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### Economic Commission for Europe

#### Committee on Trade

#### Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

##### Seventeenth session

Geneva, 7-8 July 2011

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**The way forward and UN/CEFACT's structure, mandate, terms of reference and procedures**

#### **Proposals relevant to documents**

**ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/17/Rev.1**

**ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/24/Rev.1**

Submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation for discussion and approval

#### *Summary*

This document contains textual proposals made by the delegation of the Russian Federation regarding procedures to be followed by UN/CEFACT with a view to enhancing openness, predictability and transparency in UN/CEFACT's work and standards-setting activities. Editorial changes have been made by the secretariat upon request.

## Introduction

1. The present document contains textual proposals made by the delegation of the Russian Federation regarding procedures to be followed by UN/CEFACT with a view to enhancing openness, predictability and transparency in UN/CEFACT's work and standards-setting activities, for which clear and understandable procedures are important. The background is that, during the last two years, the delegation of the Russian Federation has encountered difficulties in receiving replies to its requests, which has raised obstacles to the participation of Russian experts in UN/CEFACT's work. The delegation recalls in this connection that, at its twenty-ninth meeting on 27 February 2009, EXCOM requested UN/CEFACT "to 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" (see paragraph B (iii), Decision on Matters relating to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, document ECE/EX/4).

2. The delegation would clarify that, while its proposals could be relevant in particular to the subject matter of the documents Draft revised rules of procedure for the UN/CEFACT Bureau (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/17/Rev.1) and Draft revised open development process (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/24/Rev.1), it is not specifically proposing modifications to these two documents; its concern is rather with correcting the negative practices identified. The delegation is open to suggestions regarding the documents in which its proposals could be reflected and whether the procedures adopted to reflect these proposals are mandatory or voluntary. The delegation suggests that the 17th Plenary discuss and agree upon the setting-up of a temporary mechanism incorporating such procedures, with provision for review and, if necessary, modification of this mechanism by member States in the light of experience gained from its provisional operation. After such review, the revised text would be submitted to the 18th Plenary for adoption.

## **I. Proposal relevant to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/17/Rev.1: Procedure for responding to requests from governments/delegations**

3. Official requests by member States may be expressed or submitted for or during Plenary sessions or may be sent, independently from any meeting, to the secretariat or to the Plenary Bureau. It is desirable that requests be transmitted through the Head of Delegation (HoD) of the country concerned.

4. The secretariat shall establish and maintain a roster of such requests, including requests sent both to the secretariat and to the Plenary Bureau. Requests sent to the Plenary Bureau shall be transmitted by the Plenary Bureau to the secretariat within one week of receipt.

5. Receipt of any request from a HoD shall be confirmed to him/her within two weeks. Depending upon the subject, the secretariat and/or the Bureau shall decide on how to address the request. The response to the HoD or governmental authority shall be sent within one month of its receipt (in exceptional cases, for example, when additional information is required, the deadline may be extended but by not more than two months). Should these deadlines not be met, the secretariat shall immediately take appropriate action to respond to the requests made or to encourage responses to such requests by the Plenary Bureau, as the case may be.

6. All requests made by member States and the replies made to such requests shall be copied to the HoDs' list server (unless confidentiality has been requested by the member State concerned)

7. All HoDs shall be informed regularly (not less than once every three months) about policy-related or other important requests received by UN/CEFACT (this information can be provided as part of a regular update to HoDs on current UN/CEFACT activities).

## **II. Proposal relevant to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2010/24/Rev.1: Procedure for responding to comments on UN/CEFACT publications/deliverables at their final approval stage by the Plenary**

8. This procedure is aimed at supplementing and clarifying relevant provisions of the open development process.

9. Each UN/CEFACT project shall have a comments log. Information on all official submissions on the project shall be included on this log, as well as on the webpage where project information is posted.

10. Such official submissions may be made during official Plenary meetings or sent separately either to the team working on the project, to the secretariat or to the Bureau (as part of the open development process, in the preparation of a "proposed final draft"). It is preferable that such official submissions be sent through, or after informing, the relevant HoD.

11. The drafting group shall organize and maintain a roster of official comments until the product is finalized, approved and published.

12. Upon receipt of a comment it shall be confirmed to the relevant sender and HoD within two weeks. At the same time other HoDs shall be informed about the receipt of comments and their substance.

13. Depending on the subject, the drafting group, secretariat and/or the Bureau shall decide on how to address the comments. The response to the relevant sender, HoD or governmental authority shall be sent within one month of receipt (in exceptional cases, for example when additional information is required, the deadline may be extended but not by more than two months). If the submitted comments were taken into account, the reply shall explain how this was done. If they were not taken into account, the reply shall explain why.

14. The HoDs shall be informed regularly (not less than once every three months) about substantive comments received by UN/CEFACT on its major projects (this information can be provided as a part of a regular update to HoDs on current UN/CEFACT activities).