

UN/CEFACT

**Summary report on the Third Global Forum on Fostering Democracy and
Development through e-government,
12-17 March 2001, Naples**

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1. The Forum was a joint G7 and UN event, organised by Italy (as Chair of the G7) and by UNDESA. There were three specific parts: the high level workshops on e-government organised by the UN, the inter-governmental meetings and seminars organised by G-7, and the meeting of the UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN).
2. Participants from the UN included senior personnel from DESA, ESCWA, ECA and myself from ECE. The World Bank was represented by Bruno Lanvin, who is currently Executive Secretary of DOT Force, a joint World Bank-IFC venture to promote ICT for development.
3. The high-level workshops were very challenging. There were many parallel sessions and so it was possible only to participate selectively. I concentrated on those of specific relevance to ECE's work or to my responsibilities regarding my role as the ICT Focal Point. During the workshops, I made short presentations on ECE's implementation of ICT, particularly the inventory of 28 projects which we submitted to New York. I also made interventions regarding the Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development and the plans for regional conferences on e-government in FYRO Macedonia, Georgia, and the Russian Federation. In addition, I introduced the e-government-related work of UN/CEFACT, the progress made in the CEFACT legal Working Group, and ECE's work regarding arbitration and alternative dispute resolution.
4. Among the themes which were examined were: local strategies for e-government (including some highly relevant presentations from Italian, Brazilian and German municipalities), and e-network of Italian environmental agencies; training needs for the public administration regarding e-government; the contribution of e-government to economic and social development; and arguments for a new regulatory paradigm for e-government.
5. The Inter-Governmental Meetings and Seminars were dominated by ministerial declarations about commitment to public sector reform and visions for the future, including the contribution of new technologies to implementing e-government strategies. There were many parallel sessions, mainly dealing with ICT applications in elections, parliaments, and strengthening democracy.
6. The Forum provided a valuable opportunity to publicise UN/ECE's work regarding e-business standards, our role regarding EDI and UN/EDIFACT, and the launch of the Team of Specialists on Internet Enterprise Development. There was also wide interest in the forthcoming Forum on e-Services for Trade, Investment and Enterprise (11-12 June 2001) which will take place in Geneva at the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development.
7. Finally, the UNPAN meeting agreed the outline of its report to the General Assembly for later in 2001. ECE is requested to establish a European network, linking ECE to as many sub-regional organisations concerned with public administration as is feasible. Current European members of UNPAN include the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (Bratislava), the European Institute of Public Administration (Maastricht), the International Institutes for Administrative Sciences (Brussels), and the UN Training Centre (Thessaloniki).

8. The five Regional Commissions are invited to create a global e-network, which fits very well with the strategy already proposed for ECE. Each Regional Commission is also required to provide a list of Advisers on public administration and e-government by the end of May 2001. (UNPAN Secretariat is provided by the UN Department for Public Economics and Public Administration)
9. Participation in the Global Forum enabled me to draw the attention of very senior UN management and high-level delegations from USA and Italy to the achievements of UN/CEFACT and the significance of the programme for Internet enterprise development.
10. Overall, participation in the Global Forum helped to secure recognition of UN/ECE as an innovative organisation, and strengthened our networks within the UN ICT Task Force. I was the only participant from the UN in Geneva.

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