UN/CEFACT

REPORT OF THE CODES WORKING GROUP (CDWG) TO THE UN/CEFACT PLENARY

SOURCE: CDWG Chair - David Dobbing
STATUS: For information, 7th UN/CEFACT session
Introduction

1. This report covers the activities of the Codes Working Group (CDWG) as they relate to the key work programme priorities for UN/CEFACT.

2. Since the March 2000 UN/CEFACT Plenary, the CDWG has conducted two plenary meetings in Geneva, during May 2000 and November 2000.

3. A number of significant CDWG milestones have been achieved during the period since the last UN/CEFACT Plenary, including:
   - Finalisation of the 2001 version of the UN/LOCODE, Recommendation No. 16,
   - Submission for UN/CEFACT Plenary approval of a revised Recommendation No. 19 - Codes for modes of transport,
   - Submission for UN/CEFACT Plenary approval of a revised Recommendation No. 20 - Codes for units of measure used in international trade,
   - Preparation for public comment of a revised code list for Recommendation No. 20,
   - Approval of a revised code list for Recommendation No. 21 - Codes for types of passengers, cargo, packages and packaging materials,
   - Approval of a revised code list for Recommendation No. 24 - Trade and transport status codes,
   - Submission for UN/CEFACT Plenary approval of a new recommendation, Recommendation No. 28 - Codes for types of means of transport,
   - Progress with the resolution of issues concerning draft Recommendation No. 30 - Harmonized commodity description and coding system for the coding of goods and commodities,
   - Re-election of Mr. David Dobbing as Chair and Mr. Alex de Lijster as Vice-chair of the CDWG,

UN/LOCODE Expert Group

4. The CDWG UN/LOCODE Expert Group has had two meetings since the March 2000 Plenary under the Chairmanship Mr. Gosta Roos, the UN/LOCODE Consultant.

5. Concerning the use of diacritic characters in the names of locations, agreement was reached to incorporate an additional column in the UN/LOCODE presentation layout to contain location names represented without diacritic characters.

6. It was agreed that name of Recommendation No. 16 should be changed from “Codes for Ports and other Locations (UN/LOCODE)” to “United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations - UN/LOCODE” in order to better reflect its current usage and coverage of all modes of transport.

7. The introduction of geographical co-ordinates into the UN/LOCODE was acknowledged as being valuable but equally a time consuming task. Assistance is being sought from a number of reference sources to facilitate this work.
8. Consideration was given to making available a Web form for the submission of change requests to the UN/LOCODE, in addition to the existing submission channels. The UN Secretariat is progressing with this development, recognising that this will form part of a future Web based facility for the submission of change requests for all UN/CEFACT maintained code lists.

9. The group agreed to align the function classifiers contained in Recommendation No. 16 with the equivalent mode of transport codes specified in Recommendation No. 19. The existing function classifier of “8” (Border crossing) would retained in Recommendation No. 16 with a classifier of “C”. These changes would be introduced in a future release of the UN/LOCODE following the reclassification of certain port locations as inland water transport locations.

10. It was agreed that the change indicators used in the UN/LOCODE would be aligned with those used in other UN Recommendations related to codes and the UN/EDIFACT directories.

**Recommendation No. 16 - United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations - UN/LOCODE**

11. UN/LOCODE 2001 has been finalised. The UN/Secretariat will be informing the Plenary of its current publication status and availability on the Web. This edition of the UN/LOCODE contains more than 2000 new entries, including an additional column for location names without diacritic characters.

**Recommendation No. 20 - Units of Measure Used in International Trade**

12. The changes to Recommendation No. 20 have arisen from the need to apply to a number of requests for new code values and in particular in response to clause 29 of the current version of Recommendation No. 20. This clause stipulates that a number of informative code values be deleted unless a written justification and definition of the unit has been provided to the UN/Secretariat.

13. The updating of Recommendation No. 20 has taken into account user community requirements to address the issue of upward compatibility between versions, including seeking the views of the UN/CEFACT constituency as well as the positions of ISO and ANSI ASC X12.

14. An extensive review of the body text of Recommendation No. 20 has resulted in a number of changes, notably; alignment of the format and presentation with other recommendations prepared by the CDWG, removal of incidental historical information, updating of references, inclusion of change indicators and provision for the progressive introduction of descriptions for each unit of measure code entry.

15. The body text for this fifth revision of Recommendation No. 20 is submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for approval as TRADE/CEFACT/2001/20 under agenda item 10.

16. It is intended that the associated code lists for Recommendation No. 20 will be considered for approval by the CDWG at its May 2001 meeting, following a two month public comment period.
17. Mr. Steve Luster from the United States has to date championed the task of updating Recommendation No. 20. With his recent retirement, the CDWG acknowledges the very valuable contribution to work of the CDWG that Mr. Luster has made, in particular to the updating of Recommendation No. 20.

**Recommendation No. 19 - Codes for modes of transport**

18. The CDWG updated Recommendation No. 19 to coincide with the development of the new Recommendation No. 28 (Codes for types of means of transport). The CDWG had been requested by user representatives to address an issue of the ambiguity associated with the use of the second digit in the existing codes for the modes of transport. This coupled with the development of Recommendation No. 28 removes the need for a second digit in the codes for modes of transport. Accordingly, the code list for Recommendation No. 19 is limited to a single digit to designate the mode of transport.

19. Furthermore, following a CDWG decision agreed in consultation with UN/LOCODE Expert Group to align the function classifiers contained in Recommendation No. 16 (UN/LOCODE) with the mode of transport codes specified in Recommendation No. 19, the code list entries represented by codes “0” and “9” have been swapped and their respective descriptions adjusted accordingly.

20. The format and presentation of Recommendation No. 19 has been aligned with other recommendations prepared by the CDWG.

21. The second edition of Recommendation No. 19 was subject to a two month public comment and finalised at the November 2000 meeting of CDWG. It is submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for approval as TRADE/CEFACT/2001/19 under agenda item 10.

**Recommendation No. 21 - Codes for passengers, types of cargo, packages and packaging materials**

22. The CDWG updated Recommendation No. 21 to incorporate a number of user requests for additional and revised code entries. Following a two month public comment period, a final version of the code list for Recommendation No. 21 was approved by the CDWG at its November 2000 meeting. It is a substantive revision of the code list.

23. The revision to annex V (Code list in code name order) and annex VI (Code list in code value order) of Recommendation No. 21 is submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for noting as TRADE/CEFACT/2001/21 under agenda item 10.

**Recommendation No. 24 - Trade and transport status codes**

24. The CDWG updated Recommendation No. 24 to incorporate a number of user requests for additional and revised code entries. A new release of the code list for Recommendation No. 24 was approved by the CDWG.
25. This revision to annex 2 (Code list code value order) and annex 3 V (Code list in code name order) of Recommendation No.24 code list is submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for noting as TRADE/CEFACT/2001/22 under agenda item 10.

**Recommendation No. 28 - Codes for types of means of transport**

26. Recommendation No. 28 is a new recommendation designed to establish a common code list for the identification of the type of means of transport. Its development arose from user requests to have a single reference point for these codes. It has particular relevance to transport organisations and providers, Customs and other authorities, statistical offices, forwarders, shippers, consignees and other parties concerned with transport.

27. A number of the codes defined within the annexed code list correspond to existing industry codes in order to facilitate the migration to the codes contained in Recommendation No. 28.

28. This Recommendation was subject to a two month public comment and finalised at the November 2000 meeting of CDWG. It is submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for approval as TRADE/CEFACT/2001/23 under agenda item 10.

**Recommendation No. 30 - Harmonized commodity description and coding system for the coding of goods and commodities**

29. The CDWG has progressed work on this draft recommendation. In particular, following the last UN/CEFACT Plenary session, a special one day open meeting was convened during the May 2000 CDWG meeting to further consider comments received on the initial draft of Recommendation No. 30, TRADE/CEFACT/2000/12 (19 Jan 2000).

30. The CDWG formed a subgroup to respond to the comments received and to continue work on Recommendation No. 30. It was resolved that this work would be based on identified business needs concerning the harmonization and simplification of goods descriptions used for transport-related purposes. In conjunction with the WCO, the subgroup should also study the suitability of using the HS for this purpose. The work was to involve all relevant parties so that compatibility with user and business requirements could be ensured.

31. At its November 2000 meeting, the CDWG conducted an extensive review of the future direction for Recommendation No. 30. Options for the progression of Recommendation 30 were discussed, ranging from its complete withdrawal, to preparing a revised version based on the use of the HS. It was acknowledged that without the full support of the maritime industry, further development of this Recommendation would not be appropriate. The group concluded that any further work on Recommendation No. 30 would be dependent on formal written support from key transport bodies, in particular those related to the maritime sector. Such support should clearly stipulate whether the use of the HS is the preferred method for the coding of goods and commodities in support of a common approach for information exchange between maritime carriers mutually and between carriers and their agents, as well as for the exchange of information between these carriers and regulatory authorities.
32. As at the time of preparing this report, the aforementioned level of support has not been received by the CDWG.

33. A final decision on the future of Recommendation 30 will be made at the next CDWG Plenary meeting, during May 2001.

**Other CDWG Developments**

34. Currently, Recommendation No. 21 covers codes for types of passengers, cargo, packages and packaging materials. In response to user requests, the CDWG is progressing work on splitting Recommendation No. 21 into two recommendations; Recommendation No. 21 covering types of packages and packaging materials, and a new Recommendation No. 29 to cover types of passengers and cargo. Whilst the two recommendations are related, they do address two separate trade and transport subject domains.

35. With the widespread use of the Internet as a ubiquitous global communications channel, the CDWG is continuing with the evaluation of a number of options to streamline the maintenance of codes and improve the availability using Web based technologies.

36. In accordance with the CDWG work programme, further work is required on the development of CDWG maintenance procedures for UN Recommendations related to codes. This work will be extended to cover the establishment of quality control criteria and policy.

**Forthcoming Meetings**

37. The following CDWG meetings are planned for the year 2001.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>07 May 2001</td>
<td>UN/LOCODE Expert Group</td>
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<td>08-10 May 2001</td>
<td>CDWG Plenary</td>
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<td>26 November 2001</td>
<td>UN/LOCODE Expert Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-29 November 2001</td>
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