**REPORT OF UN/EDIFACT WORKING GROUP (EWG)
CHAIR TO THE UN/CEFACT PLENARY**

Submitted by the Chair of the UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) *

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Report Of UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) Chair To The UN/CEFACT Plenary

Submitted by the Chair of the UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG)

Introduction

This report covers the work of the UN/EDIFACT Working Group since the last session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary in September 1998 and includes information from the EWG meeting in Brussels which immediately preceded the September Plenary.

The EWG is comprised of industry experts, nominated by Heads of Delegation to UN/CEFACT. It has a Plenary which encompasses all members, a Steering Committee representing the Chairs of Sub-Working Groups plus the four Entry Points (Australia, Japan, Europe and USA) and a Management Team comprising the Chair, Vice Chair, four representatives elected by the Steering Committee and representatives of the four Entry Points.

Brussels Meeting – September 7-11, 1998

A total of 220 experts from 32 countries met at Brussels from 7th to 11th September for the 2nd UN/EDIFACT Working Group Meeting.
The meeting was held in the Free University of Brussels.
It was a very productive meeting conducted in an environment conducive to the working group nature of the meeting.

Sub Working Groups

There were 22 groups which met in Brussels over a range of message development, technical and general issues.

In collaboration with the Development Sub-Working Groups, the Technical Assessment Sub Working Group processed 1025 data maintenance requests which required resolution. A large percentage of these DMR's were code-related.

Promotion

EWG resolved to raise the profile of promotion of the EWG and its successes and deliverables. To underline this changed emphasis the EWG appointed a new Chairman of the Promotional Advisory Team (Mr Camille Elisabeth from France). The EWG expects to enhance its efforts in the area of promotion, awareness and training and will seek to do this in collaboration with UN/CEFACT and its Working Groups.

Data Maintenance Request Automation

In order to improve the speed and efficiency of processing the many DMR's which are received, a system has been devised which automates the process very effectively.

In December 1998, Ms M Pemberton of Australia undertook the task of installing the system and its software at the UN Secretariat in Geneva. This work is largely completed with the Entry Points in Australia and Europe now capable of sending Data Maintenance Requests to the UN/CEFACT Secretariat in Geneva. The other Entry Points (Japan and USA) are expected to follow in the coming months.

Directory Production (D.99A)

Following the EWG meeting in Brussels the UN/Secretariat, the Directory Production Team and the DirectoryAudit Team collaborated to produce the D99A directory for publication.

The Clean Audit Statement for this Directory was signed off by the Directory Audit Team on 16 January 1999.

The EWG requested UN/CEFACT to proceed with the publication of the D.99A directory which is now available on the UN/CEFACT website.

The directory as published and available on the website includes 175 United Nations Standard Messages (UNSMs); in addition there are 47 messages in development (MIDs).

D99B Directory

Planning has been completed for the production and publishing of the D.99B directory subsequent to the next EWG meeting in Atlanta in March 1999. Increased automation of this process is increasing its overall efficiency and ensuring accurate, timely production of the directories.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the operative Sub-Working Groups of the EWG have been prepared and tabled in accordance with guidelines established by the Mandate, Organisation and Procedures Sub Working Group.

There are some issues relating to consistency in the procedures relating to voting and elections to be resolved. These issues will be decided at the next EWG meeting in Atlanta in March 1999.

Single International Technical Assessment (SIT)

The first meeting of the Single International Technical Assessment was held in Washington USA from January 18 to 22, 1999. The decision to establish this meeting was made at the Brussels EWG in September 1998.

There were 33 attendees at this meeting which was considered highly successful. 950 DMR's were reviewed at the meeting of which 833 were accepted, the balance being deferred, rejected or withdrawn.

The SIT meeting was able to take advantage of the availability of the D.99A directory in its Washington meeting, and also the other data maintenance automation progress which had been achieved.

Message Design Rules and Implementation Strategy

The Brussels EWG meeting approved the revised Message Design Rules Version 5 and the Implementation Strategy as proposed by the MDR Group headed by Mr Steven Luster of USA.

Documents relating to this activity will be tabled (for information only) at the March 1999 CEFACT Plenary.

Management Team Meeting – Frankfurt 28/29 January 1999

The Management Team met to discuss future strategy and direction of the EWG. The meeting was held at the Dresdner Bank in Frankfurt Germany and their hosting of the meeting was most appreciated.

Matters discussed included:

- Voting Procedures
- XML/EDI
- Simpler EDI
- Object Oriented EDI / Modelling
- Coordination with UN/ECE Secretariat
- Structure of Development Groups
- Promotion
- Nomination of Experts

Recommendations will be put to the EWG MEETING IN Atlanta in March.

Next Meetings

The next EWG meeting will be in Atlanta, USA, from 22-26 March 1999. It is being organised by DISA.

The subsequent EWG meeting will be in Canberra, Australia from 20-24 September 1999. It is being organised by Tradegate ECA.

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