met to find a way to share experiences on accounting entry and General Ledger. XBRL commented on the Working Group's Accounting Entry model and the Group commented on XBRL's General Ledger model.

(m) TBG13 – Environmental Standards: The Working Group on Environmental Standards submitted its first Business Requirement Specification on Waste Tracking Phase I to the Steering Committee. The Group made an agreement with the Council for Environmental Cooperation (NAFTA) on the path for Waste Notification Phase II. The Group committed to remain in close



contact with the Working Group on Transportation regarding pre-harmonization efforts regarding dangerous goods.

(n) TBG14 – Business Process Analysis: The Working Group on Business Process Analysis developed a new version of its Common Business Processes Catalogue. The Group, jointly with the Supply Chains Working Group and the Customs Working Group, initiated its International Supply Chain Reference Model revision project. Contributions based on the port of Victoria were received from Australia, and collaboration might continue with Australian Customs on their project involving the export of wine to the United Kingdom. The Working Group worked with the Information Content Group on the structure of the Repository to allow the storage and retrieval of common business processes. The Group produced a trial set of Common Business Processes and is seeking ways to revise and extend the list. The Framework for the Building of Common Business Processes is currently under internal review and will be submitted for public review in May 2006. A draft paper was prepared concerning the Supply Chain Reference Model, joining the work of ISO, TMG, and TBG.

(o) TBG15 – International Trade Procedures: The International Trade Procedures Working Group reviewed the first draft of a new Recommendation on the Data Standardization process for participating government agencies in a Single Window. The Working Group met with the Legal Group concerning a recommendation on legal issues for establishing a Single Window. The e-Cert Requirement Specification Mapping (RSM) has progressed, identifying synergies with the Phytosanitary Project. A decision was made to move the e-Cert project to the Working Group on Agriculture. The Working Group confirmed the management of funding in relation to the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide and it discussed the roles of the Reference Group and the Project Management Team. The final version of Recommendation 12 was approved and will now be sent to the International Trade and Business Group and other interested organizations for review. The Guide to Benchmarking Trade Facilitation Performance has been ‘signed off’ and will be published for the Plenary in May 2006.

(p) TBG16 – Entry Points: The Working Group on Entry Points maintained the web site for the International Trade and Business Group, making a working repository for group information and working documents on the Internet. The Entry Points Group is committed to the Forum process.

(q) TBG17 – Harmonization: The Harmonization Working Group is a cross-domain group and, most of its project work is conducted during interim meetings. The Forum meetings are used for interfacing with the other the International Trade and Business Group working groups and with the other Forum Groups. As part of the Core Components Library, the Working Group finalized the first complete submissions containing Business Information Entities and messages for the working group on Supply Chain Cross Industry Invoice and working group on Architecture and Construction’s eTendering. A Submission Template has been updated and released for harmonization of both Core Components and Business Information Entities. The Group provided the first Library Administration Procedures document for revision by the other Forum working groups.

(r) TBG18 – Agriculture: The Agriculture Working Group finalized its terms of reference, its projects matrix and elected its Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The Group began work on a new project proposal: a Phytosanitary eCertificate and Animal Passport. Business Requirements Specification documents were prepared for the following projects: DAPLOS Crop Production, Animal Passport and IPPC e-Cert (Phytosanitary).

(s) TBG19 – e-Government: The e-Government Working Group convened for the first time during the Forum meeting in Vancouver. It finalized and approved its terms of reference and submitted them to the Steering Committee. Following comments received, the Group will update the terms and resubmit them through an electronic ballot. A preliminary list for candidate work items was discussed, including e-Procurement, Legal Archiving, Exchanges between Tax and Social Security agencies and Information exchanges for Law enforcement. Other subjects such as Government Strategic Reference Model, exchanges of Phytosanitary certificates and enrichment of the WCO data model were also discussed with various partners. The Group invited the OASIS e-Government Technical Committee to join them at the next Forum.

#### Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG)

44. The UN/CEFACT Techniques and Methodologies Group has made great progress since the Kuala Lumpur Forum. It also met in Waldorf, Germany; Lyon, France; and Sydney, Australia.

45. Its Business Process Working Group accomplished the following:

(a) A revision of the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) designed to support a separation of its major components and to provide a clear extensibility mechanism. The second working draft is ready for step 5 of the Open Development Process. The review period started on 17 March 2006 and will end on 30 April 2006. The Working Group began its User Guide updating process.

(b) The Business Collaboration Specification Schema was launched and progressed considerably. This joint project with the Information Content Group and Applied Technologies Group defines a Uniform Modelling Language profile for UMM and evaluates interoperability. Version 1.0 of its draft specification is released to Step 4 of the Open Development Process.

(c) The next version of the OASIS' Business Process Specification Schema standard, v2.0.3, will be submitted to International Standards Organization's Technical Committee 154 for approval<sup>2</sup>. The Group will recommend that the Plenary support this action. UN/CEFACT and OASIS will announce that version 3.0 will be a joint effort and they still need to work out details on how and where the work will be done. The v3.0 project will incorporate all comments from the Group and will align itself with the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodologies.

(d) The Resources-Events-Agents Economic Ontology Specialization Module for the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology project was approved. Mr. Bill McCarthy was appointed Chairperson of the project.

46. The Techniques and Methodologies Group Core Components Working Group accomplished the following:

(a) The Core Component Technical Specification v2.2 was released for step 4 of the Open Development Process. The review period started on 3 April 2006 and will end on 3 May 2006.

(b) The Core Component Message Assembly team has been formed; the project and a series of steady conference calls have produced sixteen pages of comments.

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<sup>2</sup> as ISO/DTS 15000-6

(c) The Working Group has a new approved project, which is the Context Methodology Project. Mr. Joe Zhou was appointed Chairperson.

47. In addition to the OASIS dialogue, the Group has engaged in constructive communications with the Object Management Group and the World Wide Web Consortium regarding initiatives, and all parties are exploring opportunities to collaborate.

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