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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Eleventh session, 22 – 23 June 2005

REPORT OF THE 11TH SESSION

1. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) held its eleventh session in Geneva on 22 and 23 June 2005 under the chairmanship of Mr. Christian Frühwald.

Participants and observers

2. Participants in the meeting included representatives of the following countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Uzbekistan.

3. The following intergovernmental organizations participated: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Bank for International Settlements (BIS), European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), and The World Bank.

4. The following non-governmental organizations participated: International Article Numbering Association (EAN International), International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH), Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (S.W.I.F.T), Global Standards 1, International Chamber of Commerce, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT).

5. Observers at the invitation of the secretariat included representatives of: “Association Est rencontre Ouest”, EMEA (Microsoft office for Europe, Middle East and Africa), the Korea International Trade Association, Peace Worldwide and the World Trade Organization (WTO) notification Agency (Armenia).

Opening

6. The Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe UNECE welcomed the delegations on behalf of the Executive Secretary. She said that a successful Executive Forum on “Paperless Trade in International Supply Chains: Enhancing Efficiency and Security” had been held before the Plenary session. The results had indicated that trade facilitation and the development of electronic business standards was increasingly important and that the work of UN/CEFACT should be continued and further strengthened. Trade facilitation had become an important topic in the WTO as part of the “Doha discussions” and it was hoped that the newly focused UN/CEFACT work would be properly acknowledged in this area.

7. The Director also drew attention to the recommendations made by the external evaluation team on the programme of work and focus of UNECE. The draft recommendations had been submitted to the diplomatic missions in Geneva. The delegations were invited to make comments and suggestions on the recommendations concerning the work in trade facilitation and electronic business standards.

8. The Director announced her departure from UNECE at the end of July. Thanking the delegations for their support over the years, she wished them well for their future work in UN/CEFACT.

Note: Decisions taken during this meeting are shown in boldface type.

Agenda item 1 – Approval of the agenda:

9. The Chairman announced the changes made since the submission of the draft agenda to translation. A new agenda item on cooperation with other international organizations was added and six miscellaneous documents had been issued.

Decision 05-01:

The Agenda was approved with the changes as announced.

Item 2. Report of the 10th session of UN/CEFACT

Decision 05-02:

The Centre endorsed the report of its 10th session, as approved in an intersessional process in 2004.

Item 3. Report of the Bureau

10. The Acting Chairman presented the report of the Bureau. Several delegations noted an improvement in the work of UN/CEFACT and in the processes in place and congratulated the Bureau on successful consolidation of the Centre’s management. Some delegations felt, however, that the communications to Heads of Delegation between Plenary sessions could still be improved and requested the Bureau to issue, for instance, quarterly messages through the listserver of the Heads of Delegation. At the same time, Heads of Delegation should also be encouraged to involve themselves more in the Centre’s discussions and decision-making.

Mandate and Terms of Reference

11. The 10th plenary had invited the Bureau to revise the Mandate and Terms of Reference of UN/CEFACT (TRADE/R.650) to include the changes and the spirit of work done in UN/CEFACT as a result of the recent organizational restructuring. The Bureau had prepared Revision 4 with a shorter and more concise text, providing a clear and stable environment for work. The Head of Delegation of the United States requested that the intersessional approval process should be properly defined and referenced in R.650.

12. The Delegations welcomed the set of UN/CEFACT's constitutional documents.

13. Detailed technical and editorial comments were also made to complete the final text of R.650. It was agreed that a fixed target date in 2009 should be set for the following review of R.650 to define further needs for change and refinement.

14. The Plenary agreed that rapporteurs should have a standing open invitation to attend the Bureau meetings and take part in conference calls, and should be included on all relevant listservers. The secretariat reminded the delegations of the independent role of rapporteurs in the United Nations system. The nomination process of Heads of Delegation should also be spelled out.

15. The ISO delegate requested that the mandates and terms of reference of the Rapporteurs be revised as soon as TRADE/R.650/Rev.4 would be finished.

Rules of Procedure of the UN/CEFACT Forum

16. The Chairman of the Forum Management Team (FMG) presented the draft procedures according to which the Heads of Delegation would nominate their teams participating in the Forums and inform the secretariat accordingly. The UNECE would keep the records until the nomination is withdrawn and no repeated nominations for participants would be required

17. The delegations also requested the secretariat to publish a list of Heads of Delegation for review by the Plenary. The secretariat should explain the authority for and the process of inviting guests without HOD nomination. The United States delegation recommended approving the document on procedures, particularly regarding the notion of officially invited guests and their status vis-à-vis that of observers and nominated delegates in decision-making and elections. In addition, the delegations felt that all those delegates that would be officially nominated by a HOD should automatically have full voting rights and could stand for elections.

Open Development Process

18. The FMG Chairman presented the draft Open Development Process (ODP). The Head of Delegation of France pointed out that there was only a procedure for technical specifications but none for other UN/CEFACT outputs and that these should be prepared.

19. The Chairman concluded the agenda item by stating that the approval of the Mandate and Terms of Reference of UN/CEFACT, together with the Rules of Procedure of the groups and the ODP, finished the process of reviewing and updating UN/CEFACT structures and procedures.

Decision 05-03:

The Plenary endorsed the report of the Bureau. The Bureau was requested to provide timely and quarterly progress reports to Heads of Delegation (HoD) through the HoD listserver. The secretariat was requested to update the subscriptions to the HoD listserver.

Decision 05-04:

The Plenary noted the report of the Forum Management Group (FMG) on the objectives of the UN/CEFACT Forum (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/3).

Decision 05-05:

The Plenary approved the Mandate and Terms of Reference of UN/CEFACT (TRADE/R.650/Rev.4) and requested the Bureau to incorporate the typing changes and the following comment made by Plenary delegations: a description of the intersessional decision-making process should be prepared and a reference should be made to it in TRADE/R.650/Rev.4. These changes shall be included in the final text.

Decision 05-06:

The secretariat should prepare a form for Heads of Delegation to use for nominating Forum delegates.

Decision 05-07:

The Rules of Procedure for the UN/CEFACT Forum were approved. The Plenary requested the FMG, in cooperation with the Bureau, to revise these Rules of Procedure in order to clarify the right to invite observers and special guests to Forums.

Decision 05-8:

The Open Development Process (ODP) was approved and the Bureau, together with the FMG, was requested to complete the document with procedures to cover all UN/CEFACT deliverables.

Item 4. Strategy and Programme of Work

20. The Bureau first presented two draft strategy documents – trade facilitation (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/6) and electronic business (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/7) for discussion and approval. This was followed by the presentation by the Bureau of the Centre's programme of work (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/8) and a list of outputs (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/18).

21. The delegations of IAPH and Canada supported the two documents and congratulated the Bureau on completing a comprehensive programme of work for UN/CEFACT that was clearly linked to the strategy of the Centre and the concrete outputs under way in the Forum. It was essential that the Plenary ensure that the work to be undertaken to implement the programme of work was adequately monitored, and then revised in future sessions.

22. The Chairman reminded delegations that the package that included the strategies and the programme of work would allow the Heads of Delegation to review the role of UN/CEFACT. He invited them to forward their comments regarding work undertaken in UN/CEFACT to the team of experts who were carrying out an external evaluation of the UNECE.

Decision 05-9:

The trade facilitation and electronic business strategies were approved.

Decision 05-10:

The Programme of Work (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/9) was approved.

Item 5. Financing of the UN/CEFACT Programme of Work

23. The Chairman of the FMG introduced the agenda item and announced that document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/9 "Financing of the Programme of Work of UN/CEFACT" had been replaced by document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.5 owing to late submission.

24. The Plenary was requested to discuss the approach and approve the principles of financing that would be applied by the Bureau in cooperation with the FMG to finish the details of a fund-raising plan.

25. The Head of Delegation of France recommended approving the document and committing to making all efforts possible to secure additional financing by member States. In addition, urgent measures should be taken to secure financing for the next UN/CEFACT Forum that would take place in Lyon, France, from 26 to 30 September 2005. The Chairman reminded delegations that because Forums were official United Nations meetings, United Nations rules and procedures for financing and conducting the meetings needed to be followed.

26. In the subsequent discussion, the delegations agreed that the role and contribution in kind of the experts should be mentioned in the final financing document. It was also agreed that, as the external evaluation was currently under way, Governments should be approached with tact and caution as demands for additional funding could be misinterpreted. The Bureau was requested to prioritize the items and activities to be funded in order to secure funding of the most important elements of the programme of work should there be insufficient means to cover all planned activities.

27. The Head of Delegation of Canada announced that the financing issue would need to be completed without delay in order to allow the Forum to take place in Vancouver in March 2006. Financing to run the Forum meetings would need to be agreed as a matter of urgency and separate from financing other issues, including the repositories and permanent support to the Groups.

28. The delegation of IAPH referred to earlier advice that had been received from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) whereby contributions could be invited from the Forum members to a trust fund to cover additional meeting costs. These contributions would need to remain voluntary and unenforceable.

29. The Chairman concluded that there were two separate issues related to financial questions. The financial issues related to meeting room and accommodation at the next forums in Lyon and Vancouver needed to be solved as a matter of urgency and the financial arrangements for additional meeting support, repositories, etc. as a policy matter separately. The Bureau and FMG should develop the detailed procedures and descriptions either for intersessional approval or for the following Plenary.

Decision 05-11:

The principles laid out in document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.5 (Recommendations for the Support and Financing of the UNECE's UN/CEFACT Programme of Work) were approved. The Bureau, in cooperation with the FMG, was requested to develop the related, detailed procedures and descriptions for either intersessional approval or approval at the 12th Plenary session in 2006.

With regard to the Forums in Lyon (September 2005) and Vancouver (March 2006), specific measures have been taken.

The delegation of Canada reserved the right to review the matter at a later stage.

Item 6. UN/CEFACT Intellectual Property Rights

30. The Bureau introduced a report highlighting the work undertaken in the Special Contact Group (SCG) set up during the 10th Plenary in 2004. The current draft of the intellectual property rights policy (IPR) with commentaries on the open issues had been circulated to HODs just a week before the Plenary, which, it was understood, had not allowed the member States to fully familiarize themselves with the policies and open issues in the matter. Consequently, the Plenary was asked to approve only the principles of the policy. This would allow the SCG to finish the text as soon as the pending comments and advice was received, and submit the draft to the secretariat for final clearance by OLA.

31. The Chairman thanked the Bureau and the SCG for their work. OLA had been involved in the discussions of the CSG and had approved the general outline of the policy.

32. The Legal Rapporteur congratulated the SCG on a paper that contained a good proposal for the UN/CEFACT IPR policy. He emphasized the need for a policy that would be fair to contributors but that would, at the same time, also ensure that UN/CEFACT products remain free for all users. He considered the proposed draft to be an excellent step forward.

33. The Head of Delegation of France reminded the delegations that the same issue was under discussion in organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and ISO. He also regarded the proposed principles to be an important way forward and requested the SCG to resolve the issue as a matter of first priority.

34. Some delegations enquired as to whether IPR was tied to financing, and needed to be solved together with that. The Chairman's reply indicated that IPR was crucial to but not explicitly tied to financing. While there were implications between the two, the issues could be solved separately, one not excluding the other.

35. The Chairman noted that the Plenary had unanimously approved the principles contained in the draft policy and the explanatory note and that the Plenary requested the Bureau to clarify the final issues and process the policy through OLA for approval.

Decision 05-12:

The principles of the Intellectual Property Rights Policy were approved as laid down in document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.3. The Special Contact Group, in cooperation with the Bureau, was requested to prepare a document that the secretariat can clear with the UN Office of Legal Affairs. The IPR policy should be approved in an intersessional approval process by the end of 2005.

The Delegations of Canada and Sweden reserved the right to submit comments later and they were requested to do so within three weeks after the Plenary to expedite the finalization process.

Item 7. Cooperation arrangements with other organizations

36. The secretariat presented a document on the principles of cooperation arrangements with the private sector and other organizations (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.1) and a copy of a Cooperation Agreement signed by the UNECE and the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS) the day before, on 21 May 2005 (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.2).

37. The Plenary noted that areas for cooperation included a number of issues, which, however, were not exclusive. The Executive Forum that had been held before the Plenary had identified further areas, including UNEDocs and future technologies such as web services.

38. The concrete areas and means of cooperation would be tested in time through joint work. As it was understood that both organizations had work in the same areas, these issues should be discussed to ensure that a viable work plan was put in place for both organizations, avoiding duplication of effort.

39. The Chief Executive Officer of OASIS complimented the FMG on working closely with OASIS and on the strong support of the secretariat. The primary goal of the agreement was to pave the way for continued and improved cooperation of the members of the two organizations.

40. ISO and the Head of Delegation of Canada congratulated the teams of both organizations that had made the Memorandum of Understanding possible.

Decision 05-13:

The Plenary approved the suggested approach to cooperation with the private sector as laid down in document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.1 and encouraged the Bureau to identify partners for such cooperation agreements.

Decision 05-14:

The Plenary confirmed the Cooperation Agreement signed between the UNECE and OASIS.

Item 8. UN/CEFACT Forum progress reports

41. The Chairman invited the chairpersons of the groups to present their annual reports to the Plenary. It was noted that the Legal Group had not submitted a report but that the secretariat had prepared a short note highlighting the work of the Group. The reports and related Powerpoint presentations would be made available on the UN/CEFACT website.

42. The Head of Delegation of France had submitted a paper (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.6) where concerns regarding the work of the Legal Group were discussed, as no documents had been received from the Legal Group or Legal Rapporteur addressing these matters.

43. The Legal Rapporteur replied that he had two separate activities: one was the work of the Group in the area of legal instruments for trade facilitation, and the other legal issues in UN/CEFACT, e.g. those related to the IPR policy. Unfortunately, the Legal Group had not been active within the Forum since its meeting in Washington in September 2004. Separate meetings had been held with the SCG and the Group had had a meeting in the Netherlands in October 2004. Subsequently, the secretariat had announced that it would no more be in a position to support the Group, which had led to the current situation. The LG needed to be revitalized as the two joint chairpersons had not been able to carry the work forward.

44. The Chairman of the FMG proposed that a call for participation should be made to Heads of Delegation and the next Forum, in Lyon, France, should set up a revitalized Legal Group.

45. The delegation of the Netherlands supported the proposal but reminded delegations that the tasks and scope of legal work in UN/CEFACT should first be clarified. The Legal Group's original mandate was to address legal aspects of trade facilitation and electronic business standards, not to provide the other groups with legal advice. Although synergy had been and was being sought, the Group had not seen a need to participate in general Forum meetings.

46. The Chairman concluded that after the approval of TRADE/R.650/Rev.4, all five groups were permanent and the same rules applied to all of them, including the Legal Group.

Applied Technologies Group (ATG)

47. The ATG was responsible for the creation and maintenance of trade, business and administrative data structures based on a specific technology or standard. Its function was the design, assembly and production of syntax-specific solutions based on identified business and/or technical requirements from the permanent UN/CEFACT groups.

48. Eighteen data maintenance requests had been processed for the D.04B UN/EDIFACT Directory and 30 for the D.05A UN/EDIFACT Directory. A team with representatives from the Universal Business Language grouping (UBL) and UN/CEFACT had been set up to resolve technical differences between two Extended Mark-up Language (XML) Naming and Design Rules.

49. Three meetings had been held - in Australia, Germany and Norway - and the next would take place as part of the Forum in Lyon in September 2005.

50. A full report of the Group was submitted in document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/13.

Information Content Management Group (ICG)

51. The ICG had made significant progress with Requirements Specifications Mapping (RSM) and with the UN/CEFACT Registry Specification. Revision 3 of Recommendation 20 on Units of Measure used in International Trade had been issued and a migration project for UN/EDIFACT Code List in the Core Component Library had been prepared. Two updates of Recommendation 16, Codes for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE), had been issued.

52. The Chairman noted with satisfaction that participation in the work of the Group had greatly increased in the Asian region. The registry project was being prepared by OASIS, and was a good example of how duplication of work was being avoided.

International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG)

53. The TBG focused on the simplification of international trade procedures, analyses of business and governmental processes and the use of best practices. In support of the development of trade facilitation and electronic business solutions the TBG used methodologies such as the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) and the Unified Modelling Language (UML). There were 18 working groups in the Group covering a wide variety of business domains. Two new working groups had been set up in the course of the year: TBG2 working on electronic documents and TBG18 in the area of agriculture. TBG2 would focus on working on UNeDocs. One new UN/EDIFACT message – DAPLOS, data plot message DAPLOS containing data for traceability and environmental information for agricultural products – had been approved. The Group had also revised recommendation 6 and finished Recommendation 33 on the Single Window concept. The Group had also prepared six Business Requirements Specifications that would be submitted to the Plenary for review under agenda item 8.

Techniques and Methodologies Group

54. The TMG had several items under way in the Open Development Process (ODP), including the Core Components Technical Specification V2.01 (Part 8 of the ebXML Framework), the UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) Meta Model, the UMM Reference Guide, the UMM User Guide, the Business Collaboration Schema Specification (BCSS), the Unified Business Agreements and Contracts (UBAC), as well as the ebXML Business Process Specification Schema (BPSS).

55. TMG, ICG and ATG had also decided to jointly define a profile for the next generation of XMI (XML Metadata Interchange) documents for UMM and Core Components Technical Specification compliant class models. With TBG, TMG was going to establish a joint ad hoc “Modellers’ Reference Initiative” Group (MRI).

56. The Head of Delegation of the Netherlands informed the Plenary of ebXML guidelines that had been produced in order to explain the values of ebXML to user communities. Copies were made available to the delegations.

Decision 05-15:

The Plenary endorsed the reports of the Applied Technologies Group (ATG), the Information Content Management Group (ICG), the Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG) and the Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG). The Plenary noted the secretariat's report on the work undertaken in the Legal Group and requested the FMG to issue an invitation to Heads of Delegation for participation in the Legal Group. The next meeting of the Legal Group would be organized during the UN/CEFACT Forum in Lyon, France, 26 – 30 September, where new officers of the Group would be elected.

Item 9. Approval of recommendations and associated documents

57. The Bureau gave an overview of work items that were under development (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/18). The list of items for each Group had been referenced to the Programme of Work (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/8) as well as to the trade facilitation and e-business strategies.

58. The Chairman of the ICG introduced for approval document 19 containing Revision 3 of the UNECE Recommendation 20 on Codes for Units of Measure Used in International Trade. The representative of ISO pointed out that the relevant ISO standard (ISO 2559) had been withdrawn and consequently, the ICG had been requested to revise Recommendation 20. This having been done, consultations between the ICG and the relevant ISO Technical Committee (TC154) were envisaged on a fast-track approval process for at least parts of Recommendation 20. The delegation of the United States informed the Plenary that there were two related processes under way in their country. The outcome of the discussions on how these codes should be made available in e-business contexts would be forwarded to the ICG and the ISO TC, as appropriate.

59. The Chairman of the TBG presented five draft Business Requirements Specifications (BRS) for review and approval by the Plenary, and one for information.

60. It was brought to the attention of delegations that the title of the proposed BRS on export certification might be misleading. The Plenary therefore decided to change the title to read "Business Requirements Specification for Sanitary and Phytosanitary e-Certificate".

61. The representative of Malaysia informed delegations that even with this change there were other related international documents, such as electronic sanitary certificates and certificates of origin that could cause confusion and suggested a complete review of the title. The representative of ISO also informed the Plenary that the World Customs Organization (WCO) was working on similar issues and requested UN/CEFACT to ensure appropriate coordination.

62. With regard to the BRS for material safety data sheets which had been submitted for information, the Plenary was informed that the TBG15 was updating Recommendation 11 on "Documentary Aspects of the Transport of Dangerous Goods" and the UNECE WP.15 on Transport of Dangerous Goods had already been issuing standards and norms on the transport of dangerous goods for many years. Any further work in TBG3 on the proposed material safety data sheet would need to take into account the existing United Nations tools and standards.

63. The Chairman of the TBG concluded by noting that the BRS documents were drafts and further work would be undertaken. He invited the delegations to participate actively in the subsequent work to finish the documents.

64. The Chairman reminded the groups that to ensure adequate time for delegations to review and comment on documents, the provisions regarding submission times, as laid down in R.650/Rev.4, would need to be followed by all groups.

65. The Plenary reminded the groups that the internal and external liaisons affecting the work and outputs of any Group should be reflected on the cover page of any documents submitted for approval by the Plenary in order to ensure the full traceability of inputs.

66. The secretariat informed delegations that the two documents related to the UN/CEFACT Single Window Recommendation 33 had been submitted. The text had been updated and complemented by a deeper background and an analysis of existing Single Window approaches in different countries. A seminar would be organized later in 2005 on these issues. The three language versions of the Recommendation would be issued as a UNECE publication. A repository of information on Single Window implementations would also be opened based on the results of a survey that had been made.

67. The Plenary noted with satisfaction that the delegation of Jordan had announced after the Executive Forum that had been held prior to the Plenary that it would submit the Single Window Recommendation to its Government with a request to establish a Single Window in the country. The delegates of Canada and Sweden recommended that the Single Window publications be widely circulated as they were directly related to discussions at the WTO on trade facilitation and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) articles on transit and customs.

68. The Vice Chair of the FMG introduced the work on the UNeDocs project that had been moved to the TBG2 working group on digital paper. Increased semantic interoperability was being sought through the use of the UN/CEFACT Core Component Library. The project was expected to result in an electronic successor to the paper-based UN Layout Key (UN Recommendation 1), combining ISO 15000-5 Core Components, EDI, XML, document presentation and box completion guidelines. The group called for increased participation in its work. The delegations of the United States and the IAPH emphasized the importance of the project and reconfirmed their active interest in and support to the project.

Decision 05-16:

The Plenary approved Revision 3 of its Recommendation 20 “Units of Measure” (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/19) and the following documents as draft Business Requirement Specifications:

TRADE/CEFACT/2005/20	Business Requirement Specification for Cross Industry Invoice
TRADE/CEFACT/2005/21	Business Requirement Specification for Cross Industry Remittance Advice
TRADE/CEFACT/2005/22	Business Requirement Specification for BoostAero e-Supply Chain
TRADE/CEFACT/2005/24	Business Requirement Specification for e-Tendering
TRADE/CEFACT/2005/36	Business Requirement Specification for Sanitary and Phytosanitary e-Certificate

Decision 05-17:

The Plenary reminded the Groups that they should follow the stipulations of TRADE/R.650/Rev.4 regarding outreach and participation in the Groups’ work. The cover pages of Business Requirement Specifications should indicate the Permanent Group in charge as the source submitting the document, and the individual working group where the work is undertaken to ensure full traceability of data as well as internal and external liaisons.

Decision 05-18:

The Plenary requested the Bureau to review the term “Business Requirement Specifications” to ensure that it corresponds to current practices in UN/CEFACT. The individual titles of Business

Requirement Specifications should avoid confusion with similarly named work items in other organizations.

Decision 05-19:

The Plenary took note of document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/23 containing a draft “Business Requirement Specification for Material Safety Data Sheet” and requested TBG to take into account the provisions and results of related work as laid down in the documents: “Annex to Business Requirement Specification for Material Safety Data Sheet” (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/23/Add.1); and “The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)” (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/32). The TBG was requested to submit a revised BRS for review and approval of the Plenary.

The Plenary noted documents TRADE/CEFACT/2005/25 and TRADE/CEFACT/2005/26 containing the full Single Windows Recommendation in English, French and Russian and recommended a wide publication of these.

The Delegation of Canada reserved the right to comment on the Business Requirement Specifications at a later stage.

Item 10. Reports from UN/CEFACT Rapporteurs, and related matters

69. The Asian Rapporteur presented his report highlighting the need for closer cooperation between the UN/CEFACT Forum and the different groupings in the Asia-Pacific region.

70. The delegation of Australia supported the proposal by the Rapporteur concerning increased coordination among the numerous actors in the region. The IAPH delegation emphasized the need for establishing similar Rapporteur liaisons with other regions, and, in particular, with organizations in Africa and Latin America.

71. The Plenary welcomed the work undertaken by the Rapporteur in the Asia-Pacific region and wished to see further mechanisms for cooperation established, e.g. in the area of alignment and harmonization. Specifically, the Rapporteur was requested to prepare a list of UN/CEFACT items where enhanced cooperation would be sought.

72. The Standards Liaison Rapporteur made a short report on his work to ensure adequate and functional coordination between the different actors involved in the area of trade facilitation and electronic business standards worldwide. His work focused on cooperation arrangements under the Memorandum of Understanding between the International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Organization for Standardization, the International Telecommunication Union and the UNECE.

73. The Chairman raised the issue of mandates and terms of reference for rapporteurs. Those of the Standards Liaison Rapporteur (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/17) and the Rapporteur for Asia ((TRADE/CEFACT/1998/9) had been revised by the Plenary in 1998, while those of Legal Rapporteur had been only been approved by the Steering Group in 1999 (TRADE/CEFACT/1999/CRP.4 – Annex I “Draft Mandate for Legal Liaison Rapporteurs”). He suggested that the Bureau should complete the constitutional legislative documents of UN/CEFACT with one final document comprising a standard set of mandates and terms of reference for all rapporteurs for intersessional approval.

74. The representative of IAPH proposed that the terms of reference of rapporteurs be revised for the beginning of the mandates of the next rapporteurs to be elected. The representative of ISO agreed with the Chairman and reminded the Plenary delegations that the work and role of standards liaison had greatly changed over the years.

Decision 05-20:

The Plenary took note of the Report of the Standards Liaison Rapporteur.

Decision 05-21:

The Plenary took note of the Report of the Rapporteur for Asia. The Bureau requested him to further develop contacts with regional standardization initiatives and to help ensure cooperation and coherent approaches to trade facilitation and electronic business standard development in the Asian region.

Decision 05-22:

In order to complete the set of constitutional documents of UN/CEFACT, the Plenary requested the Bureau to review the mandates and terms of reference of rapporteurs and submit them to Heads of Delegation in an intersessional approval process.

The Plenary requested the Bureau to work on the identification of regional rapporteurs in additional regions and in particular in Africa and Latin America.

Item 11. UN/CEFACT Capacity-Building and related matters

75. The Chief of the UNECE Global Trade Solutions Branch made a presentation on a review that the secretariat had prepared on the relevance of UNECE instruments addressing trade facilitation in the WTO Doha programme of work, particularly Articles V, VIII AND X of the GATT 1994. The Chairman of the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) had been invited for discussions regarding any work related to the TIR Carnet that UN/CEFACT might wish to undertake as part of the UMM.

76. The secretariat introduced the draft Guide to Trade Facilitation Benchmarking (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/33). The document contained an overview of current approaches to benchmarking in a trade facilitation context. The IAPH welcomed the benchmarking exercise and referred to similar activities carried out by e.g. the International Telecommunication Union in the development of digital access and requested the Bureau to take such initiatives into account in future work, as well as relevant linkages to training and capacity-building.

77. The secretariat informed the delegations of a new baseline study that would be undertaken in the course of 2005. The study would be based on the level of implementation of the following recommendations: 1 (UN Layout Key), 4 (National Trade Facilitation Organs), 16 (UN/LOCODE), 25 (UN/EDIFACT) and 33 (Single Window) in a group of 11 countries including EU members and advanced economies in the UNECE region (Canada, Czech Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom), EU accession members (Bulgaria), CIS member countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation) and non-UNECE member States (Republic of Korea, Thailand). The IAPH delegation suggested including NGOs and business associations in the contacts to be surveyed.

78. The Regional Adviser reported on capacity-building activities that had been carried out in Central and Eastern Europe. The Government of the Czech Republic had continued to finance a programme that UNECE was implementing. The secretariat also briefly highlighted the progress that it had made in capacity-building under the programme of work of the UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (TRADE/2005/15). The Bureau reminded delegations that member States had a standing invitation to bring such events to their region and countries.

79. The delegation of Ukraine thanked the secretariat for assistance provided to the emerging economies in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The cooperation with FITPRO in the Czech Republic and with the UNECE Regional Adviser had significantly supported the integration of the countries into global trade systems and international supply chains in Europe and Asia. Particular reference was made to the practical implementation of UNEDocs. The delegation solicited complementary support to help advance the project.

80. The Head of the Czech delegation highlighted the plans of the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade for future support. He particularly thanked the Director of the Division for her contribution towards the success of the programme. The Czech support project would be continued, as additional funding had been secured.

81. The Bureau had prepared a draft discussion paper on cooperation between the regional commissions and other regional partners (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.4) that highlighted a number of ways in which such cooperation could be enhanced. The Director of the Division thanked the Bureau for the report and, on behalf of the secretariat, endorsed the proposal that the regional commissions should reinforce their cooperation within UN/CEFACT. All five regional commissions had profited from their effective cooperation for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis in November 2005, and such cooperation would be further reinforced by the regional commissions' cooperating in UN/CEFACT.

Decision 05-23:

The Plenary took note of the following reports made by the secretariat:

- **UNECE Instruments to Address Trade Facilitation in the WTO Doha Work Programme (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/28)**
- **Benchmarking Guide (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/33)**
- **Plan for a UN/CEFACT Implementation Study (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/34)**
- **Czech technical assistance project (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/35)**
- **Capacity-building and implementation activities in Support of the Programme of Work of the UNECE Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (TRADE/2005/15)**
- **Summary of Trade Facilitation Recommendations (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/31)**

Decision 05-24:

The Plenary took note of the Bureau's report on Regional Cooperation (TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.4) and requested that the Bureau follow up and report at the 12th Plenary. The Plenary further requested the secretariat to refer this matter to the Executive Secretary of the UNECE for follow-up at the highest level with the other regional commissions.

Item 12 Elections

82. The Director of the Division regretted to have to announce that the Chairman would step down. The Bureau had set up a Search Committee consisting of Christina Rahlén (Sweden) as the Chair and Messrs Tahseen A Khan (India) and Mark Palmer (United States) as members, to identify candidates for a new Chair of UN/CEFACT.

83. After being identified as a candidate by the Search Committee, Mr. Stuart Feder (USA) was unanimously elected Chairman of UN/CEFACT for the two-year term 2005 – 2007.

84. The Chairman in office, Dr. Christian Frühwald (Germany) congratulated Mr Feder on his election and wished him well in his new functions. He wished UN/CEFACT a fruitful continuation of its work and thanked the secretariat and all officers of UN/CEFACT for the good cooperation he had enjoyed with them during his term of office. He hoped that this cooperation had been positive and proactive, and he looked forward to supporting UN/CEFACT in the future.

85. Mr. Feder thanked delegations for their vote of confidence and support and said he looked forward to cooperating with all delegations.

86. On behalf of the delegations and the Bureau, Mr. Mike Doran thanked Dr. Frühwald for his valuable contribution to the work of UN/CEFACT during the years of difficult restructuring of the work and the processes. He concluded by thanking the Director of the UNECE Trade Development and Timber Division. He said that she had been an extremely important link between the United Nations system and the UN/CEFACT constituencies over the past 10 years.

Decision 05-25:

The Plenary elected Mr. Stuart Feder as its Chairman for the period 2005 – 2007.

Item 13 Review of Decisions

Decision 05-26:

The Plenary adopted the decisions made at the 11th Plenary session held in Geneva on 22 and 23 June 2005, and requested the secretariat to issue a list of the decisions on the UN/CEFACT website and in a message to the Head of Delegation listserver.

Decision 05-27

The Plenary decided to hold the 12th Plenary of UNCEFACT from 29 May to 2 June 2006.
