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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT OF THE UN/CEFACT RAPPORTEURS\***

Asia

I. Introduction

1. In the Asian region, the effort to accomplish paperless trading and implement e-Business standards continues in various regional bodies. As the effort grows, so too does the need for coordination among them and with UN/CEFACT. This is the report of the Rapporteur for Asia on the developments towards these goals in the region, based on his observation and interaction with regional bodies, since the 11<sup>th</sup> UN/CEFACT Plenary.

II. AFACT (Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business)

2. The 23rd AFACT Meeting and the EDICOM Conference were held from 24 to 27 October 2005 in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The Ministry of Trade hosted the event. There were about 60 participants from 12 member countries and economies. Two associate members, ebXML Asia

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\* The UNECE Trade and Timber Division has submitted the present document after the official documentation deadline due to resource constraints.

Committee and PAA (Pan Asian e-Commerce Alliance) were also present. The event consisted of a Steering Committee meeting, Joint Working Group meetings, the plenary meeting and the EDICOM conference.

3. The 23rd AFACT Plenary, held on 26 October, began with observing one minute's silence in condolence and sympathy to the earthquake victims in Pakistan and India. Many AFACT Joint Working Groups met with one another to share mutual work areas and coordinate possible collaboration. During the meetings, the following decisions were made:

(a) The Business Collaboration Framework Working Group (BCF) decided to change its name to Business Collaboration Working Group. The Financial Working Group initiated a new project on Cross-border Payment;

(b) To promote awareness, the Plenary decided to distribute the annual AFACT yearbook to a wider target audience in the region, including non-AFACT members. The AFACT community recognized the need for closer and specific collaboration between UN/CEFACT and AFACT;

(c) The Plenary agreed to organize a bi-annual eAsia Award event;

(d) The AFACT Plenary noted that AFACT membership maintained 17 member countries and economies and 2 associate members as of 2005. The Plenary also identified hosts for the AFACT meetings up to the year 2009;

(e) Pakistan will host the 24<sup>th</sup> AFACT Meeting and EDICOM. The 2006 AFACT Steering Committee Mid-term meeting is scheduled for 10 and 11 April 2006 in Lahore and the AFACT annual meeting and EDICOM are scheduled for 8 to 11 August 2006 in Karachi;

(f) The 25<sup>th</sup> AFACT Meeting and EDICOM will be hosted by Thailand.

4. The annual EDICOM conference was held on 27 October 2005 under the theme of "Total Solution for e-Business." Seventy domestic and regional experts attended the conference. Issues included UN/CEFACT, ICT indicators in ASEAN, policies for e-Business implementation, available e-Business solutions of global IT vendors and Vietnamese vendors.

### III. Developments of other bodies in the region

5. ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations): The e-ASEAN Working Group (EAWG) handled various electronic commerce issues, including paperless trading and

ebXML. The Rapporteur for Asia had presented UN/CEFACT to EAWG in 2004. However, in 2005, the EAWG was dissolved and the agenda of EAWG integrated into the activities of the telecommunications working groups. Further tracking of ASEAN activities on e-Business and trade facilitation is necessary for coordination and collaboration with ASEAN.

6. APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation): The Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG) deals with issues concerning electronic commerce. Under ECSG, there is a Paperless Trading Subgroup dealing with issues directly related to UN/CEFACT work items such as the Electronic Certificate of Origin and the electronic SPS Certificate. The APEC ECSG held its 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting in September 2005 in Kyung-ju, Republic of Korea. The 13<sup>th</sup> APEC ECSG meeting was held in February 2006 in Hanoi, Viet Nam, and was preceded by the 2<sup>nd</sup> APEC Public Private Partnership (PPP) Dialogue on Paperless Trading, a free discussion forum for collaboration between public and private sectors.

7. According to a decision by the 11th Plenary, the Rapporteur for Asia approached APEC ECSG and had been officially invited to participate and make a presentation at the 12<sup>th</sup> ECSG meeting. In his presentation, he introduced UN/CEFACT and proposed collaborating in the field of paperless trading. The three areas for collaboration identified by the Rapporteur, based on his analysis of the goals of APEC and the United Nations, were capacity-building, promotion, and development and implementation of paperless trading standards. Following an internal review, the APEC ECSG proposed that UN/CEFACT should request guest status at the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ECSG as a first step towards future collaboration.

8. ebXML Asia Committee: This is a regional body to promote the implementation of ebXML in the region. The Committee held its 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting from 20 to 24 June 2005 in Hong Kong SAR, China and its 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting from 22 to 25 November 2005 in Chinese Taipei. The Committee is composed of a Plenary, two task groups (Core Component and Interoperability) and one project on a Registry & Repository Federation (RRF).

9. In 2005, the ebXML Asia Committee concentrated its work on the RRF project. This joint project with Working Group 2 (Metadata) of the Subcommittee 32 (Data Management and Interchange) of the ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1 deals with data sharing and federation among ebXML registries. For the project, the Committee held interim meetings and completed a pilot test and guidelines at its 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting. The Core Component Task Group (CCTG) handles an ebXML Asia Committee Core Component Library and collaborates with UN/CEFACT TBG17. At its 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the ebXML Asia Committee decided to expand the scope of its work to include various standards for e-Business and eTrade, instead of focusing exclusively on ebXML. The Committee's 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting is scheduled for May 2006 in China or Japan.

10. PAA (Pan Asian eCommerce Alliance): This is an industry-led alliance aimed at enabling secure and reliable cross-border transmission of trade and logistics-related documents. It was established in July 2000 by three member economies of the Asian region. There are currently nine member organizations from regional economies: China International Electronic Commerce Centre (CIECC); TradeVan of Chinese Taipei; TradeLink of Hong Kong SAR; Trade Electronic Data Interchange (TEDI) of Japan; KTNET, an electronic trade service and solution provider in the Republic of Korea; TedMev of Macau SAR, China; DagangNet of Malaysia; CrimsonLogic of Singapore and CAT Telecom of Thailand. PAA continues its project to exchange trade documents, especially ECO (Electronic Certificate of Origin), among its members, and to expand the scope and participation level.

#### IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

11. In the region, the desire, need and environment are strong for realizing the UN Millennium Development Goal 8, *develop a global partnership for development*, by implementing paperless trading and e-Business standards. To support this productive approach of the Asian region and future efforts of other regions, the commitment to strengthen its global remit should be more actively sought by UN/CEFACT itself.

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