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Reports of rapporteurs**Report of the Rapporteur for Asia and the Pacific****I. Introduction**

1. The current trend in e-Business is continuously and rapidly being driven along with the unprecedented growth of the global economy. This is giving rise to many challenges in creating and developing ICT infrastructure and ubiquitous networks, which play a vital role in socio-economic development and can 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 a report on the development in the region based on my observation on and interaction with regional bodies since the eighteenth 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 UN/CEFACT. A majority of active members of AFACT have always striven for the joint projects/activities beneficial for all the member countries/economies, and we all look forward to developing the ways and means to help each other in collaborative e-commerce and increased adaptability and flexibility in a non-political environment.

The structure of AFACT is as follows.

- (a) The Plenary is held once a year and all members will attend and decide the key issues;
- (b) The Steering Committee (StC) manages and coordinates AFACT activity;
- (c) The executive committees (EC): AFACT has three ECs, Business Domain committee (BDC), Technology & Methodology Committee (TMC) and Community Support Committee (CSC);

- (d) Working groups (WG): Under BDC there are two WGs, eCOO (e-Country of Origin Certificate) and TT&L (Travel, Tourism and Leisure).

3. The 30th mid-term meeting of the AFACT Steering Committee was held on 21 and 22 May in 2012 in Kish island, Islamic Republic of Iran. Many AFACT members attended.

4. The 30th AFACT annual meeting was held from 19 to 20 November 2012 in Tehran. The event was composed of Steering Committee meeting on 20 November, executive committees and working group meetings on 19 and 20 November, and a Plenary meeting on 21 November, followed by the EDICOM 2012 conference on 22 November.

5. At the 30th AFACT Plenary, on 21 November, Dr. Mahmood Zargar, Chair of the Steering Committee 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 (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Viet Nam; and one associate members Pan Asian e-Commerce Alliance (PAA) as of 2012. The Plenary also noted that Viet Nam will host the AFACT meeting in 2013;

- (b) The Plenary noted the reports by

- (i) Mr. Sugamata on topics discussed in the TMC meeting including UN/CEFACT Update, Single Window Interoperable Framework, and Core Component Library Utilization in Asia, as well as the Action Plan;

- (ii) Mr. Suzuki on the status of TTL WG, including discussions on SLH (small scale lodging house) information trial project with private sector organizations from Chinese Taipei, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand; and also on the project on Destination Travel Information (DTI), which was proposed by the Republic of Korea. This project will be submitted to UN/CEFACT after receiving at least three letters of endorsement by three HoDs of AFACT. So far, Japan and the Republic of Korea supported this new project and Thailand and the Islamic Republic of Iran will probably also support it;

- (iii) Dr. Mahmood Zargar also presented the status and conclusions of the eCOO WG meeting;

- (c) Secured, authenticated, accountable interchange platform (Sharp). The presentation of Sharp was done by the Republic of Korea. Starting a new working group on the Sharp project under BDC is now under discussion;

- (d) Dr. Mahmood Zargar reported that he attended the Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism (ROC-TF) in Colombo last November;

- (e) The Plenary noted the collaboration plan with UNESCAP for UNNExT and PAA, ISOTC154, and UNTDED-JMA;

(f) The Plenary noted that the 31th AFACT Meeting, as well as the eAsia Award contest, would be hosted by Viet Nam in 2013, and the 32th AFACT Meeting would be held in Thailand in 2014.

6. The annual EDICOM conference was held on 22 November 2012 at the Iran International Exhibitions Center, Tehran, under the theme, “Single Window, From Planning to Implementation”. The Conference covered issues related to Single Window implementation, including Stakeholder Coordination in Implementing a Single Window, Policy considerations on the Electronic Communications Convention and e-Government Interoperability Framework for SMART Collaborative e-Government.

III. ASEAN Single Window

7. The following is quoted from a report ‘ASEAN Single Window Hearing Survey 2012’ issued by Japan Association for Simplification of International Trade Procedure (JASTPRO). The hearing survey was carried out from July to October 2012.

(a) ASEAN is now working to compose the “ASEAN Community” by 2015. In the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, elaborated in 2007, it is regarded that the ASEAN Single Window is an important element to allow the Free Circulation of Goods, reinforcing ASEAN as a “Single Market and Single Production Base”. The ASEAN Single Window is, in that sense, said to be the Corner Stone of ASEAN Community. 2012 is the target year to establish the ASEAN Single Window and each country will complete their National Single Window ready to be linked to the ASEAN Single Window (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) although for some countries the allowance of another three years has been given, i.e. by 2015 (Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam)

(b) In ASEAN a “National Single Window” is defined as a SYSTEM (in many cases, it will be equipped with some physical server systems and associated mechanical facilities) that enables:

- a single submission of data and information;
- a single and synchronous processing of data and information;
- a single decision making for customs release and clearance.

(c) “ASEAN Single Window” is defined as the ENVIRONMENT (actually it will mean a kind of Network system) where National Single Windows of Member Countries are operated and are integrated all together.

IV. Conclusion and recommendation

8. The region continues to be strongly committed to implementing paperless trading and electronic business as demonstrated by the efforts of AFACT. UN/CEFACT needs to continue its engagement with regional bodies in the Asia and the Pacific region to coordinate regional inputs with its development and delivery of global instruments. _