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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Fifteenth session
Geneva, 9-12 November 2009

**REPORT OF THE CENTRE FOR TRADE FACILITATION
AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS ON ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION**

Summary

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) held its fifteenth session from 9 to 12 November 2009 in Geneva. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/778/Rev.4), and the Rules of Procedure of the UNECE Committee on Trade (TRADE/2001/2), the Centre is submitting its report of the fifteenth session for review by the Committee on Trade and, subsequently, approval by the UNECE Executive Committee.

The fifteenth session reviewed the needs and priorities of member States, regional and international organizations, standard setting organizations and the business community relating to the use of UN/CEFACT recommendations and standards, in the light of matters arising since the fourteenth session, including relevant decisions by the Executive Committee of UNECE.

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I.   ATTENDANCE

1.   The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) held its fifteenth session in Geneva from 9 to 12 November 2009.

2.   Participants in the meeting included representatives of the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and Viet Nam.

3.   The following intergovernmental organizations participated: the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

4.   The following non-governmental organizations participated: ECP-EPN Platform of Information Society, European Committee of Standardization (CEN), GS1, International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

5.   The observers present at the invitation of the secretariat were representatives of the following organizations: Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations and MSU International Center.

6.   The Chairman opened the meeting. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) welcomed delegates to the meeting. He expressed his appreciation of the work undertaken by UN/CEFACT and observed that the interest shown by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of UNECE in this work was a measure of its importance. He indicated that the secretariat would work together with UN/CEFACT to fully implement the recommendations from EXCOM. He also encouraged enhanced cooperation with other organizations and called for greater implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and Recommendations in transition economies.

II.   ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

7.   The Chairman presented the draft agenda. The Russian delegation, supported by the Belarus delegation, requested that Approval of Recommendations, i.e. agenda Item 11, be deleted from the agenda, as the Russian translations of the recommendations had not been made available sufficiently in advance to allow consultations in their capitals. He also objected to the adoption of the report under Item 13, since his delegation had been expecting to only have the decisions of the session approved, as had been the case at the last two sessions.

8.   After discussion, it was agreed to revise agenda Item 11 to read, "Consideration of new standards and recommendations", and Item 13 to read, "Process for the adoption of the report of the fifteenth session". The Chairman and secretariat undertook to consult with the delegations involved to resolve these issues in a manner satisfactory to all parties. The secretariat noted that

nearly all documents were now available on the website in English, French and Russian. The Plenary adopted the amended agenda (Decision 09-01).

9.   The delegation of Belarus noted the importance of the follow up to developments arising from the specific outcomes from the stakeholder sessions held at the 2008 UN/CEFACT Plenary and to the suggestions made by member States in their replies to the questionnaires, which were distributed immediately prior to that Plenary. In this context, he expressed hopes that such follow up would take place with respect to conclusions coming out of this Plenary.

III.   MATTERS ARISING SINCE THE FOURTEENTH SESSION (Agenda item 2)

10.   The Director of the Trade and Timber Division gave a presentation on matters arising from the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) and the Committee on Trade since the fourteenth session. She called delegates attention to the recommendations made by the EXCOM in February 2009 and the July 2009 report on progress made in their implementation as contained in document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/3. In particular, delegates' attention was drawn to documents: ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/4, "Strategic Action Plan to enhance participation by countries in transition", and ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/5, "Integrated strategic capacity-building plan with specific focus on the needs of transition economies", prepared at the request of EXCOM. Delegations were encouraged make any further comments that they might have to these documents, but none were made.

11.   The Director of the Division also reviewed collaboration with other organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Customs Organization (WCO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Global Facilitation Partnership for Trade and Transport Facilitation (GFP) and UNCTAD.

12. The   delegation   of   the   Russian   Federation,   commenting   on   document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/3, expressed concern that as work to further implement the EXCOM recommendations would need to take place before the December EXCOM session, the Plenary would not have the opportunity to actively contribute to this.

13.   This delegation also requested that, in line with the EXCOM recommendations, the UN/CEFACT website should be made more user-friendly for Russian speakers. Documents on UN/CEFACT processes and procedures should be translated into Russian. There should be more input   from   Plenary   delegations   to   the   review   of   UN/CEFACT   terms   of   reference (ECE/TRADE/R.650) and more information should be made available about participants in the work to develop standards and recommendations, and on who proposed projects. He requested that the secretariat prepare explanatory notes on each project in the official languages as well as guidelines on the content and use of the website.

14.   The delegation of France confirmed its interest in and support for the further implementation of the initiative which had been launched between UN/CEFACT and EXCOM, which allowed UN/CEFACT to undertake coherent action while ensuring guidance was provided by EXCOM.

15.   The Plenary considered and endorsed documents ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/3, ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/4, and ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/5 (Decision 09-02).

16.   The Interim Chair of the Committee on Trade requested that the documents endorsed under Decision 09-02 be copied to the Bureau of the Committee on Trade.

IV.   BUREAU OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS (Agenda item 3)

17.   The Chairman reviewed developments since the last session, including: key deliverables achieved such as version 2 of the Cross Industry Invoice; the new UN/EDIFACT Government Cross-Border Regulatory Message, several revised and new Recommendations as well as: collaboration with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on e-business, the dialogue with EXCOM; presentations made at the WTO; three UN/CEFACT Forums held; and significant work on UNeDocs/Buy-Ship-Pay. He indicated the way forward would require outreach to all stakeholders with greater encouragement of two-way communications and guidance from EXCOM, the Committee on Trade and the Plenary. His presentation is available on the Plenary website[1].

18.   The German delegation raised a technical question concerning the publication of version 2 of the Cross Industry Invoice, and whether it could be considered as a semantic reference model. The Chair noted this and indicated that the Cross Industry Invoice would be discussed in more detail by a presentation under a later agenda item.

V.   ACTIVITIES OF THE FORUM MANAGEMENT GROUP
AND THE PERMANENT GROUPS (Agenda item 4)

19.   The Chairperson of the Forum Management Group (FMG) reviewed activities undertaken since the last Plenary session, referring to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/8. Detailed presentations on the work of their respective groups were made by the chairpersons or vice-chairpersons of the following Permanent Groups: the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG), the Information Content Management Group (ICG), the Applied Technologies Group (ATG) and the Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG). The Chairperson of the ICG pointed out that, as from the release of the D.08B Core Components Library onwards, the Library had been divided into two parts, one part for message core components which had undergone a full audit and another part for reference core components which had not been audited. Legal Group (LG) developments were presented by the FMG Chairperson.   The presentations are available on the Plenary website. Based on these presentations, the Plenary reviewed developments in the work of the Permanent Groups.

20.   The Plenary was informed that the next two UN/CEFACT Forums were planned to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (12 – 16 April 2010) and Geneva, Switzerland (30 August – 3 September 2010). It was noted that proposals to host UN/CEFACT Forums in 2011 would be welcomed, particularly from countries with economies in transition.

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[1]   http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf_plenary/plenary09/list_doc_09.html.

21.   The Swedish delegation called on members to participate not only in the work of technical groups, but also in the work of groups like TBG 15 (International Trade Procedures), which is developing, inter alia, a recommendation on public-private consultations which could eventually provide important input to discussions on this topic within the WTO.

22.   The German delegation presented to the Plenary comments and suggestions for amendments to Plenary documents. The Chair noted that these submissions raised several points which require careful consideration, not necessarily in the Plenary, and should be responded to as soon as possible.

23.   The Russian delegation, referring to the renewal of mandates and terms of reference of UN/CEFACT permanent groups (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/9), requested that these be renewed for one year rather than two in the light of the ongoing discussions regarding the Committee on Trade. The Chair noted the suggestion, and indicated that this issue would be taken up under Agenda Item 9 "Strategic Directions and Next Steps."

VI.   ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL RAPPORTEURS (Agenda item 5)

24.   The Rapporteur for Africa reported on activities in the region since the last Plenary, as contained in document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/12. These included an international Single Window conference organized by Senegal in partnership with UN/CEFACT in Dakar from 5-7 November 2008, the UN/CEFACT Forum in Saly, Senegal and the creation of an African e-Commerce Alliance, as well as updates on several regional initiatives.

25.   A report was then made on behalf of the Rapporteur for Asia, highlighting the work of the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) as well as developments under other regional and interregional bodies (see document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/11).

26.   The Russian Federation provided information on the "Greater Tumen Initiative" in which it was a member with a number of northwestern Asian countries, and requested assistance from UN/CEFACT in putting this Initiative in contact with AFACT so that they could explore possible areas for cooperation.

VII.   STAKEHOLDER NEEDS AND PRIORITIES (Agenda item 6)

27.   The session consisted of presentations made by different groups of stakeholders. All presentations are on the Plenary website.

28.   A presentation on e-procurement by local authorities and regions was made on behalf of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the Swedish National Financial Management Authority. It mentioned efforts of the Standards Advisory Team and on the Core Component Library Framework as important platforms in going forward.

29.   A presentation on behalf of the European Commission described initiatives and cooperation with UN/CEFACT in the e-business domain. Particular reference was made to Version 2 of the Cross-Industry Invoice (CII-V2) and the potential for cost-savings in this key

domain of activity in business and trade, estimated at 40 billion Euro annually over a six year period. A suggestion was made to include more non-technical information suitable for both private and public-sector users on UN/CEFACT deliverables and to continue work on upgrading the Internet site. In addition, the delegate from Germany noted the Commission draft report mentioned use of CII-V2 as a semantic model.

30. A presentation from SITPRO, the national trade facilitation organization in the United Kingdom, explained how it is working with its stakeholders. SITPRO needed new standards (in particular XML), guidance on best practices and an improved delivery process from UN/CEFACT.

31. The UNECE Regional Adviser on Trade highlighted major priorities of countries with economies in transition, particularly: accession to WTO, Aid for Trade, Single Window implementation and trade facilitation for export promotion. Obstacles included a lack of political will, poor cooperation between government agencies, a lack of understanding and overly-complex solutions.

32. A presentation on behalf of the chairman of AFACT covered its activities and developments in its 19 member states. The report underlined the need for closer cooperation between AFACT and UN/CEFACT working groups. It reiterated the need for a UN/CEFACT Repository and expressed appreciation of the move of the UNNext initiative from UNESCAP and UNECE and the possibility that the eBGT initiative could help in establishing an interface with UN/CEFACT Working Groups.

33. GS1 described the importance of cooperation with UN/CEFACT in a wide range of areas that support its 1.2 million stakeholders around the world, in particular, in providing harmonized e-solutions for the business community such as the Cross- Industry Invoice V2.

34. The member of the UN/CEFACT Bureau responsible for standards liaison reviewed coordination and cooperation with these groups over the past year, which included the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

35. The United States delegation noted the significant globally-oriented role that UN/CEFACT plays in the international standards community, which supports trade facilitation and electronic business. He stated that one major concern of Governments and businesses was the existence of too many standards and too many Standard Development Organizations (SDOs). Although the majority of SDOs had their own niche, the need to strengthen cooperation and symbiosis was stressed, as had happened in UN/CEFACT-OASIS cooperation on ebXML.

36. At the end of the session delegations responded to the following questions:

   (a) Have we adequately covered stakeholder needs (this includes making an inventory of their needs, as well as a list of initiatives to meet these needs)?

   (b) Are we clear about priorities?

   (c) Are the deliverables achievable?

   (d) Are the transition economies in the picture?

   (e) Is UN/CEFACT's global remit addressed?

37.   During the ensuing discussions, the French delegation stressed that priority should be given to the development of CEFACT's role as a platform for convergence vis-a-vis all actors and stakeholders involved in standardization.

38.   The Swedish delegation suggested that: UN/CEFACT identifies short, medium and long-term priorities; input from the Regional Adviser should be fed into the work programme; on-going work on deliverables related to the whole supply chain should be continued and the global remit should be maintained.

39.   The Italian delegation supported the Swedish statement and stressed the importance of closer cooperation with SDOs (particularly within the EC).

40.   Mongolia stressed that it was essential to address the specific needs of countries in transition.

41.   The delegate from Kyrgyzstan requested that a special programme on issues relating to implementation of the Single Window be created.

42.   The Russian delegation requested that its concerns raised under items 2 and 3 and the needs expressed by countries in the questionnaire prepared for the 2008 Plenary be reflected in the decisions of the Plenary and a timeframe be provided for their implementation. The Netherlands delegation requested that, based upon a full inventory of the requirements and needs of stakeholders, a list should be prepared of action items which, if carried out appropriately (including as in terms of timeliness, right content, or right sequence), would lead to deliverables fulfilling the requirements and needs listed.

43.   The UNECE secretariat undertook to prepare a note mapping how requests made at the current and previous sessions fit into the UN/CEFACT work programme.

44.   The delegate from the United Kingdom stressed that delivery and information issues were closely linked to resource availability. In addition, as only a few countries in transition were present at the meeting, other means of identifying their needs were needed such as, for example, the October 2009 meeting of the Working Group on Trade of the Special Programme for Central Asia (SPECA).

VIII.   POLICY DRIVERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE FACILITATION INSTRUMENTS (Agenda item 7)

45.   The session was chaired by the Swedish Head of Delegation who identified as questions to be answered: (1) in your view, who are policy drivers?; (2) are stakeholders also policy drivers? (3) what is the policy drivers' impact on UN/CEFACT work?; and (4) how should UN/CEFACT relate to policy drivers? She gave examples of policy drivers such as countries and national, regional and intergovernmental organizations and underlined the need for UN/CEFACT to continuously analyze the impact of policy drivers on its work.

46.   The Swiss delegate gave an overview of the current state of trade facilitation negotiations within the World Trade Organization, noting that these are focussed on customs issues. He expected a successful conclusion to the discussions, including the establishment of a Trade

Facilitation Committee in the WTO. He recommended that UN/CEFACT follow up on this work and provides input.

47. A World Customs Organization (WCO) presentation introduced the work of this organization on a new strategic direction for Customs in the 21st Century. There is an increased need for customs administrations to exchange information and to coordinate border management activities. The WCO data model 3.0 is critical for the work of the WCO and the organization is closely cooperating with UN/CEFACT in its development.

48. The UNCTAD presentation focused on policy drivers for trade facilitation such as the current economic crisis, WTO negotiations, regional trade agreements and an evolving concept of trade facilitation. Although implementation of trade facilitation remains a challenge, it also presents various opportunities. UNCTAD and other UN organizations help countries to address this challenge through capacity building, technical assistance and policy support.

49. A presentation from Belarus provided information on recent government decisions to establish a national system for data exchange based on the automated identification of goods. The system will be based on GS1 technologies and guidelines (many of which are based on UN/CEFACT standards). Belarus is also working on an electronic goods passport, which links goods and electronic documents, and will support Single Window Systems. The government of Belarus has sent a letter to UNECE asking for support to further develop this project.

50. The UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Africa reported on the implementation challenges faced by developing countries. Success requires that the necessary political, technical and financial conditions are provided, the first two often being the most difficult. Regional organizations have an important role in promoting Single Windows through the exchange of experience; the sharing of platforms and pools of expertise; and the sensitization of political decision makers.

51. The Mongolian delegation reported on the process of Single Window implementation in their country and stated that in the past; too much focus was put on technical issues. Key factors for success are capacity-building within the private sector, and commitment building within the government. All presentations made during this session are available on the Plenary website.

52. The Chief of the UNECE Global Trade Solutions Section drew the attention of delegates to the increasing global importance of trade facilitation, and noted that it has become a mainstream instrument in international trade. The UNECE can provide technical standards through its UN/CEFACT expert groups, and as an international organization, deal with the policy dimension of trade facilitation issues.

53. The Chair of the Forum Management Group provided an overview of key issues addressed during the session, including some national experiences and the potential for strengthening UN/CEFACT's on-going collaboration with the WTO and the World Customs Organization. He referred to plans to continue work on data modelling and interoperability related to Single Windows and requested assistance from delegations to help UN/CEFACT prioritize among recommendations to be reviewed and updated.

54. The delegate from Kazakhstan then reported on recent developments in government policy on electronic business in her country (see document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/14 for more

information). Kazakhstan intended to implement a Single Window, but requested UN/CEFACT assist it by providing specific information on the benefits of Single Window implementation to support government decision making processes.

55.   The United States delegation asked if Latin American countries were involved in UN/CEFACT activities. The UNECE secretariat replied that ongoing efforts were being made to involve countries from this region, including the UN/CEFACT Forum that was held in Mexico in 2008. In the meantime, UN regional commissions collaborate on trade facilitation matters, and Latin American countries were receiving information and participating in trade facilitation work through the UN Regional Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC).

56.   Russia noted that it would be very useful if UN/CEFACT were able to develop internationally agreed definitions for trade procedures and for trade facilitation. The UNECE secretariat noted that UN/CEFACT already had an agreed definition. A number of delegates also noted that due to longstanding practices in different organizations to use these terms differently, it was unlikely that an international agreement on "standard" definitions for these terms could be achieved.

IX.   CAPACITY BUILDING AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS (Agenda item 8)

57.   A representative from UNCTAD described its capacity-building work on standards and trade facilitation and outlined a number of fundamental capacity building questions arising from its interactions with government officials from developing countries. The WCO delegate then described its Columbus Programme for capacity-building in support of the revised Kyoto Convention. A member of the UNECE secretariat explained that the core mandates of the UNECE and its intergovernmental bodies such UN/CEFACT were to elaborate standards, recommendations and intergovernmental agreements. As a result, they did not undertake long-term technical assistance and were limited to capacity-building activities that support, for UNECE-UN/CEFACT standards, recommendations and agreements: initial awareness-raising; an understanding of the uses and benefits; and a technical understanding of their use. He also underlined the different roles and responsibilities of the secretariat and UN/CEFACT members in this context. A representative of NorStella, Norway, described its activities to support government and private sector companies in the national adaptation and implementation of global standards. These presentations are available on the Plenary website.

58.   The delegation of Mongolia queried how his country could obtain resources for trade facilitation projects amongst the variety of donors and initiatives involved in the region. The delegation of Viet Nam requested technical support from UN/CEFACT for e-commerce projects. The delegation of Senegal described experiences in Africa and emphasized that the success of technical assistance depended on the national ability to absorb new technologies and gain "ownership" of standards. His remarks were supported by the delegation of Italy. The UK delegate questioned what capacity-building could be delivered within existing resources and where additional funds would be obtained. The Swedish delegate stated that it was important for UN/CEFACT not to compete in this area, but to cooperate with other technical assistance organizations. The French delegate suggested UN/CEFACT could help countries to prepare projects and approach donors. The representative from UNCTAD stressed that standards were

only one aspect of wider trade facilitation, including institution-building. The German delegate suggested that UN/CEFACT should explain how to implement the standards it produced.

59. The UN/CEFACT Chair suggested that hosting a UN/CEFACT Forum was one way to facilitate the sharing of experiences and the development of local understanding and competencies. He then concluded by stating that the issues raised would be reflected in the final documents for EXCOM.

X.   STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS (Agenda item 9)

60. The Plenary considered the revised UN/CEFACT Programme of Work for 2010-2011 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/17). The Russian delegation agreed to approve this programme of work provided that it would be reviewed again in 2010. The Programme of Work (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/17) was approved (Decision 09-03).

61. The French delegation suggested providing UN/CEFACT briefings to keep stakeholders informed of UN/CEFACT's work. The Swedish delegation expressed its support of this idea.

62. Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/20, concerning the ongoing revision of the Mandate, Terms of Reference and Procedures for UN/CEFACT (ECE/TRADE/R.650 Rev. 4) was presented. The delegation of the Russian Federation requested that this revision clarify procedures for organizing the plenary. The Plenary requested that, once finalized; the Secretariat secure translation of the revised text of ECE/TRADE/R.650 Rev. 4 and its Annexes into French and Russian so that they could be submitted for intersessional approval (Decision 09-04).

63. Following debate, it was agreed that the mandates of the UN/CEFACT permanent groups be extended for a two-year period, subject to review and possible revision at the next Plenary session (Decision 09-05).

64. The delegation of the Russian Federation requested that the mapping to the programme of work of stakeholder priorities raised during the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions, and the related gap analysis, be transmitted to heads of delegation.

65. Various UN/CEFACT members made presentations on the electronic Business Government and Trade (eBGT) initiative and a call was made for participation in eBGT. Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/18 was referred to in the course of these presentations, which are available on the Plenary website.

66. A presentation was made on behalf of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) highlighting links between the work of ISO TC 154 and UN/CEFACT, as well as opportunities for further cooperation.

67. Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/19 on the Operating Procedures of the Permanent Groups was presented for information. The French delegation welcomed the approach taken of ongoing review and updating, while at the same time urging the Plenary to ensure coherence between agreed procedures at different levels.

XI.   ELECTIONS (Agenda item 10)

68.   The delegation of the United States nominated Mr. Stuart Feder for the post of Chairman of UN/CEFACT. This was seconded by the delegation of France and supported by the delegations of Belgium and the United Kingdom. The Plenary re-elected Mr. Feder as Chairman of UN/CEFACT for a two-year term (Decision 09-06).

69.   Following a request from AFACT, the Plenary agreed to hold the elections for the Rapporteur for Asia through the intersessional process (Decision 09-07).

XII. CONSIDERATION OF NEW STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Agenda item 11)

70.   Following a request from the delegation of the Russian Federation, the Plenary agreed to submit Recommendation 35, "Establishing a legal framework for international Single Window" for approval through the intersessional process, with an exceptional extended deadline for comments of 1 May 2010 (Decision 09-08). The delegations of France and the United Kingdom expressed their disappointment at this delay, which exceeded the usual deadlines for approval of a recommendation.

71.   The Plenary took note of Recommendation 20, "Codes for units of measure used in international trade," Recommendation 21, "Codes for passengers, types of cargo, packages and packaging materials," and Recommendation 24, "Trade and transport status codes" (Decision 09-09).

XIII.   THE WAY FORWARD (Agenda item 12)

72.   The Chair noted that the way forward within UN/CEFACT would rest on guidance from EXCOM, the Committee on Trade and the Plenary. In addition, this would be supported by gap analysis and other aspects of the eBGT initiative, increased cooperation with other international organizations involved in trade facilitation, standards development and capacity building, and by a broad outreach to all stakeholders within the global remit of UN/CEFACT. He also encouraged direct involvement of the Plenary in the work of UN/CEFACT over the long term.

73.   The Swedish delegation suggested setting key priority areas for experts to work around, and requested more communication from UN/CEFACT and the secretariat, either through Heads of Delegation or through the UN/CEFACT website, in order to achieve better information flows to stakeholders.

74.   The delegation from Mongolia suggested that the demand-driven approach to capacity building could incorporate the exchange of information between member States with differing levels of experience in trade facilitation and e-business, such that those with advanced knowledge in this area could share their experiences with those developing specific projects, particularly in transition economies.

75.   France mentioned the need to share more examples of the ways in which countries apply UN/CEFACT standards, citing the example of an official French publication of a regulatory document that defines the French interoperability framework for electronic communications that cites work from UN/CEFACT. Such examples are helpful in demonstrating the useful outputs produced by UN/CEFACT.

76.   The Netherlands underlined the importance of addressing the various audiences within member States, such as the business communities and public sector, in their own languages. The Netherlands expressed its willingness to assist UN/CEFACT in its efforts to make information accessible to these different audiences.

XIV.   PROCESS FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION (Agenda item 13)

77.   The Plenary reviewed and adopted the draft report of the fifteenth session, subject to corrections already indicated. The final consolidated version of the report will be submitted to delegations for further comment. These should be submitted to the secretariat in writing by 12 December 2009 (Decision 09-10).