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COMMITTEE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

Item 5 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)

CEFACT WORK PROGRAMME

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Submitted by the Secretariat

This document contains a framework for the programme of work approved by the Committee on the Development of Trade during its 45th session. Some minor editorial changes have been undertaken by the secretariat.

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PROGRAMME OF WORK - TRADE FACILITATION

Description:

The work programme shall allow for continuity between the existing WP.4 work programme and that of CEFACT. This requires that it build upon the existing work programme: eliminating those elements which are no longer relevant and, where appropriate, revising existing elements, and incorporating new ones. In developing this work programme the Centre must consider both the rapid growth in information technology, and the components of Electronic Commerce. The availability of resources also needs to be considered.

In all areas of its work programme the Centre shall evaluate and take into special consideration the needs of countries with economies in transition. It shall also provide support to and coordinate with agencies working with developing countries and countries in transition in the area of trade as well as international standardization bodies (for example the other UN regional commissions, UNCTAD, ITC, WCO, WTO, ISO and IEC).

Ongoing activities:

(1) Analyze, review and model the key elements of international transactions in commerce, transport and administration, with particular emphasis on their information content, the communication methods used (for example, paper or UN/EDIFACT) and data transmission.

(2) Provide a forum for institutional cooperation in formulating and implementing international trade facilitation strategies and for reconciling official governmental and commercial requirements.

(3) Develop recommendations which simplify, harmonize or eliminate practices and procedures used in international transactions. Then publish, promote and report on the use of such recommendations.

(4) Ensure that UN/EDIFACT and related activities effectively serve and provide the tools for electronic commerce activities, the facilitation requirements of international trade, administration, commerce and transport. In particular, respond to any requests for message development or maintenance coming out of the work on the International Trade Transaction Model. Where appropriate, this work may be done through the development of model scenarios and, based upon these scenarios, recommended message implementation guidelines, message subsets or document layout keys.

(5) Identify and evaluate legal constraints that affect: procedures and practices in international administrative commercial and transport transactions; and the use of tools for facilitating international trade.

(6) Propose and recommend practical solutions to these legal constraints, when appropriate in cooperation with organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

(7) Promote the development of international trade facilitation initiatives as well as related initiatives covered by the work of the Centre.

(8) Formalize the relationship between WTO, WCO and CEFACT to provide a proper forum to give technical assistance.

(9) Promote and support the establishment and ongoing activities of national trade facilitation organizations in all countries, taking advantage of the best tools and practices currently in use in the world. This shall be done in cooperation with the UN regional commissions, ITC and UNCTAD.

(10) Maintain close liaison with national trade facilitation organizations in order to better understand their trade facilitation needs, encourage cooperation in trade facilitation and improve the flow of trade facilitation information to all countries.

(11) Taking into account the developments in the field of information technology, identify electronic information exchange needs in the areas of administration, commerce and transport. As part of this work:

(i) review, monitor and evaluate the worldwide use of electronic exchange of data in order to better understand the opportunities for EDI in the world and in the multisectoral business environment. In particular, monitor the results of business procedures based upon EDI;

(ii) identify potential new requirements for world and multisectoral EDI harmonization activities and work for their development;

(iii) monitor developments in information technology which are likely to facilitate information exchange in administration, commerce and transport, notably in an international context.

(12) Maintain and develop the UN/EDIFACT standard, update the UN/EDIFACT directories and related deliverables accordingly, analyze supporting requirements and, based upon scenarios/models, define interchange profiles capable of meeting these needs through a sequence of UN/EDIFACT messages and, to that end:

(i) identify, promote and, where appropriate, propose information technology developments and initiatives which are likely to bring practical results to the exchange of information in international administration, commerce and transport including in liaison with international standardization bodies;

(ii) provide an open forum for the continued development of UN/EDIFACT and all its components, in a global, multi-sectoral and coherent manner;

(iii) produce directories and related documents/products for users of UN/EDIFACT.