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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)

Fourth session, 14-16 September 1998

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE CEFACT STEERING GROUP (CSG) CHAIR TO THE CEFACT PLENARY

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Submitted by the Chair of the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG)*

This report was prepared in accordance with the requirements for the CEFACT Steering Group Chair to submit a report to each Plenary, as outlined in TRADE/R.650.

The Centre is invited to: review and approve this document.

* This document has been published without formal editing

Introduction

1. As indicated in TRADE/R.650, the Chair of the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) is required to submit a written report to each session of the Plenary on the Steering Group's activities, and on other relevant issues related to the operation of the mandated working groups. Accordingly, this report covers the work of the CSG since the last session and includes a number of items which require Plenary action or approval. These items are highlighted in the following text.

2. The CSG has had one brief meeting following the March 1998 Plenary and one substantive meeting in June. This report covers all of the key issues discussed during these meetings. More details can be found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/14 which covers the January and March 1998 meetings and TRADE/CEFACT/1998/15 which covers the June 1998 meeting.

3. The CSG is a group with very different backgrounds and experiences and because of that it has not always been an easy group to chair. Certainly, it has taken some time to knit it into a cohesive team. However, at our last two meetings it has become clear that the group is building upon its various strengths and is beginning to operate in a positive and dynamic manner. It is now starting to act a real management team and the Chair would like to thank all of the CSG members who have attended these meetings for their contributions.

Elections

4. Following the resignation of Mr. Claude Chiaramonti (France) and Mr. Dimatrache Dima (Romania), the procedure for replacing CSG members who resign, agreed by the Plenary at its September 1997 meeting, has been followed (i.e. in the first instance the head of the delegation of the resigning member has been contacted and requested to nominate a replacement for the remainder of the original term of office). As a result, France has nominated Mr. Pierre Georget to the CSG and Romania has nominated Ms. Adriana Sirzea.

5. The Chair of the CSG would like to sincerely thank Mr. Chiaramonti and Mr. Dimatrache for their contributions not only to the CSG, and CEFACT, but also to WP.4 over many years.

Plenary action: Under item 2 of the agenda, to confirm the above nominations to the CSG.

6. Unfortunately, since the inauguration of CEFACT, two members of the CSG have not been able to attend any of the CSG meetings. This has had an impact on the balance of representation in the CSG, the ability to accomplish work, and has periodically contributed to problems in maintaining a meeting quorum (10 persons). At the time of writing this issue has been raised again with the two members, their organizations and their heads of delegation. If, as a result, firm guaranties are not received from their organizations by 14 August

1998 regarding support for their future attendance, then nominations for these posts as well, will be open to other delegations.

7. Under the migration plan agreed by WP.4 (TRADE/WP.4/CRP.122/Rev.1), to ensure continuity in Plenary operations, the following Plenary officers need to seek re-election at the September 1998 meeting: the chair of CEFACT (France), one of the two vice chairs representing the ECE member countries (U.S. and U.K.) and one of the two vice-chairs representing article 11 countries (Australia and Japan). Because of the resignation of Ms. Bernadette Curry, the Vice Chair position filled by the U.S. is vacant and, therefore, this becomes the post for ECE member states to be filled by election. At the time of writing, the heads of delegation of the other countries possibly involved in elections are being contacted to ascertain their plans.

8. **Once information has been received from the Heads of delegation in question regarding both the possible CSG vacancies and the Plenary officers, the secretariat will be contacting all Heads of delegation with details on the elections.**

Procedures

9. There are three procedural issues which need to be considered by the Plenary. These are related to: the report of the Plenary, the submission of documents to the Plenary and the coordination between working groups.

Plenary Report

10. As mentioned during the March 1998 Plenary, the CSG has been considering ways of making the approval of the Plenary report more efficient. Currently, the report is available from the secretariat during the afternoon after the close of the Plenary (this is necessary in order to allow time for its preparation). As a consequence, delegates wishing to participate in the approval of the report have to stay an extra day in Geneva.

11. The CSG proposes that a new mechanism is adopted beginning at the September 1998 session which removes this requirement and is as follows:

- In order to ensure that decisions are approved before the close of the session, the concept of a summary decision list will be introduced. This will work as follows:
 - At the beginning of the second, and any subsequent days, the summary text of decisions taken the day before will be approved.
 - On the last day, at the end of the final session, the summary text of decisions for that day will be approved.
 - These approved texts will then be incorporated into the draft report.
- Paper copies of the draft report will still be available at the end of the day following the close of the meeting for those delegations who

remain in Geneva and wish to have it.

- Between 48 and 72 hours after the close of the meeting, an electronic copy will be circulated by e-mail and, where requested, by fax.
- With the exception of the approved decisions, which cannot be modified, delegations will have ten working days to comment on the contents of the draft report.
 - Changes to the report which refer to a delegation's own position, statements or comments will be accepted verbatim by the secretariat.
 - Changes that relate to other matters will be approved by a team consisting of the CEFACT Chair, or officer(s) of the Plenary nominated by the Chair, and the secretariat.
- The resulting, final report will be published both electronically on the World Wide Web (WWW) and officially by the UN.
- At the beginning of the next Plenary meeting, acceptance of the report will be confirmed.

Submission of Documents to the Plenary

12. The CSG has agreed upon the following rules for the submission of documents to the CEFACT Plenary:

- Documents for the Plenary will be accepted from:
 - UN/CEFACT delegations;
 - The CSG and its Chair;
 - Chairs of working groups, provided the document in question has been approved by their working group;
 - The secretariat, after joint review by the head of the secretariat and the Chair of the CSG.
- Personal submissions will not be allowed.
- Input documents will not be accepted if they carry any copyright.

Coordination between working groups

13. The following procedure has been developed by the CSG in order to ensure that requests and communications between working groups and between working groups and the CSG take place on a timely basis as well as to establish a central record of such requests.

- All formal communications between working groups, or between the CSG and working groups, are to be by resolutions (i.e. approved by the working group that is generating the request/communication).
- Resolutions must be copied to the UN/ECE secretariat.

- The UN/ECE secretariat will establish a central record containing all resolutions.
- The UN/ECE will regularly circulate this central record via a list server to the chairs of all the working groups and the CSG members.

14. After their approval, all of the above procedures will be incorporated into a CEFACT Plenary procedures file which will be produced as a CEFACT reference document for every other Plenary session.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 3, to approve the above procedures.

Migration to New Structures and Mandates

15. The mandates for following permanent working groups have been approved: Business Analysis Working Group (BAWG), Codes Working Group (CDWG), International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG), Legal Working Group (LWG), Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMWG) and the UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG). The terms of reference for the TMWG, ITPWG, CDWG, and EWG have also been approved by the CSG and the terms of reference for the LWG and the BAWG are in the final stages of being completed. Once the terms of reference for all of these groups have been approved by the CSG, they will be published together with the mandates as a CEFACT reference document. The procedures for each group are being noted by the CSG and lodged with the secretariat.

UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG)

16. At the Miami Joint Rapporteurs Meeting in April 1998, agreement was reached on all the outstanding issues related to formation of the EWG and, as a consequence, the JRT dissolved at the end of the third day of the meeting and EWG formally came into being on 30 April 1998. Successful, well conducted, elections were held for the EWG officers and respectively, Mr. Barry Keogh (Australia) and Mr. Pierre Georget (France) were elected Chair and Vice-Chair. Later in the meeting a full management team consisting of 4 members from the EWG Steering Group and 4 members representing processing points were appointed along with the Chair of the Directory Audit Team, who is ex-officio, Mr. François Vuilluémier. A full list of the membership of the management team can be obtained from the EWG Officers or the secretariat.

This successfully completes the migration process for UN/EDIFACT.

Business Analysis Working Group (BAWG)

17. This group held its inaugural meeting in Miami in April 1998. This is an important group for the future of CEFACT and represents a much more strategic, "top-down" approach to the wider issues of trade facilitation. Because of the need to analyse and develop a number of new concepts, the group have requested an extension of 6 months before they deliver their terms of reference to the CSG. Further, and importantly, the group has requested a change in their name to the Business Process Analysis Working Group (BPAWG).

The CSG supports this change and the extension of the deadline for submitting their terms of reference.

Plenary action: Under item 3 of the agenda, to approve the change of name and the extension to the deadline for submission of terms of reference.

SIMPL-EDI and forms & web-based EDI ad hoc group (SIMAC)

18. Following the agreement at the March Plenary to establish this ad hoc group, the CSG agreed, and circulated to Heads of delegation, the terms of reference (see annex A) and the group held its first meeting in Geneva on 19-20 June 1998. The CSG appointed one of its members, Mr. Lex de Lijster (Netherlands) as the Chair of the group and his interim report will be available for the Plenary session, see paragraph 23 below.

Plenary action: Under item 3 of the agenda to note the terms of reference of SIMAC.

The Plenary

19. It should be noted that, beginning in 1999, the Plenary will be meeting only once a year and this will complete the migration from WP.4 to UN/CEFACT. The meeting in 1999 will be in the week beginning 15 March.

Working Group Activities

Permanent Working Groups

20. Reports from all the Permanent working groups will be available in conference room papers during the Plenary. The legal group will also be giving a presentation of their work to the September 1998 Plenary and this will be followed by other groups at future Plenaries.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 4, to note the reports from the permanent working groups.

Ad hoc Working Groups

UN/LOCODE ad hoc working group

21. Following the publication of the final report of the UN/LOCODE ad hoc working group at the March 1998 Plenary, the CSG has requested the Codes Working Group to establish a UN/LOCODE sub-group to continue this important activity.

Electronic commerce ad hoc working group (ECAWG)

22. As a result of the resignation of the chair of the ECAWG, Mr. Claude Chiaramonti, the timetable for the completion of the work of this ad hoc group needs to be adjusted. The CSG are in the process of appointing a new chair and recommend that the report should now be presented in March of 1999.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 4, to approve the new timetable for this report.

SIMPL-EDI and forms & web-based EDI ad hoc group (SIMAC)

23. An interim report will be presented as a conference room paper (CRP).

Plenary action: Under agenda item 4, to note this report.

UN/CEFACT Rapporteurs

24. Following the conclusion of the negotiations on the new Memorandum of Understanding between the UN/ECE, ISO, and the IEC (see paragraph 37 below); the CSG wishes to recommend the appointment of a UN/CEFACT Rapporteur to advise the Plenary on standardization matters; where appropriate, represent UN/CEFACT in other standardization organizations and coordinate the various standards liaison activities of the working groups. The mandate for the Rapporteur can be found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/17.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 5, to approve the mandate for the Standards Liaison Rapporteur and, if approved to appoint a Rapporteur.

Vision and Promotion

25. With the appointment Mr. S. Mila as the Vice Chair responsible for UN/CEFACT's promotion activities, a number of actions have taken place to accelerate and enhance UN/CEFACT's promotional activities and they are detailed below.

26. The CSG has approved the establishment of a Promotion advisory ad hoc working group (PROMO), under the chairmanship of Mr. Mila, to develop a promotion and communications plan for CEFACT, including recommendations for implementation. The terms of reference for this group can be found in Annex B.

27. To ensure that CEFACT is consistently recognized as UN body with a global remit, the CSG strongly recommends the Centre should always be referred to as UN/CEFACT.

28. Based on its work on the strategy document (see paragraph 32), the CSG has developed an overarching vision for UN/CEFACT's work which it recommends to the Plenary. The vision is: *"Simple, transparent, effective processes for global commerce."*

29. Further, the CSG recommends the adoption of a UN/CEFACT logo incorporating this vision and an alternative version for additional use, where appropriate, with the following text, *"A world-wide activity of the United Nation's Economic Commission for Europe."* The ECE Executive Secretary has reviewed and endorsed both logos which can be found in Annex C.

30. A UN/CEFACT home page has under consideration for some time. It is proposed that it should have its own domain name (URL) and be a showcase for UN/CEFACT as well as its working groups. This site is now at an advanced stage of development and it is hoped that a final version will be available for presentation at the September 1998 Plenary.

31. In addition, the CSG is considering the possibility of a conference to follow the March 1999 Plenary to present UN/CEFACT's work to a wider audience. If a final decision can be reached prior to the September 1998 CEFACT Plenary,

a CRP will be made available.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 6, to approve the above recommendations on identity, vision and logo and to note the establishment of the ad hoc group.

Strategy, work programme and priorities

32. As mentioned in TRADE/CEFACT/1998/10 at the March 1998 session, the CSG has been developing a strategy to provide an overall direction for the work programme which can also be used to present UN/CEFACT's work at the highest level to other interested parties including international organizations. The strategy is contained in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/19 and is for review, comment and, if appropriate, approval.

33. The work programme, as presented at the March Plenary in TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.3 is a living document which has now been enhanced to include the activities of the EWG, as well as updates from the other working groups. In addition, an introduction to the work programme has been developed and the consolidated document can be found in TRADE/CEFACT/1998/20 and its addendum. It is for approval with the understanding that it will be updated at each annual Plenary session.

34. The June 1998 CSG meeting took place at the same time as the annual meeting of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED), to which UN/CEFACT reports. Following the decision of the ECE, CTIED was asked to prioritize at its meeting the whole of their work programme which covers a range of activities including those of UN/CEFACT. The CSG was therefore urgently requested to prioritise the UN/CEFACT work programme, which it did in consultation with the officers of the permanent working groups although there was not enough time to consult heads of delegation. The CTIED approved the CSG's priority list which is contained in TRADE/CEFACT/1998/21. Further, it gave trade facilitation the highest ranking within its own set of priorities.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 7, to consider approving the strategy document, to approve the work programme and to note the priorities submitted to the CTIED.

Cooperation with other International Organizations

WTO

35. After the WTO trade facilitation seminar of early March 1998, the ECE secretariat has maintained close contact with the WTO secretariat and is following developments as the members of the WTO discuss further the most appropriate role for that organization vis a vis trade facilitation. In this context, the secretariat will also continue to follow-up on the proposals for active cooperation between CEFACT and the WTO which were made by the ECE at the March 1998 WTO seminar.

OECD

36. The UN/ECE has been granted observer status at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In the autumn there is an important OECD ministerial conference entitled, "A borderless world: realising the potential of global electronic commerce" which will be held in Ottawa from the 7-9 October 1998. The ECE will be represented by the Chair of the CTIED, the Chair of the CEFACT Steering Group and a member of the secretariat.

Co-operation with International Standards Organizations

ISO, IEC and ITU

37. After serious negotiations which were concluded during the Miami JRT/EWG, a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UN/ECE, ISO, and the IEC has been agreed upon (see document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/22). Subsequently the CSG has approved the document and it has been forwarded to the Executive Secretary for signature on behalf of the ECE. It is understood that the MoU will similarly be signed by the chief executives of the ISO and the IEC. All three organizations are very pleased with the results which include extending the scope of the MoU to cover electronic business and to include participation from user organizations with defined standardization requirements. The first two user organizations to participate under this new MoU are the International CALS Congress and NATO CALS.

38. It is hoped that the MoU will be extended to also include the ITU in the near future.

39. To oversee the functioning of the MoU between the three standardisation organisations, a new management committee has been established and will first meet on Friday, 18 September 1998. To represent the UN/ECE, the CSG has nominated a new team for MoU matters consisting of the Chair of the CSG, David Dobbing, Pierre Georget, Klaus-Dieter Naujok, Kenji Itoh, François Vuilleumier and a member of the secretariat.

Plenary action: Under agenda item 10, to note the MoU agreement and to approve the nominated ECE members of the MoU management committee.

Resources

40. Now that all the working groups have been established, the CSG has initiated a review with the secretariat of the allocation of secretariat resources to the working groups. This is an ongoing exercise and a report will be made to the March 1999 Plenary.

Other Matters

Future CSG meeting dates

41. The following meeting dates for the next 18 months have been agreed.

1998	September 16-17,	Geneva
1999	January 25-27,	Frankfurt, Germany
1999	June 21-23,	Location to be confirmed

ANNEX A

SIMPL-EDI and forms & web-based EDI ad hoc group (SIMAC) Terms of Reference

Objectives

1. To review the proposals contained in TRADE/CEFACT/1998/4 "SIMPL-EDI" and TRADE/CEFACT 1998/CRP.16 in order to identify the common ground and possible work items for progression by CEFACT and its working groups.
2. Taking fully into account existing work programme items, consider how work items identified under 1, can be most efficiently and effectively developed within CEFACT's structure and working groups and identify, in detail, the deliverables and the timescales for consequent work programme items. These might include Recommendations for Best Practice, the interface with internet technology and the relationship between SIMPL-messages and more effective trading and administrative practices and processes.

Membership

To ensure coordination across all Working groups, the ad hoc group will be led by a member of the CSG and interested delegations are invited to nominate experts. The following Permanent Working Groups are requested to nominate representatives: BAWG, CDWG, EWG & ITPWG. Electronic participation in the work of the group is encouraged.

Deliverables

An interim report to the CSG shall be produced by the end of August 1998 and a final report by the end of 1998. The reports shall also be made available to the Plenary and to the Working Groups.

Timescales

The ad hoc group is established for a maximum of 12 months.

ANNEX B

Promotion Advisory Ad hoc Working Group

Terms of Reference

Objectives

To prepare a promotion and communications plan for CEFACT, including recommendations for implementation.

To identify potential resources for carrying out the above promotion and communications plan.

Membership:

The ad hoc working group will be led by the CEFACT Vice-Chair responsible for promotion. Its members can be nominated either by CEFACT Heads of Delegation or by other CEFACT Working Groups. The latter will be encouraged to participate in order to ensure that each group's work is properly reflected in the promotion of CEFACT.

Deliverables:

A promotion and communications plan for CEFACT, including recommendations for implementation shall be submitted to the CSG prior to March 1999.

Six months after submission of the promotion and communications plan, a report on resources identified for carrying out the plan will be submitted to the CSG.

ANNEX C

UN/CEFACT



Simple, Transparent and Effective Processes
for Global Commerce

UN/CEFACT



A worldwide activity of the United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe

