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CAPACITY-BUILDING AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Note by the secretariat for information

1. This note provides an overview of capacity-building and implementation activities carried out by the UNECE Regional Adviser on Trade Facilitation and by the Committee's subsidiary bodies.

I. REGIONAL ADVISER ON TRADE FACILITATION

2. The Regional Adviser provided advisory services to the countries of Southeast Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

3. He worked with countries of Southeast Europe, particularly within the SECI (Southeast European Cooperative Initiative)/Stability Pact framework. In particular, he:

- (i) Supported the network of trade facilitation bodies within SECIPRO
- (ii) Prepared policy papers and projects within the Working Group on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation
- (iii) Promoted UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33 on "Single Window", and the "UNeDocs" (UN electronic trade documents) project
- (iv) Organized a seminar on WTO Accession and Trade and Transport Facilitation in Belgrade in October 2005

- (v) Organized a regional Ministerial Meeting in Thessaloniki, Greece, in July 2005 to support the e-Southeastern Europe Initiative (e-SEE) of the Stability Pact
- (vi) Led the work on guidelines on how to set up basic infrastructure for electronic business (the guidelines were adopted by the countries of the subregion under the e-SEE initiative)
- (vii) Explored possibilities for capacity-building and pilot projects.

4. In countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Regional Adviser:

- (i) Promoted UNECE standards at seminars on trade facilitation and the WTO in: Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (April-May 2005); Georgia (November 2005); Armenia (December 2005)
- (ii) Organized a regional seminar on trade facilitation in Kiev, October 2005 to initiate trade facilitation projects for Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova
- (iii) Worked with Russian partners in Moscow (January 2006) to advance their plans to set up a national trade facilitation body (PRO Committee), organize a capacity-building seminar together with EurAsEC, and establish a "Single Window" facility at Vnukovo airport in Moscow
- (iv) Assisted in developing projects for the Working Group on Trade of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) and led the development of a new United Nations Development Account project on trade facilitation for SPECA countries
- (v) Managed the UNECE-Czech technical assistance project, through which many of the above activities are financed.

5. The Regional Adviser promoted UNECE norms, standards and recommendations in collaboration with: the Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia corridor (TRACECA), the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the GUAM group of countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Republic of Moldova), SECIPRO and SECI/SP Business Advisory Council network, and the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC).

II. TRADE FACILITATION AND E-BUSINESS

6. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) organized the following events to present and publicize its tools and recommendations:

- (i) Paperless Trade in International Supply Chains: Enhancing Efficiency and Security, 20-21 June 2005, Geneva
- (ii) United Nations Regional Commissions Round Table on Paperless Trade Implementation, 23 June 2005, Geneva
- (iii) UN/CEFACT Joint Meeting on Single Window Standards and Interoperability, 28 September 2005, Lyon, France
- (iv) Regional Workshop on International Standards to Stimulate Paperless Trade, 20-21 February 2006, Kuala Lumpur

- (v) Regional Technical Workshop on UNeDocs Data Modelling, 22-24 February 2006, Kuala Lumpur
- (vi) Symposium on Single Window Standards and Interoperability, 3-5 May 2006, Geneva

7. UN/CEFACT promoted and advanced the use of its tools and recommendations at the following events organized by other organizations:

- (i) Trade Facilitation Negotiations in the WTO, June 2005, Lusaka; organized by UNCTAD for African countries
- (ii) Expert Level Meeting on Trade Facilitation for OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) Member Countries, 27 and 28 September 2005, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; organized by the Islamic Development Bank
- (iii) Regional Meeting on Economic Partnership Agreements and Trade Facilitation, 22-24 September 2005, Mombasa, Kenya; organized by UNDP for Africa and Caribbean-Pacific countries
- (iv) Regional Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCWA East Mediterranean Countries, 14-15 November 2005, Cairo; organized by ESCWA for ESCWA East Mediterranean
- (v) ODASCE1 Conference, Dijon, France, 17-18 November 2005, organized by ODASCE for Europe
- (vi) European Commission Single Window Seminar, 1-3 March 2006, Innsbruck, Austria; organized by the European Commission for EU Member States
- (vii) Expert Group Meeting – Follow up to results of 6th WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong SAR, China, 4-5 April 2006, Beirut; organized by ESCWA for ESCWA region countries.

8. UNECE signed an agreement with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to develop a Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide and to finance a series of capacity-building workshops. The project will run from April 2006 to April 2008.

III. REGULATORY COOPERATION AND STANDARDIZATION POLICIES

9. In October 2005, the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies contributed to a conference for Russian industry in Brussels on the European experience with standardization and technical regulations.

10. The Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques (START Team), at its meeting in March 2006, assessed the progress made on its sectoral projects for the CIS region (“earth-moving machinery” and “pipeline safety”).

¹ French International Trade Facilitation and Simplification Body.

IV. AGRICULTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS

11. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards organized (jointly with FAO and the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables) a Workshop on Quality Standardization and Inspection in Horticultural Trade (July 2005, Tbilisi). The purpose of the workshop was to present international standards to Georgian experts, and to explain how to use the standards for inspection of agricultural produce.

12. The Working Party contributed to the training course, sponsored by OECD, on harmonization of quality assessment procedures for fruit and vegetables (September 2005, Mojmirovce, Slovakia). The course was organized for quality inspectors to learn how to apply UNECE standards in their practical work.