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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 5 of the provisional agenda

**Memorandum of Understanding between
the World Customs Organization (WCO)
and the United Nations Centre
for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)**

Submitted by the UN/ECE and WCO secretariats

This document is submitted to the Centre for noting.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION (WCO)*
AND
THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE
FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS (UN/CEFACT)** ,**

RECOGNIZING that trade facilitation reduces transaction costs in national and international economies and strengthens trade relations through the simplification, rationalization and whenever possible elimination of procedures;

RECOGNIZING that Customs administrations play a key role in international trade, and that the manner in which they implement their responsibilities can have a substantial impact on the ease, cost and speed of movement of goods across international borders;

RECOGNIZING that international business needs uniform, clear and simple Customs rules and procedures to facilitate cross-border trade and develop global business strategies building on and implementing world-wide trade liberalization following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organization;

RECOGNIZING that **the WCO** is the worldwide focal point for Customs issues, including technical and policy matters directly affecting Customs administrations;

RECOGNIZING that **UN/CEFACT** is the worldwide focal point within the United Nations system for the development, maintenance and promotion of general trade facilitation measures, standards and best practices;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that international non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations actively participate and support these efforts;

NOTING the existing working relationship between the WCO and UN/CEFACT and their common strategic objectives in the area of efficient international trade procedures;

FURTHER NOTING the official observer status already existing between both Organizations;

BELIEVING that modern business and Customs techniques can reconcile more effective official controls with improved trade facilitation;

* World Customs Organization (WCO) is the working name of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC).

** UN/CEFACT is the United Nations worldwide focal point for trade facilitation and electronic business, hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

The World Customs Organization and the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, have agreed as follows :

1. to establish effective and systematic consultation, co-operation, and the exchange of information between them;
2. to promote co-operation between Customs administrations, Government officials, top executives from the private sector, and national trade and transport facilitation committees to support the concept of trade facilitation and to promulgate standards and best practice;
3. to consult and co-operate in order to produce and promote mutually beneficial objectives and policies in contacts with other international institutions, including but not limited to the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, UNCTAD, OECD and the International Chamber of Commerce;
4. to hold regular meetings between the WCO and UN/CEFACT to facilitate the exchange of views and
5. to review the provisions and operation of this Memorandum and the guidelines for its implementation in the light of experience and to agree appropriate modifications and developments to cover specific projects, as appropriate.

Done at on

Danuta Hübner,
Executive Secretary,
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Michel Danet,
Secretary General,
World Customs Organization

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Guidelines to the MOU

To establish effective and systematic consultation, co-operation, and the exchange of information between the WCO and UN/CEFACT

In addition to the existing arrangements for official observer status enjoyed by both Organizations, the WCO and UN/CEFACT will establish liaison officers to ensure that each organization is kept fully up to date concerning activities of mutual interest. The liaison officers can either be nominated persons for the WCO Secretariat and the UN/ECE Secretariat working for UN/CEFACT or others nominated by the Secretariats.

The Organizations undertake to attend and participate in each other's relevant Committee meetings on trade facilitation matters. The attendance will either be by the Secretariats or their nominated liaison officers.

To promote co-operation between Customs administrations, Government officials, top executives from the private sector, and national trade and transport facilitation committees to support the concept of trade facilitation

The Secretariats will explore areas of mutual interest with a view to establishing joint co-ordinated actions or projects for the benefit of trade facilitation.

To hold regular meetings between the WCO and UN/CEFACT to facilitate the exchange of views

Both organizations agree to look at the feasibility of establishing a contact group where Members of the WCO and UN/CEFACT, along with the Secretariats, can meet to discuss issues of mutual interest relating to trade facilitation.
