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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices  
for Administration, Commerce and Transport  
Meeting of Experts on Data Elements  
and Automatic Data Interchange (GE.1)  
(Fifty-sixth session, 18 September 1997)

**REPORT OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION OF  
THE MEETING OF EXPERTS ON DATA ELEMENTS  
AND AUTOMATIC DATA INTERCHANGE**

1. GE.1 held its fifty-sixth session in Geneva on 18 September 1997 under the chairmanship of Mr. Harvey Bates (Australia) and the vice-chairmanship of Mr. Klaus-Dieter Naujok (Canada).

2. Participants in the meeting included representatives from:

The following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The FYR of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The European Union (EU)

The following inter-governmental organizations:

Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), World Customs Organization (WCO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The following UN bodies:

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

And the following non-governmental organizations:

European Electronic Messaging Association (EEMA), International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (S.W.I.F.T.) and the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation.

3. Observers to the meeting, present at the invitation of the secretariat, included representatives from: The European Board for EDI/EC Standardization (EBES), the International Federation of Inspection Agencies (IFIA) and the North American Trade Procedures Organization (NATPRO).

#### **Item 1 - Adoption of the agenda**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1 Report of the 56th session of GE.1
- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/2/Rev.1 Revised Provisional Agenda of the Fifty-Sixth Session of the Meeting of Experts on Data Elements and Automatic Data Interchange

4. The provisional agenda (TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/2/Rev.1) was adopted with the agreement to consider agenda item 11 "Legal/commercial aspects of trade facilitation" at a joint session of GE.1 and GE.2. The report of the joint session shall be annexed to the reports of the fifty-sixth sessions of GE.1 and GE.2.

#### **Item 2 - Migration to CEFACT**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/3 UN/EDIFACT - Future Strategy and Organisation
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.29 French comments on document Trade/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/3, UN/EDIFACT - future Strategy and Organization and on the AC.1 "Reference guide to the next generation of UN/EDIFACT"

5. The CSG Chair, in his role as the editor and former Chair of GE.1, introduced document TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/3 (UN/EDIFACT - Future strategy and Organisation). This document had been requested by GE.1 during its March 1997 session and represented a combination of two documents presented at that session (TRADE/WP.4/CRP.135, Report from the UN/EDIFACT Steering Group (ESG) January 1997 Meeting and TRADE/WP.4/CRP.123, The Chair's Report on the Activities of the ESG) modified to reflect consultations held during the April 1997 Singapore Joint Rapporteurs Team (JRT) meeting and comments received from delegations. He then proceeded to discuss the two principal sections of the document: "Strategy" and "Organization" separately.

#### **Strategy**

6. As a result of the consultations held during the April 1997 Singapore JRT and comments from delegations, the "3 parallel tracks" proposed as the forward strategy for UN/EDIFACT in TRADE/WP.4/CRP.123 had been transformed into two

strategic objectives: "Mainstream EDIFACT" and "Object Oriented EDIFACT". These two corresponded to the previous first and third "tracks". The term "track" had been replaced by strategic objective since this was felt to be less confusing. The description of these two strategic objectives is copied below:

*1) Continuation of the development and maintenance of UN/EDIFACT as the global message standard based on both batch and interactive syntaxes. (Strategic Objective 1 - Mainstream UN/EDIFACT)*

*2) Full development of the Object Oriented approach to the design of future messages. (Strategic Objective 2 - Object Oriented EDI, "OO/EDIFACT")*

7. Both strategic objectives would take into consideration the special requirements of small and medium sized enterprises for simple and stable messages which could be incorporated into effective and inexpensive applications -- thus absorbing the previous second track ("Simpler EDI").

8. The delegation from the UK, supported by Brazil, suggested that perhaps the second strategic objective should be renamed to "Research into New Technologies" in order to avoid misunderstandings and create a clearer link with the mandate of the Techniques and Methodologies Working Group. Whilst this suggestion was seen as appropriate, the editor of the document stressed that this strategic objective encompassed both process and semantic content, thus including more than just research. Other significant issues raised were the required resources for carrying out the second strategic objective as well as the need to complete the current research before making a definitive decision as to the technology to use for future development. **As a document outlining some of these issues, GE.1 noted document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.29 (French comments on document Trade/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/3, UN/EDIFACT - future Strategy and Organization and on the AC.1 "Reference guide to the next generation of UN/EDIFACT").**

9. GE.1 then agreed that the strategic portion of this document and the UK proposal should be further discussed at the Anaheim JRT with the understanding that this should not create any delays in the research and development currently being undertaken by AC.1 and now being transferred to the Techniques and Methodologies Working Group. The result of these discussions would provide input to the CEFACT discussions on strategic objectives in the work programme as agreed in the CEFACT session earlier in the week.

#### Organization

10. After discussion, all in support of the concepts outline, GE.1 re-affirmed its support for the flexible approach outlined in TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/3 which would allow delegations to either remain part of a regional structure, if they so wished, or participate independently in the UN/EDIFACT development work. At the same time, GE.1 agreed that more details were needed before complete implementation of the concepts presented, and in particular any clear move away from the use of already established secretariats for technical input.

11. In reference to the above options for participation in the UN/EDIFACT work, it was indicated by the Asian EDIFACT Board Rapporteur and the Western European EDIFACT Rapporteur that the countries in their respective regions wished to continue working a regional board, while the delegations from Australia and the United States indicated that, in the future, they would be participating as countries and not as part of a regional structure. A question was asked as to

whether countries could participate both as countries and as part of a regional structure and it was suggested that perhaps procedures allowing this could be established at a regional level with nominations for participants coming from the country into the regional structure for forwarding into the UN/EDIFACT process.

12. The following discussion emphasized the importance of involving more countries in the work, especially those where implementation of UN/EDIFACT was already taking place. In this context, the proposal in TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/3 for CEFACT Rapporteurs to represent and promote all of CEFACT's work in a region was welcomed and further suggestions were made to use the new partnerships with the other UN Regional Commissions and new technology to widen participation.

13. **In conclusion, GE.1 agreed to the proposal from the document's editor to dis-associate the two subjects of strategy and organization in future reports, although it had been useful to combine them in one document for this meeting.**

**Item 3 - Technical issues and reports from UN/EDIFACT standing technical groups**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/4 Report to GE.1 of the Message Design Rules Group (MDRG)
- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/5 Syntax Development Group: Executive Summary
- TRADE/WP.4/R.840/Rev.4 UN/EDIFACT Message Design Rules for Batch EDI
- TRADE/WP.4/R.1244/Rev.1 UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 4, Syntax and Service Report Message for Batch EDI, (Message Type - CONTRL)
- TRADE/WP.4/R.1251/Rev.2 UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 7, Security Rules for Batch EDI (Confidentiality)
- TRADE/WP.4/R.1284/Rev.1 UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 10, Security Rules for Interactive EDI
- TRADE/WP.4/R.1284/Rev.1/Corr.1 UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 10, Security Rules for Interactive EDI
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.2 Report from Ad hoc Group 1 (AC.1)
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.5 AC.1 Reference Guide to "The Next Generation of UN/EDIFACT"
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.6 Different versions of UN/ISO EDIFACT Syntax Version 4
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.15 Anti-segment Collision Techniques - A Proposal for the Way Forward
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.34 Recommendation to GE.1 regarding TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.6

**MESSAGE DESIGN RULES**

14. The Chair of the Message Design Rules Group (MDRG), Mr. B. Hurd (USA), introduced the Report to GE.1 of the Message Design Rules Group (TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/4) and document TRADE/WP.4/R.840/Rev.4 (Message Design Rules for Batch EDI). He further informed GE.1 that with the completion of TRADE/WP.4/R.840/Rev.4 the group's work is considered completed. He thanked his team members and, notably, Messrs. Dobbing (Australia), Wilson (United Kingdom), Conroy (France) and Naujok (Canada) for their dedication and quality of work.

15. **GE.1 then approved TRADE/WP.4/R.840/Rev.4 and expressed its appreciation to the Chair and his team for the work put into this document and, in particular, the efforts made to ensure that all interventions and interests had been taken into consideration in its drafting.**

16. The Chair also drew the attention of GE.1 to the newly established group for the development of a complimentary set of Message Design Rules covering Version 4 (batch and interactive) of the Syntax. This new group had been established by the ESG as requested by GE.1 during its March 1997 session and its terms of reference could be found in the report from the May 1997 ESG meeting. The Syntax Development Chair requested that there be an early and continuing exchange of information between the new Message Design Rules Group for Version 4 of the syntax and the JSWG as a quality check. **Both the Chair and GE.1 agreed to this proposal.**

#### **SYNTAX DEVELOPMENT GROUP (SDG)**

17. The SDG Chair introduced TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/5 (Syntax Development Group: Executive Summary) and began by indicating that the SDG had held its last meeting and had now become the Joint (UN/ISO) Syntax Working Group (JSWG), of which he was also the Chair. As part of a status report on the progress of the various parts of the syntax through the ISO fast track process, he informed GE.1 that parts 1, 2, 3 and 8 would be going out for a second ballot during which he fully expected them to be approved. The JSWG would be meeting next in January 1998.

18. The SDG Chair then recommended to GE.1 approval of parts 4, 7 and 10 of the Syntax for forwarding into the ISO fast track process.

19. GE.1 was then informed of concerns regarding the compatibility of certain aspects of the security parts of the new version of the syntax with other standards and that ISO/IEC JTC1, the week just prior to this session, had passed a resolution requesting that ISO ensure coordination of the work on the security parts of ISO 9735 with other work in ISO. The delegate from ISO confirmed that the ISO MoU Coordinating meeting to be held the 19 September 1997 would address this issue. In addition, concerns were also expressed about editorial errors found in the document for part 10 of the syntax.

20. Following this discussion, **GE.1 approved the following two documents for submission to the fast track process of ISO:**

- **TRADE/WP.4/R.1244/Rev.1**                      **UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 4, Syntax and Service Report Message for Batch EDI, (Message Type - CONTRL)**
- **TRADE/WP.4/R.1251/Rev.2**                      **UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 7, Security Rules for Batch EDI (Confidentiality)**

21. **GE.1 further decided not to approve part 10 as found in documents: TRADE/WP.4/R.1284/Rev.1 and TRADE/WP.4/R.1284/Rev.1/Corr.1 (UN/EDIFACT Syntax, Part 10, Security Rules for Interactive EDI) and requested that the GE.1 Chair brief the Security Group meeting at the Anaheim JRT as to the actions to be taken in terms of deficiencies to be rectified and the consultations to be undertaken with the appropriate ISO and ISO/IEC JTC1 groups.**

22. GE.1 also agreed, as recommended in TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/5, that implementation guidelines for the security parts of the syntax were not part of the JSWG'S work and would be better dealt with under other CEFACT groups. In this context, the Chair agreed to also discuss this issue with the Security Group meeting at the Anaheim JRT.

23. Finally, GE.1 thanked the SDG Chair and the members of his team for the work done over many years to develop and finalize this version of the syntax.

24. The delegate of Germany introduced TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.6 (Different versions of UN/ISO EDIFACT Syntax Version 4). It was noted that the issues raised in this document had been discussed with the EDIFACT Steering Group (ESG) who had developed a recommendation to GE.1 as found in TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.34 (Recommendation to GE.1 regarding TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.6).

25. GE.1 then approved the recommendation in TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.34 as copied below:

i) it should be re-iterated to all CEFACT members that all Parts of ISO 9735 Syntax Version 4 published in the TRADE/"R" series documents are for information only, and are not for implementation;

ii) with immediate effect the TRAFIX Web Page holding the UN "R" documents for all Parts of ISO 9735 Syntax version 4, should be amended to make clear in the cover page of each Part that the Parts are for information as documents which have been/shall be submitted into the ISO "Fast Track" process and are not for implementation;

iii) further, each of the cover pages should also be amended to make clear that upon the Part being approved under the ISO "Fast Track" process as an International Standard (IS), the UN will publish the IS approved version of the Part as being available for implementation within a defined timescale.

26. The delegate from the United Kingdom then introduced document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.15 (Anti-segment Collision Techniques - A Proposal for the Way Forward) and requested that it to be referred to the JSWG. GE.1 agreed to this proposal and noted this document.

#### AD HOC GROUP 1 (AC.1) REPORT

27. The Chair of the Research, Strategic Advice and Implementation Planning Group (AC.1) introduced the AC.1 report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.2) and TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.5 (the AC.1 Reference Guide for "The Next Generation of UN/EDIFACT"). He stressed that the Reference Guide was a "snapshot" of the state of research of AC.1 and should be considered as a living, rather than a completed document. Issues that need to be addressed in the further discussions and research of AC.1 were outlined in appendix A of the AC.1 report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.2).

28. The delegate from Brazil requested that the Reference Guide be forwarded to ISO/IEC JTC1 as input from CEFACT in order to harmonize the work of both bodies. The AC.1 Chair then informed the group that the "catalog order scenario" in the Reference Guide had already been submitted to Working Group 1 of ISO/IEC JTC1 SC30 (Open-edi) who had adopted it as an example of an open-edi scenario.

However, he also supported submission of the entire document to ISO/IEC JTC1. **GE.1 approved the proposal for submission of TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.5 (the AC.1 Reference Guide for "The Next Generation of UN/EDIFACT) to ISO/IEC JTC1 and requested AC.1 Chair and the ISO/IEC/ECE MoU team to follow-up.**

29. The Chair of AC.1 concluded by emphasizing the importance of enlarging the participation in this work and requested that, as soon as possible, heads of delegations designate members to the newly empowered Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMWG), which would be taking over AC.1's work programme. GE.1 was informed that the next AC.1 meeting in Paris, from 10-12 November 1997 would be dedicated to the migration from AC.1 to TMWG and would be followed by a two day meeting of the TMWG.

30. **GE.1 then noted the AC.1 report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.2) and its Reference Guide (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.5).**

#### **Item 4 - UN/EDIFACT policy and promotion**

##### Documents

- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.16 ECOSOC Decision to Approve Recommendation 25 as an International UN Recommendation:  
Extract from Document E/1997/40/Add.1

31. The secretariat introduced TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.16 and informed the meeting that Recommendation 25 (Use of UN/EDIFACT) had been approved by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a UN Recommendation during its July 1997 session. It also thanked the Swiss and Austrian delegations who had initiated the work on this Recommendation and emphasized its importance for the promotion of UN/EDIFACT on a global level. **GE.1 then noted TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.16.**

#### **Item 5 - Reports from UN/EDIFACT Steering Group and UN/EDIFACT Rapporteurs**

##### Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.3 Report on the Activities of the UN/EDIFACT Steering Group from the ESG Chairman
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.4 Report on Recent Developments in the Regions from the Regional UN/EDIFACT Rapporteurs
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.11 Statement on UN/EDIFACT in Australia
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.18 Progress of Trade Facilitation and UN/EDIFACT in Hungary
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.20 Report from the August 1997 ESG meeting

#### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN UN/EDIFACT**

32. The Chair introduced TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.4 (Recent Developments in UN/EDIFACT: Regional Reports) which the Regional EDIFACT Rapporteurs had submitted for information and called GE.1's attention to several other reports on recent developments which had been submitted.

33. **GE.1 then noted documents: TRADE/WP.4/CRP.124 (Recent developments in UN/EDIFACT: regional reports), TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.11 (Statement on UN/EDIFACT in Australia), and TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.18 (Progress of Trade Facilitation and UN/EDIFACT in Hungary).**

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EDIFACT STEERING GROUP (ESG)**

34. The Chair of the UN/EDIFACT Steering Group (ESG) introduced his report to GE.1 (TRADE/WP.4/CRP.123). He reported to GE.1 that the mandate for the EDIFACT Working Group was extremely close to being finalized and he expected it to be approved at the Anaheim JRT meeting in two weeks time.

35. He then reported on work being done by the Joint Technical Assessment Group (JTAG) to support the process via a "Developers Handbook" and proposals for the improvement of procedures.

36. The ESG had also endorsed the publication and distribution of three JTAG working documents which had been approved through the regional process. The procedures contained in these documents shall now be implemented at the Anaheim JRT. These documents are the:

- \* Batch Technical Assessment Checklist (Version 5.6);
- \* Interactive Technical Assessment Checklist (Version 1); and
- \* Procedures for Unresolved DMRs.

37. The ESG had reviewed the European Commission's Portia Report which highlights legal issues in respect of the use of EDI messages. Whilst the report contains a study of UN/EDIFACT, the ESG noted that the conclusions reached were also valid for all other EDI standards. However, in view of the report's conclusions it had been decided to request the Legal Rapporteurs Team to develop an appropriate disclaimer for publication in future UN/EDIFACT Directories.

38. In view of the considerable attention being given to the Year 2000 Issue and the increasing number of questions regarding its impact on UN/EDIFACT the ESG had requested that a paper be prepared as a guide for users of the UN/EDIFACT standard. A first version of this paper was approved at the May 1997 ESG meeting and, subsequent to comments, a slightly expanded version was approved at the August 1997 ESG meeting and, endorsed for publication. A copy of this paper was included in the CRP and can be found in Annex A to this report.

39. In response to a request for a joint STEP and UN/EDIFACT message design work within the JRT from a small ad hoc group consisting of ISO TC184 members and UN/EDIFACT representatives, the ESG had established a small group to meet at the Anaheim JRT and determine if this request could be covered within the scope of existing activities or required the establishment of a new group. This initiative shall also be discussed at the ECE/ISO/IEC MoU Coordinating Committee meeting on 19 September 1997.

**40. GE.1 then noted document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.3, Report on the Activities of the UN/EDIFACT Steering Group from the ESG Chairman.**

41. The Chair then opened up the floor for comments on document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.20, Report from the August 1997 ESG meeting. The UK delegation then requested that this document be revised in order to submit the procedure outlined in paragraph 24 to JTAG, so that they could develop a suitable procedure to accomplish the proposed objective as the one procedure contained in the document could be open to interpretation. **Both the Chair and GE.1 agreed to this proposal and document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.2 was noted .**

**Item 6 - UN/EDIFACT Directories and message types submitted as Messages in Development (MiDs)**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.9                      Executive Summary of the DAT meeting for the D.97B Directory
- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/6                      UN/EDIFACT directory D.97B
- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/10                      Summary of Messages in Development (MiDs)

**D.97B UN/EDIFACT DIRECTORY**

42. The Directory Audit Team (DAT) Chair introduced the Executive Summary of the DAT meeting for the D.97B Directory (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.9) and reported that, in the opinion of the DAT, the D.97B directory was prepared according to procedures and was endorsed by DAT for publication. He further mentioned that the number of errors identified during the audit had reduced significantly as compared to earlier directory productions and his belief that this showed the increased maturity and stability of the systems in place.

43. **GE.1 noted the DAT report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.9), approved the D.97B directory (TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/6) and requested that the D.97B Directory be recommended to the CEFACT Steering Group for publication.**

44. In response to a question from the floor, the GE.1 Chair assured delegates that the EDIFACT Steering Group was actively working to have cross-referencing implemented in the directories (and, inter-alia, in document TRADE/WP.4/R.1023 which defines the directory layout), as had been previously requested by GE.1.

**MESSAGES in DEVELOPMENT (MiDs)**

45. **GE.1 noted the following messages, as described in TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/10, as Messages in Development:**

<u>Tag</u>	<u>Message Name</u>
PASREQ	Travel, Tourism and Leisure Product Application Status Request
PASRSP	Travel, Tourism and Leisure Product Application Status Response
PROCST	Project Cost Reporting
TIQREQ	Travel, Tourism and Leisure Information Inquiry Request
TIQRSP	Travel, Tourism and Leisure Information Inquiry Response

**Agenda Item 7 - International Standardization Affecting Trade Interchange**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.7                      Standards Liaison Executive Summary
- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.8                      Standards Liaison Rapporteur's Meeting Report

46. The Standards Liaison Rapporteur presented his Executive Summary Report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.7) and Meeting Report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.8). He noted that appendix for CRP.8 was available under the CEFACT document section on the UN/ECE's Internet site at: <http://www.unece.org/trade/untdid/sessdocs> and that the substance of this document regarding the adoption of AC.1's Catalog Order Example by ISO/IEC JTC1 SC30's Working Group 1 had been covered under the AC.1 report. These documents contained no items for approval, however, he requested that delegates read them and contact him regarding any questions.

**47. GE.1 then accepted the Standards Liaison Rapporteur Executive Summary Report (TRADE/WP.4/R.1269) and Meeting Report (TRADE/WP.4/R.1270).**

48. The Standards Liaison Rapporteur then reminded GE1. that each empowered group under CEFACT would need to establish the necessary physical liaisons with other standards bodies, however, the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) would need to coordinate these liaisons. He expected the CSG to discuss this issue at its next meeting.

49. The ISO representative informed GE.1 that the new ISO/IEC JTC1 SC32 Data Management Services, would combine the old SC14, SC30 and SC21 WG8 and was a group covering topics of interest to GE.1.

#### **Agenda Item 8 - Codes and Policy Related to Codes**

50. There were no documents under this agenda item and the Chair noted that the Codes Working Group established at the preceding CEFACT meeting would now be responsible for any work related to codes.

#### **Agenda Item 9 - International Trade Transaction Model**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.2/1997/3                      Report of the Steering Group for the International Trade Transaction (ITT) Model

51. The Chair suggested, and it was agreed, that as GE.2 had discussed the ITT modelling work the previous day, it was not necessary to undertake any further detailed discussions other than noting the ongoing need for coordination between all of CEFACT's work areas.

52. Accordingly, GE.1 noted document TRADE/CEFACT/GE.2/1997/3.

#### **Item 10 - Multilingualism and Terminology in UN/EDIFACT**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.28                      Draft - Objectives and work for the establishment of a TMWG - Sub Group: Terminology

53. The delegate from Austria presented document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.28 (Draft - Objectives and work for the establishment of a TMWG - Sub Group: Terminology) noting that this was a first attempt to define the objective and deliverables required to continue work on multilingualism and terminology within CEFACT.

It was not, however, intended to prejudice discussions as to where such a group should be located within the CEFACT organization.

54. The following discussion centred around a general agreement that the principal problems in translation centred around ambiguities in the original English language text, i.e. around the question of terminology. Thus improving the original English language text was an essential element in increasing the global use of UN/EDIFACT and other CEFACT Recommendations. In this context, the delegate from Australia pointed out that new rules on naming and defining data elements had been incorporated into the Message Design Rules approved during this session (TRADE/WP.4/R.840/Rev.4), in order to, at least in part, address this need for greater clarity and discipline.

55. The Chair concluded by noting that the draft EDIFACT Working Group Mandate included as one of its purposes "to develop and maintain guidelines and proposals that support the use of multi-lingual terminology" and invited the delegate from Austria to meet with the ESG during the September 1997 Anaheim JRT to further discuss this issue. GE.1 then noted document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.28.

#### **Item 11 - Legal/Commercial aspects of trade facilitation**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.17                      Legal Rapporteurs Report
- V.97-22269 May-5                              UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce with Guide to Enactment 1996

56. The discussion of this agenda item was deferred to a joint session of GE.1 and GE.2 on the legal and commercial aspects of trade facilitation held during the afternoon of 18 September 1997. The report of the joint session can be found in Annex B to this report.

#### **Item 12 - Other Business**

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1997/ 9                      ITIGG Guide to UN/EDIFACT Container Messages

57. **GE.1 noted the above document which had been submitted for information under other business, without discussion.**

#### **DEADLINES AND MEETING DATES**

58. The secretariat then informed delegates of the following meeting dates and deadlines for document submission:

<u>CEFACT meeting beg.</u>	<u>Deadlines</u>		
	<u>Translation</u>	<u>Issuance as an "R" Document</u>	<u>Reproduction as a CRP</u>
Monday, 16 March 1998	1997 Dec. 19	1998 Jan. 17	1998 Feb. 28
Monday, 14 Sept. 1998	1998 June 15	1998 July 13	1998 Aug. 26

59. The following meeting date for the next CEFACT Meeting of Experts on Data Elements and Automatic Data Interchange (GE.1) was approved:

57th Session - 18 March 1998

60. **GE.1 noted the following meeting dates:**

CEFACT Steering Group	- 1997 December 1-4, Geneva
CEFACT Steering Group	- 1998 Jan. 26-29, Concord, USA
CEFACT Steering Group	- 1998 June 15-18, Geneva
CEFACT Steering Group	- 1998 Oct. 26-29, Geneva
CEFACT Steering Group	- 1999 Jan. 25-28
Joint Rapporteurs Team Meeting	- 1997 September 19 - October 3, Anaheim, California (close to Los Angeles)
	- 1998 April 27 - May 1, Miami
	- 1998 September 7-11, Brussels
Electronic Commerce	- 1997 December 5, Geneva
International Trade Procedures (formerly ITT)	- 1997 November 10-12, Geneva
AC.1	- 1997 November 10-12, Paris
Techniques and Methodologies (formerly AC.1 & BIM)	- 1997 November 13-14, Paris
Joint (ECE/ISO) Syntax Working Group (JSWG)	- 1998 January, to be confirmed

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

61. Contact information for submission of comments, as requested in the above minutes:

Comments on substantive issues related to version 4 of the EDIFACT syntax should be sent to:

Dr. Winfried Hennig  
DIN NBü  
D-10772 Berlin  
Germany  
Telephone: 49 30 2601 2305  
Telefax: 49 30 2601 1158  
Internet: dallmann@nkt.din.de

Comments on legislative needs, requirements and current practice should be sent to one of the two following addresses:

Ms. Anne Troye-Walker  
Commission for the European Communities  
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200, Rue de la Loi  
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Mr. Renaud Sorieul  
Legal Officer, UN/OLA/ITLB  
Secretary UNCITRAL Working Group on EDI  
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**OTHER INFORMATION**

62. For constantly updated information on Trade Facilitation and UN/EDIFACT work, as well as documentation for the next meeting, delegates can refer to:

The UN/ECE Internet WWW Trade Facilitation Information Exchange (TRAFIX)  
ADDRESS: <http://www.unece.org/trafix/>

**Item 13 - Adoption of the report of the fifty-sixth session**

63. The report of GE.1 was adopted on 19 September 1997 on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

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**ANNEX A**

**UN/EDIFACT  
STATEMENT ON THE YEAR 2000 ISSUE  
(21 August 1997)**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Considerable attention is being given to ensuring that computer systems and applications accurately process dates into the next century. In particular, the format of dates is being extended to include a value for the century. For example, from the "YMMDD" format to "CCYYMMDD".
2. This statement has been prepared as a guide to users of the UN/EDIFACT standard on the Year 2000 issue to enable users to assess and make any required changes to their UN/EDIFACT implementations.
3. Dates are used both in UN/EDIFACT Messages and in the UN/EDIFACT Service Segments that envelope the messages.

**UN/EDIFACT MESSAGES**

4. For all UN/EDIFACT Messages, dates are specified in the DTM (Date/Time/Period) segment.
5. Within the DTM segment the value for a date is specified in data element 2380 (Date/time/period). This data element has a variable length of up to a maximum of 35 characters. As such, this can readily cater for dates and periods specified with the century.
6. Furthermore, Data element 2379 (Date/time/period format qualifier) in the DTM segment provides for a code value to specify the format of the date value given in data element 2380. The existing code list for data element 2379 caters for dates formatted with the century. Entries in this code list include:

102	CCYYMMDD
203	CCYYMMDDHHMM
204	CCYYMMDDHHMMSS
303	CCYYMMDDHHMMZZZ
600	CC
602	CCYY
710	CCYYMM-CCYYMM
718	CCYYMMDD-CCYYMMDD
7. Any additional date formats that may required in the code list can routinely be requested through the UN/EDIFACT DMR (Data Maintenance Request) process.

8. While no changes are required to the DTM segment to cater for dates and periods specified with the century, users may need to make changes to their EDI implementations and to adjust their supporting Message Implementation Guidelines (MIGs) accordingly.

#### **UN/EDIFACT SERVICE SEGMENTS**

9. Two UN/EDIFACT Service Segments contain a date, the UNB (Interchange Header) segment and the UNG (Functional Group Header) segment. In both cases, the same composite data element S004 (Date/time of preparation) appears. Within S004 is data element 0017 (Date) with a representation of n6 and a note defining the format as "YYMMDD".

10. To incorporate the century in data element 0017 would require a change to the syntax to extend the length of the data element.

11. Arising from this situation a number of observations can be made:

- a) In data transfer, the date in data element 0017 serves as a time stamp of the data interchange. Typically, since this date is exchanged in a service envelope, it is not passed to the in-house computer application that subsequently processes the enveloped message data.
- b) Extending the length of data element 0017 would result in the UNB and UNG segment specifications not being downwardly compatible between the version of the syntax in which the change was applied and earlier versions of the syntax.
- c) For the purposes of interchange tracking and auditing, it is not considered to be a problem in recognising that, for example, "000131" is in fact 31 January 2000, since neither EDI nor the UNB and UNG segments existed in 1900.
- d) If it did become necessary to manipulate the date in data element 0017 from a YYMMDD format to a CCYYMMDD format, a simple test could be applied to the value of the first two digits of the YYMMDD format, such as;

If YY > 80, set CC to 19, else set CC to 20.

This solution assumes that no records of EDI activity were recorded prior to 1980. It potentially could cope with the issue until the year 2080.

- e) The ANSI X12 community in the United States has opted not to change the format of the date in their equivalent service segments to accommodate the value of the century.

12. Given the above position and in the absence of any significant number of user requests to make a change to the date in data element 0017, the UN/EDIFACT Steering Group (ESG) considers that no change is necessary, at this point in time.

13. However, if there are proposals for change, the following points should be addressed:

- a) The question of compatibility between versions 3 and 4 of the syntax;
- b) Consideration needs to be given to the impact of changing the length of date element 0017 in the UNB & UNG segments on those users who have no requirement to manipulate/process the data in data element 0017;
- c) Thought must be given to the format of the date, if a change is to be made. In the wider "Year 2000" date discussions, the problems which can arise if the format is specified as variable length of n..8 (rather than a fixed length of n8) needs to be considered;
- d) The widest possible user reaction to the proposal should be sought.

14. Should majority support from the UN/EDIFACT user community for a change be identified, the ESG would request the UN/ISO Joint Syntax Working Group (JSWG) to respond.

**ANNEX B**

**REPORT OF THE JOINT GE.1 AND GE.2 SESSION  
ON LEGAL AND COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF TRADE FACILITATION  
(18 September 1997)**

Documents: - TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.17, Legal Rapporteurs' Report  
- V.97-22269 May-5, Uncitral Model Law on Electronic Commerce  
with Guide to Enactment 1996

1. The joint session was chaired by Mr. H. Bates, Vice-Chairperson of CEFACT.

2. The Legal Rapporteurs, reported that at its last meeting in Singapore on 21 to 25 April 1997, the Legal Rapporteurs' Team (LRT) had revised the programme of work in view of the migration process. It was suggested that priority status be given to certain work items and that e-mail should be used more extensively in order to promptly respond to requests and avoid the necessity for meetings of the Legal Group at each JRT. The Legal Rapporteurs emphasized that the review of the work programme had been done in the light of the progress made in electronic commerce as well as other developments including the growth of the Internet and its interface with the EDI process. It was also noted that the revised work programme would serve as a basis for the preparation of the Legal Working Group's (LWG) Terms of Reference.

3. The Legal Rapporteurs reviewed the proposed items to be included in the CEFACT Legal Working Group's work programme:

- (a) Model Interchange Agreement: It was explained that the Legal Working Group would consider extending the scope of Recommendation No. 26 to cover in addition electronic commerce and a model technical annex which would eventually result in a revision of the Recommendation. The Legal Rapporteurs also noted that a small working group would start this work in October 1997. The Austrian delegation noted that their country had developed such a model agreement which could be taken into consideration by the Legal Rapporteurs.
- (b) National legal and commercial barriers to international trade: The Legal Rapporteurs reported on the on-going analysis of responses to the questionnaire, noting that approximately 20 countries had replied and emphasising that this work was carried out in cooperation with the UNCITRAL secretariat. The Legal Rapporteurs also stressed the usefulness of this analysis noting that the work would be finalized as soon as possible to present a report at a future session.
- (c) Electronic authentication: The Legal Rapporteurs reported that SITPRO in collaboration with UNCITRAL secretariat, had up-dated the inventory of international trade and transport conventions and agreements including references to "signatures", "writing" and "document" (TRADE/WP.4/R.1096) and extended the scope of the study to cover other international instruments relevant to international trade law. It was noted that the revised document would identify instances where revision of existing document was necessary to allow for electronic equivalents of paper documents. An inventory of identified obstacles would be presented at a future session. Furthermore, the Legal Rapporteurs also pointed to the uncertainty that prevailed over how to proceed in order to overcome the obstacles identified. The critical issues outlined by the Legal Rapporteurs included: the difficulty of re-negotiating well-established international conventions that dealt

with substantive legal issues and went far beyond establishing form requirements; the desirability and feasibility of preparing yet another convention to interpret existing form requirements, which might result in complex issues of conflicting conventions; alternatively the possibility of promoting the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce as a tool for interpreting existing instruments.

- (d) Data Protection: The Legal Rapporteurs noted that work in this area was of critical importance and should focus on preparing practical guidelines to users.
- (e) Private International Law: It was noted that research activities in the field would need to be considered in relation to the revision of the Model Interchange Agreement. The Legal Rapporteurs also mentioned that several important issues such as jurisdiction and dispute settlement linked to the development of the Internet and to a global framework needed to be addressed urgently on the international level, and were subject to a number of initiatives, amongst which a workshop organized under the auspices of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. So far, work in this area had not produced any results.
- (f) Model Intermediary Agreement: The Legal Rapporteurs explained that work in this area was in a preliminary stage and needed to progress. In the future, the elaboration of a new UN Recommendation could be envisaged.
- (g) ICC E-terms Repository: It was noted that work under this item should focus on monitoring the progress in this area and provide guidance to users as it could be relevant to the revision of the Model Interchange Agreement. It was also mentioned that the ICC E-100 project had been reviewed by the ICC and replaced by the Electronic Commerce Project (ECP). The French delegate mentioned also the work of the ICC in relation to certification authorities and digital signatures.
- (h) Educational tools: The Legal Rapporteurs stressed the need to increase awareness and facilitate understanding of legal issues linked to electronic commerce and EDI through promotional activities such as web sites, videos or other educational tools.
- (i) Legal review of UN/EDIFACT messages: Work in this area should follow the guidance given by the ESG.

4. Recognizing the importance of all work items listed above, the Legal Rapporteurs mentioned that priority would be given to the review of the Model Interchange Agreement, electronic authentication as well as other items depending on progress made. Work items no longer listed in the new programme of work owing to a lack of resources or work undertaken by other international bodies included negotiability, electronic invoicing and self-billing, and the requirement for certification authorities.

5. In response to observations made by several delegations as to the exclusion of negotiability, the Legal Rapporteurs stressed the lack of expertise in this field, the lack of resources as well as the fact that other bodies were examining the issue. With reference to the BOLERO scheme, it was explained that it was a commercial initiative and outside the scope of the Legal Working Group's mandate. Furthermore, the Legal Rapporteurs also briefly outlined the work undertaken in this area by UNCITRAL and the International Maritime Committee (CMI).

6. The Legal Rapporteurs also noted that significant developments on the national level as well as coordination with other international bodies would continue to be part of the review work included in the work programme.
7. The Legal Rapporteurs also urged delegations to provide them with all relevant documentation and information in order to facilitate their work and broaden the scope of their analyses.
8. TEDIC project: The Legal Rapporteurs reported that following the request by WP.4 to examine the TEDIC project and give an overview on the legal implications, discussions with the TEDIC promoters had taken place at the Helsinki JRT meeting in 1996. Further meetings could despite all efforts not be arranged, but a demonstration was organized by the TEDIC promoters prior to the GE.1 and GE.2 joint session. The Legal Rapporteurs expressed the view of the Legal Working Group that it would not be appropriate to evaluate a commercial project which would better be tested by the market.
9. Referring to a new intermediary report made available by the TEDIC promoters in July 1997, the Legal Rapporteurs made the following comments:
- (a) a key factor of success of the TEDIC project would be its global dimension, especially its global legal dimension. So far, the Legal Rapporteurs explained, the approach was that of a national legal approach.
  - (b) the Legal Working Group might wish to monitor further developments of the TEDIC project in connection with its possible relevance to the revision of the Model Interchange Agreement. The Legal Rapporteurs also pointed to the differences in the concept between the Model Interchange Agreement used in this forum and that used by the TEDIC promoters. The TEDIC project covered much of what was included in the Technical Annex of the Model Interchange Agreement and additional issues as part of different scenarios.
  - (c) it would also be advisable to evaluate with the project promoters the development that would be required and the method to be used within the UN/EDIFACT process to support the TEDIC initiative.
  - (d) prior to the operational phase, an analysis of dependencies of certification authorities might be a key factor of the project's success.
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