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## **UN/CEFACT Mini-Conference**

**27 April 2016**

### **Sustainable Fishery Management through Information Management (FLUX)**

#### **Opening Statement**

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Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all UN bodies and international organizations have been working hard to identify how each of them can contribute to the achievement of these goals. Indeed, in order to take a step closer to a better world for future generations, we must all take responsibility for ensuring the success of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In this context, UNECE is committed to also placing its expertise and work at the service of the SDGs.

UNECE's Centre for Trade Facilitation and eBusiness (UN/CEFACT) is the focal point for the standardization and harmonization of trade procedures worldwide. Its work consists in developing standards and other instruments (guidelines, recommendations, Single Window...) to facilitate trade procedures in order to accelerate global trade and the effective exchange of information between governments and government agencies, between them and businesses and between businesses.

Our work increases the trade capacity of countries, which results in stronger economic growth and, in the medium to long-term, less poverty. Thus, Trade Facilitation contributes directly to the achievement of SDG 1 which is to, "End poverty in all its forms everywhere".

The experts in UN/CEFACT's Agriculture Domain focus on the development of eBusiness standards and best practice in order to make agricultural trade more efficient and safer, thus reducing food waste, preserving precious natural resources and improving human health. Their work has included the development of standards for electronic Sanitary and Phytosanitary documents, CITES permits, electronic Laboratory messages, animal passports and traceability standards for agriculture trade – all of which are used in countries around the world and their use is increasing every year – not to say every week and month!

One of the standards recently developed by UN/CEFACT's agriculture domain group is FLUX which stands for "*Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange*" and it is used for the electronic exchange of information on fish catches in order to better manage the world's fish stocks. Thus, FLUX directly supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14 which calls upon the world community to, "*Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*".

FLUX is an eBusiness instrument to address the crisis of global fishery stocks: Due to overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, world fish stocks are becoming depleted. As of 2011, 28.8% of fish stocks were estimated to be fished at a biologically unsustainable level (FAO, 2014). This threatens not only the fish, but also the humans depending on them. According to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), "about 1 billion people, largely in developing countries, rely on fish as their primary animal protein source."

In order to efficiently manage fishery zones it is important that Fishery Management Organizations and their stakeholders exchange timely information on fishing vessels, fishing locations, the gear used, catches, landings, etc.

Until now, fishing vessels mainly used paper-based logbooks to record and exchange this information which was cumbersome and error prone. With the support of the European Commission Directorate for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) UN/CEFACT has now developed a standard for the electronic information exchange of fishery information.

With this standard, Fishery Management Organizations around the world have, for the first time, an open and global standard for the collection and dissemination of fishery catch information to support the sustainable management of the fish stocks under their stewardship.

The FLUX standard is also connected to other UN/CEFACT standards used for Tracking and Tracing. The standard can be an efficient tool for detecting and combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In addition, the use of FLUX can contribute to the development of reliable and up-to-date databases on fishery activities which will then improve research in support of science-based fishery management.

We are confident that FLUX can be a major tool for Fishery Management Organizations and Governments to better control and preserve the world's valuable fishery stocks – and, as a result that FLUX will also be an important tool in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am looking forward to the presentations and discussions at this workshop and I hope that it will contribute to the wider use of this important UN/CEFACT standard.