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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE
UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND
ELECTRONIC BUSINESS (UN/CEFACT)

Note by the secretariat

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

The last session of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) took place 27 – 28 May 2002, during the same week as the sixth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development. The report of that meeting (TRADE/CEFACT/2002/41) will be presented to the seventh session of the Committee for endorsement. This document contains a summary of the major accomplishments and developments under UN/CEFACT since May 2002.

I.   Recommendation and Standards Updated between May 2002 – February 2003

1.   UN/CEFACT e-Business Architecture Technical Specification, Version 0.83 was released for Public Review under the Open Development Process on 10 February 2003.

2.   UN/CEFACT - ebXML Core Component Technical Specification, Version 1.85 was released for Public Review under its Open Development Process on 4 October 2002.

3.   UN/CEFACT technical specification "ebXML Business Process Specification Schema" was released for public review on 22 July 2002.

4.   Two new versions of UN/LOCODE were issued: 2002.2 on 29 July with 1.000 additional entries and the version 2003.1 code list on 20 December 2002.

5.   The Code Working Group issued a draft second version of the recommendation 28 (Code for types of means of transport) for public comments in June and the final second edition of the recommendation was issued in October 2002.

6.   The final version 4 of annex V and annex VI of Recommendation 21 (Code for types of packages) were issued in May 2002.

7.   In the framework of the UNeDocs project, country and currency code lists were made available in XML format on the Internet at www.UNeDocs.org in July 2002.

8.   UNEDIFACT Directory D.02A was issued on 30 July 2002 and D.02B on 14 February 2003.

II.   First UN/CEFACT Forum

9.   The first UN/CEFACT Forum was held at the Palais des Nations from 9 to 13 September 2002. This was the first meeting of all UN/CEFACT Groups and working groups after the adoption of the new structure of UN/CEFACT by the 8th Plenary session in May 2002.

10.   The Forum prepared and adopted draft mandates for the Groups. Subsequently, the Steering Group completed the texts to be presented for adoption to the 9th Plenary session in May 2003.   The full texts are available in document TRADE/CEFACT/2003/20. These are summarized below:

Applied Technologies Group (ATG)

11.   The purpose of the Applied Technologies Group (ATG) is to be responsible for the creation and maintenance of the trade, business and administration document structures based on a specific technology or standard. The function of the ATG is to design, assemble and produce syntax specific solutions based on identified business and/or technical requirements from the empowered groups of UN/CEFACT.

Information Content Management Group (ICG)

12.   The purpose of the Information Content Management Group (ICG) is to ensure the release of quality technical specifications for e-business. To achieve this aim it is responsible for the:
- Management of the UN/CEFACT information repositories and libraries for electronic business and Recommendations that fall within its scope;
- Technical conformance and the registration of the UN/CEFACT business requirements specifications;
- Normalization and maintenance of the base syntax neutral information components that serve as the building blocks for the development of standards for implementation;
- Technical conformity and registration of syntax specific information objects and components.

Legal Group (LG)

13.   The purpose of the Legal Group (LG) is to analyse current legal processes and issues within the mission and objectives of UN/CEFACT, to identify legal constraints that adversely affect the mission and objectives of UN/CEFACT, and to propose practical improvements to these legal processes and issues.

International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG)

14.   The purpose of the International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG) is to be responsible for business and governmental business requirements and content. This is achieved by initiating work in the areas of process analysis, best practices, and international trade procedures. Where appropriate the UN/CEFACT Modeling Methodology is to be used to support the development of trade facilitation and electronic business solutions.

Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG)

15.   The purpose of the Techniques and Methodologies Group (TMG) is to provide all UN/CEFACT Groups with Meta (base) Business Process, Information and Communications Technology specifications, recommendations and education. The TMG would also function as a research group evaluating new information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as techniques and methodologies that might assist UN/CEFACT and its groups in fulfilling their mandate and vision in Trade Facilitation and e-Business.

Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons

16.   The Groups elected their chairpersons and vice-chairpersons at the first Forum. The ATG was chaired by Ms. Margaret Pemberton with Mr. Anders Grangard as Vice Chair. ICG was chaired by Mr. Mike Conroy with the assistance of Mr. David Dobbing as Vice Chair. Mr. Rob van Esch was elected the Chairman of the Legal Group and Mr. David Marsh Vice Chair. Mr. Ralph Berwanger was elected Chairman of the TBG with Ms. Sue Probert and Mike Doran as his Vice Chairs. TMG elected Mr. Klaus-Dieter Naujok as its Chair and Mr. Christian Huemer as its Vice Chair.

Forum Coordination Team (FCT)

17.   The first Forum elected Ms. Melanie McCarthy the Chairperson of the Forum Coordination Team (FCT) for a first three-year mandate. The purpose of the FCT is to provide the overall operational coordination of the UN/CEFACT Forum. The primary responsibilities of the FCT include: logistical coordination of the joint meeting requirements with the UN/CEFACT secretariat and other support service providers and project management to ensure that new project proposals are assigned to the appropriate group to avoid duplication.

18.   In addition to the Chairperson of the FCT, FCT membership is comprised of the chairs and vice-chairs of the five Groups.

Programme of work

19.   During the first Forum, the Forum Coordination Team accepted to undertake five new projects:
- The Generic Business Document Header (ATG)
- Transport Core Components Task Force to continue to identify and define the core components for documenting the business data in transport messages, their context and data structure (TBG3);
- Creation of a Transport Business Process Modelling Task Force to create Business Process Models as a means for documenting the business processes in the complete cycle of transport and logistics (TBG3);
- A Revision of the UN/ECE Recommendation 20 on Codes for Units of Measure used in International Trade (ICG/TBG).
- Migration of the maintenance and management of the United Nations Code List to ICG (ICG/ATG).

III.   Second UN/CEFACT Forum

20.   The Forum was held from 10 to 14 March 2003 at Hilton San Diego Mission Valley in San Diego, United States. The reports of the groups from the second UN/CEFACT Forum are to be submitted to the 9th UN/CEFACT Plenary for adoption and action, as appropriate.

IV.   Legal Group

23.   The Legal Group had four meetings since May 2002: Cologne (July), Copenhagen (September), Geneva (September), and Tunis (December). The Group worked, among other things, on alternative dispute resolution and a trading partner agreement.

V. **Websites**

24.   The Steering Group decided to call for additional resources for the maintenance of the websites of the UN/CEFACT Forum and the Groups. The new websites hosted by the Data Interchange Standards Association (DISA) were launched for the second UN/CEFACT Forum. These websites can be found through the main UN/CEFACT website hosted by UNECE at www.cefact.org

VI. **Capacity Building in Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business**

25.   Two major projects were initiated during the last year: 1) Capacity Building in Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business in the Mediterranean and 2) United Nations Extensions for Electronic Trade Documents. Both projects are described in more detail in TRADE/2003/14 (Capacity-Building and Technical Cooperation in Support of the Programme of Work).

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