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Statement

By

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at the roundtable

“Digitalizing Services and Employing the One-Stop Shop Principle for Exporters”

International Export Forum “Made in Russia”

9 December 2020, Moscow

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests, good afternoon.

It is a great pleasure for UNECE to contribute to the “Made in Russia” Export Forum. Thank you to the Russian Export Center and in particular to Ms Nikishina for this kind invitation.

The topic of today’s session on digitalizing services has been relevant to trade discussions for quite some. The ongoing pandemic, however, has highlighted the increasingly important role of digital technologies in facilitating trade flows. To ensure sustainable and resilient economic recovery, we need a further innovative and digital transformation post-COVID-19.

Of course, these are exactly the goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Trade can promote inclusive growth, job creation and poverty reduction, thus contributing to the achievement of many SDGs. *This includes efforts towards promoting a rules-based, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (Goal 17), to which Russia is an important Member; as well as efforts to reduce inequalities and ensure economic growth (SDG 8) – which are particularly pertinent now.*

Digital solutions like “Single Window” support and facilitate trade flows, in particular during times of crisis. Trade and digital solutions are thus crucial for contributing towards economic recovery and the achievement of SDGs.

My intervention today will first highlight UNECE’s work and some specific tools to advance the use of digital services. In this context, I will be pleased to mention an important collaboration we have with the Russian Federation. In the second part of my statement, I will address the specific questions that were raised for this roundtable.

UNECE's collaboration with the Russian Federation on the Single Window initiative has a long history. It started back in 2009. At that time the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business – so called UN/CEFACT - was preparing recommendations on the Single Window. Harmonizing data was an important consideration to allow various agencies participating in the Single Window to “speak the same language”, i.e. use the same codes, names and definitions for data elements. Other recommendations dealt with an enabling legal environment for the Single Window and interoperability of the Single Window systems.

This work led to a set of concrete UN/CEFACT Recommendations (namely: Recommendations 33 through 37) and the Single Window Terminology technical note. In this context, it is important to look at terminology used for defining and differentiating the concepts of “Single Window” and “One Stop Shop”. “Single Window” is a facility which allows exporters or importers to accomplish all of their import, export or transit related regulatory procedures in a single electronic facility. A “One Stop Shop” is a physical location where all cross-border services are available in a single physical place.

I am thrilled to see how much progress on the Single Window has been made in the Russian Federation. Through our joint collaboration and pilot projects, including for the Vnukovo Airport, the Russian Federation advanced significantly the Single Window – now called “One Window for Exporters”.

These strong results at the national level have also had positive spillovers at the regional level, in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union. Through these initiatives, the Eurasian Economic Commission developed a “Single Window Reference Model” to be used in all EAEU member States. On the Union level, important work has been done to align data exchanges with the international standards for trade facilitation, data and document exchanges – that

would allow to communicate with similar systems, regulatory agencies and businesses around the world within Single Window mechanisms.

It is important to keep in mind that the implementation of a Single Window is not a single event; it is something that requires a long-term iterative investment with appropriate resources.

Normally, a Single Window or equivalent system will progressively add services, functionalities or processes of other partner organizations. Also, the legislative base of processes already integrated into the system may evolve requiring updates.

A Single Window will always be in constant evolution and therefore will require the allocation of appropriate resources.

Within the UNECE, we continue to work on these topics through UN/CEFACT and regular sessions between experts. My special appreciation goes to UN/CEFACT Vice Chair Aleksei Bondarenko in charge of the International Trade Procedures and Single Window area. The Russian Federation's contribution to these discussions – given its extensive experience – is extremely valuable.

With this brief introduction, let me address some of the specific questions posed for this roundtable.

Regarding **the first question** on measuring the effect of digitalizing services, UNECE Recommendation 33 is of relevance. It provides a methodology to give a numerical score based on implementation, partial implementation or non-implementation of over 60 key indicators. I am happy to mention that UN/CEFACT will launch a project to publish this methodology as an international standard. I am happy to hear that the Eurasian Economic Commission has already established a methodology¹ based on the UNECE key indicators.

¹ Decision of the Commission Board No. 123 of September 28, 2015.

On the second question – absolutely: services and processes change as a result of the transition from paper to digital documents and data. Two points:

1. First, the digital systems require precise and coherent data inputs, understandable on both sides of the exchange. This enhances interoperability of digital systems. An important implication of this shift in data management is the reduction of possible fraud.
2. My second point: paper-driven and process-driven exchanges are different. Digital data exchange is not based on a single document but on a process – in other words, it is more process-driven. Importantly, digital information could be more accessible in the supply chain. This is an important consideration in UNECE's work, as we employ new technological practices including blockchain.

Recently, UNECE launched a project on enhancing transparency and traceability in garment and footwear. This initiative supports companies to collect and share data about the sustainability performance of products, processes and facilities along the value chain. We would be happy to provide more information and to discuss the relevance of this initiative in the Russian Federation.

In conclusion, I would like to appreciate once more the progress that has been achieved in the Russian Federation on digital transformation. All of these efforts directly support trade facilitation initiatives at the multilateral level – creating a Single Window is an important area under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. But they also matter greatly at the regional level. UNECE, being a neutral platform for the development and dissemination of global standards for trade facilitation and electronic business, stands ready to support the Russian Federation in this effort.

Thank you.

