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Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices
for Administration, Commerce and Transport

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A STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF UN/CEFACT OBJECTIVES

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Submitted by the Chairman of the CSG *

This document is submitted to the Centre by the Chairman of the CSG for discussion and approval.

* This document has been published without formal editing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Now that UN/CEFACT and all of its permanent working groups are fully established, the work programme is agreed and its implementation is underway, it is vital that we consistently explain to external parties the wider goal of UN/CEFACT (*simple, transparent, effective processes for global commerce*) and the value of its work. In a world where first impressions really do count, a lack of awareness can easily damage credibility and lead to an under-valuation of an institution's worth. Therefore, as UN/CEFACT develops, the issue of promotion and awareness becomes more and more important. The purpose of this paper is to map a strategy to increase the external visibility of UN/CEFACT and, subsequently, to provide an umbrella for the further promotion of the Centre's objectives. The starting point is a strengths and weaknesses analysis of the current position from a marketing and awareness perspective, which has been carried out by members of the CSG. It should be emphasised that the analysis may have given a different result if carried out from a different perspective. Further, and importantly, it has been assumed that, in all areas, a high standard of technical work will be maintained.

2. THE ANALYSIS

2.1. Strengths

The prime strength of the Centre is that it is part of the United Nations and can call itself UN/CEFACT. Being part of the UN gives credibility and neutrality and from an external perspective, global reach and a multi-cultural/ multi lingual understanding. Other strengths include:

- The clear focus of the Centre on Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business; (although this is currently being obscured by the cumbersome nature of the Centre's title)
- The very special structure of the Plenary where non-governmental organisations, including many from industry and commerce, have the same status as member states. The fact that industry and commerce can be seen to be on an equal footing with governments is a powerful statement of the Centre's openness and reach, without in any way lessening the role of the member states;
- The empowerment of Working Groups, with their ability to attract key experts from all sectors of industry, commerce and government; (this also strengthens credibility and openness)
- The experience of the Centre as a flexible and innovative standardisation body.

2.2. Weaknesses

The lack of specific (as opposed to general) funding for the work programme and the relatively small size of the Secretariat is a significant weakness, for it constrains the ability of the Centre to be able to undertake many tasks in the support of the work programme. Other weaknesses include:

- The association with the Economic Commission for Europe for it generates an external perception that the Centre has a European rather than a worldwide focus; (In reality this perception is due entirely to the name of the Commission not its breadth of interest or competence. If the

Commission was called the Economic Commission for Europe and North America, which apparently some had suggested at the time of its formation, this perception would disappear)

- The perception, in some quarters, of the UN as a bureaucratic, political, body.

2.3 Conclusion

Given this analysis and from a marketing perspective, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. Certainly, if a way can be found to minimise - or change the perceptions - of the weaknesses, the Centre's strengths can be leveraged. The key to this is probably the Centre's open worldwide interface with industry and commerce. For if industry and commerce can be seen to clearly support the Centre's work – and perhaps can be persuaded to contribute extra budgetary funding – then it is likely that governments will further recognise the value of the Centre. The combination of strong input from industry and commerce, close cooperation with and thoughtful guidance from policy makers, and quality technical work is very powerful. Therefore, initiatives to strengthen links with industry and commerce should be a significant part of the promotional and awareness strategy and this is further discussed below. However, there is a range of more direct marketing actions that must also be a central part of the strategy. These include a unique and clear identity, which builds on the strengths, a relevant and simple “message” (we already have this at the highest level - *simple, transparent, effective processes for global commerce*) and an evaluation of the most effective ways of increasing awareness and reaching a world-wide audience

3. A UNIQUE AND CLEAR IDENTITY

3.1 A change in the name of the Centre

Before creating a unique identity, it is desirable to have a name that clearly expresses the role of the organisation. In that respect, “The Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport” – is an awkward and cumbersome title, as anyone making presentations on behalf of the Centre can testify. More importantly, from an external perception, it gives no understanding of the real focus of the Centre's work. The Director of the Trade Division has also expressed this concern and after discussion with the CSG, a proposal has been made to change the name of the Centre to “The Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business”. This much more accurately reflects the main areas of the Centre's work and is more meaningful and focussed. The acronym UN/CEFACT, however, has gained in recognition and it would now be wrong to change it. Further from a marketing perspective there is no issue in keeping the acronym but changing the name.

The Plenary is invited to approve the recommended to change the name of the Centre - but not the acronym - to “The Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business.”

3.2 A Unique Identity

To-date, UN/CEFACT has lacked a unique identity that builds on its strengths. However, under the leadership and expertise of the Vice Chair from the IAPH, Santiago Mila, and through a generous contribution-in-kind from the Port of Barcelona, a new identity has been professionally

developed. The proposed logo is shown in Annex A, but the contribution is much more than just a logo. It is the development of a complete identity manual, covering all aspects of the Centre's work, with related logos being developed for the Permanent Working Groups and for the Centre's main "products" such as UN/EDIFACT and the UN/LOCODE. The draft manual, which will be available at the Plenary for review, also details the technical specifications of each part of the identity and, therefore, will allow the logo to be disseminated and reproduced, for example on the programmes of approved conferences. If the proposal to change the name is accepted, it is the intention of the PROMO group to distribute to Heads of Delegation and the Working Groups copies of the manual.

Without doubt, the work of Santiago Mila and his Group has been very valuable and an excellent contribution to the strategy but, if the new identity is approved, it is essential that it is applied in a consistent manner throughout the Centre's activities. That requires establishing and publishing the criteria for use, particularly in the area of endorsement such as external events and the PROMO Group, in liaison with the CSG, have undertaken to do this.

The Plenary is invited to approve the new logo.

4. INCREASING AWARENESS

4.1 The Press

Given a clear and unique identity and an agreed high level "message" the Centre needs to find the effective and consistent means of disseminating the message and details of its work, to a world-wide audience. Obviously using media channels and especially press releases and press interviews is one important aspect of this and the Centre, its Secretariat and its Groups, need to find ways of doing this on a more regular basis and in a manner that reaches the target audience. Apart from major developments such as the ebXML initiative, the Centre has not been good at generating news items although there are many aspects of our work that are newsworthy if presented more attractively. Journalists particularly welcome case studies of the implementation of the Centre's work and usage statistics. Everyone involved in the Centre has an important role in identifying news items and the Secretariat is ready to act as a co-ordinator and to treat PR as a high priority. The target audience and the channels to them is likely to vary from country to country and from organisation to organisation and apart from the CSG, Heads of Delegations, Rapporteurs and the Chairs of Working Groups are particularly well placed to identify the audience and the channels and to "tailor" particular items of news. The Secretariat has made a start on building up a network of national/organisational contacts to be able to do this but much more work needs to be done and Heads of Delegation and Chairs of Working Groups are strongly encouraged to nominate persons to act as awareness multipliers.

4.2 The Web

However, in today's world and particularly for an organization that has electronic business as one of its main areas of activity, the Web offers a major opportunity and must be accorded the highest priority. It is vital that the Centre's site should be attractive, easy to use, and carry both news items and detailed information about the Centre's activities. The Centre's website now has its own Unique Reference Locator <www.uncefact.org> and is currently being substantially upgraded. Over the past few months, significant effort has gone into reorganizing the internal

structure of the Website and into the implementation of efficient software tools for Website management. To facilitate access to important documents, a search engine has been developed. Following another contribution-in-kind, the German Company, GEFEG, is hosting this service. The reorganization of the Website will finally lead to a redesign of the UN/CEFACT home page. Clearly, the maintenance of the site, provision of news stories and the updating of the technical pages are a key task of the Secretariat in conjunction with the Working Groups.

4.3 Endorsement

Another way to increase awareness is to endorse external events such as relevant conferences. Over the past six months Officers of the Plenary, members of the CSG, Rapporteurs, Chairs of Working Groups and the Secretariat have responded to requests for presentations on UN/CEFACT's activities at significant events in Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and North America. Many of these events were organised by Member States or organisations associated with the Centre such as AFACT. However, although these events specifically featured the Centre's work, from an awareness perspective few of them were directly linked to UN/CEFACT. Consequently, opportunities have been lost both to be seen to support the event and to increase general local/regional awareness of the Centre. If the work on the new identity is approved, then in the future it would be advantageous to the Centre to offer to endorse such events and allow the use of the logo on the programmes and publicity material. This would require appropriate criteria to be established but this should not be too difficult. Further, the speakers should be encouraged to place their presentations on the Centre's website as a source of general information.

4.4 Statements of Policy

Although UN/CEFACT's work is mainly of a technical nature, it does have a policy impact. Certainly, by agreeing Recommendations to governments the Centre is trying influence policy, for example, the Recommendation on Pre-shipment inspection. In reality the Centre also has clear views on many other policy issues, which range from the necessity of public/private cooperation in trade facilitation to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition for capacity building in their telecommunications structures if they are to be able to take advantage of electronic business. However, many of these views are implicit, and in increasing awareness it may be advantageous to make them explicit. Although any such statements would need to be carefully prepared and used in an appropriate context with the guidance of the Secretariat, they could provide a powerful additional dimension to the perception of the nature and value of the Centre's work.

4.5 A Business Advisory Council

In the analysis section of this paper, it was argued that initiatives to strengthen links with industry and commerce should be a significant part of the promotional and awareness strategy. Although the Centre already receives the technical input of a number of leading industrial and commercial associations, it would be very useful to get more policy views and this is probably best achieved on an informal basis. The following outline proposal for discussion suggests a Business Advisory Council where senior business leader's who share the vision of "*simple, transparent, effective processes for global commerce*" would be invited to meet on a regular (once or twice a year) but informal basis with the Plenary officers, CSG members, Rapporteurs and interested Heads of

Delegation to discuss the broader business and implementation issues arising out of the Centre's strategy and work programme. Effectively the Council would act as a sounding board for discussions relating to business issues and apart from increasing awareness, could also add further credibility (and perhaps even resource) to the Centre's work. Membership would be by invitation, with members serving for a three-year period and a Council of about 20 members, representing a broad cross-sector of industry and commerce worldwide is envisaged. A report would be produced after each meeting and circulated to Heads of Delegation.

The Plenary is invited to discuss the above proposals for increasing the awareness of the Centre's work, and, where appropriate, mandate the CSG and the PROMO group to develop the ideas further.



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**SIMPLE, TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE PROCESSES
FOR GLOBAL COMMERCE**