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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Matters arising since the fifteenth session

Report to EXCOM

Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau for information

Summary

This document details the activities undertaken by UN/CEFACT in response to the recommendations of the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) in February 2009. The EXCOM requested UN/CEFACT to report on progress at its 16 December 2010 meeting.

* Re-issued for technical reason.

1. Introduction

1. This report presents the actions undertaken by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), in collaboration with the UNECE secretariat, in implementing the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) recommendations on UN/CEFACT, agreed at its 29th meeting on 27 February 2009¹. These recommendations followed a review of the work of UN/CEFACT by EXCOM during 2008.
2. The report details the specific actions undertaken in response to the EXCOM recommendations. It is presented in tabular form for ease of reference.

2. Background

3. In its recommendations of February 2009, EXCOM asked UN/CEFACT to enhance and advance its work in the areas of information access, governance, transparency, participation of transition economies and capacity-building. In order to achieve this, it requested UN/CEFACT to take action in the following areas:
 - A. Information-sharing and communication to foster broader transparency and participation;
 - B. Intergovernmental governance and oversight of the work of UN/CEFACT, including strategy and priority setting and the use of the United Nations label;
 - C. Ensuring balance between UN/CEFACT's work on electronic business standards on the one hand and on Recommendations for trade facilitation on the other hand, with due reflection on the budgetary allocation;
 - D. Greater involvement of countries with economies in transition;
 - E. Capacity-building activities to promote implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations;
 - F. Cooperation with other institutions.
4. EXCOM invited UN/CEFACT, with the active participation of the secretariat and interested EXCOM members, to develop strategic action plans to (1) enhance the participation of transition economies and (2) to enhance capacity-building activities – no later than June 2009, and to provide an overall progress report to EXCOM on all the above decisions no later than December 2009.

3. Response to EXCOM

3.1. Planning

5. In response to the above decisions, the UN/CEFACT Bureau prepared and submitted the following strategic plans to EXCOM at its meeting on 13 July 2009:
 - UN/CEFACT Integrated strategic capacity-building plan; with specific focus on the needs of transition economies (EXCOM 13 July 2009: informal document no.

¹ Recommendations concerning the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, ECE/EX/4 (13 March 2009).

2009/7 – also 2009 UN/CEFACT Plenary Document
ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/5);

- UN/CEFACT Strategic Action Plan to enhance participation by countries in transition (EXCOM 13 July 2009: informal document no. 2009/8 – also 2009 UN/CEFACT Plenary document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/4);
- Progress in implementation of the EXCOM recommendations to UN/CEFACT (EXCOM 13 July 2009: informal document no. 2009/9).

6. The secretariat prepared an accompanying document reflecting additional issues on capacity-building and enhancement of participation of transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT and on the above-mentioned progress report itself (EXCOM 13 July 2009: informal document no. 16).

7. At the EXCOM meeting of 12 July 2010, the secretariat provided an interim assessment of the progress made in implementing the above decisions (informal document no. 2010/10). EXCOM members acknowledged the report and looked forward to receiving the next progress report in December (i.e. the current report).

3.2. Actions to implement the EXCOM decisions

8. The following table sets out the specific actions undertaken over the period 2009 - 2010 to implement the EXCOM decisions. It presents the following information:

- EXCOM item number;
- Text of EXCOM Recommendation;
- Action completed;
- Additional, ongoing or outstanding activities;
- Target date for completion.

EXCOM Item No.	EXCOM recommendations	Action completed	Remaining activities	Target date for completion
A: Information-sharing and communication to foster broader transparency and participation				
A (i)	Develop, with the support of the secretariat, a more user-friendly website to include the following information:			
A (i) (a)	Summary details on projects (including such items as project initiator, participants, extra budgetary resources mobilized, supporters, expected deliverables, timeframe, current status, how newcomers can participate, etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A UN/CEFACT project website has been established with details on projects covering many existing projects - see http://www.unece.org/cefact/index.htm and click on "Projects". A summary report providing an overview of projects is available for December EXCOM meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to include in the confluence website full details of projects until completed. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p>
A (i) (b)	Consolidated, summary information about UN/CEFACT procedures and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All current information on UN/CEFACT procedures and policies is available in one place on the website at http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf_docs.htm A draft revised UN/CEFACT Mandate and Terms of Reference, procedures and structure are scheduled for consideration at the 16th UN/CEFACT Plenary in December. All documents are available in the three official languages on the Plenary website at http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf_plenary/plenary10/DocumentList_2010.html. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on revised procedures will be uploaded to website as soon as they are approved by Plenary. 	Completed

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A (i) (c)	Simple, clear and concise information on UN/CEFACT policy and decision-making processes, especially related to the identification, selection and development of standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft revised UN/CEFACT Mandate and Terms of Reference, procedures and structure will be presented to the 16th UN/CEFACT Plenary in December. All documents are available in all three official languages on the Plenary website at http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf_plenary/plenary10/DocumentList_2010.html. 	Once the revised UN/CEFACT Mandate and Terms of Reference, procedures and structure are approved by the Plenary, the procedures will be summarised and provided in a brochure style publication for delegates.	Mid-2011
A (i) (d)	Information on UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation.	Available on the website at http://www.unece.org/cefact/forum_grps/Secretariat/HoDList.html .	None	Completed
A (ii)	Provide a registry and tracking system for project proposals.	Included in the project website (see A (i) a). All project proposals are listed on the website in Open Development Process (ODP) 1 prior to consideration by the Forum Management Group (FMG).	None	Completed

EXCOM Item No.	EXCOM recommendations	Action completed	Remaining activities	Target date for completion
B: Intergovernmental governance and oversight of the work of UN/CEFACT, including strategy and priority setting and the use of the United Nations label				
B (i)	Continue to enhance the transparency of the UN/CEFACT policy and management process through which decisions are made on the selection of specific standards for development. In this regard, the proposed standards should respond to a minimum of common interest expressed through support by at least three countries.	The “three-country rule” and related procedures for approval of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations has already been applied, retroactive to 1 January 2010. The procedure will be submitted to the Plenary in December 2010 for formal approval and will be incorporated into the revised UN/CEFACT mandate and terms of reference.	Procedures are currently in place subject to formal approval at the 16th Plenary.	Completed

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B (ii)	Encourage meaningful participation of member States in the development of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Building events were held at the Rome, Sapporo Forum meetings for local and regional experts in 2009 and detailed briefing sessions were held at the 2010 Geneva UN/CEFACT Forums for diplomatic staff at Geneva based Missions and experts from a number of Transition Economies to explain and promote UN/CEFACT's standards & recommendations and to encourage wider participation in UN/CEFACT's work. 	This is an ongoing exercise	Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct promotion to individual member States through UNECE's capacity-building and transition economy programmes. 		Ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on UN/CEFACT standards is regularly disseminated through the UNECE multiplier point network. See also Section D below 		Ongoing
B (iii)	Ensure that priorities expressed by member States (through UN/CEFACT plenary, bureau and other channels) are adequately taken up in the UN/CEFACT programme of work and effectively implemented. For this purpose, the UN/CEFACT Plenary should agree upon priorities at each annual session and ask the Bureau to oversee their implementation and to report to the Plenary on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UN/CEFACT Programme of Work for 2010 – 2011 was approved at the 15th Plenary. Implementation of the Programme of Work is ongoing. A matrix of the needs expressed by delegates at the 14th and 15th Plenaries, along with the 2008 survey of member States' priorities, was mapped to the Programme of Work 2010 – 2011 to identify any gaps. This 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Completed 	Ongoing

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	their status.	document is presented to the 16th Plenary for information in Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/7 - http://www.unece.org/cefact/cf_plenary/plenary10/ECE_TRADE_C_CEFACT_2010_7E.pdf .		
C: Ensure balance between UN/CEFACT's work on electronic business standards on the one hand and on Recommendations for trade facilitation on the other hand, with due reflection on the budgetary allocation				
C (i)	To take steps to further strengthen the development of trade facilitation Recommendations and to promote their implementation through promotion initiatives, such as publications, seminars or workshops, with particular attention to the needs of countries in transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following three new Recommendations have been drawn up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendation 34: Data Simplification and Standardization for International Trade (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/13) submitted to the 16th Plenary for approval. - Recommendation 35: Establishing a legal framework for international trade Single Window (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/23/Rev. 2) approved intersessionally in October 2010. - Recommendation 37: Signed Digital Evidence Interoperability Recommendation (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/14) submitted to the 16th Plenary for approval. 	UN/CEFACT intends to further strengthen its work in the development of trade facilitation recommendations through the proposed restructuring of UN/CEFACT.	Ongoing
D: Greater involvement of countries with economies in transition				

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D (i)	Develop a strategic action plan and implement specific actions, in collaboration with the secretariat, to facilitate the participation of transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT, and especially to enable their experts to contribute substantively to the elaboration of standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic plan was approved by the 2009 Plenary (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/4). UN/CEFACT participated in the "Trade Development and Facilitation for Economies in Transition" which was organised by the UNECE Committee on Trade in October 2009. UN/CEFACT provided a technical training session, particularly for experts from transition and developing economies during the Geneva Forum in September 2010. It was attended by 23 participants from 9 countries. 	This work is ongoing	Ongoing
D (ii)	Take steps, with the support of the secretariat, for information about all key UN/CEFACT recommendations and standards to be translated into Russian.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three new Recommendations from UN/CEFACT (Recommendation 34, 35 and 37) have been translated into the three official languages. The secretariat has secured funding for translating key documents into Russian and is working with the Russian mission to identify priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	Ongoing
E: Capacity-building activities to promote implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations				
E (i)	In collaboration with the secretariat, develop an integrated strategic capacity-building plan on the use and implementation of UN/CEFACT instruments, and initiate supporting actions, with particular attention to the needs of transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An integrated strategic capacity-building plan was developed by approved by the 2009 Plenary (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/4). The UNECE-UN/CEFACT Trade Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, and revise and maintain it in response to 	Early 2012

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	economies. The secretariat should have the key role in implementing this plan and undertaking relevant capacity-building activities.	<p>Implementation Guide Project is being developed with financial assistance from the Swedish Development Agency, Sida.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN/CEFACT Capacity Building events at Forum meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rome, April 2009 – Sapporo, October 2009 – Geneva, September 2010 	feedback from countries and changing trade facilitation needs.	
F: Cooperation with other institutions				
F (i)	Explore areas for enhanced cooperation between UN/CEFACT and other institutions, especially in the framework of the Trade Facilitation Negotiations of the World Trade Organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN/CEFACT cooperates very closely with the World Customs Organisation which is represented in the UN/CEFACT Bureau. The trade facilitation and eBusiness standards requirements of WCO and customs in general are addressed within UN/CEFACT at the TBG 4 Customs Working Group and in liaison with the TBG 15 International Trade Procedures Working Group as well as UN/CEFACT technical working groups. UN/CEFACT contributed to the “Forum on WTO, Trade Facilitation and the Private Sector in Developing Countries” in February 2010. 		Ongoing