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Executive Committee

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Twenty-sixth session

Geneva, 4 May and 26-27 November 2020

Report of the Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) on its twenty-sixth session

I. Attendance

1. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) held its twenty-sixth Plenary session as a hybrid meeting on 26 November 2020.
2. The following countries were represented: Bulgaria, People's Republic of China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Ukraine. The European Union was also represented.
3. The Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Economic Cooperation and Trade Division opened the meeting. She underlined the importance of trade facilitation and internationally agreed e-business standards in this disruptive period of the COVID-19 pandemic. She stressed the need to build back better, creating a more sustainable, more inclusive and more circular economy. This is key for all countries around the world, including for countries with economies in transition
4. The UN/CEFACT Chair¹ welcomed the delegates and highlighted some of the achievements of UN/CEFACT over the past few months despite the pandemic challenges. She explained the recent work done to support United Nation Development Account (UNDA) COVID-19 'build back better' project tackling the challenges of digitalizing cross-border and transport modal data exchange in international cargo movements, avoiding physical contact with paper documents.
5. The secretariat explained how the meeting facilities and interpretation would function during this session.

¹ When the title "Chair" is written alone, it refers to the Chair of UN/CEFACT.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

6. The secretariat informed the Plenary that the draft agenda ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/1 had been amended, and presented the revised draft agenda ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/1/Rev.2. The dates in the header of the documents reflect the originally planned session and the dates reserved for this meeting; the meeting only took place on the 26th of November because of budgetary constraints and the need for interpretation. A specific topic on circular economy will be presented at the sixty-ninth session of the UNECE. The decisions made by silence procedure in June 2020 were also included as a new agenda item (item 2) in order to record these decisions in an official report; the rest of the agenda was modified to correspond with these decisions. The secretariat also outlined the order in which the topics would be presented in this meeting.

Plenary Decision 20-01: The Plenary adopted the *Annotated Provisional Agenda for the Twenty-Sixth Session* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/1/Rev.2) with minor adjustments.

III. Silence procedure decisions of June 2020 (agenda item 2)

7. In light of the exceptional circumstances triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair of UN/CEFACT, assisted by the secretariat organized an informal virtual consultation with members of the UN/CEFACT Plenary on 4 May 2020 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.11). Seven decisions which were identified as business-critical (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.12) were presented and discussed during this meeting and put forward for adoption through silence procedure to the UN/CEFACT Head of Delegations and the Geneva-based Permanent Missions of the UNECE member States (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.13). This process was in line with the decision of the informal virtual Executive Committee (EXCOM) of 6 April 2020 and followed the decision of the 20 May 2020 informal virtual EXCOM (as approved through subsequent silence procedure). These decisions are to be recorded in the report of the next official Plenary (this meeting). These decisions are as follows:

- a) The Plenary appoints by acclamation eight Bureau Vice Chairs: Ian Watt (Australia), Marek Laskowski (Canada), Hanane Becha (France), Tahseen Khan (India), Liliana Fratini-Passi (Italy), Estelle Igwe (Nigeria), Benno Slot (the Netherlands) and Aleksei Bondarenko (Russian Federation).
- b) The Plenary approves the revision of *Recommendation No. 33: Recommendation and Guidelines on Establishing a Single Window* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/7).
- c) The Plenary approves the revision of *Recommendation No. 16: United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Location (UN/LOCODE)* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/8).
- d) The Plenary approves the revision of *Recommendation No. 5: Abbreviations of INCOTERMS* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/10).
- e) The Plenary endorses the *Programme of Work of the Advisory Group on Advanced Technologies in Trade and Logistics* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/18).
- f) The Plenary endorses the *Programme of Work for 2020-2021 of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) Advisory Group* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/20).
- g) The Plenary endorses the *Programme of Work of the Team of Specialist on Sustainable Fisheries 2020-2021* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/22).

8. The silence procedure period ended on 8 June 2020 and the decisions were subsequently enacted. The delegations of France and Italy sent the following comment related to document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/8, revision of *Recommendation N°16 on United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE)*:

"With reference to Recommendation No. 16 on UN/LOCODE, a future UN/CEFACT Plenary discussion should be envisaged on "child codes": child codes should be official and obligatory; in a future version of annex 3 or in an official repository, the uses of the available child codes should be described (for example IMO for port facility codes, BIC for container depot codes, SMDG for port container terminal codes, etc.)"

Plenary Decision 20-02: The Plenary noted the decisions taken by silence procedure in June 2020 as outlined in the document *Business-critical decisions on UN/CEFACT activities to be taken under special procedures during the COVID-19 period* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.12).

IV. Advisory Group on Advanced Technologies in Trade and Logistics (agenda item 8)

9. The Chair of the Advisory Group on Advanced Technologies in Trade and Logistics presented the *Report of the Conference on Latest Technology Trends Impacting eBusiness Internet Trading and Trade Facilitation – Anticipating the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.7), *Report the Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on International Trade and Logistics* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/5) and the meeting report of the first annual meeting of this group (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/19). He stressed the relevance of advanced technologies in this pandemic crisis period.

Plenary decision 20-03: The Plenary endorsed the report of the first annual meeting of the Advisory Group on Advanced Technologies in Trade and Logistics (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/19) and took note of the *Report of the Conference on Latest Technology Trends Impacting eBusiness Internet Trading and Trade Facilitation – Anticipating the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.7) and the *Report on the Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on International Trade and Logistics* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/5).

V. Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) (agenda item 9)

10. The Chair of the Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) presented the *Report on Activities of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group in 2019* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.8) and the meeting report of the third annual meeting of this group (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/21). He stressed the importance of the network of Focal Points on UN/LOCODE and of the reengineering project of the UN/LOCODE system.

Plenary decision 20-04: The Plenary endorsed the report of the third annual meeting of the Advisory Group on UN/LOCODE (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/21) and took note of the *Report on Activities of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group in 2019* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.8).

VI. Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries (agenda item 10)

11. The Chair of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries presented the document *Overview of Activities Related to the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.9) and the meeting report of the third annual meeting of this group (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/23). He underlined the importance of the United Nations Fisheries Language for Universal eXchange (UN/FLUX) standard and the benefits this can bring to the trading community.

12. The delegations of the European Union, the Netherlands and Italy supported the idea of broadening the scope of work of this Team of Specialists to other sectors of activities working on sustainable value chains, such as the current work on textile and leather traceability. The Bureau was requested to prepare a proposal for such an evolution of this group for the next Plenary session.

Plenary decision 20-05: The Plenary endorsed the *Report of the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries on its Third Session* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/23) and took note of the *Overview of Activities Related to the Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.9). The secretariat was requested to prepare a proposal for a new Mandate and Terms of Reference to broaden the scope of the Team of Specialists to cover other sustainable value chains.

VII. Sixty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (agenda item 11)

13. The sixty-ninth session of UNECE will take place on 20-21 April 2021 at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva. The EXCOM decided that the theme of the coming Commission session will be: “Promoting circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in the UNECE region” (EXCOM/CONCLU/109 and EXCOM Informal Document No. 2020/38). UN/CEFACT and its secretariat have been requested to consider how to contribute to the cross-cutting theme of the Commission session, within approved mandates, ongoing work and existing resources (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.14 and ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.15).

14. The secretariat presented the *Briefing Note on the UN/CEFACT contribution to the Circular Economy* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/24), submitted to the Plenary for noting. This briefing note outlines key actions towards a circular economy, provides an overview of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) linkages, and outlines how UNECE / UN/CEFACT recommendations, standards, tools and capacity building activities for sustainable trade facilitation and e-business directly and indirectly contribute to the transition from linear to circular economy patterns in the UNECE region and beyond. The aim is to support member States in their effort to achieve a new and inclusive economic paradigm that minimizes pollution and waste, extends product lifecycles, enables broad sharing of physical and natural assets, and keeps resource consumption within planetary boundaries. The transition to the circular economy is the theme of the sixty-ninth session of UNECE.

Plenary decision 20-06: The Plenary took note of the *Briefing Note on UN/CEFACT Contributions to Circular Economy* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/24) and requested that the secretariat and UN/CEFACT continue working to support its member States in their effort to transition to a circular economy.

15. The secretariat presented the *Call to Action for Enhancing Transparency and Traceability of Sustainable and Circular Value Chains in Garment and Footwear* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/6) developed in connection with the ongoing UN/CEFACT project on traceability and transparency of sustainable value chains in garment and footwear. This *Call to Action* invites all actors in the garment and footwear industry to take action for traceability and transparency, and to accelerate the sustainability and circularity of value chains in this industry, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The initiative aims to establish a mechanism for supporting the uptake of measures in the proposed UNECE recommendation on *Enhancing Transparency and Traceability for Sustainable Value Chains in Garment and Footwear* with its implementation guidelines (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.16), to be submitted for approval to the twenty-seventh session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary, as well as relevant UN/CEFACT standards, and the monitoring of their implementation. The *Call to Action* was submitted by the UN/CEFACT Bureau and its secretariat to the twenty-sixth session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary to seek

support for this initiative as a contribution of UN/CEFACT to the sixty-ninth session of UNECE.

16. The delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed the work on traceability for sustainable value chains in garment and footwear which will be very useful for businesses and governments in the future. They underlined the work done within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan 2020, which has shown encouraging results on carbon, water and waste, and the recent announcement of the next phase of work through Textiles 2030.

Plenary decision 20-07: The Plenary expressed support to the *Call to Action for Enhancing Transparency and Traceability of Sustainable and Circular Value Chains in Garment and Footwear* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/6) as a contribution of UN/CEFACT to the sixty-ninth session of UNECE, and requested the secretariat and the UN/CEFACT Bureau to explore similar initiatives in other areas of work of UN/CEFACT.

VIII. Matters arising since the twenty-fifth session (agenda item 3)

17. The secretariat presented a report on matters arising which outlines the main developments in the work of UN/CEFACT and an overview of the UNECE secretariat's outreach and support activities since the twenty-fifth session (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/3). This report highlights:

- the ongoing work within the UNECE nexus on “Sustainable Mobility and Smart Connectivity” (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.1);
- the collaboration with other United Nations entities such as the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division, the UNECE Market Access Section, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the other United Nations Regional Commissions;
- the collaboration with regional bodies such as the Eurasian Economic Commission and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE); Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union (DG TAXUD); Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE); Directorate-General for Informatics (DG DIGIT); and Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO);
- the work of the secretariat to support the implementation of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) (notably with the National Trade Facilitation Committees of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia); and
- some of the major activities planned for 2020-2021, including a Programme of Work for the period 2021-2022.

18. The UNECE Regional Advisor submitted a report (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.2) which outlines the activities linked to the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), assistance on the implementation of the WTO TFA and the continued work on digitalization.

Plenary Decision 20-08: The Plenary took note of the report on *Matters Arising Since the Twenty-Fifth Session* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/3) and requested that the secretariat report on matters arising at the next Plenary session in 2021.

IX. Bureau overview of developments (agenda item 4)

19. The Chair presented the *Bureau Report of Developments* from the twenty-fifth session until April 2020, including Bureau decisions, summary of promotional activities and project activities (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.3). The report highlights:

- fifteen regular Bureau calls and two face-to-face meetings;
- 104 Bureau decisions, detailed in its Annex I;
- 86 events in which UN/CEFACT was represented, detailed in its Annex II;
- 38 projects which were active during this period, detailed in its Annex III;
- 1280 experts registered within UN/CEFACT – distribution par delegation detailed in Annex IV; and
- the extension of the mandate of all Domain Coordinators and Focal Points for an additional year.

Plenary decision 20-09: The Plenary took note of the *Bureau Report of Developments* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.3) and requested that the Bureau report on developments at the next Plenary session in 2021.

X. Reports of rapporteurs (agenda item 5)

20. The Chair announced that a report was received from the Rapporteur for Sub-Saharan Africa (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/4). This report underlined the initiatives of the region such as the African Continental Free Trade Area and the African Alliance for Electronic Commerce. The latter has organized several meetings where UN/CEFACT deliverables have been discussed.

21. Reports were not provided from the Rapporteur for the Asia-Pacific region or from the Rapporteur of the Middle-East-North-African region.

Plenary Decision 20-10: The Plenary took note of the *Report of the Rapporteur for the Sub-Saharan Africa Region* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/4) and requested that all rapporteurs provide reports at the next Plenary session in 2021.

XI. Standards (agenda item 7a)

22. The Chair announced that, since the last Plenary, and according to agreed procedures, the secretariat has issued:

- versions D.19A and D.19B of UN/EDIFACT;
- releases 2019-1 and 2019-2 of UN/LOCODE;
- releases D.19A and D.19B of the UN/CEFACT Core Component Library;
- releases D.19A and D.19B of the UN/CEFACT XML Schema Library;
- an update of the code list of *Recommendation N° 20 Codes for Units of Measure Used in International Trade*, Annex II “Code elements listed by units of measure name” and Annex III “Code elements listed by common name”;
- an update of the code list of *Recommendation N° 21 Codes for Passengers, Types of Cargo, Packages and Packaging Materials with Complementary Codes for Package Names*, Annex V “Code representations of package type names used in international trade in alphabetical name order” and Annex VI “Code representations of package type names used in international trade in alphabetical code order”;

- the *Buy-Ship-Pay Reference Data Model (BSP-RDM) Business Requirement Specification (BRS)*;
- the *Cross-Border Delivery BRS*;
- the *Smart Containers BRS*;
- the *Purchase Order Financing BRS*; and
- the *Pipeline Data Carrier BRS*.

23. The Chair expressed appreciation for UN/CEFACT experts' work, especially for the maintenance and development of the library maintenance, UN/EDIFACT, validation and eBusiness standards.

Plenary decision 20-11: The Plenary took note of the standards presented by the Chair and requested that they continue to be updated on a regular basis.

XII. Other deliverables (agenda item 7b)

24. A document on the *Progress on the UN/CEFACT Readiness for Emergency Relief Importation Project* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/9) was submitted to the Plenary for information. This project in progress seeks to provide guidance on border-crossing measures that can be implemented in the event of a natural disaster. Considering the urgency of the topic and the need to implement this recommendation as soon as possible, the secretariat requested the possibility to present this recommendation for intersessional approval. The Chair thanked the project leader and project team for their hard work.

Plenary decision 20-12: The Plenary took note of the document on the *Progress on the UN/CEFACT Readiness for Emergency Relief Importation Project* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/9) and accepted the possibility to approve it intersessionally.

25. A *White Paper on Integrated Services for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in International Trade (ISMIT)* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/11) was submitted to the Plenary for noting. This paper outlines the basis of an e-service platform which can be implemented to help MSMEs access international markets. This work is accompanied by a set of case studies, presented to the Plenary for information (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.4). The Chair thanked the project leader and project team for their hard work.

Plenary decision 20-13: The Plenary took note of the *White Paper on Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade (ISMIT)* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/11) and the associated case studies (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.4).

26. A *White Paper on the Core Principles of the Operation of Systemically Important Single Window* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/12) was submitted to the Plenary for noting. This paper details the different types of risk that could be encountered in the operation of a Single Window and how to address these challenges. This document is proposed as the basis for a future recommendation on the subject. The Chair thanked the project leader and project team for their hard work.

27. The Russian Federation noted that the content of the White Paper does not correspond with the initial title and they suggest that the name be modified to "Core principles for managing risks and contingencies in the operations of Systemically Important Single Windows".

Plenary decision 20-14: The Plenary requested a modification of the title of the White Paper as follows: *White Paper on the Core Principles for Managing Risks and Contingencies in the Operation of a Systemically Important Single Window* and took note of the results of this project (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/12).

28. A revision of the *White Paper Overview of Blockchain in Trade* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2019/9/Rev.1) was submitted to the Plenary for information. This document combines and streamlines the previous version of this Overview with the Sectoral Challenges presented in document (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2019/INF.3). Three new sectoral chapters have been added since the previous version on healthcare, finance and energy. The use cases have been separated in order to create a repository of case studies. The SDG chapter has been removed to rework it into the Briefing Note on this topic (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2018/25), to be finalized in the near future. The Chair thanked the project leader and project team for their hard work.

Plenary Decision 20-15: The Plenary took note of the revision of the *White Paper Overview of Blockchain in Trade* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2019/9/Rev.1).

XIII. Implementation support material (agenda item 7c)

29. UN/CEFACT has continued to develop Executive Guides that aim to provide a brief, high-level description of the technical work of UN/CEFACT. Four guides were presented to the Plenary for noting:

- Executive Guide on Transboundary Movement of Waste (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/13)
- Executive Guide on Enhancing Quality of Supply Chain Data (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/14)
- Executive Guide on Smart Containers (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/15)
- Executive Guide on Smart Connectivity (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/16)

30. The Chair thanked the secretariat and the project teams for putting these together.

Plenary decision 20-16: The Plenary took note of documents ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/13 to 2020/16 and supports the development of future Executive Guides.

XIV. Support to capacity building (agenda item 7d)

31. The *UNECE Regional Report on Sustainable and Digital Trade Facilitation* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/17) was presented to the Plenary for noting. This report presents the findings from the UNECE region based on the collaborative global report which is performed by all five regional commissions on this subject. This year's report integrates information on MSMEs and on gender.

Plenary decision 20-17: The Plenary took note of the *UNECE Regional Report on Sustainable and Digital Trade Facilitation* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/17) and requested that the secretariat continue preparing a similar report on a bi-annual basis.

32. The secretariat also presented the *National Trade Facilitation Roadmap for Exports Enhancement and Diversification of the Republic of Tajikistan 2019-2024* (ECE/TRADE/450). This roadmap provides the framework for a five-year national trade facilitation reform program and includes a strategic vision supported by goals and activities and performance indicators to measure progress against set target. This document was developed in the context of the project on "Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Republic of Tajikistan" at the request of the Government.

Plenary decision 20-18: The Plenary took note of the *National Trade Facilitation Roadmap for Exports Enhancement and Diversification of the Republic of Tajikistan 2019-2024* (ECE/TRADE/450) and encouraged the secretariat to continue providing such support to trade facilitation implementation.

33. The *Meeting Report of the 41st Session of the Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding Management Group Meeting of 4 December 2019* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.5) was presented to the Plenary for information. This Memorandum of Understanding brings together the International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Standards Organization and UNECE as well as all other standards-setting bodies in the domain of electronic business. This report provides an update of activities in each respective body as well as resolutions and actions agreed upon during the meeting.

34. The *Report of the Sixth UNECE Single Window Conference* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.6) was presented to the Plenary for information. This conference was organized during the UN/CEFACT Forum in London in October 2019 and presents several actual implementations as well as an innovative approach to measuring the effectiveness of implementations. These are planned as topics for future UN/CEFACT work.

Plenary decision 20-19: The Plenary took note of the *Meeting Report of the 41st Session of the Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding Management Group Meeting of 4 December 2019* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.5) and the *Report of the Sixth UNECE Single Window Conference* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.6).

XV. Support to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals (agenda item 7e)

35. A document on *UN/CEFACT Work Supporting the Implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/26) was presented to the Plenary for information. This document provides an initial mapping of UN/CEFACT work in relation to the various targets of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Plenary decision 20-20: The Plenary took note of the document on *UN/CEFACT Work Supporting the Implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/26) and encourages UN/CEFACT to continue to support the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

XVI. Future challenges in trade facilitation and electronic business (agenda item 12)

36. A *Briefing Note on How UN/CEFACT Standards Protect Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/25) was presented to the Plenary for noting. This document underlines the actual and potential application of UN/CEFACT standards and enhanced cooperation with the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Plenary decision 20-21: The Plenary took note of the *Briefing Note on How UN/CEFACT Standards Protect Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/25), thanked the secretariat for preparing this document and encouraged the secretariat and UN/CEFACT to continue work in support of the protection of endangered species.

XVII. Other business (agenda item 13)

37. The delegation of the Russian Federation expressed the importance they place on the work of UN/CEFACT. They noted, with pleasure, that the COVID-19 pandemic period has not had a negative impact on the work of UN/CEFACT; to the contrary, there has actually been an enhancement of activities. The Russian Federation also noted that the UN/CEFACT

agenda and its results have important common elements with Eurasian Economic Commission activities. These will be reflected in the ongoing cooperation program between the Eurasian Economic Commission and UNECE for 2021-2023. The Russian Federation's delegation sees the potential for cooperation and exchange of experience in the field of electronic commerce, technical regulation of markets, simplification of customs administration and in ensuring interoperability within the framework of electronic information interaction.

XVIII. Adoption of report and decisions of the 26th session (agenda item 14)

38. In line with established practice, the secretariat read through the decisions taken during this session and the Plenary confirmed their approval.

39. Following the special procedures to take decisions in formal meetings with remote participation, adopted by EXCOM on 5 October 2020, the decisions made at the session will be circulated to all Geneva Permanent Missions for approval by silence procedure (of 72 hours) by the participating delegations of the session. The silence procedure will close on Thursday, 3 December 2020 at 18:00 (CET) and will be concluded if there are no objections. The decisions of the above meeting will then be considered adopted. Related information is available on the UNECE website under www.unece.org/info/about-unece/executive-committee-excom/silence-procedure.html.

Plenary decision 20-22: The Plenary approved the report and decisions of the Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) on its twenty-sixth session (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/2) which, as per recent EXCOM decision, will be subject to a 72 hours silence procedure in the event of technical connection difficulties of member State representatives.

Annex:

List of Plenary decisions at its twenty-sixth session

Plenary Decision 20-01: The Plenary adopted the *Annotated Provisional Agenda for the Twenty-Sixth Session* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/1/Rev.2) with minor adjustments.

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Plenary decision 20-06: The Plenary took note of the *Briefing Note on UN/CEFACT Contributions to Circular Economy* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/24) and requested that the secretariat and UN/CEFACT continue working to support its member States in their effort to transition to a circular economy.

Plenary decision 20-07: The Plenary expressed support to the *Call to Action for Enhancing Transparency and Traceability of Sustainable and Circular Value Chains in Garment and Footwear* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/6) as a contribution of UN/CEFACT to the sixty-ninth session of UNECE, and requested the secretariat and the UN/CEFACT Bureau to explore similar initiatives in other areas of work of UN/CEFACT.

Plenary Decision 20-08: The Plenary took note of the report on *Matters Arising Since the Twenty-Fifth Session* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/3) and requested that the secretariat report on matters arising at the next Plenary session in 2021.

Plenary decision 20-09: The Plenary took note of the *Bureau Report of Developments* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.3) and requested that the Bureau report on developments at the next Plenary session in 2021.

Plenary Decision 20-10: The Plenary took note of the *Report of the Rapporteur for the Sub-Saharan Africa Region* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/4) and requested that all rapporteurs provide reports at the next Plenary session in 2021.

Plenary decision 20-11: The Plenary took note of the standards presented by the Chair and requested that they continue to be updated on a regular basis.

Plenary decision 20-12: The Plenary took note of the document on the *Progress on the UN/CEFACT Readiness for Emergency Relief Importation Project*

(ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/9) and accepted the possibility to approve it intersessionally.

Plenary decision 20-13: The Plenary took note of the *White Paper on Integrated Services for MSMEs in International Trade (ISMIT)* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/11) and the associated case studies (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.4).

Plenary decision 20-14: The Plenary requested a modification of the title of the White Paper as follows: *White Paper on the Core Principles for Managing Risks and Contingencies in the Operation of a Systemically Important Single Window* and took note of the results of this project (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/12).

Plenary Decision 20-15: The Plenary took note of the revision of the *White Paper Overview of Blockchain in Trade* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2019/9/Rev.1).

Plenary decision 20-16: The Plenary took note of documents ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/13 to 2020/16 and supports the development of future Executive Guides.

Plenary decision 20-17: The Plenary took note of the *UNECE Regional Report on Sustainable and Digital Trade Facilitation* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/17) and requested that the secretariat continue preparing a similar report on a bi-annual basis.

Plenary decision 20-18: The Plenary took note of the *National Trade Facilitation Roadmap for Exports Enhancement and Diversification of the Republic of Tajikistan 2019-2024* (ECE/TRADE/450) and encouraged the secretariat to continue providing such support to trade facilitation implementation.

Plenary decision 20-19: The Plenary took note of the *Meeting Report of the 41st Session of the Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding Management Group Meeting of 4 December 2019* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.5) and the *Report of the Sixth UNECE Single Window Conference* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/INF.6).

Plenary decision 20-20: The Plenary took note of the document on *UN/CEFACT Work Supporting the Implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/26) and encourages UN/CEFACT to continue to support the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Plenary decision 20-21: The Plenary took note of the *Briefing Note on How UN/CEFACT Standards Protect Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/25), thanked the secretariat for preparing this document and encouraged the secretariat and UN/CEFACT to continue work in support of the protection of endangered species.

Plenary decision 20-22: The Plenary approved the report and decisions of the Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) on its twenty-sixth session (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/2) which, as per recent EXCOM decision, will be subject to a 72 hours silence procedure in the event of technical connection difficulties of member State representatives.
