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Executive Committee

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

UN/LOCODE Advisory Group
2022 meeting
Geneva (hybrid), 28 June 2022
Item 10 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of decisions

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

Summary

Following the approval of the mandate of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group on 24 March 2022 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Executive Committee (EXCOM), the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group held a meeting on 28 June 2022. The secretariat prepared the conference report of the meeting.

The report provides a summary of the discussions held during the UN/LOCODE meeting and the decisions made by the group. The outcome of this meeting will be presented to the UN/CEFACT Plenary for endorsement at its 28th session.

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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