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**REPORTS OF THE RAPPORTEURS**

Development of the Asia and Pacific Region

Report by the UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia\*

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The countries and regional bodies in the Asia Pacific region actively continued their efforts to realize the potential of electronic business and trade facilitation for regional development. This is the report of the Rapporteur for Asia on the development in the region based on his observation on and interaction with regional bodies since the thirteenth UN/CEFACT Plenary session.

**II. ASIA PACIFIC COUNCIL FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS (AFACT)**

2. Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) is a regional body mandated to support in the Asia Pacific region policies and activities, especially those promoted by UN/CEFACT, and dedicate itself to stimulate, improve and promote the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations to exchange products and relevant services effectively, in a non-political environment.

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\*This document was submitted late due to resource constraints.

3. The twenty fifth AFACT Meeting and EDICOM 2007 were held from 6 to 10 August 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand. The event was hosted by the Thai Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and participated by more than one hundred experts from ten member economies as well as two associate members. The event was composed of Steering Committee meeting on 6 August 2007. Joint Working Group meetings on 7 August and Plenary meeting on 8 August 2007, followed by eAsia Award on 9 August 2007 and EDICOM 2007 conference on 10 August 2007.

4. The twenty fifth AFACT Plenary, held on 8 August 2007, started with the welcome and opening remarks made by 2007 AFACT chair, Ms. Anchalaporn Siriwan of Thailand. In the Meeting, the following decisions were made:

(a) The Plenary noted that AFACT membership maintained 18 member countries and economies and two associate members as of 2007. The Plenary also noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran would host AFACT meeting in 2012;

(b) The Plenary engaged in extensive discussion on how to re-vitalize the activities of Joint Working Groups in line with the development of AFACT Roadmap, which is to used as a guide for AFACT activities in the term of future five years;

(c) The Plenary agreed to select single window, UNeDocs and e-Government Interoperability Framework as strategic work items for the period of 2007-2008;

(d) The Plenary noted the action of AFACT Steering Committee to propose the eBusiness Asia Committee to transition to AFACT for increasing synergy in regional effort;

(e) The Plenary noted the activities of Joint Working Groups (JWGs) as well as the efforts made by its members;

(f) The Republic of Korea will host the 26th AFACT Meeting and EDICOM 2008. The 2008 AFACT Steering Committee Mid-term meeting is scheduled on 1 and 2 May 2008 in Jeju Island, and the AFACT annual meeting and EDICOM 2008 are scheduled on 13-16 October 2008 in Seoul;

(g) The 27th AFACT Meeting and EDICOM 2009 will be hosted by India in 2009.

5. The third eAsia Award ceremony was held on 9 August 2007 with the final round evaluation in the four areas trade facilitation, eBusiness in the public sector, eBusiness in the private sector and bridging the Digital Divide. As a result of evaluation, 10 best practice projects won the award and an honorary award was given to Mr. T. A. Khan of India in recognition of his long-time contribution to regional development and AFACT.

6. The annual EDICOM conference was held on 10 August 2007 under the theme of “Single Window – Common Standards and Interoperability.” About one hundred domestic and regional experts participated in the Conference. The Conference covered issues related to implementing

single window such as national single window implementation cases, data harmonization, UNEDoc, etc.

7. The 26<sup>th</sup> AFACT Steering Committee Mid-term Meeting was held on 1-2 May 2008 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. The Meeting approved the membership application of Saudi Arabia to be the nineteenth member of AFACT. The Meeting extensively reviewed the development of AFACT Roadmap and took a series of resolutions to facilitate the implementation of some work items in the Roadmap.

### **III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER BODIES IN THE REGION**

#### eBusiness Asia Committee (eAC)

8. The eAC is a regional body to promote the implementation of eBusiness standards and technologies in the region, especially (ebXML). The Committee is composed of a Plenary and two task groups (Core Component and Interoperability). The Committee held its seventeenth Meeting on 6-7 August 2007 in Bangkok, in conjunction with the twenty-fifth annual AFACT Meeting eighteenth Meeting on 3-5 December 2007 in Wuhan, China and nineteenth Meeting on 1-2 May 2008 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea in conjunction with the 26th AFACT Steering Committee Mid-term Meeting. In the 17th Meeting, each received an offer of transition to AFACT from the AFACT Steering Committee and accepted the offer to be a special committee of AFACT in its 19th Meeting.

9. The Interoperability Task Group (ITG) is working on ebMS version 3.0 issues, action plan for Web Services Reliability test and ebMS 2.0 interoperability testing. The ITG is scheduled to conduct the ebMS 2.0 online interoperability testing against several ebMS 2.0 solutions of Asian vendors in the period of June and July 2008. The Core Component Task Group (CCTG) kept working on the development and maintenance of eAC Core Component Library.

#### Pan Asian eCommerce Alliance (PAA)

10. PAA is an industry led alliance aimed at enabling secure and reliable cross-border transmission of trade and logistic related documents. PAA was established in July 2000 by three member economies of the Asian region. There are currently nine member organizations from regional economies, which include the China International Electronic Commerce Centre (CIECC), TradeVan of Chinese Taipei, TradeLink of Hong Kong, the Trade Electronic Data Interchange (TEDI) of Japan, KTNET, an electronic trade service and solution provider in Korea, TedMev of Macau, DagangNet of Malaysia, CrimsonLogic of Singapore and CAT Telecom of Thailand. PAA

continues its regular meetings and projects to exchange trade documents among members, which include:

- (a) Electronic Certificate of Origin (ECO) between the Republic of Korea and Chinese Taipei,
- (b) Air Way Bill among Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea, and four commercial documents (purchase order, commercial invoice, packing list and advancedshipment notice) in textile industry between Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei.

#### **IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTER-REGIONAL BODIES**

##### Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

11. In APEC, there are two fora that have direct relevance to the work of UN/CEFACT. One is the Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG), which deals with issues on electronic commerce. The other is the Sub-Committee on Customs Procedure (SCCP), which is located under the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI). Under ECSG, there is a Paperless Trading Subgroup. The UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia participated in the 16th and 17th APEC ECSG meetings on behalf of UN/CEFACT as an official guest, which was granted by APEC to UN/CEFACT in the 13th ECSG meeting in February 2006. The 16th ECSG Meeting was held in June 2007 in Cairns, Australia. The 17th ECSG meeting was also held in February 2008 in Lima. In 2007, APEC ECSG launched three paperless trading related projects – APEC e-Invoicing framework, APEC-UN Joint Symposium on Paperless Trading and APEC data harmonization. All of these three projects are being implemented in 2008.

12. The Sub-Committee on Customs Procedure (SCCP) initiated a Single Window Initiative and formed a Single Window Working Group (SWWG). The SWWG successfully developed strategic plan and development report on APEC single window in June 2007. Based on the result of initial one year work, the SCCP decided to continue the activities of SWWG to produce more deliverables with limited term.

13. The APEC-UN Joint Capacity Building Symposium, under the auspices of APEC ECSG and UN/CEFACT, was held on May 26-28 2008 in Seoul. With intensive three-day interaction among the participants, the Symposium drew conclusion and agreed to several recommendations. Some of the Symposium recommendations relevant to UN/CEFACT includes recommendation on the use of the UN/CEFACT Core Component Library as the foundational data standard for cross-border paperless trading and UN/CEFACT' consideration of request for developing recommendations related to the Single Window.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

14. The region continues strong commitment to the implementation of paperless trading and electronic business as demonstrated by the efforts of such regional bodies as APEC, ASEAN and AFACT. UN/CEFACT needs to continue its engagement with regional bodies in the Asia and the Pacific to coordinate regional inputs with its development and delivery of global instruments.

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