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

INFORMATION CONTENT MANAGEMENT GROUP (ICG)

Report to the UN/CEFACT Plenary

The present document is submitted by the Information Content Management Group (ICG) and is for distribution to the UN/CEFACT Plenary and the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG).

1. General

> *PURPOSE*
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> *The purpose of the Information Content Management Group (ICG) is to ensure the release of quality technical specifications for e-business. To achieve this aim it will be responsible for the:*
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> *⚥⚥Management of the UN/CEFACT information repositories and libraries for electronic business and Recommendations that fall within its scope as listed in section 2 of the mandate;*
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> *⚥⚥Technical conformance and the registration of the UN/CEFACT business requirements specifications;*
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> *⚥⚥Normalization and maintenance of the base syntax neutral information components that serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;*
>
> *⚥⚥Technical conformity and registration of syntax specific information objects and components.*

The ICG was created with the purpose as outlined above. The Group is entirely new; it had fundamentally no antecedents, other than the integration of the CDWG (its membership was largely from the EWG transport group) and some of the previous Directory Audit Team (DAT).

The ICG activities are in the main based on new Group functions and this has created difficulties for the Forum participants to identify clearly the group's objectives and associated deliverables. Consequently participation has been low and remains an obstacle in enabling the group to meet its objectives. At the March 2003 Forum meeting the group had at one point 8 participants, but the core participation during the course of the meeting was merely 4 participants. The ICG is actively encouraging membership by raising awareness of the importance of the activities of the Group, though in many respects its activities are still perceived as a "back-office" functions, albeit accepted as an essential part of the overall UN/CEFACT process. The ICG has kept the CSG informed of its concerns on the participation issue and expects that membership will increase as its role becomes more established.

2. UN/ECE Recommendations

The ongoing management of the UN Recommendations related to codes was successfully transitioned to the ICG from the CDWG. A number of significant work items have been covered during the period since the last UN/CEFACT Plenary, including:

- ⚥⚥**Recommendation 23 (Freight cost code –FCC)**, was revised during the course of the March 2003 Forum meeting with the addition of a number of new codes. This 1st revision to the codes defined in Recommendation 23 has been issued for its public review cycle as document UN/CEFACT/ICG/2003/IC001 and notified to Heads of Delegation through the HOD email list. The two-month public comment period commenced 1st April 2003 and will conclude on 30th May 2003. Under this open process all interested parties are encouraged to review the contents of the code list and to respond with any comments for consideration prior to the code list being finalised for submission for approval by the ICG Plenary.
- ⚥⚥**Recommendation 20 (Units of Measure used in International Trade)**, is in its final stages of revision. This fifth revision is a substantive revision and includes enhancements to the presentation format, inclusion of new code entries, inclusion of code entry descriptions, and the flagging for

deletion of a number of codes designated as being no longer required. The latest draft was approved by the ICG for release as an internal UN/CEFACT Group document for a six week review period by the Groups. Pending feedback from this initial review process, a draft will be issued by the ICG for its two-month public review cycle. Afinal version of this Recommendation is being targeted for UN/CEFACT Plenary approval later this year, taking account of the submissions received during the public comment period. Some minor outstanding issues remain and will be resolved as part of the ongoing revision process. The work is being coordinated with ISO/TC 154 (Technical Committee - Processes, data elements in commerce, industry and administration).

&&**Recommendation 16 (Code for Trade and Transport Locations - UN/LOCODE).** The UN/ECE Secretariat has published two releases of the UN/LOCODE since the last UN/CEFACT Plenary, UN/LOCODE 2002-2 and UN/LOCODE 2003-1. These are available for download from http://www.unece.org/locode, a UN/ECE Web site section dedicated to the UN/LOCODE. The latest release contains some 36,600 UN/LOCODE entries, with 690 additions.

&&**Recommendation 28 (Codes for types of means of transport)**, has been revised and approved by the ICG. It is the 1st revision to the code lists under this Recommendation and is submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for information and noting as ECE/ TRADE/315 (under agenda item 6).

3. UN/CEFACT Group Workflow

One of the main issues that confronted the ICG was determining what information came from where, among the UN/CEFACT Groups. This was inherent in the manner that the new Groups were created. The ICG consequently spent a considerable amount of time working with the TBG and the ATG to clearly define the interfaces between each of the Groups and to establish a consistent and coherent information flow that would facilitate the progression of the respective work programmes in a timely and efficient manner.

The basic principles were agreed, with the task of documenting the workflow procedures becoming a major work item for the ICG. These procedures will be finalized in consultation with the TBG and the ATG and are expected to be approved at the next UN/CEFACT Forum meeting, September 2003. A presentation of the workflow with supporting commentary can be found on the UN/CEFACT ICG Forum website.

4. Business Requirements Specification (BRS) and Requirements Specification Mapping (RSM) documents

Two key documents in the workflow process were defined at the March 2003 UN/CEFACT Forum meeting. These documents stem from a work item within the ICG to formalize the interface with the TBG. These documents were further refined following consultation with other UN/CEFACT Groups, in particular with the TBG and the ATG. They form the backbone for the process flow among the UN/CEFACT Groups and the Open Development Process (ODP).

The documents essentially serve as a boilerplate, detailing the minimum information requirements necessary for the registration of the common and reusable information blocks in a future UN/CEFACT Repository. It has been designed to facilitate the introduction of the UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology (UMM). These documents should be considered as the first step in establishing UMM as the foundation for defining common business processes and allowing for its progressive introduction throughout UN/CEFACT's standards development process. The documents will evolve as UMM is assimilated into the process.

5. Terms of Reference and procedures

The first draft of the ICG terms of reference was prepared and reviewed by the ICG. They will be formally considered for internal ICG approval at the next UN/CEFACT Forum meeting, September 2003, for subsequent submission to the CSG.

5. Directory Audit

The UN/EDIFACT D.02B Directory audit was delayed pending agreement among the UN/CEFACT Groups and the UN/ECE Secretariat on most effective and efficient process to conduct the audit under the new UN/CEFACT Group structure. Acting on an ICG proposal, the CSG requested the ICG to conduct the audit. This was completed and the D.02 Directory was approved by the CSG, during February 2003.

The issues surrounding the UN/EDIFACT Directory process have been successfully resolved by the UN/CEFACT Forum Coordination Team in consultation with the UN/ECE Secretariat, and the workflow process agreed by all Groups. In future, the ICG will be responsible for performing the audit process remotely, with support from the UN/ECE Secretariat.
The ICG intends to audit the D.03A UN/EDIFACT Directory during the first week of May in order to facilitate its approval and release during May 2003.

6. Other ICG Working Groups

The ICG Working Group jointly set up between the ICG and ATG to effect the migration of the generic UN/EDIFACT Code Lists (UNCL) from the ATG to ICG, did not achieve its target to define the migration approach and timetable. This was mainly due to resource constraints and the priorities assigned by the ICG to other key ICG activities. The ICG intends to advance this work prior to the next UN/CEFACT Forum in consultation with the ATG.

7. Unfinished business

In view of the current workload, the ICG has not yet managed to develop a strategy with respect to the establishment and management of the UN/CEFACT Repository. This work item will undertaken as part of its preparation for the next UN/CEFACT Forum meeting, September 2003.

Submitted by:

Mike Conroy
Chair UN/CEFACT ICG

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