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Matters arising since the fifteenth session

Report to EXCOM

Submitted by the UNECE secretariat for information

Summary

This document details the activities undertaken by the UNECE secretariat in response to the recommendations of the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) in February 2009. It should be considered in conjunction with the report to EXCOM submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau, Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1. Both reports will be presented to EXCOM at its 16 December 2010 meeting.

1. Introduction

1. This report presents the specific actions undertaken by the UNECE secretariat in response to the recommendations of the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) on UN/CEFACT, agreed at its 29th meeting on 27 February 2009¹. It should be considered in conjunction with the report to EXCOM submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau, Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1. The report is presented in tabular form for ease of reference.

2. The report also includes a more detailed account from the UNECE secretariat of the actions by UNECE in enhancing the participation of transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT (see annex A) and undertaking capacity-building activities focused especially on the needs of transition economies (see Annex B). It further includes a section on the emerging importance of the “Single Window” as a catalyst for implementing trade facilitation (Annex B, section 5). The paper also provides a preliminary assessment, based on information acquired by the secretariat (including the Regional Adviser), regarding the state of implementation of UN/CEFACT standards in countries in transition. It is envisaged that the countries concerned will provide more detailed information on an on-going basis, to enable regular revision and updating of this assessment. More complete information should also be obtained from current and planned UNECE needs assessment studies on regulatory and procedural obstacles to trade².

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

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

² The UNECE Committee on Trade is conducting a series of in-depth, demand-driven needs assessments on regulatory and procedural obstacles to trade. The first study, currently underway, is in Belarus and should be completed in early 2011. Two additional assessments will be conducted in transition economies in 2011 - 2012.

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. 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 UNECE 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. EXCOM members welcomed the progress that had been made. They expressed their recognition of the distinct roles and responsibilities of UN/CEFACT and the secretariat: UN/CEFACT having the expertise in the development of trade facilitation and electronic business standards; and the secretariat having the expertise in designing and implementing capacity-building programmes (EXCOM, Thirty-first meeting, 13 July 2009, Chairman's Conclusions, document EXCOM/CONCLU/31).

8. 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

9. The following table sets out the specific actions undertaken by the UNECE secretariat 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

Actions already reported by the UN/CEFACT Bureau in document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 are not repeated here.

Actions taken to implement EXCOM decisions

| 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"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 |
| A (i) (b) | Consolidated, summary information about UN/CEFACT procedures and processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 |
| 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"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 |
| A (i) (d) | Information on UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 |
| A (ii) | Provide a registry and tracking system for project proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 |

| 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 |
| B (ii) | Encourage meaningful participation of member States in the development of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNECE, with support from the Bureau, organised detailed briefing sessions at the 2010 Geneva UN/CEFACT Forum 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 promote the participation in UN/CEFACT's work UNECE will organise a similar event for technical experts prior to the 16th Plenary. Direct promotion to individual member States through UNECE's capacity-building and transition economy programmes (See Annexes A and B) Information on UN/CEFACT standards is regularly disseminated by | This is an ongoing exercise | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>8 December 2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

| EXCOM Item No. | EXCOM recommendations | Action completed | Remaining activities | Target date for completion |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | <p>the secretariat through the UNECE multiplier point network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See also Section D below | | |
| B (iii) | <p>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 their status.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 | <p>See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1</p> |
| 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) | <p>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.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 regarding development of trade facilitation recommendations UNECE has undertaken extensive promotional and capacity-building activities – see Section D and E below for summary information and Annex A and B for further details. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 regarding development of trade facilitation recommendations See Sections D and E below. | <p>See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

| EXCOM Item No. | EXCOM recommendations | Action completed | Remaining activities | Target date for completion |
|---|--|---|---|----------------------------------|
| D: Greater involvement of countries with economies in transition | | | | |
| 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"> • Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 regarding the strategic plan. • UNECE undertook a number of actions to enhance the participation of transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT. Annex A contains a report on this work, along with an assessment of the factors surrounding the participation of transition economies in the work. • UNECE has undertaken a number of capacity-building activities under the UN Development Account and in collaboration with UNESCAP. Annex B contains a detailed account of these activities. • Working under the Regional Programme for Capacity-Building, the Regional Adviser has organized a number of projects, workshops, initiatives and studies promoting the implementation of UN/CEFACT Recommendations and standards (see Annex B.3). | <p>Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1</p> <p>This work is ongoing</p> | Ongoing |

| EXCOM Item No. | EXCOM recommendations | Action completed | Remaining activities | Target date for completion |
|---|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 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. | <p>The three new Recommendations from UN/CEFACT (Recommendation 34, 35 and 37) have been translated into the three official languages.</p> <p>The secretariat has secured funding for translating key documents into Russian and is working with the Russian mission to identify priorities.</p> | <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 economies. The secretariat should have the key role in implementing this plan and undertaking relevant capacity-building activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 regarding the strategic plan and UN/CEFACT led capacity building events. UNECE has undertaken a series of capacity-building activities under the UN Development Account and in collaboration with UNESCAP. Annex B contains a detailed account of these activities. The UNECE-UN/CEFACT Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide Project is being developed with financial assistance from the Swedish Development Agency, Sida. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 Capacity-building is ongoing and UNECE will undertake further capacity building activities under the UN Development Account and through the joint UN regional commission initiative on trade facilitation. Develop the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, and revise and maintain it in response to feedback from countries and changing trade facilitation needs. | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Early 2012</p> |

| EXCOM Item No. | EXCOM recommendations | Action completed | Remaining activities | Target date for completion |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| 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"> • See document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 regarding UN/CEFACT led cooperation areas • UNECE established the joint UN regional commission initiative on trade facilitation. This initiative focuses on capacity-building and support to member States in implementing trade facilitation measures negotiated at the World Trade Organization. • UNECE is a core partner in the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP) www.gfptt.org • UNECE is working closely with the World Customs Organization on implementing the WCO Data Model, especially in connection with setting up Single Windows and harmonizing data. • In the capacity-building initiatives organized by the Regional Adviser, synergies and close collaboration were established with the European Commission, the WCO, EurAsEC, the Commission of the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, UNCTAD (ASYCUDA), the Regional Cooperation Council for Southeast Europe, GTZ, WTO, various national authorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1 • Under the UN Development Account, UNECE and the other regional commissions will undertake a series of trade facilitation capacity building activities in 2011 and 2012. • Ongoing • UNECE will prepare a report to the 2011 Plenary on the cooperation with WCO and the implementation of UN/CEFACT and other standards. • Ongoing | <p>See ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/2/Add.1</p> <p>Ongoing to end 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2011 Plenary</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

| EXCOM Item No. | EXCOM recommendations | Action completed | Remaining activities | Target date for completion |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | (such as Customs) of UNECE Member States, UNU, UNDP, etc. | | |

Annex A

Enhancing the participation of transition economies

1. Introduction

1. This paper presents the work undertaken by UNECE over the period 2009-2010 to enhance the participation of transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT and to encourage the implementation of trade facilitation instruments in these countries. The report is presented in two parts. Part 1 presents the issues and environment related to the engagement of transition economies in this work. Part 2 details the specific actions undertaken by UNECE over the period to further this objective.

Part 1

2. Overall environment

2. At present, the secretariat has limited data on the exact use of eBusiness standards in countries in transition. From the national assessments of regulatory and procedural obstacles to trade being undertaken by the Committee on Trade, it should soon have a better picture of the situation³ in selected countries.

3. Notwithstanding the above, the secretariat, through its contacts with national agencies, technical cooperation projects and national and regional organizations, has compiled the following overview of the situation regarding the implementation of trade facilitation and eBusiness standards in transition economies.

4. The secretariat notes that most government bodies and administrations (including at the municipal level) in transition economies are using electronic data interchange to a certain extent. However, the overall situation regarding e-readiness differs considerably, not only between countries in the region but also between specific regions and cities.

5. In the transition economies, the ministries with the most advanced use of eBusiness technology seem to be those dealing with security, taxes, customs, statistics and passports.

6. Almost all ministries in the CIS countries have their own information systems and databases (with different levels of complexity and often with different standards). Most countries intend to develop inter-agency information systems. In principle, these agencies should then be able to communicate and exchange information with each other in electronic format. However, due to the still relatively limited application of e-information standards, and e-document standards that provide a functional electronic equivalent to paper documents, there may be difficulties in practice and interagency exchange of information may continue to be primarily paper based.

³ The UNECE Committee on Trade is conducting a series of in-depth, demand-driven needs assessments on regulatory and procedural obstacles to trade. The first study, currently underway, is in Belarus and should be completed in early 2011. Two additional assessments will be conducted in transition economies in 2011 - 2012.

7. Many countries, particularly in Central Asia, are now prioritizing the development of Single Window (SW) systems for international trade⁴ and have already started the process. The SW concept is fairly well known in the region but it appears that UN/CEFACT business standards such as the Core Components Library (CCL), UN/CEFACT Modelling Methodology (UMM) or Core Components Technical Specification (CCTS) may have so far failed to make a strong contribution to the development of standards-based electronic messages in the region. In particular, in Central Asia, there is now a real risk that, due to different data standards, national Single Window frameworks will not be able to fully support cross-border electronic data exchange, which is crucial for transit operations in the region.

8. However, the recently published WCO Data Model version 3, which is based on UN/CEFACT standards, could lead to a customized regional data model being created for cross-border trade. This would require collaboration between the countries and policy leadership on the regional level in a similar manner as is provided in the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Countries) Data Model. Likewise, implementing standards-based automated customs management systems, such as UNCTAD's ASYCUDA⁵, would greatly enhance the adoption of eBusiness standards.

9. The secretariat also notes that the Cooperation Agreement between the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community and UNECE should facilitate the adoption of UN/CEFACT Standards in the region. The agreement states: "acknowledging the necessity of harmonization in the implementation by member States of internationally agreed norms, standards and legal instruments in the areas of trade facilitation in particular those agreed by States within the framework of UNECE could request support from UNECE to review and advise on whether draft legislation developed under the aegis of EurAsEC IPA complies with relevant UNECE internationally agreed norms, standards, regulations and international legal instruments"⁶.

10. In conclusion, UN/CEFACT eBusiness standards are not well known or implemented in e-government systems in transition economies. This is partially due to a lack of awareness of these standards, a lack of understanding and experience in the use of the standards, and because UN/CEFACT standards are perceived as highly specialized and sophisticated and requiring extensive expertise and investment for their implementation; factors that would not be attractive to countries with low trade volumes.

11. The present situation shows the need to strengthen the holistic approach to capacity-building to support policy managers and high-level decision makers in addressing trade and transport facilitation using international standards and best practice. It also shows the need for practical technical standards and solutions that are accompanied by basic guides and tools.

⁴ A Single Window is defined in UN/CEFACT Recommendation 33 (paragraph 2) as "a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. If information is electronic, then individual data elements should only be submitted once". See http://www.unece.org/cefact/recommendations/rec_index.htm.

⁵ ASYCUDA is a computerised customs management system which covers most foreign trade procedures, including manifests and customs declarations, accounting procedures and transit and suspense procedures.

⁶ Cooperation Agreement between the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 25 January 2007, http://www.unece.org/oes/MOU/EURASEC_agreement_e.pdf.

3. Specific case: The Countries of the Customs Union between Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus

12. Countries in the Customs Union between Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus are more advanced than many of their neighbours in implementing e-governance facilities.

13. **Russia** has extensive information systems in areas such as passport and visa controls. Information is exchanged electronically with a number of other agencies and ministries (foreign affairs, security). The information system of the Russian customs is used to provide customs statistics and to exchange information in the framework of a database (“agencies exchange”).

14. The Ministry of telecom and mass communications (MIAIS) is developing a national inter-agency automatic information system to support the regulation and control of external trade. The system is based on the concept of cooperation between federal agencies responsible for border controls, which was approved by the Government in May 2008.

15. **In Kazakhstan**, “electronic customs” is a component of an e-governance information system and a number of pilot modules are already functioning. For example, a module was established to facilitate the electronic submission of customs declaration to any customs point through the Internet. This information feeds into a module on risk assessment of products crossing the border.

16. From January 2009, pilot activities also began at the inter-agency centre for customs control, which unites the regulatory controls of border agencies. With assistance from the World Bank, technical and organizational feasibility work is being carried out regarding the establishment of a Single Window.

17. **Belarus**, in cooperation with Russian customs, is establishing an automated customs management and information system. It will carry out the following tasks: control of customs transit; confirmation of exports; control of temporarily imported transport means; support and updating of legal and normative documentation etc. The Belarus tax ministry is working on a system for exchanging information among the Customs Union countries on payment of indirect taxes.

18. The Belarus health ministry is working on an information system to support a common list of products that are subject to sanitary and other related controls on the territory of the three Customs Union states.

19. The legal and organizational framework (including e-issues) for the Customs Union is not yet fully in place. For example, each individual member country has numerous agreements with individual third countries that regulate specific aspects of their trade relations. Russia has 102 such agreements; Kazakhstan has 50 and Belarus 40. This makes the harmonization and integration of processes very complicated.

20. The countries signed an agreement on applying information technologies in electronic document exchange for international and mutual trade on the united customs territory of the Customs Union. This agreement contains a definition of e-document, the principle of equivalency of e- and paper documents, certification of digital signatures and other issues. The countries also agreed on the concept of an integrated information system, which will provide a technical means for exchanging information among regulatory agencies (the agreement does not mention international or UN/CEFACT standards).

4. Conclusions

21. Given this situation, there is a clear need to:

- 1) Prioritize the development of standards for inter-agency information exchange and cross-border data exchange.
- 2) Focus particularly on the development of electronic documents to support regulatory processes in international trade (including certificates of origin, conformity assessment certificates, declarations of conformity of the manufacturer/supplier, sanitary/phytosanitary certificates and other licenses and permits).
- 3) Ensure that standards and approaches complement the implementation of the WCO Data Model in the region.
- 4) Develop standards with a view to ease of implementation, as well as low implementation and break-even costs.
- 5) Accompany standards relevant for developing countries and transition economies with basic user and implementation guides.
- 6) In cooperation with the other UN regional commissions and relevant UN agencies, support policy managers and high-level decision makers in developing solutions using trade facilitation, documents harmonization; data simplification and harmonization; business process analysis and solutions for Single Window systems based on standards provided by different national and international organizations.

Part 2

Actions undertaken by the UNECE secretariat

1. Introduction

22. To increase awareness of UN/CEFACT standards in transition economies and to encourage experts in such countries to participate in the standards-development work, the secretariat has undertaken the actions described below. However, the gap between transition and developed economies in awareness and use of such standards is vast. Addressing this issue will thus take much time and effort. Indeed, a fundamental assessment of these issues is required with a view to embarking on a more radical programme of engagement and adoption of standards.

2. Strategic Approach

23. The participation of countries with transition economies has been relatively limited in UN/CEFACT's work, and this has been the case for many years. In these countries, the use of standards is primarily driven by government prescription, through a law or regulations specifying the use of a particular standard. The private sector's role is limited to following these requirements and to implementing whatever set of standards is prescribed by government.

24. To promote increased participation by these countries, the secretariat has sought primarily to engage the key standards-setting organizations in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as national standards-setting agencies, in discussions relating to electronic business standards.

3. Regional level –standards-setting organizations

25. The key CIS organizations dealing with standards on a regional level are the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RC) and the CIS Inter-State Council on Standardization, Metrology and Certification.

26. Both organizations include and represent sectoral ministries/agencies of the CIS countries. A brief overview of both of these organizations is provided below.

27. **Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RC):** This is a coordinating body of the ministries of communications of 12 CIS states, with a secretariat in Moscow.

28. In 2009, the UNECE secretariat established contacts with the RC secretariat and with its Working Group on Standards. It invited this Working Group examine the UN/CEFACT standards and look into their possible use in the RC countries.

29. The Working Group on Standards considered this issue at its meeting in Baku [Baku] in October 2009 and they expressed interest in studying the matter further provided it receives concise information in Russian on UN/CEFACT standards and tools and on their possible use. The chair of the Working Group will participate in the 16th Plenary of UN/CEFACT and will attend the training programme for countries in transition organized on this occasion.

30. **CIS Inter-State Council on Standardization, Metrology and Certification:** This is one of the effective, functioning inter-regional CIS organizations/bodies; it unites standardization bodies from all 12 CIS member states. It is registered as a regional standardization organization at ISO under the name: Euro Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC).

3.1 Contacts with the standards-setting organizations

31. During 2009, the secretariat held discussions with the CIS Inter-State Council on Standardization, metrology and certification on standards related to e-commerce and e-business.

32. At its June 2009 meeting, the Inter-State Council agreed that e-commerce issues were of interest to its member governments and requested countries to submit specific proposals to initiate the work in this area.

33. In spring 2010, the secretariat submitted a more detailed proposal to the Inter-State Council to look into UN/CEFACT standards and their relevance to members of the Council. This and other proposals, including an invitation from the secretariat to the September 2010 UN/CEFACT Forum in Geneva and the parallel UN/CEFACT information seminar in Geneva, were considered at the 39th meeting of the Council which took place in June 2010 in Ukraine (11 CIS countries were represented).

34. The Council agreed that its countries had a common interest in information technologies related to identifying (and particularly to ensuring traceability) of products in trade, and decided to pursue work in this area. It proposed that the inter-state standardization technical committees TC 517 “technologies of automatic identification and

of data collection and biometrics” would be assigned responsibility for matters related to identifying products in trade.

35. Subsequently, experts from Belarus and Russia representing TC 517 participated in the Geneva Forum and information sessions.

3.2 Support to the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan

36. In November 2009, the Heads of State of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan decided to create a Customs Union as of 1 January 2010. The Union de facto started functioning with the entry into force of its common Customs Code on 1 July 2010.

37. This meant introducing a common customs classification system for goods, a common customs code, common rules of origin and other certificates, as well as drawing up common laws, regulations and procedures, or harmonizing existing ones.

38. The secretariat established contacts with the executive body of the Customs Union-Customs Commission and offered expertise and assistance to interested countries and the CU from UNECE experts.

39. Following these contacts, the secretariat of the Commission of the Customs Union asked UNECE and UN/CEFACT experts to comment on a number of the Customs Union documents /agreements prepared (agreement on the use of information technologies, on the Customs code; on integrated information systems; on uniform conformity certificates, etc.).

40. The UNECE secretariat translated the draft agreement on applying information technologies under electronic document exchange in international and mutual trade on the united customs territory of Customs Union. Experts from the UN/CEFACT Legal Group and UN/CITRAL made comments on this draft, some of which were reflected in the final text adopted in September 2010 (for example, while the draft made reference to specific technologies to be used for verification and authentication purposes, the final version is technology/standards neutral).

41. After comparing the Union’s Customs code and the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), the UNECE secretariat suggested that it would be desirable to harmonize the two. It also suggested to take note of the trade facilitation discussions at WTO during further work on the code. (Some areas were singled out: for example, it was noted that the concessions to authorized business operators, which are being discussed at WTO, are much wider than those originally foreseen in the Customs Union code).

42. The UNECE secretariat also looked at the concept of an Integrated Information System for internal and external trade in the Customs Union. Major comments on the concept concerned the use of Single Window approaches (which were not mentioned), the use of international standards and the issue of compatibility with other systems. At the invitation of the Customs Commission, the secretariat took part in an expert meeting on the elaboration of regulatory and e-related Customs Union documents and agreements (St. Petersburg, November 2010).

43. In cooperation with experts from the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6), the secretariat prepared examples of good regulatory practices in conformity assessment. These were sent to the Customs Union experts working on preparing common conformity certificates and manufacturers declarations to be used in the Customs Union.

3.3 Discussions at the national level: standards-setting in the Russian Federation

44. The UNECE secretariat also held discussions with national standards-setting agencies in the CIS and in the Russian Federation.

45. In the Russian Federation, it initiated consultations with different government agencies and with business to attract attention to UN/CEFACT tools and activities. These discussions were intended to encourage the creation of mirror committees to the UN/CEFACT working groups, and the establishment of groups of interested parties or national committees dealing with information standards.

46. In December 2009, a new technical committee “TC 22 Information Technologies” was established under the aegis of ROSSTANDARD (the Russian Standard Certification and State Product Registration Centre). It is foreseen that this Committee will form the nucleus for an inter-State body on information technologies to be set up within the CIS framework. As a result of discussions with the TC 22 management, this technical committee decided in June 2010 to also take on the functions of a UN/CEFACT “mirror committee”.

47. These functions were assigned to its sub-group “Information technologies in state administration”. This decision (on a mirror committee function) was supported/approved by the Russian standards-setting agency (« ROSSTANDART ») which is supervising the majority of Russian technical committees. The Chair of TC 22 will participate in the 16th UN/CEFACT Plenary and will attend the training programme for countries in transition organized on this occasion.

48. The UNECE secretariat hopes that this arrangement will help to establish the first focal point on UN/CEFACT tools in the Russian Federation and, later on, in the CIS region.

49. Discussions are also under way in the Russian Federation on initiating another “mirror committee” on data elements, concerning ISO TC 154 (“Processes, data elements and documents in commerce, industry and administration”) and its related activities. This could be achieved through establishing an ISO mirror committee in Russia and maybe also in Belarus (the issue was discussed with the Russian and Belarus experts who participated in the Geneva Forum).

50. In autumn 2009, contacts were established with Intra-Sectoral Council on Information Technologies of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP),

51. RSPP is interested in discussing the business-related aspects of UNECE standards and regulations (including in the e-business and e-trade sectors). It hosted a conference on information technologies and standards in October 2010 in Moscow (for more details see paragraph 56 on p. 17).

4. Meetings

4.1 Meetings on the Customs Union

52. The secretariat took part in the conference “development of small and medium business under Customs Union conditions” (Moscow, 12 April 2010). It provided information on the use of information technologies in developed countries and pointed out the importance of wider involvement of all stakeholders (both from ministries and from the private sector) in the debate on developments in the Customs Union and in discussions on relevant legal and administrative documents.

53. During events organized during the “Russian business week” (12-16 April 2010, Moscow) that were related to the Customs Union, the secretariat pointed to issues relating to the use of UN/CEFACT standards in the harmonization of documents (common certificates of conformity, etc.) and to the exchange of information among regulatory agencies in the Customs Union.

4.2 Parallel information events for transition economies at the UN/CEFACT Geneva Forum

54. Following contacts with the CIS Inter-State Council on Standardization, Metrology and Certification, technical experts from Belarus and the Russian Federation representing the CIS inter-State standardization committee 517 (“technologies of automatic identification and of data collection and biometrics”) and experts from the Russian standardization agency (“ROSSTANDART”) took part in the UN/CEFACT Geneva Forum.

55. During the Forum two seminars on UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations were organized; one was aimed at diplomats from the Geneva missions; another focused on technical experts. The attendance was more than 40 delegates from 27 countries (including 20 developing and transition economies) and more than 20 experts from 10 countries (including 7 developing and transition economies). Participants considered these events useful and the secretariat is organizing a similar event during the UN/CEFACT Plenary in December 2010.

4.3 IT Standards 2010 – Moscow

56. In October 2010, an international conference “IT Standards 2010” was organised in Moscow by the Intra-Sectoral Council on Information Technologies of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP), in cooperation with the UNECE secretariat (about 150 participants from governmental agencies and business). Presentations were made by secretariat on UN/CEFACT tools, instruments and approaches. Contacts with public agencies and companies were established; it was proposed to make it an annual event.

5. Presentations and UNECE intra-secretariat cooperation – raising awareness of UN/CEFACT tools

5.1 Minsk, Belarus in June 2010

57. In the context of intra-secretariat cooperation (within UNECE) on information technologies issues, the secretariat suggested to add single window issues to the programme of an international seminar held in Minsk, Belarus in June 2010. As the result, a presentation was made on raising the efficiency of public administrations using Single Windows and information technologies. The seminar “Real property cadastre and registration services in the ECE region: the impact of “E-government” reforms” was organized by the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration and the Belarus State Committee on Property and the Belarus National Cadastral Agency.

5.2 e-traceability

58. In October 2010, the secretariat made a presentation on the use of international electronic business standards in e-traceability to the meeting of the Specialized Section on standardization of Meat of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7). This presentation referenced the Belarus project on “e-passport of goods” presented at the 2009 UN/CEFACT Plenary. The Specialised Section stressed the importance of these matters for both the meat industry and regulators and expressed its interest to collaborate on these issuers.

59. The traceability issues in the market surveillance context were also discussed at the session of the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6; November 2010; Geneva). The WP decided to consider a possibility of elaborating a recommendation on traceability matters.

6. Conclusions

60. The preliminary conclusions arising from the secretariat’s work in the field is that the application of information standards and policies is often fragmented, being primarily limited to specific sectors. This may be due to insufficient understanding by policy-makers of the global need for a common regulatory information language.

61. Accordingly, the secretariat recommends the elaboration of an approach and conceptual design for the exchange of information and data (including through electronic means) between regulatory agencies and within e-governance programmes. Such an approach could cover both policy and practical issues and address the possibilities and needs for data exchange at both national and transboundary levels. It should promote good approaches, practices and procedures for the exchange of information (including through the use of UN/CEFACT tools) and encourage developing countries and countries in transition to enter into both internal and international dialogues on their needs and concerns in this area.

Annex B

Capacity-building activities in support of EXCOM decisions

1. Strategic approach to capacity-building

62. The UNECE approach to capacity-building in trade facilitation is multifaceted. It includes working to understand the trade facilitation dynamics and needs of member States; helping to launch initiatives to address these needs; building awareness of available international standards and recommendations – in particular those of UN/CEFACT; developing tools and guides to help implement them; and providing technical training. It is primarily driven by the expressed needs of UN member States, and particularly transition economies. In building capacity, UNECE also works closely with the other regional commissions. It works closely with UNESCAP and this work is being broadened to include all the regional commission through the joint UN regional commission initiative on trade facilitation. An overview of these activities is given below.

2. Needs Assessments

63. Needs assessments are generally conducted through direct contact with relevant officials in member States. They can be carried out in many ways, including:

- direct contact by member States with the UNECE secretariat, requesting assistance in specific areas;
- missions to member States;
- surveys of member States;
- requests by member States at the UN/CEFACT Plenary and Forums;
- workshops and seminars.

64. Examples of activities undertaken in this area are listed in Annex B1.

65. UNECE has compiled a mapping of requests from the UN/CEFACT Plenaries in 2008 and 2008, and also the survey of member States undertaken in 2008, to the 2010 – 2011 UN/CEFACT programme of Work 2010-2011 – see document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/7 for details.

66. In addition, UNECE, through the Committee on Trade, has embarked on a series of national studies to assess regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in three transition countries. The first of these is currently under way in Belarus. Two more are planned in 2011 and 2012.

67. The studies will identify strengths and weaknesses, gaps and redundancies in a country's regulatory and procedural environment. They will form the basis of policy discussions within the Committee, and result in recommendations; to individual countries or regional groupings on how to improve their trading environment; to donors on where assistance is required; and to UNECE subsidiary bodies, including UN/CEFACT, on where additional work is required.

68. The outcome of the above work will feed into the secretariat's capacity-building programme, as well as its approach to encouraging the participation of transition economies

in the work of UN/CEFACT and to promoting the application of current trade facilitation techniques and standards (See sections 3-7).

69. As part of its activities on needs assessments in countries in transition, the secretariat arranged an information note on the use of information technologies in Kazakh customs, which was submitted to the 2009 UN/CEFACT Plenary (document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2009/14). The secretariat is currently working on training modules for delegates and technical experts on single window, documents harmonization, e-documents infrastructure and business process analysis to be used by the secretariat and UN/CEFACT in its capacity building activities. It is foreseen, that such modules can also be used by educational institutions in the region. The first version of these modules will be used to deliver in December 2010 a training session at the OSCE Border Management Staff College (Dushanbe, Tajikistan).

3. Capacity-building Activities and Development of Tools 2009-2010

70. This section covers the capacity building, promotional, advisory and technical training activities of UNECE in trade facilitation over the period 2009-2010. It is important to understand that UNECE does not have a regular budget to undertake such activities. Rather, they are undertaken through UN Development Account projects under the UN ECOSOC. This work focuses mainly on activities related to Single Window Implementation, Business Process analysis and Data Harmonization. They are summarised in Annex B1. Of particular importance is the work with countries in Central Asia on Single Window Implementation, which will be followed up by a regional workshop in mid-2011.

71. In addition, the UNECE Regional Advisor for Trade Facilitation undertakes a programme of work to provide strategic policy advice, and manage capacity-building and technical cooperation projects funded under the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation. A summary of the Regional Advisor's activities is provided in Annex B.3. The activities of the Regional Advisor in Trade Facilitation and those of the UNECE Global Trade Solutions Section have now been linked into one integrated programme of activities.

4. Capacity-building for Single Window Implementation

72. As stated above, capacity building for Single Window Implementation was a primary focus over the period and deserves special mention. Initially developed by UN/CEFACT as a recommendation to governments to establish "a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements"⁷, governments have taken the Single Window concept to a much broader and comprehensive dimension. It now commonly includes the simplification and harmonization of trade procedures and documents and information flows, and the interagency exchanges of such information to simplify and automate cross-border trade. It usually focuses on the national level and in some cases on the regional level. These aforementioned factors reflect the fact that implementation of core elements of trade facilitation are essential preconditions for the successful operation of a Single Window. Single Windows have, in

⁷ UN/CEFACT Recommendation Number 33,
http://www.unece.org/cefact/recommendations/rec33/rec33_trd352e.pdf.

fact, become a key catalyst for the introduction of such measures and, as such, the concept is a powerful force in enhancing trade facilitation implementation and development in transition and developing economies. This is in part because the concept of a Single Window is relatively simple to comprehend and is politically attractive.

5. Single Window Development in Central Asia and the Asian and the Pacific Region

73. Governments in many developing and transition economies in Central Asia and the Asia and Pacific Region consider Single Window as a priority strategic instrument to foster public-private sector collaboration in external trade and to integrate their national economy into regional and global markets.

74. They are increasingly recognising the potential of Single Windows to reduce the extensive waiting times encountered in their cross border trade. In the Asia and Pacific region, organizations and initiative such as ASEAN, APEC and Pan Asian Alliance (PAA) use Single Windows as instruments for regional trade integration. On the global level, the Asia-Europe Alliance for Paperless Trade (ASEAL) is developing projects for the interregional exchange of trade information.

75. These developments have significantly increased the need for regional and interregional collaboration in the design, implementation and extension of Single Windows. Such activities can include common managerial models for Single Window project management, the exchange of experience and lessons learned from coordination in the development of regional strategies and synergies in Single Window implementations. In maintaining their strong partnership, UNECE and UNESCAP have developed the UN Network of Experts to provide a platform for the policy dialogue, exchange of experience and capacity building required by the member States of the region. In using this common platform, the two organizations are able to coordinate their delivery of services for their joint constituency in Central Asia, to leverage considerable synergies in developing capacity-building programmes and to integrate donor agencies in the joint work.

76. To better focus its support and use of available resources UNECE is in the process of developing a strategy to support Single Window Development in Central Asia. This will provide a set of long, medium and short-term objectives and resulting activities for capacity building and support to Governments, in coordination with UNESCAP and technical cooperation agencies. Based on discussion and input from member countries and UNNEXT regional focal points, UNECE will revise and adapt this strategy as required.

77. UNECE and UNESCAP will also continue to work within the system of United Nations Regional Commissions to strengthen interregional collaboration of Single Windows to enable a smooth, electronic flow of trade information that mirrors the flow of goods along the international supply chain. Given the success of this collaboration, UNECE is now leading a joint UN RC initiative on trade facilitation, which will include components of UNNEXT in a wider United Nations RC approach.

6. United Nations Network of Experts (UNNEXT)

78. The UN Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia Pacific (UNNEXT) is a joint initiative of UNECE and UNESCAP, established at the request of member States and funded through the UN Development account 6th Tranche. It provides a peer-to-peer networking and knowledge-sharing platform for policymakers, practitioners and technical experts developing countries and transition economies to support the implementation of

trade facilitation instruments and standards. The UNNEXT Secretariat is jointly provided by UNECE and UNESCAP. A Committee of Advisors from academia and representatives of the participating Government administrations supports the Secretariat in identifying priorities. In addition, all Central Asian countries have nominated official national focal points for UNNEXT.

79. In 2010, UNECE and UNESCAP developed significant training packages to support UNNEXT Capacity Building activities. The training follows a modular, step-by-step approach to the simplification and automation of processes and data for Single Window, which fosters a balanced focus on trade facilitation and eBusiness tasks. These packages include:

The UNNEXT Guide for Business Process Analysis: This provides techniques and tools to analyse and simplify business processes for Single Window Implementation (and other applications). The Guide has already been used in UNNEXT training events in Mongolia, Cambodia, and Viet Nam and in a regional one for Central Asian Countries organised in Baku (Baku), Azerbaijan.

Guide for the simplification and harmonization of trade documents: Completed and under editing for publication. Related capacity-building will be provided.

Single Window Implementation Framework (SWIF): Developed by UNECE⁸, this framework is based on latest management instruments for the development of large inter-organizational systems such as The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) and the Programme Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). The Implementation Framework adapts these standards to the specific case of Single Window projects. It provides Governments with an integrated approach to preparing and implementing a Single Window project. At the meeting of Central Asian Countries during the ESCAP/ECE/ADB Trade Facilitation Forum,⁹ member countries requested UNNEXT to extend this framework, adapting it to the specific requirements of Central Asian countries.

Single Window Implementation Master Plan: On the request of the Government of Mongolia UNNEXT organised a peer review meeting on the Mongolian Master Plan for implementation of a Single Window. The meeting provided high-level decision makers of the Mongolian Government with an opportunity to share and discuss details of their implementation strategy with policy makers and project managers from member countries with relevant national experience in the implementation of Single Windows. The outcome of the meeting will be a refined national strategy, which will be presented to the President for final approval.

Joint UNECE/ESCAP and World Customs Organization (WCO) technical workshop on Data Harmonization for Paperless Trade: Under the UNNEXT capacity building programme UNECE and ESCAP jointly with the World Customs Organization organised a technical workshop on Data Harmonization for Paperless Trade (<http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/datamodel.asp>). The workshop introduced the latest standards, technologies and tools for simplification and automation of cross-border data exchange, in particular UN/CEFACT standards on simplified trade documents and the recently published WCO Data Model.

⁸ Joint research project of the Vrije University of Amsterdam, Delft University of Technology, Kasetsart University Thailand, TNO and UNECE under the EU funded ITAIDE project (www.itaide.org).

⁹ Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 6 October 2010 http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tforum10_prog.pdf.

80. In operating the Network UNECE and UNESCAP have succeeded in receiving complementary funding for selected activities through ASEAN, ADB, USAID, GTZ and the World Bank. Efforts to complement resources will continue in 2011.

7. Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG)

81. The Project for the Development of a Guide to Trade Facilitation Implementation (TIFIG Project), funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), will be undertaken in two distinct parts. Under Part 1, the following will be prepared: a practical generic Guide to the implementation of trade facilitation, bridging the gap between policy decisions and needs analysis, on one side, and the implementation of concrete facilitation measures, on the other; a related set of training material tailored to the specific needs and requirements of the countries/regions concerned; and several case studies integrated into both the Guide and the training material, covering experiences from all regions. These project outputs will be produced in English and subsequently translated into French and/or Russian. Under Part 2, which will be launched subject to the successful completion of Part 1 and the explicit agreement of Sida, a series of regional training workshops will be organized on the use of the Guide.

82. The beneficiaries of the TIFIG Project will be all countries and regions, particularly developing and transition countries, as well as practitioners in the trade facilitation field (particularly in these countries), primarily government, business and technical experts at all levels working to implement trade facilitation measures. These beneficiaries will be helped to understand how to implement trade facilitation in the light of: developmental needs and priorities; the content of and interrelationship amongst relevant international conventions, standards, recommendations, tools and best practices; and possible outcomes of trade facilitation discussions at WTO and other fora.

83. The TFIG Project will be managed by the UNECE secretariat, advised by a Project Team composed of UN/CEFACT experts. The Project is expected to start on 1 December 2010 and Part 1 is expected to run for 15 months.

Annex B.1

Capacity Building Events Organised by UNECE Secretariat 2009-2010

| Date | Meeting title | Location | Short description and URL | Participants/ Beneficiary countries |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Nov. 2009 | ESCAP ADB Trade Facilitation Forum and ARTNET meeting | Bangkok, Thailand | Forum on Trade Facilitation Implementation and establishment of a country steering Group for UNNEXT | Developing countries and transition economies in Asia |
| Dec. 2009 | OSCE Workshop on Integrated Approach to Supply Chain Security for the Mediterranean Region, hosted by Greece and Azerbaijan | Valetta, Malta | Using trade and eBusiness standards to increase international security | OSCE member countries with special focus on Mediterranean and Black Sea countries |
| January 2010 | Workshop for High level management instruments for Single Window | Amsterdam, Netherlands | Research on a framework for Single Window Planning and Implementation | EU member countries |
| April 2010 | Integrated Border Management in the East African Community, organised by the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) | Mombasa, Kenya | Use of UNECE standards and tools to support the establishment of a Customs Union | Developing countries in the East African Union |
| July 2010 | UNNEXT Capacity Building Workshop on Single Window and Business Process Analysis, supported by ADB and GTZ | Baku, Azerbaijan | Regional workshop on techniques to analyse and simplify business processes http://www.customs.gov.az/en/news-106.html | Central Asian countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Peoples Republic of China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and administrations and private sector companies in Azerbaijan |
| July 2010 | Single Window Implementation Seminar (CAREC with support of UNECE and UNESCAP through UNNEXT) | Baku, Azerbaijan | Regional aspects of Single Window development in Central Asia | Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Peoples Republic of China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, ADB, ESCAP, ECE, WCO, Thailand, Singapore |

| Date | Meeting title | Location | Short description and URL | Participants/ Beneficiary countries |
|-----------|---|------------------------|---|--|
| Oct. 2010 | UNNEXT review meeting on the Mongolia High Level master Plan for its Single Window implementation | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Meeting of high level experts to discuss with decision makers from the Mongolian Government their strategy for Single Window Implementation | Mongolia; review supported through Government officials from several UNNEXT member countries |
| Oct. 2010 | Asia Trade Facilitation Forum (UNESCAP/UNECE/ADB) | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Knowledge sharing on Trade Facilitation implementation among countries in the greater Asia and Pacific Region | 300 participants from Asia and Pacific Region. All Central Asian Countries were represented in the meeting |
| Oct. 2010 | First meeting of the UNNEXT Advisory Board | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Provide advise on the deliverables and priorities of the UNNEXT deliverables | Developing and transition countries of Asia including Central Asia. Central Asia is represented by two members in the Advisory Board (Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan) |
| Oct 2010 | UNNEXT Workshop on WCO Data Model 3.0 and Data Harmonization for Paperless Trade | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Technical Workshop on simplification of trade documents and development of electronic documents using international standards | Selected government officials from developing countries and transition economies |

Annex B.2

Guides, tools and related activities developed by UNECE secretariat 2009 - 2010

| Tool Name | Short Description | Application |
|--|--|---|
| UNNEXT Business Process Analysis Guide | A guide to analyse and simplify trade procedures | Used for capacity building in transition economies and developing countries; Practical use in projects in Mongolia, and in the analysis of business processes in cross-border supply chains among developing countries under the ARTNET project (details at http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/index.asp) |
| Single Window Implementation Framework | A framework to plan and manage policy, technical and institutional component of a Single Window Projects | Research done in collaboration with Universities and Single Window implementers; First adaptation of the framework to Single Window in the European community through the ITAIDE project; request to UNNEXT to develop a specialised framework for the needs of Central Asian countries. |
| Guide for the design of aligned trade forms to prepare for paperless trade | User Guide to simplify and standardise trade documents as a preparation for Single Window and paperless trade | To be used as part of the UNNEXT capacity building |
| UNECE Strategy to support Single Window Development in Central Asia | Short/medium and long term objectives to ensure best use of secretariat resources in the support of Central Asian countries | |
| UN Network of Experts for paperless trade in Central Asia and Asia Pacific | A peer to peer network of policy makers and technical experts to provide exchange of experience in the implementation of single Window and paperless trade | Government agencies from Central Asian countries nominated their official focal points; Advisory committee established; support and collaboration with ADB/GTZ and WCO on training and seminars; training materials developed; seminars and conferences organised; advisory services delivered. |
| UNNEXT Business Process Analysis Guide | A guide to analyse and simplify Business Processes for Single Window Implementation | Specific focus on situation in transition economies and developing countries; used in Mongolia and ten Asian countries |
| UNNEXT Briefing papers | Briefing papers for policy makers on specific topics | UNNExT Brief is a series of briefs covering a range of critical issues to be tackled in the successful development of paperless trade and Single Window initiatives. Also, they showcase best practices in the region and beyond to share experiences and lessons learned. UNNExT Brief No. 1, Towards a Single Window |

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| | | <p>Trading Environment – Gaining Support from Senior-level Policymakers, November 2009.</p> <p>UNNExT Brief No. 2, Towards a Single Window Trading Environment – Best Practice Cases in Single Window Implementation: Case of Singapore’s TradeNet, March 2010.</p> <p>UNNExT Brief No. 3, Towards a Single Window Trading Environment – Case of Korea’s National Paperless Trade Platform – uTradeHub, May 2010.</p> <p>UNNExT Brief No. 4, Towards a Single Window Trading Environment – Case of Malaysia’s National Single Window, July 2010.</p> |
|--|--|--|

Annex B.3

Capacity-building activities of the Regional Advisor

84. In 2009-2010, the Regional Advisor organized 14 capacity-building workshops and provided advisory services. These were aimed at strengthening the technical capacities of national experts in trade facilitation and trade policy, and at supporting the establishment and/or strengthening of networks of experts. Success stories included the establishment of a Single Window in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (the second in Europe after Sweden), various Single Window and trade facilitation projects started in Central Asia, Azerbaijan, other CIS countries, Mongolia and SE Europe, mostly with donor support, but also based on their own resources. The number of countries implementing Single Window solutions rose from three to nine. The number of participants rose to 786, instead of the planned 600. The unprecedented growth of capacity-building activities was due to the successful raising of external funds and the successful implementation of the fifth Tranche United Nations Development Account project on trade facilitation in Central Asia. Albania was the latest country to start projects on implementing a Single Window. During a UNECE-led regional seminar held there in September 2010, it also signed bilateral data-exchange agreements with two of its neighbours.

85. Three studies were developed under a special project supported by the Russian Federation: a feasibility study on a single location (airport) in the Russian Federation, a study on the readiness of the legal system in the Russian Federation to implement a Single Window, and a study on the technical compatibility of the IT systems of the various control agencies and businesses in the Russian Federation. These studies produced practical results, and are being used for preparing a feasibility study and further implementation measures for establishing a Single Window in the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

86. During recent meetings of UN/CEFACT and the UNECE Committee on Trade, 90% of member States with economies in transition expressed their satisfaction with the technical cooperation services provided under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) subprogramme in the area of trade, and requested further active technical cooperation with the transition economies in the future. Member States appreciated the usefulness of the methodologies, techniques and tools offered in the projects, finding them applicable at the national level. During the biennium 2012-2013, over 10 countries with economies in transition should be implementing Single Window solutions. This will help raise the efficiency of trade procedures and good governance in foreign trade in those countries.

Seminars/projects organized in 2009-2010

87. Tashkent and Gothenburg (2009): Training seminars for policymakers and experts from Uzbekistan. These led to the development of a draft Action Plan for a Single Window in Uzbekistan, later discussed at the Council of Ministers of Uzbekistan. Funding by donors: GTZ, USAID, and Sweden.

88. Workshop on the feasibility study on Vnukovo Airport in Moscow (2009), and two workshops in St Petersburg (2009 and 2010) on the legal aspects of developing a Single Window project in the Russian Federation. Funding: Russian Voluntary Contribution.

89. These events brought to a qualitatively new stage the work on trade facilitation and the establishment of a Single Window in the Russian Federation.

90. Under the fifth Tranche of the UNDA project on trade facilitation in Central Asia, two seminars were organized in 2009: on trade facilitation at the border in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and on public-private cooperation for trade facilitation and the Single Window in Almaty. These two seminars (attended by vice-ministers) were landmarks in the development of the concepts of trade facilitation and the Single Window in Central Asia.

91. A regional workshop on trade facilitation, the Single Window, and data harmonization was held in Tbilisi, Georgia (2009), which fostered work on the development of Single Window systems and data harmonization in the region (the three countries of the South Caucasus participated in it). A similar workshop for Ukraine was held in Kiev (2010).

92. Under the UNECE initiative on trade facilitation, the Single Window and data harmonization, two Southeast European regional conferences were organized in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2009) and Durrës, Albania (2010). They underscored the achievements of the existing Single Window projects in the region, and outlined the next steps, notably in data harmonization through following international standards.

93. Two conferences were organized for the EurAsEC countries, in Geneva; two SPECA Trade Working Group meetings were held, in Geneva and Baku, and a SPECA Aid-for-Trade Ministerial Conference, in Baku.
