



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/11
21 August 2009

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Fifteenth session
Geneva, 9-12 November 2009
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL RAPPORTEURS

Report of the Rapporteur for Asia

Summary

Despite recent global economic difficulty, the countries and regional bodies in the Asian and Pacific region continue their efforts to facilitate trade and implement electronic business for regional progress and economic development. The report of the Rapporteur for Asia describes developments in the region based on his observations on and interaction with regional bodies since the fourteenth session of UN/CEFACT.

I. ASIA PACIFIC COUNCIL FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS

1. The Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) is a regional body mandated to (a) support trade facilitation policies and activities, especially those promoted by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), and (b) dedicate itself to stimulating, improving and promoting the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations to exchange products and relevant services effectively in a non-political environment.
2. The 26th AFACT meeting and EDICOM 2008 were held from 13 to 16 October 2008 in Seoul. The event was hosted by the Korean Ministry of Knowledge Economy and organized by the Korea Institute for Electronic Commerce. Participants included more than 100 experts from 13 member economies, as well as 2 associate members. The event was composed of a Steering Committee meeting, Joint Working Group meetings and a Plenary meeting, followed by the EDICOM 2008 conference.
3. The meeting was opened by the 2008 AFACT Chairman, Mr. Chunseok Kim (Republic of Korea). The Plenary noted that AFACT membership had reached 19 member countries and economies and 1 associate member as of 2008, with the ratification of new membership of Saudi Arabia and the ratification of eBusiness Asia Committee (an associate member of AFACT) transition to AFACT as a special committee.
4. The Plenary elected the heads of delegation (HODs) of the Islamic Republic of Iran and of Viet Nam as the newly elected HoD members of the Steering Committee for the two-year term. Extensive discussion was held on the way forward, based on the report made by the AFACT Roadmap task force team, with general consensus on the three-committee restructuring model and the AFACT Secretariat Recruitment model.
5. The Plenary noted the activities of joint working groups (JWGs), as well as the efforts made by their members. India will host the 27th AFACT meeting and EDICOM 2009. The 2009 AFACT Steering Committee mid-term meeting was held on 14 and 15 May 2009 in Goa, India, and the AFACT annual meeting and EDICOM 2009 are scheduled on 2 – 6 November 2009 in New Delhi, India, together with the 4th eAsia Award evaluation and ceremony. The 28th AFACT meeting and EDICOM 2010 will be hosted by Saudi Arabia in 2010.
6. The EDICOM Conference had as its theme, “Business Innovation in e-Business and Paperless Trading Using Open Standard”. About 100 national and regional experts participated. The Conference focused on the importance of open standards in applying information and communication technologies (ICT) to the governmental and business sectors.

7. At the 27th AFACT Steering Committee mid-term meeting, participants discussed the development of the AFACT roadmap and passed a series of resolutions to facilitate the implementation of some work items in the roadmap, such as the “request for expressions of interest” for AFACT Secretariat recruitment, joint working group transition and the continuation of work on a Single Window.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER BODIES IN THE REGION

A. eBusiness Asia Committee

8. The eBusiness Asia Committee (eAC) formally resolved to transition itself to AFACT as a special committee. In its work programme, eAC included new items such as chemical material information management, standard business document header (version 2) and proof of concept for the Global Service Bus project. eAC regularized its biannual meetings by holding them in conjunction with AFACT mid-term and annual meetings.

B. Pan Asian eCommerce Alliance

9. Pan Asian eCommerce Alliance (PAA) is an industry-led alliance aimed at enabling secure and reliable cross-border transmission of trade and logistic related documents. It was established in July 2000 by three member economies of the Asian region. It currently comprises nine member organizations from regional economies, including: China International Electronic Commerce Centre (CIECC); TradeVan of Taiwan Province of China; TradeLink of Hong Kong, SAR China; Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System (NACCS) of Japan; KTNET, an electronic trade service and solution provider in the Republic of Korea; TEDMEV of Macau, SAR China; DagangNet of Malaysia; CrimsonLogic of Singapore; and CAT Telecom of Thailand. Associate members include Intercommerce of the Philippines, Tradegate of Australia, TEDI Club of Japan and EDI-I of Indonesia.

10. Among the trade documents exchanged among the PAA members were:

- (a) ECO (Electronic Certificate of Origin) between the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China;
- (b) Air Way Bill among Taiwan Province of China, Hong Kong, SAR China and the Republic of Korea;
- (c) Four commercial documents (purchase order, commercial invoice, packing list and advanced shipment notice) in the textile industry between Hong Kong, SAR China and Taiwan Province of China.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERREGIONAL BODIES

A. Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

11. Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has two forums that have direct relevance to the work of UN/CEFACT: the Electronic Commerce Steering Group (ECSG) and the Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures, which is located under the Committee on Trade and Investment. Under ECSG, there is a Paperless Trading Subgroup.

12. As UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia, I participated in the 19th APEC ECSG meeting as an official guest. APEC had granted observer status to UN/CEFACT in the 13th ECSG meeting in 2006 and renewed it in the 18th ECSG meeting in February 2009. The 19th ECSG meeting was held in July 2009 in Singapore. As a result of the Thai-initiated “APEC Data Harmonization towards Single Window Paperless Environment” project, a data harmonization guideline was produced for endorsement.

13. The Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures started a Single Window Initiative and formed a Single Window Working Group. The Working Group successfully developed a strategic plan and development report on the APEC Single Window in 2007. Based on the result of the first year’s work, the Group moved to the second phase of the activities to produce more deliverables based on a strategic plan, including a series of capacity-building workshops in 2008 and 2009.

B. Asia Europe Alliance for Paperless Trade

14. Asia Europe Alliance for Paperless Trade (ASEAL) is an interregional initiative to facilitate paperless trading between Asia and Europe. It was established in September 2004 with the founding membership of DAKOSY AG of Germany, SITPRO of the United Kingdom, France eCommerce International and KTNET of the Republic of Korea. ASEAL includes additional ordinary members such as Trade-Van of Taiwan Province of China and DagangNet of Malaysia, as well as observers from Africa.

15. ASEAL held its 4th Summit in Taiwan Province of China on 26 and 27 November 2008, and plans to cover various cross-border paperless trade issues. The 5th Summit is scheduled for November 2009 in Malaysia.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

16. The Asia Pacific region is enthusiastically implementing paperless trading and electronic business. The region is also leading the interregional initiatives such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), APEC and ASEAL, as well as the implementation of the Single Window to promote paperless trading at the global level. UN/CEFACT needs to maintain its liaison with regional bodies in the Asia and the Pacific. At the same time, UN/CEFACT needs to develop and promote the relevant trade facilitation and e-Business instruments in response to the regional stakeholder requirements in a timely manner.
