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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

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

Item 10 of the provisional agenda  
Seventh session, 26-29 March 2001

**INTER-SESSIONAL APPROVAL OF DOCUMENTS**

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Submitted by the secretariat

This document was provisionally approved by the Centre on 22 August 2000  
(as TRADE/CEFACT/2000/23/Rev.1) and is now submitted to the Plenary for confirmation, in  
compliance with the procedure for inter-sessional approval of documents.

## **Background**

### **Move from biannual to annual sessions**

The restructuring of the trade facilitation activities and the creation of UN/CEFACT resulted in the scheduling of one annual session with UN/CEFACT against two annual sessions with WP.4. This reduction to one annual session creates a situation where ongoing work which has reached a level of quality and stability that would allow its publication for approval may be unnecessarily delayed for many months. To avoid this situation, at the third session of UN/CEFACT in March 1999, the CSG proposed the introduction of a new procedure to cover such documents. It was proposed that documents approved by working groups for submission to the UN/CEFACT Plenary may be approved by a new procedure, if submitted up to five months before the Plenary. In an annual cycle of meetings, the adoption of this procedure will improve efficiency.

Subsequently, the UN/CEFACT Plenary approved the proposal.

Paragraph 21 of the report TRADE/CEFACT/1999/19 states "The Plenary approved the proposal to develop a detailed procedure for a new standards development process, as outlined under para. 29."

### **Proposed procedure**

Documents eligible for this procedure are such that are deemed necessary for urgent publication and for which a delay in publishing would hamper their usage. After consultations with the UN/CEFACT Chairman and the Chairman of the Steering Group, the document should be submitted to the secretariat by the chairman of the respective working group no less than five months before any Plenary session.

The procedure involves the publication of the draft document on UN/CEFACT's web site and its circulation to all heads of delegation clearly indicating that it is a draft document for approval. The circulation will be carried out through an electronic procedure according to the list of heads of delegation established after each Plenary session by the secretariat. The two-month period for comments will take effect on the date of the first publication of the document on the UN/CEFACT web site.

If no objections or substantive comments are raised by delegations within the two-month comment period, the document should be considered as provisionally approved, but this approval should further be confirmed by the Plenary. The document submitted for inter-sessional approval should be translated into the three official UN/ECE languages before being confirmed by the Plenary.

Comments on the draft document should be submitted to the secretariat.

Editorial comments by heads of delegation and editorial changes by the United Nations Editor may be accepted before final publication. However, if changes are made to the text, the final version should also receive the approval of the submitting working group chairman.

If substantive comments or objections are made, the document shall then be withdrawn from publication and the comments transmitted to the submitting working group chairman.

**Action**

The procedure proposed above was approved by UN/CEFACT at its sixth session in March 2000. It was decided that it should be used on a trial basis and be subject to a revision.

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