

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

125th meeting

Geneva, 30 November 2022

Item 5(a) of the provisional agenda

Informal Document 2022/32

**Meeting with the Chair of the
United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
(UN/CEFACT)
Report by the Chair**

Report by the Chair of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

1. The Chair of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), Ms. Sue Probert (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), is pleased to submit her report to the 125th meeting of EXCOM on 30 November 2022.

I. Introduction

2. This report describes the main achievements of UN/CEFACT during the period from June 2021 to October 2022, as well as major activities planned for the remainder of 2022 and for 2023. The following UN/CEFACT activities are important to highlight:

- 38th UN/CEFACT Forum held in hybrid mode from 16 to 20 May 2022
- 2022 session of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group held in hybrid mode on 28 June 2022
- 2nd session of the Team of Specialists on Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Traceability of Sustainable Value Chain held in hybrid mode on 6 October 2022
- 28th UN/CEFACT Plenary session held in hybrid mode on 10 and 11 October 2022 and
- 39th UN/CEFACT Forum to be held online on 5 and 6 December 2022

3. More detailed information is contained in the UN/CEFACT report of its 28th Plenary session (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/2).

4. UN/CEFACT's activities in the reporting period are based on its Programme of Work (PoW) for 2021-2022, as approved by the UN/CEFACT 27th Plenary session, held on 19 and 20 April 2021 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/17).

5. The current organizational structure of UN/CEFACT is presented in Annex I.

II. Achievements since June 2021

6. As international trade gradually recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and adjusts to multiple economic and geopolitical crises, the objective is to ensure that this recovery is sustainable and resilient, while supporting better preparedness to respond to future economic shocks and value chain disruptions. Considering the unprecedented and difficult times we live in, rising food and energy prices, exports restrictions and economic sanctions, are making global patterns of trade, consumption, and production vulnerable to these and other shocks. As noted by Sonja Leighton-Kone, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) during the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade and Environment Week "building greater resilience for our global economy can only be done by creating more coherence between trade, finance, development and environment".

7. Trade facilitation and electronic business play a key role in the trade-related aspects of addressing value chain disruptions and ensuring sustainable and resilient recovery, the efforts which are led within the ECE by the Trade Facilitation Section of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD). UN/CEFACT, serviced by ECTD has been at the forefront of trade facilitation and digitalization for several decades and it is very well placed to address global and regional challenges, through developing and deploying global standards and digital solutions as well as enhancing traceability and transparency along value chains.

8. During this reporting period, ECE with UN/CEFACT, continued to contribute to the implementation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) provisions through activities such as the establishment of National Trade Facilitation Bodies, the implementation of Single

Window, and the dematerialization of business processes. Moreover, in view of the upcoming 70th ECE session, which will focus on “*Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the region of the ECE*”, the work of UN/CEFACT is as relevant as ever, considering its range of its tools directly contributing to the topic.

9. Easing cross-border transactions and ensuring that goods continue to move is key to maintaining or restoring growth to economies around the world. In support of this broader objective, UN/CEFACT continued to develop and maintain its libraries, reference data models, directories and code lists which are essential to electronic data exchange not only within UN/CEFACT but also within other standards development bodies¹. Over a dozen of e-business standards and technical specifications were developed and published this year, covering key supply chain, finance, regulatory and technical processes². This also included the revised Recommendation No. 2: *ECE Layout Key: semantic information and codes in international trade data exchange*³, with its guidelines, which support the use of clear, structured semantics and coded information in trade data exchanges.

10. Special attention was also given to supporting trusted and verifiable credentials on the sustainability performance of products and processes. This is instrumental for reliable claims for digital product passports (DPPs), as well as for enabling responsible production patterns and consumption habits. This year, the UN/CEFACT traceability approach and standards, which were adopted in 2021, have been tested with more than 70 industry actors (including major brands and retailers, manufacturers, and farmers) from over 20 countries around the world in the ECE blockchain system for specific products categories in the textile and clothing sector, and the Proof of Concept is in the process of being finalized⁴. Significant progress was also made on the Call to Action for Recommendation No. 46: *Enhancing Transparency and Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector – “The Sustainability Pledge”*, adopted in 2021⁵. To date, ECE received nearly 100 pledges from 350 industry actors demonstrating tangible commitments to advancing the sustainable and circular transformation of the industry.

11. Further guidance material was developed to assist the implementation of the WTO TFA and to support Micro- Small- and Medium- sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in digitalizing their trade-related procedures⁶. Moreover, six reports were produced in the eData Management, Finance and Payment and Trade Procedures Facilitation domains on key themes with the goal to clarify best practices and propose ways forward on topical issues such as internet of things, open finance, verifiable cross-border credentials and enhanced private sector participation in international trade⁷. In addition, three executive guides were prepared with the goal to make the more technical deliverables of UN/CEFACT accessible to a non-technical audience⁸.

12. In the ECE region, the challenges arising from today’s multiple crises are particularly pronounced in its seventeen programme countries in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. From a trade facilitation perspective, the status of many countries as being landlocked deserves particular attention. The ECE secretariat through extra budgetary projects, provides technical assistance and capacity building creating positive change at the country-level, on the ground, including in cooperation with respective UN country teams, particularly in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

13. In this connection, the ECE secretariat has continued supporting several such countries in their trade facilitation reforms, notably for the implementation of the WTO TFA⁹. This included the launch of a National Trade Facilitation Roadmap¹⁰, the training of over 100 trade facilitation experts and the development of policy recommendations upon the findings of the fourth UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation jointly conducted by five UN Regional Commissions (UNRCs)¹¹.

14. In terms of support activities to UN/CEFACT inter-governmental meetings, it is to be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has continued affecting the conduct of UN/CEFACT Plenaries. Specifically, this resulted in further reduction of its session length, down to six hours this year, requiring shortening the discussion of certain agenda items. However, despite

these challenges, the UN/CEFACT continued to produce deliverables in accordance with its PoW and in support of the ECE strategic goals. Also, the work of UN/CEFACT continued to receive expert support as there are currently 1,631 experts involved in 39 active projects. The percentage of female experts has been increasing steadily from 22 per cent in 2018 to 27 per cent in 2022.

A. Supply chain disruptions in the context of the public health crisis and regional conflicts

15. The significant disruptions in global value chains due to multiple global and regional crises have been further exacerbated by the escalating geopolitical tensions in the ECE region. These disruptions have impeded global access to food, medications and other essentials and have led to a significant spike in prices, while leaving a lasting scar on regional and global economies. Pressures on global supply chains were among key topics discussed during the WTO's Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022. The WTO predicted a slight recovery for 2022, with the global GDP growth at 2.8 per cent and the growth of merchandise trade volume at 3 per cent. However, as projected by the WTO economists, international trade growth is expected to slow sharply in 2023 in response to multiple economic shocks¹².

16. Trade costs are on the rise as a result of trade sanctions, export restrictions, increase in energy costs and disruptions across the supply chain. Digital solutions, fostering electronic exchange of information and the digitalization will be at the heart of the future economic recovery. Hence, UN/CEFACT's work on digitalization and dematerialization as well as progress made on electronic certificates is of high value to making this recovery sustainable.

17. Furthermore, there are numerous examples of how UN/CEFACT has been helping to address supply chains disruptions caused by humanitarian crisis, with ECE Recommendation No. 44¹³, adopted in 2021, becoming highly relevant. This policy recommendation, developed in close collaboration with UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and with significant contributions from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), advocates the importance of building national capacity and capability to cope with a large influx of humanitarian relief for governments and supports governments by providing key considerations and practices for implementing preparedness measures for the facilitation of a large influx of humanitarian relief after a disaster.

18. ECE Recommendation No. 47¹⁴, adopted in 2021, and the White Paper on Pandemic Crisis Trade-Related Response, published in 2021, aim to provide member States with a set of measures to mitigate the adverse long-lasting impact of pandemics, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on trade flows, economies, and societies. The development of this recommendation and white paper is part of a larger effort within the ECE to assist countries in containing and mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts have been structured into three pillars: facilitating connectivity; addressing transboundary and other risks; and promoting a resilient, sustainable, and inclusive recovery.

III. Major activities planned for 2022 and beyond

19. UN/CEFACT will continue to progress trade facilitation and electronic business approaches and solutions. This will be achieved through further recommendations and standards to help member States and trade actors implement the WTO TFA and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ECE secretariat, with its UN/CEFACT, will pursue capacity building activities and advisory services through extra-budgetary funding. This will involve technical assistance for the development of National Trade Facilitation Roadmaps, the establishment of National Trade Information Portals and the organization of conferences and workshops in

collaboration with key partners such as the International Trade Centre (ITC), UNCTAD and the WTO.

20. The recovery phase from the health pandemic and regional shocks has demonstrated yet again the increasing demand for accelerating digitalization and dematerialization. UN/CEFACT will continue strengthening its existing robust semantic reference data models and e-business standards and make best efforts to assist other organizations to align with or adopt these models and standards. Further efforts will also be made related to researching and providing guidance on advanced technologies in support of the UN/CEFACT PoW, including on blockchain, internet of things, artificial intelligence, application programming interfaces and similar.

21. Particular attention will be given to advancing circularity, sustainability, as well as the green and digital transformations as detailed in section IV below.

IV. Follow up to the 2021 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

A. Sixty-ninth session of the Commission – promoting circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in the ECE region

22. The 69th session of ECE in April 2021 called on all subsidiary bodies to work on the “*Transition to a circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources*”. The contribution to sustainable development and the circular economy transition represents an integral part of UN/CEFACT’s PoW for 2021-2022. UN/CEFACT offers specific contributions to these cross-cutting priority objectives. For example, it has created concrete solutions that can help the circular and sustainable transitions in priority sectors like agri-food, fisheries, garments, footwear, and critical minerals.

23. This work includes the newly established Team of Specialists on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Circular Economy. Its focus is to enable more informed decisions for sustainable production and consumption, using ESG traceability approaches and systems for exchange of data and information along global value chains in priority industries.

24. In the garment and footwear sector, a set of tools have been developed and adopted by the UN/CEFACT Plenary in 2021, including: (i) ECE Recommendation No. 46 with its implementation guidelines; (ii) a series of technical standards in support of traceability and transparency for a sustainable and circular textile and leather value chain (including business process analyses, business requirements specifications, reference data models and XML messages for information exchange); and (iii) “*The Sustainability Pledge*” Call to Action to facilitate the uptake of project deliverables and the exchange of good practices and lessons learned. Since its launch at the 69th session of the Commission, ECE received nearly 100 pledges from 350 industry actors from more than 20 countries around the world, as already mentioned above. The goal of the initiative is to provide companies with a harmonized and standardized approach to the exchange of data about the sustainability performance of products, processes, and facilities, while ensuring that the actors involved throughout the value chain can speak the same language, and to ensure that sustainability claims are reliable.

B. Seventieth session of the Commission – digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the region of the ECE

25. At its 119th session, the EXCOM designated a cross-cutting theme for the high-level segment of the 70th ECE’s session in 2023. The discussion will focus on “*Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the region of the ECE*”. Contributions from the ECE’s governance architecture are being collected in preparation to the session and in

the efforts to showcase activities supporting the green and digital agenda as well as to foster digital development in the region. In this context, UN/CEFACT has been requested to prepare a brief stock take of pertinent ECE tools and instruments, including its efforts on addressing supply chain disruptions through digitalization and dematerialization.

26. In view of the high relevance of the theme of the 70th Commission session to the work of UN/CEFACT and its subsidiary bodies, UN/CEFACT expressed its readiness to support the ECE secretariat in preparing for the upcoming anniversary session. To date, UN/CEFACT and the ECE secretariat have contributed nearly 50 recommendations and 950 e-business standards to international and regional processes to support digitalization in member States, as well as to accelerate the transition towards circular and green economy.

27. For example, the Buy-Ship-Pay model allows each individual step on the international supply chain to be harmonized to ensure interoperability at all levels, and this is based on the very robust set of UN/CEFACT semantic standards. The UN/CEFACT reference data models allow subsets of the Core Component Library to be used for specific sectors and activities (supply chain, transport/logistics, and others to come) and this allows for a comprehensive data model which remains interoperable with the rest of the supply chain. There are already hundreds of readily available e-business standards and code lists, all of which are aligned and interoperable with this semantic base, and there are specific projects which directly relate to building back better, such as the Smart Container e-business standard and the Supply Chain Cross-Industry Multi-Modal Track and Trace Project.

28. Health pandemics and regional conflicts highlighted a stronger need for dematerialization and electronic documents that are instrumental to advancing paperless trade and decreasing trade costs. This is particularly relevant in landlocked countries, which proved to be the most vulnerable to shocks and experienced more challenges in the recovery phases. The ECE secretariat supported UN/CEFACT multi-modal digitalization projects including through the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on “*COVID-19 Trade and Transport Connectivity*” in partnership with several other organizations. Digitalization of alternative trade routes is currently being further explored as part of the United Nations support to Ukraine.

29. Moreover, UN/CEFACT has been instrumental in advancing responsible production and consumption patterns through ensuring availability of and access to reliable information. It has been developing norms, standards, and tools to facilitate policy coherence, regulatory compliance, interoperability of systems and collaboration among value chain actors in priority sectors for the transition to circular economy. UN/CEFACT standards for control of food quality, safety, and soil contamination (such as eCERT, eCrop, and eQuality) help identify chemicals and contaminants, thereby enabling a significant reduction in their presence in agri-food supply chains and a reduction in their accidental release in soil. Earlier this year, jointly with UNCTAD, ECE produced the Specifications for an Electronic Quality Certification System for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables that were presented to the UN/CEFACT Plenary.

30. In view of the above, UN/CEFACT is uniquely placed to offer solutions that can help respond to the rapid pace of the green and digital transformations that create new challenges but also opportunities for inclusive and resilient development patterns, for public and private actors around the world.

V. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of UN/CEFACT

31. There are no proposed changes to the subsidiary structure of UN/CEFACT. The 28th UN/CEFACT Plenary approved its programme of work for the period 2023-2024 (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/21/Rev.1). Further, the Plenary decided to extend the mandate of the Team of Specialists on Environmental, Social and Governance Traceability

of Sustainable Value Chains in the Circular Economy, as contained in document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/23/Rev.1, until 2025.

32. The Executive Committee is invited to consider the above decisions of UN/CEFACT for approval.

VI. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

33. The ECE secretariat and UN/CEFACT will continue to pursue synergies with the ECE Sustainable Transport Division. Collaboration will continue on transport facilitation (TIR and Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods Conventions); road transport (Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road) for which UN/CEFACT has developed the eCMR standard and now is working to cover all business-to-business documentary requirements for road transport; and dangerous goods, in order to propose the UN/CEFACT semantic base for other information exchange requirements of the Transport Division's working groups. This directly supports the ECE nexus theme on "*Sustainable Mobility and Smart Connectivity*". Discussions are ongoing with European Commission Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) on re-using the UN/CEFACT MMT data model to support two new European Union (EU) transport regulations.

34. Furthermore, the ECE secretariat will also continue to foster synergies with the ECE Environment and Sustainable Energy Divisions, among others, in support of the ECE nexus theme on "*Sustainable Use of Natural Resources*", and with UN/CEFACT tools such as the e-Basel standards (in support of the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste), the e-CITES standard (in support of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and the FLUX standard (assisting to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing).

VII. Technical cooperation activities

35. Through its multiple projects, the ECE secretariat has continued to support countries' reform efforts for trade facilitation and e-business, particularly in our seventeen program countries in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia. This has included the development of training materials for National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC) in partnership with UNCTAD and ITC, providing support to Kyrgyzstan in development and launch of the National Trade Facilitation Roadmap, development of the National Trade Information Portal in collaboration with ITC and the National Trade Facilitation Council webpage for increased access to trade-related information, providing support to the Kyrgyz Economic University with conducting training courses on trade facilitation, providing support to Georgia to conduct and launch the Business Process Analysis study on export of pharmaceuticals to Central Asia. In addition, the ECE secretariat provided continuous support to the seventeen ECE program countries in strengthening their capacity by implementing UN/CEFACT standards and trade facilitation recommendations. Such support focused around the following areas of relevance to UN/CEFACT: implementing the WTO TFA, supporting countries participating in the SPECA, and supporting their implementation of UN/CEFACT semantic standards and reference data models.

36. More specifically, recent capacity building and outreach activities on trade-related issues also contributed to improving the rate of implementation of WTO TFA measures and notifications of SPECA countries to the WTO secretariat, and endorsement of the new package of standards for the digitalization of data and document exchange in multi modal transport. In particular, a number of capacity building activities were organized with participation of experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

37. Under the UNDA 14th tranche, the five UNRCs developed the project “*Blockchains for facilitating trade and enhancing competitiveness*”. This project is led by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) involves the five UNRCs for Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific as well as UNCTAD. Thereby, it ensures both global reach and regional representation, as well as international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and good practices from all over the world. The project will strengthen national innovation and technological capacities related to the use of blockchain technology in customs and trade operations in five selected developing countries and will boost trade and enhance competitiveness in support of sustainable development. The first coordination meeting of the project was organized by the ECE secretariat in Geneva in June 2022 with the online participation of several UN/CEFACT experts. ECE is the most advanced UNRC in the implementation of blockchain technology for trade considering that extensive work has been done on this topic since 2017.

38. Capacity-building activities have also continued as part of the UNDA project “*Global Initiative Towards Post-COVID-19 Resurgence of the MSME Sector*”. A Training Manual was developed and presented to the UN/CEFACT Plenary¹⁵. A compilation of literature on electronic data exchange from different institutions, it is aimed to help MSMEs to digitalize their processes, including through the UN/CEFACT.

39. The ECE secretariat also supported supply chain digitalization through the UNDA project on “*COVID-19 Trade and Transport Connectivity*” in partnership with several other organizations, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FIATA), UNCTAD and others. Further work has been done with Ukraine on trade facilitation and digitalization, especially in the context of a regional conflict. Currently, under the UNDA 14th tranche joint transport and trade project “*Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity (trade and transport nexus) in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Western Balkans*” the secretariat is updating the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG) platform.

40. For Georgia, as part of the UNDA 11th tranche project “*Evidence-based trade facilitation measures for economies in transition*”, the ECE secretariat, together with Georgian counterparts from Revenue Service and Enterprise Georgia, conducted a BPA for exports of pharmaceutical products from Georgia to the Central Asian economies. The BPA was presented to the UN/CEFACT Plenary and provides recommendations to streamline and reduce unnecessary red tape for the exportation of major Georgian pharmaceutical products.

41. In Kyrgyzstan, the ECE secretariat undertook advisory services, supporting the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of Kyrgyzstan in implementing activities outlined in the National Trade Facilitation Roadmap 2021-2025, which was launched in July 2021. Over 20 per cent of the roadmap activities have been implemented in the first year, including the development of five training modules and the delivery of training to over 100 trade facilitation experts. In addition, three international seminars and one roundtable have taken place.

42. The ECE secretariat has continued to play an active role in the meetings of the Annex D+ organizations, led by the WTO, which coordinates the efforts of international organizations in support of WTO TFA implementation through its Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility. Further assistance has been brought to economies in transition within the ECE region for implementation measures of the WTO TFA in which ECE and UN/CEFACT offer an experienced advantage. This included the organization of workshops and studies.

VIII. Cooperation with other organizations

43. UN/CEFACT and the ECE secretariat continued to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, including international organizations, UNRCs and other United Nations agencies, including UNCTAD, ITC, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO),

International Maritime Organization (IMO) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

44. The ECE secretariat is participating, as a co-chair with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in the UN Group for Digital Transformation in Europe and Central Asia (DTG4ECA). The objective of the DTG4ECA is to provide a regional platform for UN agencies to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between different UN agencies and to promote coordinated UN support to Member States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda through information and communications technologies.

45. Together with the DTG4ECA, the ECE secretariat co-organized two virtual events in the context of the ECE Regional Forum for Sustainable Development 2022. The first event was a side-session called “*Digital Transformation beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic*” which took place on 1 April 2022 and was attended by more than 60 participants. The second event was a peer-learning round-table discussion called “*Accelerating digital development through multistakeholder partnerships*” which was viewed by more than 70 worldwide experts.

46. The ECE secretariat is also chairing (on a rotational basis) the Management Group of Memorandum of Understanding on e-Business between the International Organization of Standards (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission, ITU and ECE. This valuable group of experts ensures intersectoral coherence in the field of e-business, avoiding overlap and duplication among organizations and fostering digitalization. In October 2021 a webinar on blockchain use for e-business was organized by the e-Business MoU Management Group for experts from the four signatory organizations.

47. The ECE secretariat continues to take a lead role in the joint approach to trade facilitation of the five UNRCs (decided in Beirut in January 2010). To measure Member States’ progress in the implementation of WTO TFA, and paperless and sustainable trade measures, ECE conducts on a biennial basis the United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, jointly with the other UNRCs. The fourth edition of the Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade, which represents strong cooperation of five UNRCs, was completed in 2021, covers 143 countries and features a jointly developed online portal (untfsurvey.org) to help countries visualize and compare the implementation of measures across regions and economies. It included a new set of measures on “*Trade Facilitation in Times of Crisis*” referring to immediate and long-term measures aimed at addressing crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. The results were presented at the joint RCs event during a virtual global launch in July 2021, led by ESCAP. The ECE Regional Report was published in December 2021. A regional launch of the ECE Regional Report, presenting the main results of the Survey, was virtually organized during the 37th UN/CEFACT forum on 15 October 2021. The ECE has also created a brochure presenting the main findings of the Survey, which was published in February 2022. The data collection for the next edition of the Survey is planned for January 2023.

48. Over the past year, UN/CEFACT has seen a peak in interest in its work on dematerialization and in the standards which it produces: ISO technical committee 154 will develop two standards related to e-commerce, both using the UN/CEFACT semantic standards as their base. The Global Standards 1 (GS1) organization has actively engaged to harmonize their ongoing work with the Buy-Ship-Pay Reference Data Model. The ICAO and the IMO have both sought the assistance of UN/CEFACT to dematerialize their processes.

49. The last UN/CEFACT Plenary noted the high appreciation for the work of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group. The ECE secretariat highlighted the extensive use of the UN/LOCODE standard by Member States and industry actors, which reached 400,000 individual downloads over Q3 of 2022, that makes it the most accessed ECE tool.

50. The ECE secretariat attended the Third Meeting of the Parties to the 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) from 31 May to 4 June 2021. The concept paper (UN/LOCODE-AG/2020/INF.3) was drafted jointly by the ECE and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) secretariats and approved by the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group as a general policy to support the inclusion and maintenance of all PSMA-designated

ports in UN/LOCODE to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The FAO secretariat reported it to the PSMA meeting and invited the PSMA parties to provide guidance on whether the UN/LOCODE should be introduced as a mandatory requirement when registering PSMA-designated ports in the FAO PSMA electronic system. While several delegations were supportive, one party raised concerns; therefore, the discussion will be diverted to the FAO Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE), scheduled in 2022.

51. The ECE secretariat, jointly with FAO, drafted a study paper on the use of UN/LOCODE for the FAO Global Record in order to combat IUU fishing (including and maintaining PSMA-designed ports in UN/LOCODE). In this way the FAO Global Record will become the backbone of international fisheries management as it provides the fleet record that links all the other related information.

52. The ECE secretariat has continued to support the CITES secretariat and its member States in the fight against illegal wildlife trade through the development of the eCITES UN/CEFACT aligned business standards and through the organization of workshops to support countries in their efforts to digitalize CITES permits. ECE and ESCAP also host the Task Force on Electronic CITES Permit Exchanges pilots which provides a platform for interested parties to engage in cross-border exchange of CITES permits.

53. The ECE secretariat was also invited by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to contribute to a background paper and a workshop on opportunities and challenges of electronic sanitary certificates for trade in animal products. As a standards-setting body, UN/CEFACT has played an important role in enabling the development and use of the UN/CEFACT eCERT standard.

54. The ECE secretariat and UN/CEFACT has been cooperating with several European Commission Directorate-Generals (DGs) over the past years.

(a) In this reporting period, ECE participated regularly in the DG MOVE Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF) subgroup workshops, studying the documentary requirements in transport and logistics and their dematerialization. UN/CEFACT semantic standards are well positioned to assist this group with its data requirements. Two European Union-sponsored projects supporting the DTLF are also directly supported by UN/CEFACT experts.

(b) The European Union Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union (DG TAXUD) has been very supportive of UN/CEFACT work on recommendations. DG TAXUD and the European Union Member States were active in the revision of Recommendation No. 3316 on establishing a Single Window, and how this will apply to a Regional European Single Window. The recent UN/CEFACT publication of a cross-border view on the Buy-Ship-Pay reference data models is aimed at assisting linkage between the trade and government sides of a Single Window by aligning semantic names and definitions.

(c) The ECE secretariat and UN/CEFACT are also engaging with the Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV), Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), Directorate General for Informatics (DG DIGIT), Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), and Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) on a number of issues, including the work to advance the sustainability and circularity of value chains in the textile and leather sector in European Union Member States and other regions of the world.

55. Activities with the Eurasian Economic Commission and within the United Nations Special Program for Central Asia (SPECA) which are related to UN/CEFACT are detailed in a separate report from the Trade Division Regional Adviser,¹⁷ presented to the 28th UN/CEFACT Plenary.

56. The signatories to the Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding—the ECE, the ISO, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)—met several times during this reporting period to

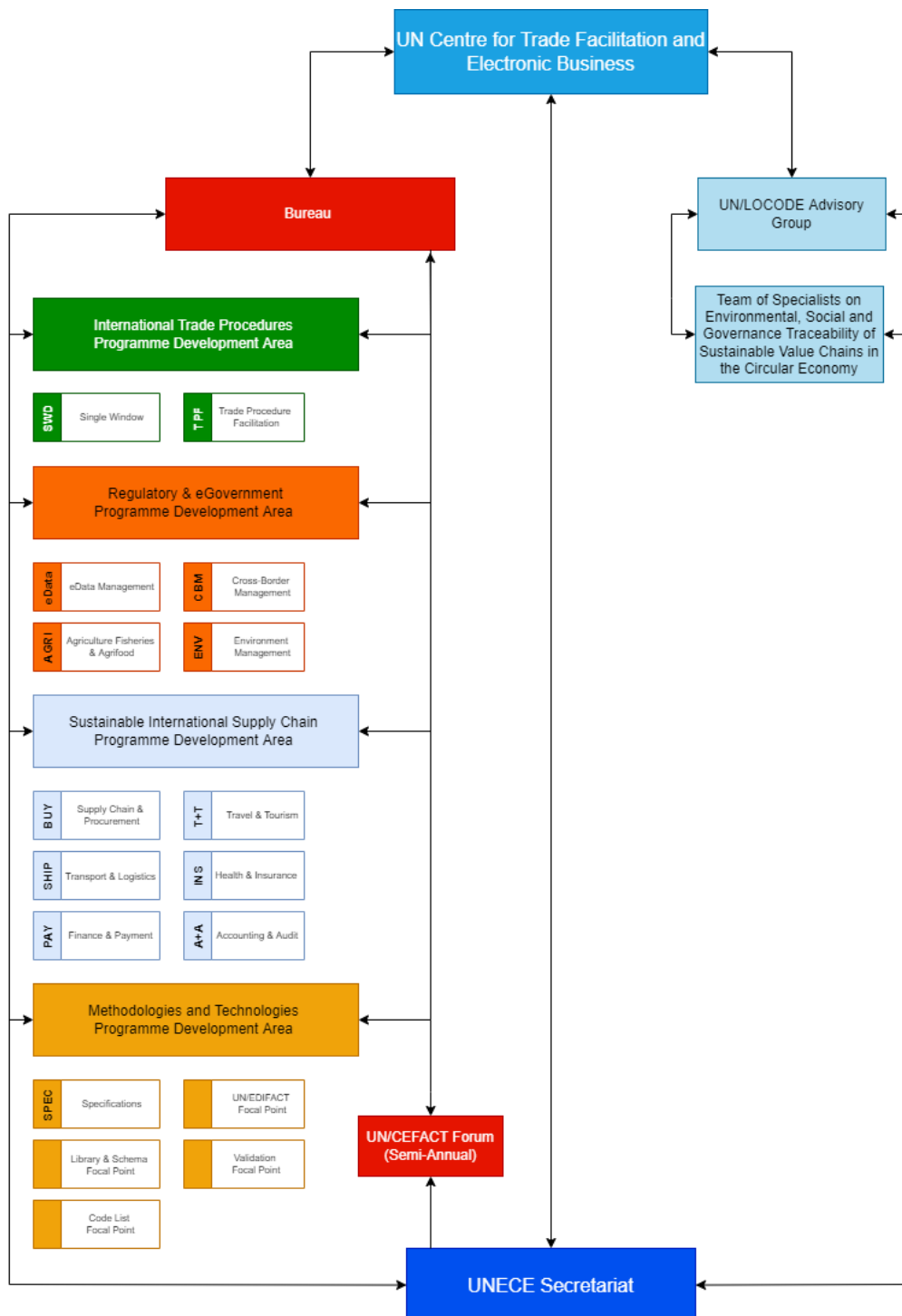
discuss developments and topics of joint interest. To this end, webinars have been organized on key topics such as the traceability, internet of things and accessibility supported by UN/CEFACT experts. The ECE held the Chairmanship of this group throughout 2022 and will be providing technical support for one year as of December 2022.

57. The ECE secretariat has closely followed the official Category-A liaisons with ISO technical committees (TCs). These include ISO TC 46 (Information and documentation), ISO TC 154 (Processes, data elements and documents in commerce, industry and administration), ISO TC 204 (Intelligent transport systems), ISO TC 307 (Blockchain and distributed ledger technologies), ISO TC 308 (Chain of custody), ISO TC 295 (Audit data services) and the Category-B liaison with ISO TC 68 (Financial services) and UN/CEFACT experts have contributed to ISO activities related to its project work activities.

58. The ECE secretariat and UN/CEFACT Chair have been active liaisons with ISO TC 154. Several items have been advanced during this period such as the development of a new standard for eCommerce logistics (ISO DIS 23354) and Electronic Data Interchange for Administrations, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT) syntax with the support of UN/CEFACT Transport and Logistic Doman subject matter experts.

Annex I:

Organizational structure of UN/CEFACT and its Bureau*, as of November 2022



* The Bureau structure and distribution of Programme Development Areas are regularly updated on the UN/CEFACT website at: <https://unece.org/trade/uncefact/bureau>

- ¹ UN/EDIFACT Directory (versions D.21A, D.21B and D.22A); UN/LOCODE Directory (versions 2021-1, 2021-2, 2022-1); UN/CEFACT Core Component Library (versions 21A, 21B and 22A); UN/CEFACT XML Schema Library (versions 21A, 21B and 22A); Core Components Business Document Assembly Technical Specification (CCBDA) version 1.1; XML Naming and Design Rules for CCTS 2.01, Version 2.1.1
- ² JSON schema naming and design rules; Open API naming and design rules; Experience Programs Information Exchange; Integrated Track and Trace for Multi-Modal Transportation; Preferential E-Certificate of Origin; Trade Information Portals; Cross-Border Management Reference Data Model; E-Negotiation e-business standard; Cross Industry Despatch and Receive Process; Cross Industry Scheduling Process; Transport and Logistics modal specific (air) e-business standards; IMO FAL Compendium.
- ³ *Revised Recommendation No. 2: Revision of ECE Layout Key: Semantic Information and Codes in International Trade Data Exchange* (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/7). Approved at the 28th UN/CEFACT Plenary held on 10 and 11 October 2022 (Decision 22-06)
- ⁴ Enhancing Traceability of Products Along International Value Chains for the Circular Economy and Sustainable Use of Resources (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/8); Report on Blockchain Pilots in the Garment and Footwear Sector (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/9); Enabling Sustainability and Circularity in the Garment and Footwear Sector: Policy Developments and Industry Perspectives on Traceability and Transparency (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/10); Reference Guide on Code Lists and Identifiers in the Textile and Leather Value Chains (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/INF.1)
- ⁵ Recommendation No. 46: Enhancing Traceability and Transparency of Sustainable Value Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/10, approved in April 2021)
- ⁶ Guide to the Implementation of Art. 1 para. 3 of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement: Trade Facilitation Enquiry Points (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/INF.3); Training Material on Helping Micro- Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to Digitalize Their Procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/INF.2); Training Material on the Implementation of Single Window (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/INF.5); Training Material on the Use of International Standard (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/INF.6); Training Material on National Trade Facilitation Bodies (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/INF.7)
- ⁷ Report of the eDATA Management Domain on the Internet of Things in Trade Facilitation: the Internet of Things in Supply Chains and Government Services (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/11) ; Report of the eDATA Management Domain on the Internet of Things in Trade Facilitation: Guide to Internet of Things Technology, Communications and Connectivity (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/12); Report of eDATA Management Domain on Internet of Things Standards for Trade Facilitation (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/13); Report of Finance and Payment Domain on Open Finance to Support Trade Facilitation (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/14); Report of Trade Procedures Facilitation Domain on Private Sector Participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/15); Report of eDATA Management Domain on Verifiable Credentials for Cross Border Trade (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/16); Report of Supply Chain and Procurement Domain on Integrated Track and Trace for Multi-Modal Transportation [ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/INF.4]
- ⁸ Executive Guide on Electronic Certification Management System for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/18); Executive Guide on eNegotiation (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/19/Rev.1); Executive Guide to Sustainable Tourism Experience Programs Technical Artefacts (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/20).
- ⁹ The ECE secretariat has further supported the implementation of the WTO TFA, notably in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan
- ¹⁰ The National Trade Facilitation Roadmap of the Kyrgyz Republic 2021-2025 has been developed by the ECE and Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Roadmap serves as the guiding framework for comprehensive National Trade Facilitation Reforms over a five-year period. Over 20 per cent of measures were implemented in the course of the first year; 30 per cent of activities are ongoing.
- ¹¹ Policy Brief – Advancing Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation in ECE Economies in Transition (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/17)
- ¹² https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres22_e/pr909_e.htm#:~:text=World%20trade%20is%20expected%20to,the%203.0%25%20forecast%20in%20April.
- ¹³ Recommendation No. 44: Cross-Border Facilitation Measures for Disaster Relief (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/7)

¹⁴ Recommendation No. 47: Pandemic Crisis Trade-Related Response (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/9), adopted in April 2021

¹⁵ Training Material on Helping Micro- Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to Digitalize Their Procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/INF.2)

¹⁶ Single Window Recommendation (ECE/TRADE/352/Rev.1) – 2020 Edition

¹⁷ Report from ECE Regional Adviser (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/4)