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Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Item 4 of the provisional agenda,  
Seventh session, 26-29 March 2001

**REPORT OF THE UN/CEFACT STEERING GROUP (CSG) MEETING**

Geneva, 22-25 May 2000

(Second meeting 2000)

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Submitted by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG)

This document has been submitted by the UN/CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) for information as required under the UN/CEFACT procedures outlined in document TRADE/R.650. It is for information only. Items to be decided upon by the UN/CEFACT Plenary will be presented in a separate report from the Chairman to the CSG.

**CSG Chair:**

Ray Walker, United Kingdom - UN/CEFACT Vice Chair

**CSG members present:**

Harry Featherstone, United States  
Pierre Georget, France  
Dariush Haghighi Talab, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Rob van Kuik, WCO  
Paivi Lehtonen, Finland  
Alexander de Lijster, Netherlands  
Emile Peeters, Belgium  
Christina Wallén-Rahlén, Sweden  
Peter Wilson, United Kingdom  
Christoph Wolf, Germany

**Ex-officio members and Rapporteurs present:**

Kenji Itoh, Japan - UN/CEFACT Vice Chair and Asia Rapporteur  
Claude Hamon - Standards Liaison Rapporteur  
David Marsh, United Kingdom - Legal Liaison Rapporteur  
Santiago Mila, IAPH/ Spain - UN/CEFACT Vice Chair

**Invitees**

Mike Doran – BPAWG Chair  
Maxence Orthlieb, UNCTAD

**Secretariat present:**

Carol Cosgrove-Sacks, Director of the Trade Division  
Hans Hansell, Deputy Director  
Rocío Cardenas  
Jean Kubler  
Vlasta Macku  
Markus Pikart

**Apologies:**

Raul Colcher - UN/CEFACT Vice Chair  
David Dobbing, Australia - CDWG Chair  
Mihai Gruia, Romania  
Peter Guldentops, SWIFT  
Tahseen Ahmad Khan, India  
Klaus-Dieter Naujok, Canada – TMWG Chair  
Teresa Sorrenti, United States - UN/CEFACT Vice Chair

Common acronyms:

BPAWG – Business Process Analysis Working Group	LWG - Legal Working Group
CDWG – Codes Working Group	TMWG – Techniques and Methodology Working Group
EWG – EDIFACT Working Group	SECI – Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
AFACT – Asia Pacific Council for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport	

## INTRODUCTORY NOTES

1. The Chair of the CSG regretted the fact that Klaus-Dieter Naujok, the Chair of the TMWG, was unable to attend due to changes in his professional situation. However, it was noted that he wished to continue his involvement in the CSG, as well as chairmanship of the ebXML initiative and the TMWG.
2. The Director of the Trade Division welcomed the participants and thanked them for their work. She then informed the meeting about a decision taken by member states with regard to the role of the secretariat. This decision could imply that secretariat resources may be partly diverted to fulfill additional assignments with regard to global UN conferences, cross-sectoral issues and sub-regional cooperation. She also thanked the CSG for their support in the organization of the Forum on Electronic Commerce for Transition Economies, to be held on 19-20 June in Geneva, and invited them to extend the information about this event to their partners. She also reported on her meeting with the new Executive Secretary of the UN/ECE, Ms. Danuta Huebner, who had expressed her interest, appreciation and support to the work conducted by UN/CEFACT. The Chair of the CSG pointed out that all the three issues in which the UN/ECE should be increasingly involved had already been present in UN/CEFACT and that this might represent an opportunity for UN/CEFACT to increase its profile in these areas.
3. The CSG Chair informed the meeting that under current CSG procedures the Romanian delegation had used their right to appoint a replacement for the Romanian CSG member who had resigned in a mid-term.

## ELECTRONIC BUSINESS

### REPORT ON THE EBXML INITIATIVE

4. CSG members who had attended the last ebXML initiative meeting (Brussels, 8-12 May 2000) reported on the course of this event which was attended by about 200 participants. In general he however felt that most groups were still discussing conceptual issues. He was also concerned about the relative lack of involvement of European participants in presentations and discussions. Other CSG members shared his assessment of the meeting and expressed hope that more tangible results would be available soon. The CSG Chair saw resemblance between the current state of the ebXML initiative and early days of UN/EDIFACT when a learning process and the clarification of ideas had taken place. Among the positive results of the meeting he quoted the preparation of ebXML requirements specification and the progress of work in the transport and packaging group. The key issue to be solved related to core components.
5. The CSG member from the United Kingdom expressed his concern about a possible serial dependency between modelling (input expected for August) and the work on core components, which might result in delays in the latter. The member from the United States said that he had heard significant confusion about what the ebXML deliverables were to be, whether specific DTD/schema or the criteria defining future development in order to support maximum interoperability and reusability. He therefore suggested that it might be helpful to clarify the expectations of the Group prior to the August meeting so that the session could be as productive as possible toward producing intended deliverables. In response to the need to define UN/CEFACT's expectations from the ebXML initiative, the CSG Chair offered to draft a short summary paper. The progress of the initiative would again be reviewed at the next CSG meeting in August 2000. Two brainstorming sessions were then organized to discuss the strategy of UN/CEFACT for phase 2 of the ebXML initiative and other related matters.

#### SIMPLE E-BUSINESS

6. After the dissolution of the Simple EDI Working Group (SIMAC), the issue had been transferred to the Data Harmonization Group (T8) within the EWG. At the same time, work had continued in the United Kingdom on simple electronic business. The delegation of the United Kingdom had presented a summary report to the UN/CEFACT Plenary in March 2000. Consequently, the Plenary requested that the CSG explored with the EWG and TMWG the feasibility of incorporating the work initiated by the United Kingdom into UN/CEFACT's work.
7. The CSG member from the United Kingdom explained that the United Kingdom had used all the possibilities to improve the product in the local context and that there was time to take it further to an international level, as well as to enhance its cross-sectoral aspects. Proposals then were made to conduct this work either in the TMWG or subgroups of EWG, such as D1 or D2. It was agreed to revert to this subject after the results of the brainstorming sessions.

#### GLOBAL COMMERCE INITIATIVE (GCI)

8. The CSG member from the United Kingdom reported on the latest developments in the Global Commerce Initiative. There were currently four major marketplace exchanges providing e-procurement services for suppliers/retailers operating within the same retail and supply scenarios. All of them faced interoperability problems related to the use of different standards or versions of the same standard, and different data dictionaries and/or catalogues. For this reason, at the Global Commerce Initiative meeting, suppliers and retailers agreed to implement a common global business-to-business and consumer-to-business strategy in terms of use of identical standards (ebXML, EAN.UCC), data directories (EAN.UCC Global Data Alignment System) and business models (Simpl-eb). This functionality should be available to the user community before August-September 2000.
9. Participants stressed the need to have common data for all parties in the supply chain, such as transport, banks, insurance, etc. Even though the GCI addressed the issue of interoperability, it only did so within one domain. A next step would be to ensure interoperability among different sectors. Business modelling was a key to achieving this objective.

#### REPORTS FROM MANDATED GROUPS

##### EWG

10. The Chair of the EWG reported on the last meeting of the EWG that had taken place on 20-24 March 2000 in Paris. 240 persons had attended, Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Group and subgroups had been elected and several documents approved relating to entry point procedure, code naming convention and DMRs. The production of the 01A directory would be fully automated. The number of DMRs had been decreasing as a result of the maturity of the standard and the future focus of work in this area was expected to be rather on maintenance than development of new messages. Use of UML by the Group was on track. The challenge for the Group was the advent of XML. Most people in the EWG were already working with XML and modelling and several subgroups had proposed to change the name of the Group into E-business Working Group reflecting the shift of its work from UN/EDIFACT towards other areas.

## TMWG

11. The Vice Chair of the TMWG introduced the main work items of the TMWG. Among them had been the priority to input to the ebXML initiative which had consumed a significant part of the Group's resources and slowed down the work on other issues such as N090. However, this document was now the overriding priority because of its importance for the work of other Working Groups, especially the EWG. A third major area of work for the Group was education programme for the EWG.

## ITPWG

12. The Vice Chair of the ITPWG reported on the activities of the Group. There were two priorities on ITPWG's agenda, namely revision of Recommendation No. 18, Facilitation measures related to international trade procedures, and update of the Compendium of Trade Facilitation Recommendations. Work on the Compendium was well advanced and additional input was needed only from the WCO and Recommendation No. 18. Another important item on ITPWG's agenda was Recommendation No. 1, UN Layout Key. He felt that in addition to the guidelines currently elaborated by the Group, there was a need to re-word the Recommendation itself so that it reflected developments that had taken place since its adoption. A link also should be ensured between the work in UN/CEFACT and TC154 on this issue. A member of the secretariat informed the participants that work was currently under way in the secretariat on an electronic application of guidelines to Rec. 1. Work was under way on Recommendation No. 8, Unique Identification Code Methodology, in conjunction with the initiatives of the World Trade Organization.
13. The CSG member from Sweden suggested that Recommendation No. 11, Documentary aspects of the international transport of dangerous goods, also deserved attention. The Deputy Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division commented that the main issue in the revision of Rec. 11 was the harmonization of approaches between the Recommendation itself, the conventions administered by the Transport Division of the UN/ECE and the International Maritime Organization. The Vice Chair of the CDWG indicated the need for strict priorities in view of the limited resources available to the Group. This also applied to the work on Recommendation No. 11.

## LWG

14. The Vice Chair of the LWG reported on the upcoming meeting of the LWG that would be held on 3-5 July in Leidschendam (Netherlands) and hosted by Electronic Commerce Platform Netherlands (ECP). ECP had also offered to provide contribution in kind to cover travel of secretariat staff member to the meeting. The two major issues on the agenda would be development of a UN/CEFACT Recommendation on the Code of Conduct for Electronic Commerce and cooperation with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) on further enhancement of Recommendation No. 31, Electronic Commerce Agreement. A meeting had been held between the representatives of the LWG and the ICC where the latter had proposed a joint programme to produce a modified version of Recommendation No. 31 that would incorporate the results of ICC's work in this area. A revised version of Recommendation No. 31 would be available in the coming three months. Another idea for cooperation with the ICC was to develop software on the basis of Recommendation No. 31 which would enable parties to conclude the Agreement electronically. A concern was expressed regarding the timing of the revision, in particular the need for a certain stability of UN/CEFACT Recommendations. It was also pointed out that the software could only be developed once the revised version of Recommendation No. 31 was available and the issue of branding of the final product resolved. The software should be presented as a joint product of UN/CEFACT and the ICC and be made available free of charge on UN/CEFACT's web site.

## CDWG

15. The Vice Chair of the CDWG reported on the last CDWG meeting held on 15-18 May in Geneva. During the first day, a UN/LOCODE meeting had been held where a significant progress had been made on the use of diacritic signs. Alignment of Recommendations No. 19, Codes for Modes of Transport, and Recommendation No. 16, UN/LOCODE, was also discussed. During the second and subsequent days, the meeting had been re-convened in a full-fledged CDWG setting. It had re-elected the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Group and discussed progress of work on Recommendation No. 19, Recommendation No. 28, Codes for Types of Means of Transport, Recommendation No. 20, Codes for Units of Measure, and Recommendation No. 24, Trade and Transport Status Codes. The Vice Chair felt that there was a need to align the various UN/CEFACT Recommendations on codes and to concentrate on the quality of their content.
16. A constructive meeting had taken place with regard to Recommendation No. 30, Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System for the Coding of Goods and Commodities. Some of the invitees had expressed their concerns about a possible mandatory use of the Recommendation and also about the differences between the code proposed by the Recommendation and the Harmonized System (HS). The Group had finally decided to set up a sub-group that would continue work on the Recommendation. This work would be based on the identified business need for the harmonization and simplification of goods descriptions used for transport-related purposes. In conjunction with the WCO, the subgroup should also study the longer-term possibilities of using the HS for this purpose. The work would involve all the parties concerned so that compatibility with user requirements could be ensured. The CSG resolved that the CDWG should submit a progress report on Recommendation No. 30 to the November 2000 CSG meeting.

#### ANNUAL REVIEW OF BPAWG

17. The Chair of the BPAWG reported on the development in the Working Group's programme and membership, current work, problems and opportunities, and coordination with other Working Groups. The Group had formally been set up in 1997, but had fully come into its work only in 1999 when the UML methodology had been made available by the TMWG and the decision had been taken to transfer the work on the International Trade Transaction (ITT) model from ITPWG to BPAWG. The membership of the Group consisted of around 6 core members and there was a need for broader participation, in particular from the United States. The Group had set up a European sub-group and the creation of another one in Asia Pacific was under discussion.
18. The main deliverable of the Group was the International Supply Chain Model approved at the BPAWG meeting in January 2000. The document had been circulated to ten EWG's D groups for comments and presented during meetings with D2 and T9 in March 2000 in Paris. However, not enough feedback had been received so far. Interest in the model had also been expressed by the ITPWG and a presentation had been made during the ITPWG meeting in April 2000 in Geneva, at the same time as the presentation of the EURIDIS project on Comparison and Harmonization of International Trade Procedures, which was largely complementary to the BPAWG model. With regard to future plans, The BPAWG Chair felt that an opportunity for the Group might be associated with the formalization of the modelling approach in the framework of the ebXML initiative. At the same time, opportunities would be sought for application of UML modelling in other sectors.
19. The closest cooperation existed with the TMWG where both a liaison person had been identified and working relations had been established between the chairs of both working groups. Back-to-back meetings had been held with the EWG, and ITP members had attended BPAWG meetings. In addition, an ITPWG member who was at the same time a member of the BPAWG served as liaison.

20. There was an understanding that the work of BPAWG was very important, in particular from the point of view of integration of different parts of the UN/CEFACT work. At the same time, the work required to be better explained to the outside world; particularly the relationship between the high-level model and concrete commercial products that could be of direct use to businesses. While modelling was often used at the industry level, relevance of and benefit from higher-level models were not always clearly understood. This also seemed to be a reason of the lack of participation from the United States in the BPAWG work. The meeting of the BPAWG on 26 May could provide an opportunity to discuss this issue.
21. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division informed the CSG that Mr. Tom Heilandt, who had a background in computer science and modelling, would be assigned to provide secretariat support to the BPAWG. However, given the lack of travel funds, he would only be able to service meetings if they were held in Geneva.

#### **COORDINATION AMONG WORKING GROUPS**

22. The Chair of the BPAWG reported on meetings that had been held with T9 and D2 during the March 2000 EWG meeting in Paris. During that meeting, the UN/CEFACT Life Cycle diagram had been used to illustrate how the work of the different empowered groups should be integrated. It had become evident that due to the difference in approaches (top-down in BPAWG, bottom-up in EWG), a number of issues needed to be clarified regarding the relationship between the BPAWG and other empowered working groups, in particular TMWG and EWG. It had been agreed that the BPAWG Chair would raise these issues with the CSG.
23. The CSG Chair felt that the issues raised were very valid but that some of them, in particular those relating to ebXML, could not be answered until decisions had been taken with regard to phase two of the ebXML initiative. The CSG member from the United States said that the repository was among issues that required an overall decision by the CSG. The ebXML initiative had reached the decision that the repository would be required and there was a proposal that it could be maintained by OASIS. Technical specifications for this repository were currently being revised. The CSG member from Japan was of the view that there might be a need to re-engineer the current EWG or to establish a new Working Group that would be in charge of repository, modelling and maintenance activities for ebXML. The CSG Chair pointed out that this was one of the main topics of the brainstorming sessions.
24. The Vice Chair of the TMWG suggested that methodological questions (such as definition of BPAWG's deliverables, identification of their prime interfaces among UN/CEFACT working groups) could be referred to TMWG. On this issue, the CSG members felt that since TMWG resources were stretched, the Group should give immediate priority to the most pressing tasks, especially to N090. It was only on the basis on N090 that the EWG could put in place their implementation plan with regard to the use of UML. This plan should be finalized at the September 2000 EWG meeting.
25. The meeting concluded that existing EDIFACT messages should not be reverse-engineered. However, the Vice Chair of the TMWG believed that the background reasons for such decision should also be provided. It was felt that formalization of modelling requirements would necessitate a new set of guidelines and new processes, including those regarding handling of DMRs for existing and new UN/EDIFACT messages. With regard to education of the "D" groups in the use of the Unified Modelling Methodology, the CSG Chair pointed out that an offer had been made by TMWG some time ago and it now needed to be taken up. It would be the role of TMWG and EWG to develop process documentation. The document "Review of the current EDI standardization process" issued by TMWG in 1998 could serve as a basis for this work.

26. The ITPWG had requested in their resolution 00-1 that a standard set of terminology for UN/CEFACT Working Groups be developed that would allow them to communicate in a homogenous manner both among themselves and with the outside world. The subsequent discussion confirmed the need for a consistent use of terms across the Working Groups stemming both from different interpretations of identical terms and the need to increase familiarity with new terms. The proposed glossary of terms could draw on the results of work already undertaken in this area by TMWG and SIMAC.

## **DEVELOPMENTS IN STANDARDIZATION**

### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ISO-IEC-ITU-UN/ECE (MoU)**

27. The Chair of the CSG welcomed the new Standards Liaison Rapporteur, Mr. Claude Hamon, to the CSG meeting.
28. He then reported on the meeting of the MoU management team that had taken place in Geneva on 17-18 May 2000. The meeting had resolved to hold the Business Object Summit (BOS) on 27-28 November 2000 in Geneva. The objective of the Summit would be to evaluate progress achieved by various organizations involved in the issue. EbXML, TMWG, BPAWG and EWG would be asked to present UN/CEFACT's contribution to the business object work. The Chair also noted that a resolution had been passed indicating that a next version of UML (No. 2) might be available with the next six months. A clarification was also provided about the role of the secretariat in the MoU, which was twofold: (a) to represent the UN/ECE as one of the signatories of the MoU with regard to coordination and cooperation in the framework of the MoU, (b) to provide resources to the joint MoU secretariat when meetings were held in Geneva (the UN/ECE were unable to support meetings held outside Geneva). The UN/ECE would serve as a secretariat for the next MoU meeting, including the BOS.

### **BASIC SEMANTIC REGISTER (BSR)**

29. The CSG Chair summarized the discussion on the BSR that had taken place in UN/CEFACT in the course of past meetings. The CSG meeting in November 1999 had developed Terms of Reference and requested the TMWG to undertake a study that would examine the current status of the BSR (especially taking into account the issue of multilingualism) and propose UN/CEFACT's position, including its potential role in relation to the BSR. This report should be available for the August 2000 CSG meeting. The Standards Liaison Rapporteur offered to invite persons responsible for the BSR to make a presentation in August and to discuss the findings of the TMWG report. While the CSG recognized the merit of the BSR in terms of addressing multilingualism, it was suggested that a closer link to modelling could be of benefit to the development of the dictionary.

### **TC 154 AND THE UNTDED**

30. The Chair of the CSG expressed a general concern about external perceptions of duplication and confusion between the work of UN/CEFACT and TC154. Originally, TC154 had been set up as a tool for fast-tracking UN/CEFACT Recommendations, but it was a full-fledged ISO technical committee and as such could initiate new work items. The issue was to ensure that TC154 did not address topics that were in conflict – or perceived to be in conflict - with the work undertaken by UN/CEFACT.

As far as XML was concerned, this work item had been put on hold in TC154 due to the fact that not enough members had expressed a commitment to participate. He informed the participants that he and the Deputy Director of the Trade Division were going to meet with the Chair of TC154 and discuss how coordination could be improved and negative outside perceptions removed.

31. The CSG Chair then summarized the issues raised in the background document to the UNTDED letter, including possible solutions. This document had been attached to the letter sent by the secretariat to TDED user groups. The CSG member from the United States felt that keeping the two directories (TDED and EDED) apart while cross-mapping their content would be the most appropriate solution. There were differences between the two directories covering around 25 per cent, or 75-100 data elements. Cross-referencing would mean flagging common and distinct elements in both directories and maintaining this list. The CSG Chair suggested that after having received feedback from users, heads of delegation should be consulted and, subsequently, a decision would be taken at the November 2000 CSG meeting on how to proceed with the TDED. The TDED maintenance agency also needed to be re-activated. The secretariat would need to ensure the coordination function between TC154 and the appropriate Working Group.

#### **CODES MANAGEMENT**

32. The Chair of the CSG reported on the meeting that had been held during the UN/CEFACT March Plenary between several members of the CSG and the representatives of the Electronic Commerce Code Management Association (ECCMA). Following that meeting, the ECCMA was to submit a paper detailing their initial proposal to undertake codes management on behalf of UN/CEFACT. Since the paper had not been received yet, there was not enough information available for the CSG to take a decision on this issue.
33. The CSG member from the United States then raised a broader issue of secretariat resources for the support of the work programme, including contributions in kind and branding, and called for a consistent and transparent policy of UN/CEFACT with regard to offers of such contributions. It was felt that with regard to contributions in kind the following elements ought to be defined: need for a contribution; objective to be attained through the contribution; terms of reference for the offer, procedure of publishing the offer in an open and non-exclusive manner, assessment of offers received, and rights and obligations of both parties (UN/CEFACT and the contributor). Products or services obtained as contribution in kind should serve to enhance UN/CEFACT's work. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division pointed to difficulties in obtaining contributions in kind from Governments and emphasized that control over the contributions in kind coming from the business sector should remain in the hands of UN/CEFACT. The EWG Chair was of the view that despite their importance in complementing UN/CEFACT resources, contributions in kind should not be viewed as a panacea.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE WCO AND THE WTO**

### **MoU WITH THE WCO**

34. The WCO representative in the CSG introduced the draft MoU with the WCO. The text was based on another MoU that the WCO was currently negotiating with the WTO. The WCO-WTO draft MoU was going to be modified further and these changes would be reflected in the text of the WCO-UN/CEFACT MoU before the next CSG meeting. He stressed the importance of the intention expressed in the MoU – the text itself did not need to go into great detail.
35. He was seeking advice from the CSG in particular with regard to areas for cooperation between the two organizations. On this issue, the CSG members felt that there was a need to stress the mutually supportive relationship between trade facilitation and electronic business.
36. Another issue was the coordination and review of the MoU. On this account, it was suggested that at the operational level, liaison persons appointed by each of the two organizations would regularly meet every six months whereas a formal review of the MoU would take place every two to three years. To address the difference in status of both organizations in relation to one another (the WCO is a member of UN/CEFACT and UN/CEFACT has an observer status with the WCO), it was proposed that an article be added specifying that the MoU covered cooperation going beyond the current relationship between the two organizations.
37. With regard to timetable, it was agreed that the final draft of the MoU would be submitted to the August 2000 CSG meeting and subsequently go through the intersessional approval process before being formally signed and then confirmed by the 2001 UN/CEFACT Plenary.

### **MoU WITH THE WTO**

38. The Chair of the CSG recalled the request by the UN/CEFACT Chair to develop a MoU between UN/CEFACT and the WTO and invited the participants to express their view on the issue. It was generally felt that while informal discussions and cooperation among the secretariats of UN/CEFACT and the WTO might be a good solution in the short run, it was advisable to formalize mutual relationship in the longer run. Further, UN/CEFACT should be ready to seize the opportunity for closer cooperation when it became available. In the meantime, there was a need to prepare a case for a MoU with the WTO and to investigate areas where cooperation would be desirable. A small team would be set within the CSG to undertake this task and it would present an initial report to the CSG meeting in August 2000.

### **MoU WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

39. The Chair of the CSG was of the view that it was important for UN/CEFACT to have memoranda of understanding with external organizations. However, such MoU should, in principle, not be concluded with members of the Plenary, unless they covered very specific issues that would justify going beyond the general level of cooperation associated with the Plenary membership.

**CONFERENCES**

## UN/CEFACT 2001 CONFERENCE

40. The CSG Chair thanked the team headed by the Chair of the EWG for their interesting and well-thought out paper about the UN/CEFACT 2001 Conference. Several issues relating to the programme and practical modalities of the Conference were then raised and discussed by the CSG.
41. The first of them was the theme of the Conference. On the basis of last year's experience it was felt that trade facilitation needed to be included in the programme, but re-packaged in terms of wording and content so as to attract more interest among participants. More impact might be achieved if trade facilitation were presented as a tool indispensable for doing electronic business. Case studies could be used in presentations from different parts of the world, including developing countries (such as India or Brazil) and countries in transition. This would also strengthen the perception of UN/CEFACT as a global body. Another aspect that might need to be reflected in the Conference was the attention to the problems encountered by small and medium-sized enterprises. Since in many countries the crucial issue in making trade facilitation and electronic business happen was a dialogue between the private and public sectors, a proposal was also put forward to organize the conference around the theme of corporate-government cooperation in this area. This could provide useful examples with the potential for replication in other countries.
42. The second issue was the purpose of the Conference and the associated question of the target segment for the Conference. A view was that the Conference should focus on the industry interface for this year. As regards the target audience, some participants believed that the Conference should have a single focus on industry and therefore, feature topics of interest to industry.
43. A third topic was that of a more long-lasting outreach of the Conference. In general it was felt that transition economies and developing countries were in need of solutions that would help them get from their current situation to an effective use of electronic business. Although funding the travel for some participants from these countries to the Conference was certainly useful, this might not guarantee that the lessons learned would always be implemented. There was therefore a need for a broader reach and a multiplication effect of UN/CEFACT conferences and activities in general. The CSG would need to identify the means that could be used to this effect, be it publications (such as proceedings from the Conference), videos or training programmes.
44. The fourth issue related to organizational aspects of the Conference. It was decided to set up a Conference committee. The CSG Chair would inform the participants at the Forum on Electronic Commerce for Transition Economies (19-20 June 2000) about the Conference, a preliminary announcement would be made on 1 September 2000 and a first draft of a detailed programme would be out before the end of November 2000. The possibility was also discussed of hiring a professional fundraiser and a professional organizer for the conference. It was, however, concluded that the experience of the Forum that had used a similar model had first to be evaluated before a final decision could be taken on this issue.

## FORUM ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE FOR TRANSITION ECONOMIES

45. The Chair of the CSG commended the quality of the Forum's programme and the speakers who were going to make presentations. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division then provided some background information about the Forum. The decision to organize the event had been taken two years ago by the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development (CTIED). The event was meant as input for the annual session of the Committee. It was expected that the Committee would decide to set up a Group on Internet Enterprise Development. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division expressed the view that this should be done in coordination with UN/CEFACT.

Other members of the CSG voiced their concerns about very similar work going on in parallel in the above Group and in UN/CEFACT and warned against possible confusion for outsiders with regard to events seemingly originating from the same organization and dealing with very similar issues. It was then stressed that the Forum was dealing with transition economies unlike UN/CEFACT events that had a global nature.

#### **PROMOTION OF UN/CEFACT'S OBJECTIVES**

46. The CSG Chair introduced the issue, as well as the need to further develop ideas outlined in the promotion paper submitted to the UN/CEFACT Plenary in March. He saw three factors for UN/CEFACT's success, namely: (a) quality work was crucial for UN/CEFACT's credibility, (b) cross-sectoral industry support and endorsement of UN/CEFACT's work would help UN/CEFACT to have the widest possible impact, and (c) a clear and positive definition of relationship between the UN/ECE and UN/CEFACT.

#### **IDENTITY MANUAL**

47. The Chair of the PROMO Group reported that the Identity Manual had been translated into English and informed the meeting about the modifications that were going to be made in the Manual following the decisions taken by the Plenary, in particular in relation to the new name of UN/CEFACT. He also suggested that decisions needed to be taken with regard to some other pending issues so that the Manual could be finalized. Among them were the final versions of working groups and products logos and inclusion or not of the proposal for web site design. Also the legal implications associated with the use of the UN/CEFACT logo needed to be clarified and then expressed in the Manual. The CSG Chair added that the Manual could only be finalized once the Committee had approved the new UN/CEFACT's name.

48. A point was made that in order to attract more participation from industry, UN/CEFACT membership might need to be expanded. To this end, clear criteria should be made available specifying the conditions and procedure to be followed by potential members. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division pointed out that the procedure which required accreditation with the Economic and Social Council was rather time-consuming and its result at times difficult to predict. The CSG member from the United States felt that once the criteria were checked with the NGO office in Geneva, the details should be made available on UN/CEFACT web site and that a promotional campaign would need to be launched to attract new members. It was also decided to investigate if a logo could be developed for members of UN/CEFACT.

#### **UN/CEFACT WEB SITE**

49. The CSG Chair congratulated the web team on the new shape of the web site which he felt was vibrant and dynamic. This view was also shared by other members of the CSG. However, the CSG Chair still had a reservation with regard to the correct relationship between the UN/ECE and UN/CEFACT (regional vs global) but hopefully this could be resolved shortly. The member of the secretariat responsible for the web site then briefed the meeting about the work that had been done on the web site. Information was now consolidated and reorganized from the maintenance point of view. A web quality initiative had been launched putting in place a structured quality maintenance procedure that would ensure that the site be fully up-to-date also in the future. Individual responsibilities had been assigned for updating different parts of the web site. Web statistics showed that the UN/CEFACT web site was one of the most visited in the UN/ECE.

50. With regard to TRAFIX, the secretariat pointed out that the site had been a big success and had become very popular with the trade facilitation community. However, in order to better address maintenance issues, the decision had been taken to phase out TRAFIX and re-direct users to the UN/CEFACT web site.

#### **BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL (BAC)**

51. The March 2000 Plenary had mandated the CSG to further develop the proposal of a Business Advisory Council for UN/CEFACT. Some CSG members felt that, in addition to efforts to expand UN/CEFACT membership, a BAC of 10-20 high-level industry representatives could help strengthen relations with industry and get advice for UN/CEFACT on strategic issues (business trends and opportunities) in trade facilitation and electronic business. This would be complementary to the cooperation on technical issues that UN/CEFACT was having with industry at the Working Group level. Other CSG members expressed some concerns with regard to the selection process and the feasibility/usefulness of a BAC at an international level. It was also suggested that advantages for potential BAC members should be clearly spelled out. For this reason, some members believed that instead of formalizing the BAC, it might be better to first explore the issue in greater detail and perhaps to raise it again during the UN/CEFACT 2001 conference.

#### **SECRETARIAT RESOURCES**

52. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division proposed to structure the discussion into two parts, namely the current and ideal state of resources, and ways to enhance cooperation between the secretariat and UN/CEFACT bodies.
53. He then informed the meeting that Ms. Vlasta Macku who had been servicing, among others, CSG meetings, would be leaving the secretariat on 1 August 2000 to work as the Head of the Trade Point Programme in UNCTAD. A temporary staff member would then be hired before the recruitment procedure for a permanent replacement had been completed. He expressed appreciation of Ms. Macku's work. The CSG and its Chair regretted Ms. Macku's departure, thanked for her outstanding contribution, efforts and understanding and wished her success in her future work. The CSG Chair also stressed that the handover of activities was of crucial importance.
54. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division then explained the CSG members the organigram of the Trade Division and the Trade Facilitation Section and clarified responsibilities of individual staff members with regard to servicing UN/CEFACT bodies and Working Groups. He also informed the meeting that the Will Keenan, the Regional Advisor for Trade Facilitation, had been re-assigned to work with the Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities and reported directly to the Executive Secretary of the UN/ECE. He then introduced the paper outlining ideal allocation of resources for the Section. While doing so, he pointed out that the document was meant as a basis for discussion and input for the biennial budgetary process that was currently under way. In this context, he mentioned that any requests for resources for the coming two years should be submitted before the end of August 2000. In case the CSG felt that more secretariat resources were needed, he invited them to discuss the matter with the management of the UN/ECE. In response to concerns that in the future secretariat resources might be to a greater extent diverted towards UN-wide issues, he said that in addition to responding to requests from delegations, Member States and Working Groups, the secretariat had already had to allocate a part of their time to address issues which were not directly related to UN/CEFACT and that this would also be the case in the future.
55. The meeting felt that the key issue in enhancing mutual cooperation was managing expectations on both sides, i.e. both on the side of UN/CEFACT bodies, and the secretariat. These expectations, including working groups' expectations in terms of secretarial and substantive support, should be

clearly formulated, even though not necessarily as a formal contract but rather as a set of expectations agreed in writing and referenceable by the parties. This would serve as the basis for a dialogue with the secretariat particularly when support capabilities or requirements were changing. On the basis of this assessment, additional resources would be looked for to address issues that could not be handled with the current level of secretariat resources. Understanding on both sides would certainly help avoid frustration and make mutual cooperation more fruitful and constructive.

56. The Deputy Director of the Trade Division made some additional suggestions that should improve cooperation between UN/CEFACT bodies and the secretariat. In the future, meetings that were supposed to be serviced by the same staff should not be scheduled for the same dates. Staff should also not be held responsible for circumstances that were beyond their control such as lack of travel funds. Such cases should be discussed with the head of the secretariat. Matters related to resources or principles should be discussed directly with the head of the secretariat and not with individual staff members.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

57. The following dates for CSG meetings have been agreed upon:

28-31 August 2000, Geneva  
20-23 November 2000, Barcelona  
30 March 2001  
14-17 May 2001

58. The meeting noted with appreciation the offer of the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) to host the November 2000 CSG meeting and to provide contribution in kind to fund travel by a secretariat staff to service the meeting.
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