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Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE)

Report of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) Advisory Group on its Third Annual Meeting

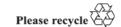## I.   Introduction and attendance

1.   The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) Advisory Group held its third annual meeting on 28 and 29 November 2019. The meeting was attended by 15 delegates and experts representing national government agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The following United Nations Member States were represented: Cambodia, China, Finland, Iran, Spain, and Turkey. The following United Nations Bodies and Organizations participated in the meeting: the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE), the Bureau International des Containers (BIC), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector participated: Chongqing e-port Centre, DB Schenker, Hapag-Lloyd, Port of Barcelona and ZIIOT.

II.   Opening remarks

2.   The Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of UNECE opened the meeting by welcoming the representatives of the Group and stressed the importance of supporting UN/LOCODE for trade facilitation and other purposes. They explained that to help address growing concerns about the continued use of UN/LOCODE and its data quality, UNECE with its United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT) have

come up with a concrete solution: the establishment of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group which helps improve data quality through the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team (involving the UN/LOCODE Focal Points, UN/CEFACT experts and the Secretariat) and which plays a key role in UN/LOCODE developments. Since the last annual meeting in Hangzhou, China, there has been good progress in the development of UN/LOCODE such as the revision of UNECE Recommendation N°16, which defines UN/LOCODE; the project of the re-engineering of the UN/LOCODE system; and the new UN/LOCODE maintenance workflow conducted by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team.

3.   The Chair of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group highlighted the importance of UN/LOCODE for the private sector and spoke to the difficulties and challenges in UN/LOCODE maintenance and its further development and implementation.

4.   The Vice President of the China National Institute of Standardization (CNIS) invited the key stakeholders to come to China for the Third Annual Meeting of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group; this will be the second time it is held outside of Geneva. As the China Head of Delegation (HoD) to UN/CEFACT, they expressed willingness to support UN/LOCODE in an ongoing way.

III.   Procedural

5.   The Agenda of the meeting was approved with an adjustment proposed by the co-convenor of the Maintenance Team. (Decision 1)

6.   Upon ending her current term, the Chair of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group explained, regretfully, that she cannot serve a further term as Chair due to a heavy workload as the Chair of UN/CEFACT, despite strong interest in UN/LOCODE.

7.   The UN/LOCODE Advisory Group appointed Dr. Qiu Yueming as the new Chair and Ms. Sue Probert as Vice Chair by acclamation. (Decision 2)

8.   A *tour de table* was had for participants to introduce themselves. The main expectations of the participants were to learn more about UN/LOCODE developments and to discuss the way forward.

IV.   Report from the Secretariat

9.   The Secretary of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group presented progress made on UN/LOCODE since the last annual meeting:

- The revised UNECE Recommendation N°16: The UN/CEFACT project to revise UNECE Recommendation N°16 operates using the Open Development Process (ODP) which is the UN/CEFACT process for managing projects. The current edition was published in 1998. The revision project has been completed as scheduled and is ready for submission to the next UN/CEFACT Plenary for approval in May 2020.

- The new UN/LOCODE maintenance workflow: As approved at the last annual meeting, the new UN/LOCODE maintenance procedure has been implemented by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team as planned.

- The UN/LOCODE Re-engineering Project: With support from CNIS, the UN/LOCODE Re-engineering Project has been launched as agreed. The Business Requirement Analysis report of the UN/LOCODE Re-engineering Project is ready and was presented by the project team for approval at this meeting.

V. Overview of recent relevant developments

10.   The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented a pre-recorded overview of the application of UN/LOCODE in the framework of FAO Fisheries Instruments and Tools to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing for sustainable fisheries.

11.   The Chair of UN/CEFACT provided an update on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL), which adopts UN/LOCODE for its location IDs. The new IMO FAL Compendium is the result of collaboration between IMO and three standards organizations: WCO, ISO and UN/CEFACT. The Chair also informed participants of the link for the updated compendium publication, which can be found on the IMO website: (http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Facilitation/Pages/IMOCompendium.aspx).

12.   The UN/LOCODE National Focal Point (NFP) for China reported that, due to the Regional Framework for Development, Design, Planning and Operation of Dry Ports of International Importance (initiated by ESCAP), they have been contacted to assign new UN/LOCODEs for all dry ports in China. They pointed out that this may conflict with the revised Recommendation N°16, even though it has not been published officially. They urged the Group to address this kind of issue. BIC Child Codes might be one option to address the issue.

VI. The revised UNECE Recommendation N°16

13.   The Project Leader of the revision of UNECE Recommendation N°16 presented the project outcome (the revised Recommendation N°16) which has been formatted to align with other recently revised and published UNECE recommendations. The revised Recommendation clarifies which concept should be supported for locations assigned with UN/LOCODEs: point or area. In order to be more aligned with UNECE Recommendation N°19 (Code for Modes of Transport), the functions of locations have been changed by adding Function '8' to distinguish inland water ports from maritime ports (Function '1'). As suggested, Function 'A' has been added for Special Economic Zones. It was requested that the importance of the UN/LOCODE Focal Point and the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group (including the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team) be mentioned, as well as UN/LOCODE Child Codes, in the revised version Recommendation N°16.

14.   Delegates and participants expressed their sincere appreciation to the project team. (Decision 3).

15.   Delegates and participants urged the Secretariat to initiate the creation of the repository of the UN/LOCODE Child Codes with the registration form, as specified in the revised Recommendation N°16, and publish it on the website after its approval by the next UN/CEFACT Plenary. (Decision 4)

16.   Delegates and participants decided to develop a document for the next annual meeting of the Group which describes general best practice in dealing with the area concept of UN/LOCODE and the assignment of specific transport locations to an area. The main purpose of the document will be to provide guidance on dealing with sea and air terminals, port areas and ports within an area. (Decision 5)

VII. The UN/LOCODE maintenance

17. The Co-convenor of the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team reported on the of Data Maintenance Request (DMR) validation activities performed by the team following the implementation of the new maintenance procedure, which was approved at the last annual meeting. He submitted the following points for further discussion:

- The interim period challenges (before Recommendation N°16 was officially in place) which should be used by the team as a guide;

- Data maintenance using a shared spreadsheet and organizing collective group work through conference calls and online shared-screen applications;

- The importance of supporting Focal Points, especially for countries that have not yet nominated their NFPs (and for whom the team might have an opportunity to identify requesters or experts as potential candidates to be nominated) and for those countries whose NFPs are not yet actively fulfilling their duties;

- The importance of contributions by experts;

- The importance of requesters' presence at the maintenance meetings;

- The importance of support for global companies who submit a significant volume of requests; and

- The issues in the use of UN/LOCODE Child Codes.

18. Based on observations, experience and expertise, the Co-convenor proposed that the Advisory Group:

- Recognize the need to provide a better IT solution for the team through the UN/LOCODE Re-engineering Project;

- Encourage the Secretariat to take actions to ensure contracting parties and delegations are fully aware of the necessity of nominating a National Focal Point;

- Investigate, together with the Secretariat, how to encourage and increase contributions by more public and private sector experts; and

- Investigate the possible advantage of private sector expertise in improving the quality of DMR validation.

19. The UN/LOCODE Advisory Group expressed their gratitude to the Secretariat for their strong support and coordination; to the UN/LOCODE Focal Points and experts who have contributed to the DMR validation work organized by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team; to all the DMR submitters who were present at the maintenance meetings for justifying their requests to facilitate the DMR validation; and, especially, to the two co-convenors for their excellent work. (Decision 6)

20. Participants discussed the main issues raised by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team. Delegates and participants proposed organizing a one-day, face-to-face meeting to review DMRs during UN/CEFACT Forum(s), pending room availability. (Decision 7)

21. Delegates and participants proposed to request that the UN/CEFACT Plenary encourage member States to take an active role in the development of UN/LOCODE, notably, by nominating UN/LOCODE National Focal Points for their countries, if they have not yet done so. (Decision 8)

22. The UN/LOCODE National Focal Point for Brazil gave an online presentation to share their experience, lessons and advice on the DMR validation. Delegates and participants

gave positive feedback on the presentation and suggested circulating it to the other NFPs. (Decision 9)

23.   As agreed in the revised agenda, one of the Co-conveners of the Maintenance Team gave a presentation on issues observed in the maintenance meetings and proposed the creation a study paper to provide guidance for UN/LOCODE maintenance decisions. This proposal was supported by the Group and should be created, as decided under item 6 on the agenda. Progress on this paper should be presented at the next annual meeting of the Advisory Group. (Decision 10)

VIII.   The UN/LOCODE Re-engineering Project

24.   The representative from IMO presented the use of UN/LOCODE in their Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) and provided a proposal for using Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to facilitate data synchronization with the UN/LOCODE system and IMO/GISIS.

25.   The Project Co-leader briefed the participants on the UN/LOCODE Re-engineering Project and presented the Business Requirement Analysis (BRA) report. He explained that the current UN/LOCODE system, which was developed more than fifteen years ago without the necessary updates and enhancements, could not meet today's business needs. Since the establishment of the UN/LOCODE Focal Point Network, the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group and the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team, the new workflow could not be supported by the current UN/LOCODE system. The Secretariat had to invest a significant time and effort to coordinate manually or use temporary solutions such as developing the platform on the Collaborative UN/CEFACT Environment (CUE) and using a shared spreadsheet to collaborate the validation of DMRs by the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team. The new UN/LOCODE system should be developed using current Information and communications technology (ICT) to meet the business requirements.

26.   CNIS is providing resources, in kind, to support the Secretariat in the re-engineering of the UN/LOCODE system. This new system is owned by the United Nations and will be hosted in the United Nations ICT environment. Based on the Terms of Reference (ToRs) agreed upon between CNIS and the Secretariat, a project team was set up to develop and deploy the new UN/LOCODE system. CNIS has offered to support the data migration from the legacy system and the maintenance of the new system for at least five years.

27.   The business processes covering the DMR life cycle are specified in the BRA report. All use cases, including business use cases and administrative use cases, are described in the report.

28.   In the discussion, Delegates and participants agreed upon the following:

- Experts in the maintenance team will be able to comment on DMRs in the approval pipeline and DMRs which are scheduled for the next release of the directory publication.

- IMO will convene an informal group of experts to draft a functional requirements document about setting up APIs for the UN/LOCODE system. This document may be presented at a meeting during the next UN/CEFACT Forum in April 2020 in Geneva, pending room availability. (Decision 11)

29.   Delegates and participants expressed their appreciation of the progress the project team has made and encouraged the team to continue their work to get the new system in place as soon as possible. (Decision 12)

30.   Delegates and participants agreed to the BRA report and encouraged the project team to engage in the development of the new system. (Decision 13)

31.   Delegates and participants proposed bringing the report to the attention of the next UN/CEFACT Plenary. (Decision 14) [1]

IX.   Presentation and discussion of draft Programme of Work

32.   The Chair presented the draft Programme of Work (PoW) of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group for the coming two years (2020-2021). The Advisory Group agreed on the PoW for 2020-2021 and requested the Chair to present it to the next UN/CEFACT Plenary for endorsement. (Decision 15)

X.   Future work and other business

33.   Delegates and participants discussed the possible date and place to hold the next annual meeting.

XI.   Adoption of decisions and the report

34.   Delegates and participants agreed to the decisions 1 to 15, and the draft report. (Decision 16)

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[1] Link as of February 2020:
https://uncefact.unece.org/download/attachments/52986954/UNLOCODE_AG_2019_INF3_BusinessRequirementAnalysis_URP_11182019_v1.9_final.pdf