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Reports of rapporteurs

Report of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific*

Submitted by the Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific

Summary

This report aims to update the Plenary on the activities of the Regional Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific to United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) since its last report. It provides an overview of meetings that took place in the region and key projects that are of pertinence to UN/CEFACT.

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. This is the report of the Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific, covering the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) activities since the previous rapporteur report.
2. In 2021, the UN/CEFACT session elected Mr. Hisanao Sugamata as the Regional Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific.
3. The main focus in the Asia-Pacific region is to ensure that data communications occur smoothly, cost-effectively and safely between trading partners and related stakeholders, especially given the growth of global supply chains utilizing e-business. There are many challenges in creating and developing the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and networks that play an important role in governing high-level, transparent, global supply/value chains. The countries and regional bodies in the Asia-Pacific region continue their efforts to realize the potential of e-business and trade facilitation for regional development.

II. Activities conducted by the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT)

4. AFACT is positioned to stimulate, improve and promote business, trade and administrative organizations in the Asia-Pacific region and to help them exchange products and relevant services effectively through the use of international standards and best practices—especially those developed and promoted by UN/CEFACT. Most of the active members of AFACT have continued to pursue joint activities of benefit to all member countries.
5. All members look forward to facilitating international trade transactions and contributing to the growth of e-commerce in a non-political environment.
6. A midterm meeting in the first half of the year and a plenary in the latter half of the year are held annually. All members are welcome to attend, share experiences and knowledge and identify key strategic issues. Japan and Taiwan Province of China hosted AFACT events in 2022 and 2023.
7. The following events were held since the last report:
 - The 40th Midterm meeting was held on 28 July 2022 (online);
 - The 40th AFACT Plenary meeting was held on 15 December 2022 (online);
 - The AFACT Forum was held on 30 March 2023 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan Province of China; and
 - The 41st AFACT Midterm meeting was held on 11 July 2023 in Kyoto, Japan.
8. The rapporteur provided a report on the activities of UN/CEFACT at the AFACT Plenary meeting which detailed the forums, the conferences and UN/CEFACT projects. Experts who participated in the relevant UN/CEFACT working groups reported in detail to the AFACT working group committees.
9. AFACT re-established the following three working groups in 2023:
 - Trade Facilitation Working Group: This group started the data pipeline project to study the possibility of establishing a data pipeline for trade facilitation in the Asia-Pacific region in response to the UN/CEFACT project “Buy/Ship/Pay Data Exchange Structures for Trade Finance Facilitation”;
 - Sustainable Development and Circular Economy Working Group: This group introduced three projects as follows:
 - Carbon Footprint Verification and Tax Project;
 - Agriculture Ecology, Social and Governance (ESG) Project; and

- Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Project.
 - Travel, Tourism and Leisure Working Group: The purpose of this working group is to revitalize the UN/CEFACT Business Standards for Sustainable Tourism and Experience Programs Technical Artefacts in the Asia-Pacific region.
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