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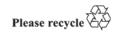**Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations**

Report of the Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) on its Activities since the Last Plenary

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

This report provides a summary of the major activities and the developments related to UN/LOCODE in the last year and includes the 2022 Meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group (28 June 2022), and the ad hoc UN/LOCODE Maintenance Policy Meeting (29 June 2022).

Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2022/22 is submitted by the secretariat to the twenty-eighth session of the Plenary for endorsement.

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I. Introduction

1.   The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) uniquely and unambiguously identifies locations for international trade and transport. It is a five-character code where the first two characters represent the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) country/territory code followed by a three-character code unique within that country.

2.   As specified in its Terms of Reference (ToR), the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group, established under UN/CEFACT, advises and supports the ECE secretariat and UN/CEFACT in the maintenance and further expansion of UN/LOCODE.

3.   The UN/LOCODE Advisory Group was established by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) in 2017 (decision ECE/EX/2017/L.10) and was further extended for two years in 2019 (decision ECE/EX/2019/L.6). Its mandate expired in June 2021.

4.   Considering the valuable work of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group, the UN/CEFACT Bureau, at its meeting on 17 November 2021, decided to propose that the UN/CEFACT Plenary give a new mandate to the advisory group to support the secretariat in maintaining UN/LOCODE for a period of two years. The UN/CEFACT Plenary adopted the mandate and terms of reference and draft programme of work for the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group through an intersessional approval procedure (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2017/15, paras. 74–81), held from 23 November 2021 to 23 January 2022. On 24 March 2022, EXCOM approved the mandate and terms of reference of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group for the period of 2022–2023.

II. Overview of the informal UN/LOCODE consultation

5.   On 8-9 November 2021 the secretariat held an informal UN/LOCODE consultation to discuss important issues of concern for stakeholders.

6.   During the informal consultation, the need to ask for a new mandate for the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group was discussed. The secretariat agreed to prepare a new draft mandate and terms of reference, as well as the draft programme of work (PoW) for 2022–2023. The secretariat called for recommendations and comments on the PoW before presenting it to the UN/CEFACT Bureau and to subsequently submit it to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for intersessional approval.

7.   The representative from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented a paper, jointly drafted with the ECE secretariat, proposing the use of UN/LOCODE to identify ports of FAO Global Record[1], to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing activities. The participants discussed if a fishing port should be regarded as a location in line with the concept of ECE Recommendation No. 16. As a general practice, these ports should be identified with a UN/LOCODE child code instead of a UN/LOCODE.

8.   The representative from the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) presented the automatic identification system (AIS) for official statistics and experimental indicators. The participants mentioned the geofencing pilot by the Bureau International des Containers (BIC), which might be helpful for the Task Team on AIS data of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD).

9.   The representative from the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) reported on the outcome of its 2021 session and its programme of work and updated the participants on the World Geographical Names Database which is being redeveloped. The participants showed interest in benefiting from the UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database to standardize location names in the UN/LOCODE directory.

10.   In response to the queries from the user community following Brexit, the secretariat introduced five options to identify locations in Northern Ireland in UN/LOCODE. The

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[1] https://www.fao.org/global-record/tool/extended-search/en/.

participants had divergent views on the best way to address the issue. The preference of the representative of the United Kingdom was not to change the existing codes but to collect additional use cases to better understand the problem. The secretariat would collect comments and proposals for use of the two-character country/territory code to identify locations in Northern Ireland in UN/LOCODE and would provide a compilation at a future meeting.

11. The co-convenor of the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team gave an update on UN/LOCODE maintenance and highlighted the importance of national focal points (NFPs) to actively participate in the process of validation for data maintenance requests. He also highlighted the need to discuss how to address recurrent requests to expand the use of UN/LOCODE for facilities, far upstream inland water ports, and offshore platforms.

12. The secretariat offered a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Bertrand Geoffray for having led the maintenance team as its co-Convenor since 2019. The Bureau International des Containers (BIC) agreed to propose a replacement for Mr. Bertrand Geoffray.

13. The secretariat presented the draft ToR for a new task force aimed at providing guidance on maintenance issues raised by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team and presented a first questionnaire based on the maintenance issues to be addressed.

14. The representative from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) presented the pilot implementation of a UN/LOCODE Application Programming Interface (API) to facilitate data synchronization between the new UN/LOCODE system and the new module "Port Management" in the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS).

15. Three representatives raised concerns about the UN/LOCODE re-engineering project. The secretariat suggested that all questions be sent in writing, and it would try to address the concerns.

III. Overview of the 2022 meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group

16. Following the approval of the new mandate of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group, the group held a meeting on 28 June 2022. The secretariat prepared the conference report (see annex) of the meeting. The report provides a summary of the discussions held during the UN/LOCODE meeting and the decisions made by the group.

17. During the meeting, the group:

- appointed a new Chair and Vice-Chair;

- presented the report of activities since the UN/CEFACT Plenary;

- discussed new developments and possible follow-up;

- presented the report on UN/LOCODE maintenance;

- presented the programme of work for 2022–2023; and

- discussed future work and other business.

IV. Overview of the ad hoc maintenance policy meeting

18. The UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team held an ad hoc maintenance policy meeting on 29 June 2022.

19. The UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team discussed the following maintenance issues:

- **Locations with function "7"**: The team members discussed the practice of the NFP of Brazil to assign a UN/LOCODE to a floating production storage and offloading (FPSO) vessel/platform. The "floating" nature of the platform challenges the concept of a location and there was no consensus on how to deal with the assigned UN/LOCODE once the platform is no longer operational or is moved;

- **Representative geo-coordinates for an area**: The team members agreed to use the geo-coordinates of the centre of a city or a town;

- **Merging of localities raised by the NFP for France**: The team members encouraged the NFP to address this issue;

- **Locations on border**: The team members agreed to input the letter "B" for Border in the column "remarks" of the UN/LOCODE directory to identify locations on the border; and

- **Fishery ports**: The team members requested that the secretariat follow up with the FAO to confirm whether fishery ports are included in the FAO Global Record.

20.   The domain coordinator of the UN/CEFACT Transport and Logistics Domain proposed the use of GitHub for the maintenance of UN/LOCODE. The team members agreed to convene a meeting for interested members within two weeks to present a proof of concept.

Annex

Report of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Location (UN/LOCODE) Advisory Group on its 2022 meeting on 28 June 2022

I.   Introduction and attendance

1.   The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) Advisory Group held its 2022 meeting on 28 June 2022. The meeting was held in a hybrid mode and was attended by 26 delegates and experts representing national government agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The following United Nations Member States were represented: Australia, Brazil, China, France, Iceland, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Representatives of the European Union were also present.

2.   The following United Nations bodies and organizations participated in the meeting: the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector participated: the Bureau International des Containers (BIC), Hapag-Lloyd, and IHS Markit.

II.   Opening remarks

3.   The Chief of the Trade Facilitation Section of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of ECE opened the meeting by welcoming the representatives of the group. She stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Eastern Europe have exacerbated the economic crisis and disrupted the supply chains. She talked about the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the resulting "Geneva package", securing multilaterally negotiated outcomes on a series of key trade initiatives, as a positive sign that strategic cooperation for global solutions is possible. Then, she highlighted the valuable work of UN/CEFACT, including UN/LOCODE, on the digitalization of international trade to reduce data rekeying, to save time, and to decrease the need for human contact. Finally, she briefed attendees on the achievements of the past year and expressed her gratitude to all concerned.

III.   Procedural

4.   The agenda of the meeting was approved. (Decision 22-1).

5.   The UN/LOCODE Advisory Group appointed Ms. Sue Probert (United Kingdom) as the Chair and Ms. Maria Teresa Chavarri (Spain) as the vice-Chair of the advisory group for a two-year term (2022-2023). Ms. Chavarri will also be the convenor of the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team (Decision 22-2).

IV.   Report from the secretariat

6.   The secretary of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group reported on the following activities since the last UN/CEFACT Plenary:

   • New two-year mandate for the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group;

   • UN/LOCODE release 2021-1 and 2021-2 published as scheduled;

- Enhancement of the UN/LOCODE Focal Point Network with new nominations by Australia, Djibouti, Guinea, Israel and Saudi Arabia and renominations by France, India, Japan, Pakistan, and Sweden;

- Liaison with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), especially its World Geographical Names Database;

- UN/CEFACT project on JSON-LD web vocabulary;

- Updates on IMO FAL 46;

- UN/LOCODE maintenance, whose work is strongly supported by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team that validates the data maintenance requests (DMRs) via regular virtual maintenance meetings; and

- Two issues for attention:

    - Current UN/LOCODE system flagged by the United Nations Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) as a non-compliant application; and

    - Maintaining the status quo for the country/territory code in UN/LOCODE used for locations in Northern Ireland.

7. Delegates and participants agreed to maintain the status quo on UN/LOCODEs to identify locations in Northern Ireland until further notice. (Decision 22-3).

V. Overview of new developments and follow-up

8. The UN/CEFACT domain coordinator of the Transport and Logistics Domain, presented a new project on JSON-LD web vocabulary. This new project aims to publish the UN/CEFACT supply chain vocabulary in JSON-LD, both human readable and machine readable, to support the international community in developing interoperable application programming interfaces (APIs), internet of thing (IoT) streams, and verifiable credentials.

9. Delegates and participants requested that the ECE secretariat gather use cases and comments and possibly any proof of concept from the UN/LOCODE business community on this new method to publish UN/LOCODE in JSON-LD. (Decision 22-4)

10. The representative of the Statistics Division of UNDESA presented the new version of the World Geographical Database of the UNGEGN. This database contains the full and short names of the capitals and major cities of the United Nations Member States with populations of over 100,000.

11. Delegates and participants asked the ECE secretariat to explore the idea of integrating locations in the UNGEGN database with those in the UN/LOCODE directory. (Decision 22-5)

12. Delegates and participants encouraged the ECE secretariat to strengthen its liaison and cooperation with UNGEGN. They underlined the benefit of using the World Geographical Names Database to standardize location names in the UN/LOCODE directory. (Decision 22-6)

13. The representative of the IMO updated participants on the 46th session of its Facilitation Committee (FAL 46), on the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business, and focused especially on the use of UN/LOCODE in the maritime industry. During the FAL 46 session, the secretariat noticed that the draft document of the Correspondence Group on the Development of Guidelines for Harmonized Communication and Electronic Exchange of Operational Data for Port Calls mentions the possible use of GS1 Global Location Numbers (GLN) in parallel with UN/LOCODE. The secretariat noted that it had made a request to join the correspondence group to finalize the document to be submitted to FAL 47 in 2023.

14. Delegates and participants urged the ECE secretariat to follow up with the IMO secretariat to clarify its position on identifying ports with UN/LOCODE and potential competition with GS1 GLN. (Decision 22-7)

15. Delegates and participants requested that the ECE secretariat follow up on their request to join the correspondence group to contribute to the final guidelines on electronic exchange of operational data for port calls and report on it at the next meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group. (Decision 22-8)

VI.   UN/LOCODE maintenance

16. The interim convenor of the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team reported on the UN/LOCODE data maintenance requests validation for the next release (2022–1). She summarized the work of the team, the difficulties and challenges of validating data maintenance requests (DMRs), and the efforts to improve the productivity of the maintenance meetings. She highlighted the importance of the National Focal Points (NFPs) to actively participate in the process of DMR validation. She also raised the following issues for further discussion and decisions:

   • Regarding recurrent requests for UN/LOCODE for facilities, as a general practice, in line with the revised Rec. 16, it is advised that this kind of request be rejected and that they be addressed by a UN/LOCODE child code;

   • Regarding DMR requests received from submitters without the needed justifications, such as from INTTRA, it is suggested that such submissions be rejected unless direct communications with INTTRA can be initiated;

   • Further workshops should be organized, and training materials provided, to enable knowledge transfer for the UN/LOCODE NFPs, especially newly nominated ones; and

   • All maintenance issues raised during the maintenance cycle should be discussed at an ad hoc maintenance policy meeting.

17. Delegates and participants expressed their sincere appreciation for the UN/LOCODE maintenance as follows:

   • To the secretariat for their dedicated support and coordination;

   • To the interim convenor of the Maintenance Team for her excellent work, especially for coming up with ideas to improve the productivity of the UN/LOCODE maintenance meetings;

   • To all UN/LOCODE National Focal Points and experts who have contributed to the DMR validation; and

   • To all DMR submitters who were present at the maintenance meetings to facilitate the DMR validation by justifying their requests.

18. Delegates and participants welcomed the proposal by the secretariat to hold the ad hoc maintenance policy meeting before each annual meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group. (Decision 22-9)

19. Delegates and participants requested that the secretariat provide a report on the outcomes of the ad hoc maintenance policy meeting of 29 June 2022 at the next UN/LOCODE Advisory Group meeting for decision and to the next UN/CEFACT Plenary for endorsement. (Decision 22-10)

20. The UN/LOCODE NFP for Brazil presented the outcome of his review on the existing code list for Brazil and shared his best practices.

21. Delegates and participants took note of the importance of the review by the NFP to improve the UN/LOCODE data quality and expressed gratitude to the NFP for Brazil for his excellent work.

VII.   Programme of work for 2022–2023

22.   The programme of work (PoW) for the coming two years (2022–2023) was presented to the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group. It was approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary through an intersessional approval procedure in January 2022.

23.   Delegates and participants requested that the Chair present it to the next UN/CEFACT Plenary for endorsement. (Decision 22-11)

VIII.   Future work and other business

24.   Delegates and participants discussed a possible date and place to hold the next annual meeting. A face-to-face format is preferred, but this will be subject to the COVID-19 situation, especially the easing of travel restrictions at the global level.

IX.   Adoption of decisions and the report

25.   Delegates and participants agreed to decisions 1 to 11 and the draft report. (Decision 22-12)

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