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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices
for Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT)
(Item 2 of the provisional agenda,
Second session, 15-16 September 1997)

REPORT FROM THE CEFACT STEERING GROUP (CSG) MEETING

Geneva, 21-23 May 1997

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Submitted by the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG)*

This document has been submitted by the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) for information and translation as required under the CEFACT procedures outlined in document TRADE/R.650. It is for information only. Items to be decided upon by the CEFACT Plenary will be presented in a separate report from the Chair of the CSG.

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REPORT
CEFACT STEERING GROUP (CSG) MEETING
1997, 21-23 May

GENEVA

Members Present:

Ray Walker, Chairman
Ray Battersby
Claude Chiaramonti
Ernst Deeg
Alex de Lijster
Dumitrache Dima
David Dobbing
David Marsh
Klaus-Dieter Naujok
Irene Navarro
Emile Peeters
Christina Wallen-Rahlen
Christoph Wolf

Secretariat Present:

Hans Hansell, Chief of Section
Dae Won Choi
Virginia Cram-Martos
Will Keenan
Jean Kubler
Ernst Smirnov

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Santiago Mila
Kenji Itoh

Observers Present:

Rory Power
Thomas Wheel

Apologies From:

Siti Aminah Abdhullah
Borislav Georgiev

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. To encourage the greatest possible openness in the process and input into its decisions and recommendations, the CSG encourages a wide circulation of its reports.

REVIEW OF MANDATES FOR APPROVAL

2. It was agreed not to make final decisions on the two mandates for permanent working groups considered during this meeting (Legal and ITT/ITPP), as more fully described below, until the August 1997 CSG meeting. These are then expected to have approval by CEFACT in September 1997, based on a document to be circulated approximately three weeks in advance, with the terms of reference of the empowered groups being available to the March 1998 meeting of CEFACT. It was decided to delay any decisions until the August CSG meeting because of the need to establish, as far as it is possible, standardized wording for the various sections of the Mandates and the need to be sure that adequate linkages have been established between Permanent Working Groups.

3. In addition, because it was difficult to adequately evaluate available resources and their appropriate allocation across groups prior to all CEFACT permanent and ad hoc working groups being established, the CSG agreed to review the resource requirements for all mandated groups 12 months after their establishment.

4. The CSG then re-iterated what is stated in the agreed CEFACT migration plan (TRADE/WP.4/CRP.122/Rev.1), i.e. that all existing work would continue until the Plenary had either (1) allocated it to a Permanent Working Group, (2) had made a decision to stop that particular work item, or (3) it had been completed.

UN/LOCODE AD HOC WORKING GROUP

5. After minor revision, it was agreed to approve the mandate proposed by the ICS for an Ad hoc working group on UN/LOCODE (See Annex A). A decision as to whether to establish a Permanent Working Group for only the UN/LOCODE shall be considered later, after considering the report by the CSG ad hoc group on codes established further below as well as the March 1998 report from this ad hoc group.

Legal Permanent Working Group

6. The mandate proposed was reviewed in detail and changes were reflected in a revised document which will be reviewed by the Legal Rapporteurs prior to the August 1997 CSG meeting.

International Trade Transaction ► International Trade Process and Procedures Group

7. A discussion was held regarding the distinction between the concept of a "model" and a graphical representation of processes. It was felt by some members of the CSG that the focus of the International Trade Transaction Group was not

modelling only, but also developing trade facilitation measures at various levels. As a result, and in order to ensure a "rigorous, interlinked and coherent approach to ITT modelling, procedures and processes," various modifications were made to the proposed Mandate for the ITT group and alternative titles for the group were discussed. Agreed upon modifications were reflected in a revised document. However, no final agreement was reached on a name for the group; therefore, in the interim, it was agreed to replace the name "International Trade Transaction Group" with "International Trade Process and Procedures Group."

TIMING OF MIGRATION

8. After discussion of proposals for the creation of four groups to cover the work of GE.2, it was agreed to develop, for the August 1997 CSG meeting, a plan for the last session of GE.2 indicating the migration of all activities that are to be continued. The following CSG members shall be responsible for this plan: R. Battersby, D. Dima, C. Wolf, and E. Peeters.

9. The Chair of the JRT Mandate, Organization and Procedures Group (MOP) reported that during the April 1997 JRT, the two mandates proposed in order to cover the work of the JRT groups had been combined into one draft mandate. It was expected that a final mandate for these activities could be approved at the September 1997 JRT for consideration by the CSG before the end of the year.

10. In order to cover all existing GE.1 activities, it would also be necessary to finalize the proposed mandates for a Techniques and Methodologies for Facilitation Group (TMF) and a group covering the activities outlined in the proposed Process Analysis and Design Group (PAD). It was, therefore, believed that the earliest possible "retirement date" that could be foreseen for GE.1 was March 1998.

CEFACT WORK PROGRAMME MATRIX

11. The approach as to how the work programme should be presented was broadly agreed upon, based on a draft document. It was further agreed to review a revised work programme matrix at the August 1997 CSG meeting in order to present the result as a CRP at the September CEFACT meeting.

CSG PROCEDURES

12. A draft set of procedures was reviewed and a revision will be submitted to the CSG meeting in August 1997, with the intention of being able to make a draft available as a CRP to the September 1997 CEFACT meeting..

13. The secretariat was requested to remind heads of delegation that submissions to the CSG had to be made 3 weeks in advance if in machine readable format, or 4 weeks in advance if only available on paper, in order to ensure that CSG members could receive them at least two weeks before the meeting.

ISO AND REPORT FROM ECE/ISO/IEC MoU MANAGEMENT GROUP

14. The members of the CEFACT ECE/ISO/IEC MoU Management Group reported that the their March 1997 meeting with the ISO Central Secretariat was very positive. It had been agreed with the ISO Central Secretariat to hold, at least twice a year, similar ad hoc management meetings in addition to the MoU Coordinating Committee meetings.

15. During that meeting they also discussed the possibility of ISO's fast track procedures being modified in order for UN/EDIFACT messages, with their supporting directories, to be recognized as ISO standards without any changes (down to the period) being allowed, i.e. the process being modified so that ISO members could only accept or reject, with any requests for changes being handled through the normal UN/EDIFACT DMR process rather than an ISO TC. This discussion had been concluded by a request from the ISO Central Secretariat for a letter from the UN/ECE secretariat formally requesting this change in procedures so that the request could be presented to the June 1997 meeting of the ISO Technical Management Board.

16. In making this request, with its potentially positive implications, it was recognized that the user community would need to be thoroughly consulted on the exact nature of any implementation of this procedure.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS (OTHER THAN ISO)

17. The Chair emphasized the importance of intersecretariat cooperation between CEFACT and WTO on the issue of trade facilitation taking into consideration, in particular, the compilation of international inter-governmental organizations dealing with trade facilitation by the WTO secretariat for submission to the Council for Trade in Goods. The CSG was also informed that the ECE already had observer status on two WTO Committees, including the Committee on Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade, and that an application had been submitted to the Council for Trade in Goods which would be decided upon during 1997.

18. It was agreed to address the issue of participation of the Regional Commissions in CEFACT at the August 1997 CSG meeting.

19. The members of the CEFACT ECE/ISO/IEC MoU Management Group reported that the their March 1997 meeting with the ISO Central Secretariat was very positive. It had been agreed with the ISO Central Secretariat to hold, at least twice a year, similar ad hoc management meetings in addition to the MoU Coordinating Committee meetings.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING OF CEFACT AND ITS WORK

20. The need to stress the international scope of CEFACT in the media was emphasized as well as the need to find/identify every possible opportunity to

write or tell people about what CEFACT is doing. This being particularly important with respect to other organizations who could "multiply" this information out to their members.

21. Based on the request from B. Curry (CEFACT Vice-Chair responsible for promotion) for nominations for co-ordination points in each of the regions, it was decided that a Permanent Working Group for Promotion (Chaired by the CEFACT Vice-Chair) should be formed. In order to accomplish this as quickly as possible, B. Curry would be asked to submit a mandate to the August 1997 CSG meeting.

22. The Secretariat reported on the project it had established with Federal Express to develop an outline/list of needed promotional materials and, in particular, for the creation of a four colour brochure on CEFACT (to be completed in the first half of 1998).

23. It was agreed that CEFACT will register (via the secretariat) as a participant in the G7, "A Global Market Place for SMEs project."

ISSUES RELATED TO ECE/TRADE/R.650

24. Based on issues raised during the discussion of Mandates and the CSG procedures, it was decided that a review of ECE/TRADE/R.650 need to take place and D. Marsh was asked to lead a group consisting of himself, I. Navarro, and C. Wolf to prepare a report on possible revisions for the August 1997 CSG meeting. Some of the issues to be addressed by this group include: interim election of officers in the case of resignations, an appeal procedure for Working Groups with regard to decisions made by the CSG and a clarification as to the ability of Groups to issue recommendations (i.e. they cannot issue UN/CEFACT Recommendations without those having been approved by the Plenary).

CALS

25. The Chair called attention to the significant value in closer cooperation with CALS and the potentially strategic role that CEFACT could play in further CALS activities. He reported on the input provided by the EDIFACT Steering Group to ISO High Level CALS Steering Group (HLCSSG) and to their report Those CSG and ESG members who attended the HLCSSG Paper editing meeting on the 21 May 1997 reported that the large majority of the changes recommended by the ESG had been agreed to would make this a positive report for CEFACT.

26. The CSG was further informed that Mr. M. Conroy would make a presentation on UN/EDIFACT and binary data at the International CALS Congress from 23-24 June 1997 and R. Walker would make a presentation on CEFACT during the same Congress.

27. The CSG decided to appoint M. Conroy and T. Wheel as special advisors to the CSG on issues related to CALS.

MAINTENANCE OF CLASS 3 (UN, BUT NOT UN/EDIFACT) CODE LISTS

28. In response to a request from the JRT and the EDIFACT Steering Group, it was agreed to set up a code team under the CSG to make proposals for long term maintenance and proper dissemination of Class 3 codes (UN/ECE codes not maintained under UN/EDIFACT) to the August 1997 CSG meeting. The Chair of this group is Mr. D. Dobbing, and its members are Mr. A. de Lijster, Mr. C. Chiaramonti, and Mr. J. Kubler.

MEETING DATES FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS:

29. The following meeting schedule was agreed upon for the next 18 months with the places of meetings being subject to further arrangements.

1997	December 1-4
1998	January 26-29 (30)
1997	June 15-18
1997	October 26-29
1999	January 25-28
