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**COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

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

Seventh session, 26-29 March 2001

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**ITPWG DRAFT CHAIRMAN'S REPORT  
FOR MARCH 2001 PLENARY**

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Submitted by the International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG)\*

This report is submitted to the Centre for discussion and noting.

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## **ITPWG Draft Chairman's Report for March 2001 Plenary**

### **Introduction:**

Following the re-launch of ITPWG at the September 1999 meeting, the Group have concentrated their main efforts on completing the work on the addendum and guidelines of Recommendation 1, *The United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents (UNLK)*, Recommendation 18, *Facilitation Measures Related to International Trade Procedures*, and the *Compendium of Trade Facilitation Recommendations*. All three have now been completed and will be submitted to the March 2001 Plenary for ratification and approval.

It has been proposed to ensure that the *Compendium* will be made available in as many languages as possible to ensure that the trade facilitation Recommendations can be used throughout the world.

The Group has also been reviewing several new developments, which it is believed will have a significant positive impact on trade facilitation. A new sub-group has been created to study these initiatives in detail.

Also currently under consideration are the creation of two further sub-groups, one to deal with the publicity and promotion of the ITPWG Recommendations and one to study trade barriers as perceived by commerce and transport groups.

These new initiatives should subscribe to ITPWG addressing a more relevant and dynamic international trade agenda and will hopefully encourage a greater participation in the work of the Group by the various representative international bodies.

The last 12 months have seen an encouraging growth in the numbers and range of skills actively participating in the work of ITPWG. The group's aim is to build on this and have agreed to hold a workshop at their April 2001 meeting and in which the appropriate international bodies representing the various parties in the trading chain will be invited to participate.

### **Procedures/Deliverables:**

The deliverables for the March 2001 Plenary are the addendum and guidelines on the United Nations Layout Key (UNLK), Recommendation 18, *Facilitation Measures Related to International Trade Procedures*, and the *Compendium of Trade Facilitation Recommendations*.

### **The United Nations Layout Key (UNLK)**

Work by the consultant and the secretariat has now been completed and the informative annex for Recommendation 1 and Recommendations 6 - Aligned Invoice Layout Key and 22 - Layout Key for standard consignment instructions will be submitted to the 2001 Plenary for ratification and approval. The secretariat will have an ongoing remit to keep the Recommendations up to date and will report its activities to ITPWG once per year or more frequently should the need arise.

## **Recommendation 18: Facilitation Measures Related to International Trade Procedures**

The sub-group dealing with the Recommendation has now completed its work and the revised Recommendation will be submitted to the Plenary for approval. The secretariat will have the day-to-day responsibility of keeping the Recommendation current and will report the activities to ITPWG once per year or more frequently should the need arise.

## **Compendium of Trade Facilitation Recommendations**

The sub-group has completed its work and the revised *Compendium* will be submitted to the 2001 Plenary for approval. As with Recommendations 1 and 18, the secretariat will be responsible for keeping the *Compendium* up to date. It will brief the ITPWG members on its activities annually or more frequently should the need arise.

## **Other Activities**

### **➤ Recommendation 8: *Unique Identification Code Methodology***

This Recommendation is not being used and as such, ITPWG is evaluating a number of other initiatives which could enhance or replace it. The newly created sub-group will now study the Unique Consignment Reference Number initiatives in detail and report back to ITPWG with its recommendations for amending or deleting Recommendation 8.

### **➤ Recommendation 11: *Documentary Aspects of the International Transport of Dangerous Goods* and Recommendation 12: *Measures to Facilitate Maritime Transport Documents Procedures***

Work on these two Recommendations had to be put into abeyance due to available resources having to concentrate on the deliverables for the 2001 Plenary.

However, ITPWG is hoping to establish a programme of work and a timetable for the revision of these recommendations.

## **Other**

### **G7 - Harmonization and simplification efforts.**

The new sub-group will analyse the above in detail and liaise with the G7 work group and other interested parties as appropriate.

#### Single Window Concepts for Government

Several Customs initiatives relating to the above such as the Integrated Customs model have been presented to, or brought to the attention of ITPWG. The new sub-group will evaluate these in detail and report back to ITPWG with its recommendations on how ITPWG should proceed in supporting such initiatives.

#### National Electronic Business Framework

Discussions within the Group are still taking place as to whether or not a recommendation should be drafted.

## **Trade Facilitation Index**

In view of the complexity of creating and maintaining such an index and in the light of the resources available, the general view of the Group is that this item should be handled very carefully and thoughtfully and that through research taking into account the reactions on the Trade Facilitation *Compendium* the added value must be clarified. In addition it is felt that the World Bank Global Facilitation Partnership initiative may provide useful guidance on the viability of such an Index and ITPWG are supporting and closely following their work where appropriate.

## **ITPWG Workshop**

The Workshop is aimed at increasing the participation in the Group and ensuring that the work programme reflects the current needs and concerns of administrations, commerce and transport.

### **The objectives of the Workshop are to:**

- identify those barriers to trade that the various international representative bodies consider have a negative impact on their members;
- identify current and planned initiatives for the further simplification and facilitation of trade;
- put in place an ITPWG work programme that addresses these concerns and initiatives;
- encourage wider participation by the various international representative bodies in the work of ITPWG.

## **Liaison with other work groups and organizations**

Over the last 12 months close contact has been maintained with BPAWG, particularly in respect of the work carried out on Recommendation 18.

Thanks to the efforts of the ITPWG vice-chair, links are maintained with as many of the other groups as possible. However, the objective of trying to overlap the Group meetings once per year have not been successful, but this is still considered to be a worthwhile objective and attempts will be made to try and achieve it.

It has been felt to be of the utmost importance that the International Chamber of Commerce and other organizations dealing with trade facilitation issues would and could be an valuable contributor to the work of the ITPWG and initial steps have been taken to ensure their participation.

## **Conclusion:**

The priorities for ITPWG remain to increase the range of skills, nationalities and regions participating in the work of the Group in order to ensure that requirements are taken into account and that the agenda items reflect the present and future needs of international trade.

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