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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

(Item 4 of the provisional agenda of the
Centre for Facilitation of Procedures
and Practices for Administration,
Commerce and Transport (CEFACT)
(First session, 17-21 March 1997)

INTERIM CEFACT PROCEDURES

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Submitted by the WP.4 Bureau

The following document was prepared in accordance with the WP.4 Bureau Proposal for Migration Plan (TRADE/WP.4/CRP.122/Rev.1) approved during the September 1996 WP.4 Session.

This document is for approval.

1/ To be renamed the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

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RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CENTRE

CHAPTER I

Sessions

Rule 1

Plenary Sessions of the Centre shall be held :

(a) At least once a year on dates fixed by the Centre, after consultation with the Executive Secretary, at previous meetings ;

(b) At the request of the majority of the participating member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC after consultation with the Executive Secretary ;

(c) On such other occasions as the Chairperson, in consultation with the Vice-Chairpersons and the Executive Secretary, deems necessary.

Rule 2

Plenary Sessions shall ordinarily be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). The Centre may, with the concurrence of the Secretary-General, and in keeping with General Assembly provisions on the holding of meetings away from headquarters, decide to hold a particular session elsewhere.

Rule 3

The Executive Secretary shall, at least 10 weeks before the commencement of a Plenary session of the Centre, distribute a notice of the dates of the session. At least 6 weeks before the opening date of a session, the provisional agenda and any basic documents shall be distributed, provided that, in exceptional cases, the Executive Secretary may transmit such documents not less than twenty-one days before the opening of the session; the preferred method of document distribution will be by electronic means.

Rule 4

Participation in the Plenary of the Centre is open to ECE member States, other UN Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC.

CHAPTER II

Agenda

Rule 5

The provisional agenda for each Plenary session shall be drawn up by the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Plenary officers of the Centre.

Rule 6

The provisional agenda for any Plenary session shall include :

(a) Items arising from previous Plenary sessions of the Centre ;

(b) Items proposed by the Economic Commission for Europe and the Committee on the Development of Trade[1/];

(c) Items proposed by participating member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC;

(d) Any other items which the Plenary officers see fit to include ;

(e) Any other items which the Executive Secretary sees fit to include ;

(f) Items proposed by a specialized agency in accordance with the agreements of relationship concluded between the United Nations and such agencies.

Rule 7

The first item upon the provisional agenda for each Plenary session shall be the adoption of the agenda.

Rule 8

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The Centre may amend the agenda at any time.

CHAPTER III

Representation and credentials

Rule 9

Each participating member State, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC shall be represented in the Centre by an accredited representative.

Rule 10

A representative may be accompanied to the Plenary session of the Centre by alternate representatives and advisers and, when absent, may be replaced by an alternate representative.

Rule 11

The credentials of each representative appointed to the Centre together with a designation of alternate representatives, shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary.

Rule 12

The Executive Secretary shall examine the credentials and when necessary report upon them to the Centre.

CHAPTER IV

Officers

Rule 13

The Plenary shall elect a Chairperson and 5 Vice Chairpersons in accordance with the following procedures. A nomination process may be established to propose candidates for election to the Plenary positions.

(a) The Chairperson and two Vice Chairpersons shall be nominated by Member states of the ECE.

(b) Two Vice Chairpersons shall be nominated by those participating Member States of the United Nations not members of the Commission.

(c) One Vice Chairperson shall be nominated by the intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC.

(d) All officers shall be elected for a 2 year term of office, renewable for one additional 2 year term. After 4 continuous years in office, an Officer shall stand down but will be eligible for re-election after a period of 2 years out of office.

Rule 14

If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, or any part thereof, one of the Vice-Chairpersons, designated by the Chairperson, shall preside.

Rule 15

If the Chairperson ceases to represent a member of the Centre, or is so incapacitated that he/she can no longer hold office, one of the Vice-Chairpersons, designated by the Centre, shall become Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term in accordance with Rule 13. In that case, or if one of the Vice-Chairpersons ceases to represent a member of the Centre, or is so incapacitated that he/she can no longer hold office, the Centre shall elect another Vice-Chairperson for the unexpired portion of the term.

Rule 16

The Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

Rule 17

The Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall participate in the Plenary sessions of the Centre as such and not as the representative of the member by whom he/she was accredited. When appropriate, the Centre shall admit an alternate representative to represent that member in the meetings of the Centre and to exercise its right to vote.

CHAPTER V

Secretariat

Rule 18

The Executive Secretary shall act in that capacity at all meetings of the Centre and of its Subsidiary Bodies. He/she may delegate his functions under these rules of procedures to another member of the ECE Secretariat.

The Executive Secretary or his representative may at any Plenary session make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

Rule 19

The Executive Secretary shall direct the staff provided by the Secretary-General and required by the Centre.

Rule 20

The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for the necessary arrangements being made for Plenary sessions.

Rule 21

The Executive Secretary, in carrying out his/her functions, shall act on behalf of the Secretary-General.

CHAPTER VI

Conduct of business

Rule 22

A quorum at the Plenary session shall be constituted by the attendance of not less than 20 members of the Centre which shall include one member from other than ECE member States.

Rule 23

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him/her elsewhere by these rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each Plenary session of the Centre, shall direct the discussion, ensure the observance of these rules, and shall accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote, and announce decisions. The Chairperson may also call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 24

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may raise a point of order. In this case, the Chairperson shall immediately state his/her ruling. If it is challenged, the Chairperson shall forthwith submit his/her ruling to the Plenary session for decision and it shall stand unless overruled.

Rule 25

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority. In addition of the proposer of the motion, one representative shall be allowed to speak in favour of, and one representative against, the motion.

Rule 26

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate whether or not any other representative has signified his/her wish to speak. Not more than two representatives may be granted permission to speak against the closure.

Rule 27

The Chairperson shall take the sense of the Centre on a motion for closure. If the Centre is in favour of the closure, the Chairperson shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 28

The Chairperson may announce time limits allowed to each speaker.

Rule 29

The preferred way of reaching decisions shall be consensus. However, where consensus cannot be achieved, principal motions and resolutions can be put to the vote in the order of their submission unless the Plenary session decides otherwise.

When an amendment revises, adds to or deletes from a proposal, the amendment shall be put to the vote first, and if it is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be put to the vote.

If two or more amendments are moved to a proposal, the Plenary session shall vote first on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, then, if necessary, on the amendment next further removed and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote.

Rule 30

The Plenary session may, at the request of a representative, decide to put a motion or resolution to the vote in parts. If this is done, the text resulting from the series of votes shall be put to the vote as a whole.

CHAPTER VII

Voting

Rule 31

Each participating member State, intergovernmental organization and non-governmental organization which has been granted consultative status by ECOSOC member of the Plenary session shall have one vote.

Rule 32

Where a vote is called, decisions of the Centre shall be made by a majority of the members present at a Plenary session and who participate in the voting. For particular issues, the Chairman may recommend that decisions be taken by a qualified majority.

Rule 33

The Centre shall take no action in respect of any country without the agreement of the Government of that country.

Rule 34

A vote at a Plenary session of the Centre shall normally take place by show of hands. If any representative requests a roll call, a roll call shall be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the member States, other UN Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC.

Rule 35

All elections shall be decided by secret ballot, unless, in the absence of any objection, the Centre decides to proceed without taking a ballot on an agreed candidate or slate.

Rule 36

If a vote is equally divided upon matters other than elections, a second vote shall be taken either after a suspension for consultation or at the next meeting. If this vote also results in equality, the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

CHAPTER VIII

Languages

Rule 37

English, French and Russian shall be the working languages of the Plenary sessions.

Rule 38

Speeches made during the Plenary session in any of the working languages will be interpreted into the other working languages.

Rule 39

The report from the Plenary session should normally be approved within the framework of the session.

Once agreed, the report shall be distributed to all participating member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which have been granted consultative status by ECOSOC and published on the UN electronic distribution system.

CHAPTER X

Rule 40

Where an item proposed for the provisional agenda for a Plenary session contains a proposal for new activities to be undertaken by the United Nations relating to matters which are of direct concern to one or more specialized agencies, the Executive Secretary shall enter into consultation with the agency or agencies concerned and report to the Centre on the means of achieving coordinated use of the resources of the respective agencies.

CHAPTER XI

Interface with working Group

Rule 41

The Center may establish working groups according to its procedures to assist it in carrying out its tasks.

Rule 42

The Centre shall establish a Steering Group. The Steering Group will be responsible for providing the operational interface between the Centre and its working groups.

CHAPTER XII

Reports

Rule 43

The Centre shall submit to the Committee on the Development of Trade [1/] a full report on its activities and plans, including those of any subsidiary body, once a year.

CHAPTER XIII

Amendments and suspensions

Rule 44

Any of these rules of procedures may be amended or suspended by the Centre provided that the proposed amendments or suspensions do not attempt to set aside the terms of reference laid down by the Committee on the Development of Trade [1/] as contained in document TRADE/R.650.

[1/] To be renamed the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development