



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

AND

THE ASIA PACIFIC COUNCIL FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS

RECOGNIZING that trade facilitation reduces transaction costs, enhances predictability and increases competitiveness in national and international economies, through the simplification, harmonization and standardization of regulatory and procedural practices;

BELIEVING that simplified, harmonized and standardized business and regulatory procedures can achieve more effective official controls with improved trade facilitation;

RECOGNIZING that international business needs uniform, clear and simple rules and procedures to facilitate cross-border trade and develop global business strategies;

REALIZING that, because trade and supply chains are increasingly global, the most effective trade facilitation solutions will also be global;

NOTING that international non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations actively participate and support trade facilitation efforts;

RECOGNIZING that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) serves in the United Nations as the focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and electronic business standards, covering both commercial and government business processes that can foster growth in international trade and related services;

RECOGNIZING that a key aim of the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) is: to promote the commitment and development of trade facilitation, electronic business policies and activities in the Asia Pacific region, mainly focusing on those promoted by UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business), as well as to guide, stimulate and develop the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations to exchange products and relevant services effectively;

NOTING the existing working relationship between UNECE and AFACT and their common strategic objectives in the area of efficient international trade procedures;

RECALLING the multilateral Agreement on Trade Facilitation adopted at the 9th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2013 in Bali, Indonesia, and the subsequent adoption by WTO members in November 2014 of a Protocol of Amendment to insert the new Agreement into Annex 1A of the Marrakech Agreement establishing WTO;

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) agree to the following:

- I. To jointly promote the concept of trade facilitation and the use of international recommendations and standards and best practices in Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, including through integrated network of experts, where necessary and appropriate;
- II. To work together, where practical and appropriate, to ensure the harmonization of global trade facilitation standards that are of mutual interest;
- III. To jointly conduct, where necessary and required, and subject to available resources, appropriate outreach activities to raise awareness of such recommendations and standards and to support their implementation;
- IV. To consult on and cooperate in these activities with other relevant international institutions, and particularly with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP);
- V. To enhance consultation, cooperation, and the exchange of information, as appropriate; and
- VI. To review the provisions and operation of this Memorandum in the light of experience gained and to consider modifications and developments, as appropriate.
- VII. This Memorandum does not create any legally binding obligations (including, *inter alia*, those of a financial or administrative nature) between the parties, nor does it prevent the parties from pursuing the goals set forth herein on their own or with other third parties.
- VIII. This Agreement may be terminated by either Party upon six (6) months' prior written notice.
- IX. The parties agree that they will settle in good faith negotiations any disagreements or disputes arising out of the implementation or interpretation of the present Agreement.
- X. Nothing in or relating to this Agreement or any amendment hereof shall be deemed a waiver, expressly or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs.

Done in Geneva on

For the United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe (UNECE), Geneva, Switzerland

For the Asia Pacific Council for Trade
Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT)

Mr. Christian Friis Bach
Executive Secretary

Dr. Mahmood Zargar
General Secretary

Date: _____

Date: _____