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COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Note by the secretariat

This document is being submitted to the Committee **for information only**.

Introduction

1. The Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED) and its subsidiary bodies enjoy ongoing cooperation with many other intergovernmental global bodies, both in and outside of the United Nations system. These include, notably, the European Union (EU), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the other United Nations regional commissions, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Bretton Woods institutions. This cooperation is well structured and the division of work has been agreed upon. Active coordination is ensured in specific areas by inter-secretariat task forces. In addition, the Trade Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) maintains very close relations with many international non-governmental organizations in particular with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

EUROPEAN UNION

2. The UNECE has for years been cooperating with European Union (EU) Member States and the other countries of Europe and North America. Because of its unique relationship *vis-a-vis* its Member States, the European Community also enjoys a unique status in all the committees of the UNECE. Regular contacts on specific programmes or projects take place between the various divisions of UNECE and the corresponding general directorates of the European Commission. The legal instruments, norms and standards established by the UNECE and negotiated and/or defined with the EU directly contribute to supporting European integration.

3. In many specific sectors, the European Commission bases its own work on outputs from the UNECE. Under the CTIED this is most notable in the area of agricultural quality standards. In UNECE bodies, such as the Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), the European Commission and EU Member States join with other countries of the region to define working procedures for international business and trade.

4. The UNECE is an effective instrument for assisting the central and eastern European countries in completing the transition to market economies, and so contributes to the enlargement of the EU. Moreover, both the EU and the UNECE make complementary contributions to the democratic and economic transition process in central and eastern European countries. Further, notwithstanding the EU enlargement, the UNECE will always offer the benefits of being the only multilateral economic forum in which all European countries participate on an equal footing.

5. The UNECE and the European Commission also work closely together in the Economic Dimension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The UNECE is also a partner in the Stability Pact for South-East Europe and actively supports regional groupings, especially those targeted to promoting economic development and political stability among countries with economies in transition.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Central European Initiative

6. The Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development has started collaboration with the Central European Initiative (CEI) on small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, and proposals dealing with micro financing are being developed. In addition, cooperation has been established within CEI agricultural----- sub rural programme to promote UNECE's agricultural standards.

The CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology

7. The CIS Interstate Council for Standardization, Certification and Metrology has an informal agreement with the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) whereby it promotes and informs its members of the work of WP.6. Major W.P 6 documents are discussed regularly at the Interstate Council's meetings and comments and proposals are submitted to WP.6. The Chair of the CIS Interstate Council is also the Vice-Chair of WP.6.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

8. Under the auspices of the Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice (WP.5), the Build Operate Transfer (BOT) expert Group has promoted the concept of private public partnerships for infrastructure development. At a international colloquium on the economic aspects to conflict prevention, (Villars, Switzerland, November 2001), jointly organized with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and with experts from NATO at which the chairman of WP.5 participated, it was agreed to establish a joint OSCE UNECE programme to promote Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the area of conflict prevention. This programme will act as a conduit for private sector collaboration in projects that will be implemented in post conflict or conflict prone regions.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

9. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has worked closely with the UNECE Build Operate Transfer Group to promote private financing of infrastructure. It has agreed to cooperate, through its Legal Transition Unit and through its unit on infrastructure, with the PPP Alliance programme. It participated in the first meeting of the Alliance programme and in the Forum on Implementing Public Private Partnerships (11-12 March 2002).

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

10. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has an active interest in trade facilitation and electronic commerce and has prepared a number of studies and plans in this field. The studies include material developed by the UNECE, which also actively has contributed to these efforts.

11. UNECE and OECD cooperate closely in the area of agricultural standards. The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables adopts UNECE standards and promotes their use. The Scheme develops explanatory material (brochures) for the standards developed by UNECE.

Southeast European Cooperative Initiative and Stability Pact

12. The UNECE secretariat fully supports the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). In the case of the Committee, this includes secretariat support and advisory services for its projects related to trade facilitation and arbitration, and transport. Of particular importance in this context is UNECE's engagement in SECIPRO¹, in the Trade and Transport Facilitation for Southeast Europe (TTFSE) program, and in the Regional Road Transport Committee (RRTC).

¹ SECIPRO is the association of national PRO committees in southeast Europe. A "PRO Committee" is a body that seeks to increase business and investment by simplifying and modernizing PROCedures and information exchange in administration, commerce and transport.

13. Since January 2002, closer operational links have been established between SECI and the Stability Pact, facilitating *inter alia* direct cooperation between SECIPRO and the Workgroup on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation under Working Table II of the Stability Pact and, more generally, leading to better coordination between SECI and the Stability Pact.

World Trade Organization

14. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has brought trade facilitation to the forefront of its discussions and the topic was extensively discussed during the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar (9-14 November 2001).

In paragraph 27 of the Declaration from the Conference it was stated that: "Recognising the case for further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and the need for enhanced technical assistance and capacity building in this area, we agree that negotiations will take place after the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference on the basis of a decision to be taken, by explicit consensus at that Session on modalities of negotiations. In the period until the Fifth Session the Council for Trade in Goods shall review and, as appropriate, clarify and improve the relevant aspects of Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT 1994 and identify the trade facilitation needs and priorities of Members, in particular developing and least-developed countries. We commit ourselves to ensuring adequate technical assistance and support for capacity building in this area."

15. The UNECE has a longstanding, excellent working relationship with the WTO. Indeed, the WTO does not have the intention of carrying out technical work in trade facilitation that might duplicate activities of other organizations. In this context, the UNECE has proposed a framework for cooperation among various international organizations. In this framework it has been suggested that the WTO be responsible for filling gaps and that its central role should be to make binding, under the WTO legal framework, recommendations that have been developed by other organizations. In order to provide a platform for discussions on this topic, the UNECE has taken an initiative to host a major international event on trade facilitation – an "**International Forum on Trade Facilitation**" 29 and 30 May 2002, in Geneva. This event has been developed in close liaison with the WTO, and the WTO's Director-General will be the keynote speaker.

16. The UNECE secretariat participates in the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (CTBT) where the UNECE has observer status on behalf of all the United Nations regional commissions and representatives of the WTO secretariat regularly participate in the sessions of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6).

17. In addition, WTO members regularly participate in the work related to the enforcement of intellectual property rights under the Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice (WP.5).

World Customs Organization

18. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) benefits from close cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO). Official control measures are of crucial importance for traders and, in UN/CEFACT's International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG), the WCO has made substantive contributions to the development of several key UNECE Recommendations; a representative of the WCO

is a current member of the UN/CEFACT Steering Group. To reflect this close cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in July 2001 between the UNECE and the WCO.

UNITED NATIONS BODIES

Regional Commissions

19. The Trade Division actively seeks to share the information and experience gathered under the Committee and its subsidiary bodies with the other regional commissions of the United Nations. This policy has been particularly productive in the area of trade facilitation.

20. In addition, the UNECE is in regular dialogue with the other regional commissions in order to coordinate and disseminate information regarding the ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) Task Force For Development and the World Summit on the Information Society. To that end, meetings has been held with the Economic Commission for Africa and ESCAP for discussions on ICT questions and reports and working material has been shared between all commissions.

21. Significant assistance in the trade facilitation area has also been provided to countries participating in the Special Programme for Central Asia (SPECA), which is jointly supported by the UNECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

22. The UNECE will, during 2002, start to implement a trade facilitation project in the Mediterranean region funded by the development account. This project will be carried out in close cooperation with ECA and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and will focus on the benefits of trade facilitation for, in particular, small and medium-sized companies.

23. In May 2002 the UNECE will host an international Forum on Trade Facilitation. The other regional commissions have actively supported the planning and development of the Forum programme as well as contributing to the documentation.

24. ESCAP and ESCWA continue to support the UNECE initiative to operate a joint web site for International Trade: <http://www.UNeTrades.net>. The Web site allows traders to download free of charge codes necessary for efficient trading. In addition, the UNECE and ESCAP cooperate through the SPECA (Special Programme for Central Asian Republics) programme, which includes elements on border-crossing facilitation as well as trade facilitation.

25. Recent discussions with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have focused on how to incorporate ECLAC (Trade Division) in the regional commissions' network on Trade Facilitation and e-Business and how to promote trade facilitation activities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

26. In the field of agricultural standards, a seminar on the UNECE Agricultural Quality Standards has been held in collaboration with the Agricultural Section at ESCWA. Several of the UNECE standards have been translated into Arabic. Further, a joint Seminar with ESCAP and EAN International takes place in April 2002, in New Delhi, on "Safe and High Quality Food for International Trade".

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

27. The relationship between Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Codex Alimentarius Commission and, in particular, the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, has substantially intensified over the past two years. Consultations between the UNECE secretariat and the FAO secretariat have resulted in a highly productive working relationship. The FAO Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables takes UNECE standards as starting points for the development of standards; in addition, wherever possible, Codex standards are aligned with UNECE standards to avoid confusion in trade.

International Atomic Energy Agency

28. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UNECE are co-sponsoring a publication entitled "Guidelines on the Management of Radioactive Protection Aspects in the Recycling of Metal Scrap", which is being developed under the auspices of the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development.

International Trade Centre

29. The International Trade Centre (ITC) fully participates in the UN/CEFACT, UNCTAD and ITC intersecretariat task force on trade facilitation. Further, the ITC will be invited to take an active part in the Mediterranean trade facilitation project aimed at small and medium-sized companies.

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

30. The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) works closely with the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in all areas of work that touch upon trade law. For example, it actively participates in the UN/CEFACT Legal Working Group and contributes to the development of a recommendation on online dispute resolution (ODR). In addition UNCITRAL has actively communicated with the UNECE in its activities related to the legal framework for public/private sector partnerships and has supported our work on international commercial arbitration.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

31. All of the Committee's subsidiary bodies communicate on a regular basis with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) regarding their work. This communication is particularly regular and structured in the area of trade facilitation where UN/CEFACT, UNCTAD and ITC are all active. An inter-secretariat Task Force meets regularly to ensure continued coordination among the work programmes of these three organizations.

32. This close cooperation is manifested through the election of the UNCTAD Chief of Trade Facilitation as Vice-chairman of the UN/CEFACT International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG). Through this group UNCTAD has made substantial contributions to UN/CEFACT's work and, in particular, collaborates on the following:

- Compendium of Trade Facilitation Recommendations.
- Brochure on Trade Facilitation, to be published for the Forum on Trade Facilitation in May 2002.
- Handbook on Trade Facilitation, developed by UNCTAD but to be reviewed by the ITPWG.

In addition, the Chief of the UNCTAD Trade Point Programme assists the UNECE in coordinating the Czech - UNECE Trade Facilitation Project which aims at capacity building in trade facilitation in selected Eastern European countries.

United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Industrial Development Organization

33. The Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development maintains close links with institutions and organisations involved in industrial restructuring and business development. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), seminars have been organised on the clean-up of chemical sites. The Team of Specialists is considering options with these agencies regarding future publication of the *Compendium of Soil Clean-up Technologies and Soil Remediation* and the organization of future seminars on the environmental clean-up of selected sites polluted by chemicals.

World Bank

34. The World Bank actively participates in UN/CEFACT's International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG). In addition, the UNECE is part of the World Bank's **Global Facilitation Partnership**, which was set up to make sure that Trade Facilitation measures are used in international projects and the World Bank's **Global Corporate Governance Forum** which seeks to promote good practice in this area.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Chamber of Commerce

35. The UNECE has longstanding, fruitful cooperation with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). UN/CEFACT has found this cooperation particularly useful; for example, in UN/CEFACT Recommendation No. 5, where the revised list of abbreviations of Incoterms is based on ICC Publication 560, Incoterms 2000. The Legal Working Group of UN/CEFACT has also cooperated closely with the ICC on the development of a new draft Recommendation on Online Dispute Resolution.

36. In addition, the ICC works very closely with the Advisory Group on Intellectual Property Rights under the Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice (WP.5). In fact, the ICC manages a Trust Fund to support the activities of this Advisory Group, as well as actively participating in its work.

37. The ICC being one of the most important international organizations representing the private sector, the UNECE secretariat has explored areas of interest and modalities for development of a Memorandum of Understanding in order to widen and deepen our cooperation. This initiative has met with a positive response and both organizations will continue work on its development.

European Electronic Messaging Association

38. The European Electronic Messaging Association (EEMA) has longstanding links with the UNECE. EEMA participates regularly in the work of the UN/CEFACT and both organizations are jointly dedicated to encouraging best practice in e-business. EEMA has provided assistance to the Committee for its 2000, 2001 and 2002 forums. EEMA particularly helped the UNECE to raise funds that have been mainly used to finance participation from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and eastern European countries and is also assisting the UNECE in identifying high quality speakers for promoting the 2002 Forum.

International Organization for Standardization

39. The International Organization for Standardization participates in and regularly contributes to the work of UN/CEFACT and the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6).

40. In order to coordinate the work between the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC) and the UNECE, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was developed in 1994. Following the establishment of UN/CEFACT, it was agreed to review this MoU and a new version was approved in 2000, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International CALS² Congress and NATO CALS as participating organizations. Regular consultative meetings between representatives of all these organizations take place in the context of this MoU and its implementation.

2 "Continuous Acquisition and Life-cycle Support (CALs).

Science Park and Innovation Centre

44. Cooperation with the Science Park and Innovation Centre network (SPICE) continued until the end of the mandate of the Team of Specialists on Business Incubation. During this work, an update of the UNECE *Guidelines on Best Practice in Business Incubation* (ECE/TRADE/265) was prepared. At its third session, the Working Party on Industry and Enterprise Development (WP.8) decided to focus its programme of work on industrial restructuring, entrepreneurship development and knowledge-based economy. Cooperation with SPICE will be reoriented accordingly.

SUMMARY

45. Collaboration with other international organizations is an essential and particularly enriching part of the Committee's work. It guarantees consultation across a wide range of parties and interests; ensures that there is no duplication of work; and assists in promoting the norms, standards, recommendations and best practice guidelines that result from our joint efforts to promote trade, industry and enterprise development.

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