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**UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS
(UN/CEFACT)**

**UN/CEFACT Forum Report
Results of 1st & 2nd Forum Meeting
Geneva Switzerland, 09-13 September 2002
San Diego California, 10-14 March 2003
Report by FCT**

The present document is submitted by the Forum and Coordination Team (FCT) and is for distribution to the UN/CEFACT Plenary. It is submitted in the form in which it was received by the secretariat.

On September 11, 2002, a group of almost 250 delegates from all over the world formed a circle around the well-known “Armillary Sphere” sculpture at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Holding hands, they observed two minutes of silence, one in remembrance of the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center in New York a year earlier, and one to reflect on peace. The delegates were at the United Nations to participate in the first UN/CEFACT Forum meeting, which was held during the second week of September.

The CEFACT document titled “Proposal for Future Structure and Organisation of the UN/CEFACT Working Group” Trade/CEFACT/2002/8/REV.1, articulated the purpose and framework of the reconstituted organization. Though significantly different, the group is focused on exploiting advances in information technology and adopting new approaches to trade facilitation based on the simplification and harmonization of business and governmental processes. Equally, it is aligning business processes with mature and emerging information technologies and is committed to delivering a harmonized set of tools, capable of enabling all levels of business expertise in consistent message exchanges.

The members of the respective groups elected the following individuals to key leadership positions:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Chairperson</u>	<u>Vice-Chairperson</u>
Applied Technology (ATG)	Ms. Margaret Pemberton	Mr. Anders Grangard
Information Content Mgmt Group (ICG)	Mr. Mike Conroy	Mr. David Dobbing
Legal Group (LG)	Mr. Rob van Esch	Mr. David Marsh
International Trade and Business Processes (TBG)	Mr. Ralph Berwanger	Ms. Sue Probert
Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG)	Mr. Klaus-Dieter Naujok	Mr. Christian Huemer
Forum Coordination Team (FCT)	Ms. Melanie McCarthy	

The Groups quickly addressed the administrative documents, required by the new organization, and resumed the important work that they were commissioned to deliver. Seventeen new projects were also presented and assigned during the first two meetings, continuing to demonstrate the large international demand for additional information published in this area.

There also have been ongoing discussions to incorporate the work of an OASSIS Technical Committee, commonly referred to as UBL. The work product is based on the previously published ebXML Technical Specifications, and was an effort to quickly deliver XML payloads. It appears that the results can be simply integrated into the work products of the various FORUM Work Groups and would deliver a single consistent set of deliverables based on published Technical Specifications. Though not finalized the prognosis is favorable that the consolidation of work products will be possible.

The restructuring as well as travel restrictions caused some confusion with the publication of the UN/EDIFACT directory production process. During the second FORUM considerable time and attention was placed on formalizing the process. To that end a “Library Content Management Workflow Process” was completed and submitted to the CSG for concurrence. The document highlights the process and interrelationships between the TBG, ICG and ATG.

Finally, it seems that the weakest link of the new organization may be the role /responsibility assigned to the FCT. To create a lean responsive organization, there are areas that might be better addressed within the core organization, rather than awaiting direction from an external steering committee. The FCT plans to consider all possibilities and possible present to the CSG a recommendation to consider slight modifications.
