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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

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Reports of rapporteurs

Report of Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific

I. Introduction

1.   The current trend in e-Business is continuously and rapidly driven along with the unprecedented growth of global economy. This is giving rise to many challenges in creating and developing information and communication technology infrastructure and ubiquitous networks that play a vital role in socio-economic development and could better facilitate trade everywhere in the developing world especially in the Asia Pacific region. The countries and regional bodies in the Asia Pacific region, therefore, actively continued their efforts to realize the potential of electronic business and trade facilitation for regional development. This is the report of the Rapporteur for Asia on the development in the region based on his observation on and interaction with regional bodies since the seventeenth UN/CEFACT Plenary session.

II. Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT)

2.   AFACT is positioned to play a very important role in the Asia Pacific region to promote trade integrating electronic mode of business using international standards and best practices especially those developed and promoted by United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). A majority of active members of AFACT have always strived for the joint projects/activities beneficial for all the member countries/economies and all of us have to look forward to develop the ways and means to help each other in collaborative e-commerce and increased adaptability and flexibility in a non-political environment. AFACT reorganized the structure, in the year 2010, into three Executive Committees and developed two working groups. These new working groups focus on specific areas such as eCOO and TT&L (Travel, Tourism and Leisure) in order to lead the future direction of AFACT, increase the contributions that make to the UN,

enhance our capacity and broaden our role and work scope. Participating in the 2011 Mid-term AFACT Steering Committee meeting from 2-4 May in Kaohsiung, Chinese Taipei are exceptional number of delegates, each to discuss continued collaboration and to achieve new goals, as well as provide a platform for strengthening trade facilitation and electronic business activities between member countries/economies.

3.   The twenty ninth AFACT annual meetings were held from 1-4 November 2011 in Taipei, the capital of Chinese Taipei. The event was composed of Steering Committee meeting on 1st November, eAsia Final Evaluation also on 1st November evening, EC/WG meeting (TMC, eCOO WG, and TT&L WG) on 2nd November, Plenary meeting on 3rd November, followed by eAsia Awards Exhibition and EDICOM 2011 conference on 4th November, and eAsia Night on 4th November.

4.   The twenty ninth AFACT Plenary, held on 3rd November 2011, started with Dr. Jyh-Sheng Ke, Chairperson of the 2011 AFACT Steering Committee, who gave an inaugural address and welcomed Dr. Jay-San Chen, Director General, the Bureau of Standards, Metrology and Inspection (BSMI), and followed by Dr. Jay-San Chen, who gave an inaugural address and welcomed the AFACT members.

(a)   The Plenary noted that AFACT membership maintained 19 members from Afghanistan, Australia, Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Vietnam; and two associate members as of 2011. The Plenary also noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran will host AFACT meeting in the year 2012.

(b)   The Plenary noted the committee reports that were informed by Mr. Sugamata on topics discussed in TMC meeting including UN/CEFACT Update, Single Window Interoperable Framework, and CCL Utilization in Asia, as well as the Action Plan; by Mr. Ishihara on the status of TTL WG, including discussions with private sector organizations from Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Thailand; and by Dr. Zargar on the status and conclusions of the eCOO WG meeting.

(c)   The Plenary noted the collaboration plan with UNESCAP for UNNExT and PAA, and discussions on the PAA Legal Framework including legal issues, applications, CA certifications and issues relating to the jurisdiction of PAA in regards to sovereign law.

(d)   The Plenary noted the status of the 2011 eAsia Award and the results of the final evaluation held on November 1, 2011, and the winner of the 2011 eAsia Honorary Award, and also noted that all the top winners had to present during EDICOM held on November 4, 2011.

(e)   The Plenary noted that 30th AFACT Meetings in 2012 will be held by Iran, and 31st AFACT Meetings in 2013 as well as the eAsia Award contest will be hosted by Vietnam.

(f)   The AFACT secretariat thinks that some recommendations or standards delivered by UN/CEFACT may not be suited to requirements of the region. Samples of this barrier include regulations, local languages, etc., which are considered as "gaps". The AFACT secretariat could make proposals to UN/CEFACT regarding such gaps between the regional requirements from AFACT members and UN/CEFACT standards and specifications. This might be done through work to be undertaken by AFACT groups, such as TMC, eCOO, or Single Window projects, to amend UN/CEFACT references where necessary.

(g)   The Plenary encouraged experts from AFACT members to register with UN/CEFACT by filling out the Expert Roster Form, urged the younger generation from AFACT members to join standard related activities to make contributions in the

future, and suggested AFACT members to make change requests to UN/CEFACT based on the gaps found between regional requirements from AFACT members and UN/CEFACT standards and specifications.

5. The fifth eAsia Award ceremony was held on 4 November 2011 from 6.30 – 9.00 pm with the final round evaluation in the four areas: trade facilitation, eBusiness in the public sector, eBusiness in the private sector and bridging the Digital Divide. As a result of evaluation, 4 best practice projects won the award and an honorary award was given to JASTPRO of Japan in recognition of the long-time contributions to regional development and AFACT.

6. The annual EDICOM conference was held on 4 November 2011 at ITeS Building, Taipei City under the theme of "Best Practices in Trade Facilitation and e-Business" – How Single Window Fulfills Trade Facilitation. The Conference covered issues related to single window implementation framework developing collaborative e-Government/e-Business platform for increasing trade competitiveness, experience sharing in data harmonization with WCO data model 3.0 for single window system, realization of green cloud computing – green EDI collaborating with financial EDI, digital opportunity centre, etc.

III. The development of other bodies in the region

Pan Asian eCommerce Alliance (PAA)

7. PAA is an industry led alliance aimed at enabling secure and reliable cross-border transmission of trade and logistic related documents. PAA is the first regional alliance to facilitate cross border paperless trade and was established in July 2000 by three member economies of the Asian region. There are currently thirteen member organizations from regional economies, which include the China International Electronic Commerce Centre (CIECC), TradeVan of Chinese Taipei, TradeLink of Hong Kong, the Nippon Automated Cargo Clearance System Operations Organization (NACCS) of Japan, KTNET, an electronic trade service and solution provider in Korea, TedMev of Macau, DagangNet of Malaysia, CrimsonLogic of Singapore, CAT Telecom of Thailand, Tradegate of Australia, InterCommerce of Phillippines, JASTPRO of Japan, and EDI-I of Indonesia. PAA continues its regular meetings:

- the 38th PAA meeting hosted by MACAU EDI VAN S.A. (TEDMEV) was held from 4th to 5th November 2011;

- the 39th PAA meeting would be held in Penang, Malaysia from 6th to 9th December 2011.

8. PAA also continues projects, which include:

- B2B Projects: Commercial Documents Exchange;

- B2B2G Projects: Automated Manifest/Declaration Service;

- ECO Project;

- Global Visibility Project: cross border container tracking between Asia and Europe.

IV. Conclusion and recommendation

9. The region continues strong commitment to the implementation of paperless trading and electronic business as demonstrated by the efforts of such regional bodies as AFACT and PAA. UN/CEFACT needs to continue its engagement with regional bodies in the Asia

and the Pacific to coordinate regional inputs with its development and delivery of global instruments.

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