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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and
Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport
Sixth session, 27-30 March 2000
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

INTER-SESSIONAL APPROVAL OF DOCUMENTS

Submitted by the secretariat

This document is submitted to the Centre for approval.

Background

Move from biannual to annual sessions

The restructuring of the Trade Facilitation activities and the creation of UN/CEFACT resulted in the scheduling of one annual session with UN/CEFACT against two annual sessions with WP.4. This reduction to one annual session creates a situation where ongoing work which has reached a level of quality and stability that would allow its publication for approval may be unnecessarily delayed for many months. To avoid this situation, at the Third Session of UN/CEFACT in March 1999, the CSG proposed the introduction of a new procedure to cover such documents. It was proposed that documents approved by working groups for submission to the UN/CEFACT Plenary may be approved by a new procedure, if submitted up to 5 months before the Plenary. In an annual cycle of meetings, the adoption of this procedure will improve efficiency.

Subsequently, the UN/CEFACT Plenary approved the proposal.

Paragraph 21 from the report TRADE/CEFACT/1999/19 states "The Plenary approved the proposal to develop a detailed procedure for a new standards development process, as outlined under para.29."

Proposed procedure

Documents eligible for this procedure are such that are deemed necessary for urgent publication and for which a delay in publishing would hamper their usage. After consultation with the Chairman of the Steering Group, the document should be submitted to the secretariat by the chairman of the respective working group no less than 5 months before any Plenary session.

The procedure involves the publication of the draft document on UN/CEFACT's web-site and its circulation to all Heads of delegation clearly indicating that it is a draft document for approval. The circulation will be carried out through an electronic procedure according to the list of Heads of delegation established after each Plenary session by the secretariat.

In the absence of negative comments or substantive change requests, after a two-month comment period, the document will be considered as approved for official publication. Absence of response from a Head of Delegation will be considered as support for the document. The two-month comment period will take effect on the date of the first publication of the document on the UN/CEFACT web-site.

Comments on the draft document should be submitted to the secretariat.

Editorial comments by Heads of delegation and editorial changes by the UN Editor may be accepted before final publication. However, if changes are made to the text, the final version should also receive the approval of the submitting working group chairman.

If substantive comments or objections are made, the document shall then be withdrawn from publication and the comments transmitted to the submitting working group chairman.

Action

To review and approve the proposed procedure to cover the inter-sessional approval of documents.
