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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for
Administration, Commerce and Transport

third session, 16-20 March 1998

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT OF THE CEFACT STEERING GROUP (CSG) Meeting *
Geneva, 18-21 August 1997**

This document has been submitted by the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) for information and translation as required under the CEFACT procedures outlined in document TRADE/R.650. It is for information only. Items to be decided upon by the CEFACT Plenary will be presented in a separate report from the Chair to the CSG.

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Members Present:

Ray Walker, Chairman
Ray Battersby
Claude Chiaramonti
Ernst Deeg
Alex de Lijster
Dumitrache Dima
David Dobbing
David Marsh
Klaus-Dieter Naujok
Irene Navarro
Emile Peeters
Christina Wallen-Rahlen
Christoph Wolf

Secretariat Present:

Hans Hansell, Chief of Section
Dae Won Choi
Virginia Cram-Martos
Will Keenan
Jean Kubler

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Santiago Mila
Kenji Itoh

Observers Present:

Rory Power
Thomas Wheel

Apologies From:

Siti Aminah Abdhullah
Borislav Georgiev

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. To encourage the greatest possible openness in the process and input into its decisions and recommendations, the CSG encourages a wide circulation of its reports. The majority of the decisions made during this meeting were recorded in the Report of the Chair of the CSG to the CEFACT Plenary (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.1). When this is the case, reference is made to that report, but the text of items contained in that report, such as the mandates approved for submission to the Plenary, is not duplicated here. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Internet WWW address: The report from the CEFACT Plenary with its final decisions on the proposals made in the report can be obtained from:

MANDATES FOR APPROVAL

2. As reflected below, it was agreed to establish a permanent working group for codes, to look at overall policy and, in particular, common procedures for maintenance of the CEFACT codes not covered by UN/EDIFACT. As a result, a mandate was drafted and agreed upon.

3. To encourage consistency, it was decided to make the wording for the various parts of the mandates as standard as possible. After editing, primarily to accomplish consistency, final mandates for the following permanent working groups were approved for inclusion in the Report of the CSG Chair and presentation to the CEFACT Plenary for final approval:

- Trade Facilitation Working Group [changed by CEFACT to International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG)]
- Techniques & Methodologies Working Group (TMWG)
- Legal Working Group (LWG)
- Codes Working Group (CDWG)
- Business Practices Working Group [changed by CEFACT to Business Analysis Working Group (BAWG)]

4. It was also decided to establish an ad hoc working group on electronic commerce to identify a definition of electronic commerce for use within CEFACT, the CEFACT work items/areas contributing to electronic commerce (ec) and new areas where CEFACT might contribute to ec without duplicating the work undertaken by other organizations. Mr. C. Chiaramonti was appointed to chair this group, with initial membership consisting of E. Peeters, T. Wheel, K-D Naujok and J. Kubler. Copies of the terms of reference for this group and the UN/LOCODE Ad hoc Working Group approved at the May 1997 CSG meeting were to be included, for information, in the report of the Chair to the CEFACT Plenary.

MIGRATION ISSUES

5. The Chair was requested to include in his report to the CEFACT Plenary the plan for migration of GE.2 activities, agreed by the CSG, which permitted the September 1997 session of GE.2 to be its last session. The CSG noted that if the September 1997 Anaheim JRT approved a mandate for the UN/EDIFACT activities, then the last GE.1 meeting would probably be in March 1998.

6. It was decided to recommend to CEFACT that "champions" be established for each approved working group to be responsible for the establishment of the democratic process within each group and the timely completion of each group's terms of reference and procedures. In the case of groups without a base in existing groups, being the "champion" might include convening the first meeting [note: this decision was further developed during CEFACT and is clearly set out in Annex C to the CEFACT Plenary Meeting Report (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/12)].

CEFACT WORK PROGRAMME

7. After discussion, it was decided that the document presented to CEFACT at its September session would cover primarily the methodology for establishing and maintaining the work programme, with the understanding that significant progress on the work programme's content needed to take place so that this could be presented to the March 1998 CEFACT Plenary.

8. It was further agreed that while some of the details for filling out the work programme might be based on the information provided in TRADE/WP.4/R.800, the primary reference for this work must be the work programme approved by the Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER UN REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Other UN Regional Commissions

9. The secretariat and CSG Chair reported on a successful mission to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) where a framework agreement was developed for cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in the area of trade facilitation. The CSG endorsed the secretariat's proposal to work on the development of frameworks for cooperation with all of the UN Regional Commissions. It further decided to recommend to the CEFACT Plenary that special representatives be appointed for each of the UN Regional Commissions as focal points for cooperation.

World Trade Organization

10. The secretariat, the CSG Chair and C. Wallen-Rahlen reported on the high-level inter-secretariat meeting between WTO, ECE, UNCTAD, ICC and WCO held in mid-July 1997. They believed that this meeting had been successful in showing to the WTO secretariat that organizations in this area are already cooperating and coordinating their work. They also believed that the WTO secretariat had no intention of doing substantive work in trade facilitation. Nonetheless, some CSG members were not sure that the message about ongoing work and cooperation between existing organizations was getting across to WTO members who make the final decisions.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO), CALS and the UN/ECE, ISO, IEC MoU

11. The Chair, with the support of T. Wheel, reported that the relationship with the CALS could greatly improved over the last 5 months and that M. Conroy (France) and R. Walker had both made presentations on UN/EDIFACT at the June 1997 International CALS Conference. They also reported support for the UN/ECE's position that any coordination needs agreed upon as a result of the report from ISO's High Level Steering Group for CALS (HLSGC) should be handled by existing mechanisms under the UN/ECE, ISO, IEC MoU. This is an important issue as the creation of new groups might result in an eventual proliferation of "coordination bodies" as various other important industry groups could then come forward and demand the same type of platform for meeting their needs.

12. K-D Naujok called the CSG participant's attention to the relevance of JTC-1's Business Teams work. In particular he noted the next meeting of this group, which will be specifically on electronic commerce, from 13-14 November 1997.

STEP

13. It was agreed that the paper submitted to the CSG on STEP joint development of UN/EDIFACT messages should be handled by the ESG and the JRT and the secretariat was asked to forward this document to them.

CSG PROCEDURES

14. Procedures were approved for submission to the CEFACT Plenary as an annex to the Report of the Chair of the CSG (TRADE/CEFACT/1997/CRP.1). Included within these, are procedures to allow an empowered group to appeal to the Plenary in the case where a draft mandate has been significantly modified by the CSG. This was done because such a procedure does not exist in TRADE/R.650 (Recommendations for the establishment of CEFACT) and it was believed to be necessary. Because of the inclusion of these appeal procedures, the CSG decided to request the Plenary, exceptionally, to approve the internal CSG procedures.

EVENTUAL REVISIONS TO TRADE/R.650 (RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CEFACT)

15. In the light of questions posed by the Legal Rapporteurs Team, it was decided to request that CEFACT confirm that UN/ECE (CEFACT) Recommendations to governments cannot be approved by working groups but only by the CEFACT Plenary.

16. The CSG decided to also ask the Plenary to have the secretariat officially open an amendment file to TRADE/R.650. Then, every two years, eventual amendments as submitted by the Plenary or the CSG should be reviewed and consolidated into a formal proposal for the revision of TRADE/R.650.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS, INCLUDING MEETING DATES FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS**Meeting dates for the next 18 months:**

17. **Decision:** The following meeting schedule was agreed upon for the next 18 months:

1997	December 1-4,	Geneva
1998	January 26-29,	Concord, USA
1998	June 15-18,	Geneva
1998	October 26-29,	Geneva
1999	January 25-28,	Location to be confirmed
