

Talking points for Deputy Executive Secretary
for UN/CEFACT Plenary

Wednesday 8 Dec at 15:00 hours
Room VII

- Greetings.
- I would also like to pass on the complements and encouragement from Mr Jan Kubis who cannot be here today. As you know, he takes an active interest in the work of UN/CEFACT.
- Welcome to delegates – over 70 delegates from over 30 countries and international organizations. This is a clear testament to the work of UN/CEFACT as a global standards developer.
- Trade Facilitation and the exchange of electronic trade documents and information is fundamental to government's efforts to become more efficient and competitive in global trade. This is evident in the current discussions on the topic at the World Trade Organization. UN/CEFACT can and does make an important contribution here in terms of the Recommendations and Standards it produces.
- This is a very important Plenary for UN/CEFACT and I appreciate the efforts of the Bureau in preparing for the meeting. I particularly appreciate the huge efforts undertaken over last year in elaborating proposals on the restructuring of UN/CEFACT, consulting with different stakeholders and preparing the relevant documents. Inclusiveness is at the very core of the work of the UN, so that our work and instruments address the needs and aspirations of all member States. We must especially reach out, through the UNECE secretariat, to countries with economies in transition and developing economies, to ensure that they understand this work and, importantly, are included in its development.
- I would especially encourage you to continue your efforts to involve all member States in the selection of the projects for development within UN/CEFACT. As UN, we are driven by the needs of governments and we welcome the strong participation of the private sector in supporting this work.
- Implementing these reforms will require a strong and effective working relationship between UN/CEFACT and the secretariat. UN/CEFACT is an important intergovernmental body of UNECE. In this regard, I am very pleased to note that the main document Draft revised mandate, terms of reference and procedures for UN/CEFACT (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/15) clearly sets out and recognizes the place of UN/CEFACT within the UN framework, in the hierarchical chain starting from the General Assembly and reaching to UN/CEFACT. This recognition sets a firm foundation for close and fruitful

relations at two levels: between UN/CEFACT and the bodies to which it reports, the Committee on Trade and EXCOM; and between UN/CEFACT and the UNECE secretariat, which is part of the UN secretariat. UN/CEFACT is very much a core part of UNECE. It does not exist outside of UNECE – nor does it have a separate mandate approved by the General Assembly.

- The secretariat fully recognizes the need for change to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of UN/CEFACT in addressing the needs of member States. The secretariat has submitted comments on the Bureau documents on restructuring UN/CEFACT, with a view to assisting the Bureau and the Plenary in the next steps regarding consideration of these draft documents and to ensure that the Plenary only approves provisions that conform to UN rules and procedures. The secretariat looks forward to being of continuing assistance in efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of UN/CEFACT in addressing the needs of member States.
 - Working within the UN has many benefits, including openness, transparency and inclusiveness and global acceptance of the instruments and conventions developed within this framework. This is what gives UN member States the confidence in its outputs. Working in the UN also entails adhering to its rules, practices, procedures and mode of operation developed over many years of hands-on experience. For example, I would encourage you to select potential host countries for future UN/CEFACT Forums well in advance as countries like to have 8 months or more to negotiate the Host Country Agreement.
 - Very soon after the Plenary, EXCOM will be considering the progress made in responding to the recommendations it made to UN/CEFACT back in February 2009. For this purpose, EXCOM will have before it two documents, one submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau and another one submitted by the secretariat. We would have preferred that these were submitted as one single document and believe that this is what EXCOM had expected.
 - I understand we had a very successful technical briefing session for transition economies this morning, organized by the secretariat. This is a great opportunity to further engage such countries on our work. I would hope in the future to see more support for this type of activity from UN/CEFACT. As I mentioned previously, ensuring that transition economies participate in and benefit from the work of UN/CEFACT is very important to UNECE.
 - In closing, I wish you every success in your work this week. I hope that you have a favourable outcome of your deliberations
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