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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and
Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport
Fourth session, 14-15 September 1998

REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION

1. The Centre for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices in Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT) held its fourth session in Geneva from 14 to 15 September 1998, under the chairmanship of Mr. Henri Martre (France).

2. Participants in the meeting included representatives from the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America. The European Union (EU)was also represented.

The following inter-governmental organizations participated:

Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The following United Nations bodies were also represented:

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

The following non-governmental organizations participated:

European Electronic Messaging Association (EEMA), International Article Numbering Association (EAN) International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (S.W.I.F.T.) and the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation.

3. Observers present at the invitation of the secretariat included representatives from the Association of Committees on Simplified Procedures for International Trade within the European Community and the European Free Trade Association (EUROPRO), Electronic Commerce Europe Association (ECEA), European Board for EDI/EC Standardization (EBES), International Federation of Inspection Agencies (IFIA), Taipei EDIFACT Committee (TEC)

Note to this report: In accordance with the procedure adopted under agenda item 3, the texts for the decisions made during this meeting were approved prior to the close of the session. These agreed decisions are shown in boldface type in the following report.

Item 1 - Adoption of the agenda

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/11	Report of the third CEFACT session
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/12/Rev.1	Provisional agenda for the fourth CEFACT session

4. **The provisional agenda (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/12/Rev.1) was adopted.**

Item 2 - Election of Officers

5. The delegation of Bulgaria nominated Mr. Henri Martre (France) as Chairman of CEFACT. This nomination was seconded by the delegation of Korea and Mr. Martre was unanimously elected.

6. One Vice-chair position for non-UN/ECE member states was now empty following the retirement of Mr. Harvey Bates (Australia). The Plenary expressed its gratitude for the outstanding contribution Mr. Bates had made to the formation of UN/CEFACT as well as to the work of its predecessor, WP.4 and its meeting of experts, GE.1. He had been twice previously, the UN/EDIFACT Rapporteur for Australia/New Zealand, a Vice-chair of GE.1 and its last Chair. He had also made an essential contribution to the migration of GE.1 activities to UN/CEFACT and the UN/EDIFACT Working Group.

7. The delegation of Australia nominated Mr. Raul Colcher (Brazil) as Vice-Chair of CEFACT for non-UN/ECE member states. This nomination was seconded by the delegation of Japan and Mr. Colcher was unanimously elected.

8. In recognition of the need to maintain geographical balance between the two UN/ECE Vice Chairs, the importance of North America's support for the work of UN/CEFACT, and short term organizational issues in North America, the Plenary decided to delay the election for the empty Vice-Chair for UN/ECE member states until the March 1999 Plenary. However, if no North American nomination for this position were to be forthcoming prior to 15 December 1998, the secretariat was instructed to issue a general request to all delegations for nominations.

9. Based on the procedure approved at the September 1997 Plenary for the replacement of CEFACT Steering Group members who resign during their terms of office, which gives the original nominating delegation the first option for nominating a replacement to finish the term of the resigning member; Mr. Pierre Georget (France) was confirmed by the Plenary to replace Mr Claude Chiaramonti (France) and Ms. Adriana Sirzea (Romania) was confirmed by the Plenary to replace Mr. Dimitrache Dima (Romania).

10. The Plenary then also recognized the long-standing commitment and significant contributions of Mr. Dima and Mr. Chiaramonti to UN/CEFACT's work. Mr. Dima was the head of the Romanian delegation for many years, a vice-chair of GE.2, a vice-chair of WP.4 and a CSG member. Mr. Chiaramonti, was a vice-chair of GE.1, a CSG member and Chair of EBES.

11. The remaining vacancy had originally been filled by a nominee from the Asia EDIFACT Board. Following it July 1998 re-structuring, its successor organization had not yet been able to find a suitable candidate for the CEFACT Steering Group. They were sure, however, that they would be able to nominate a candidate, by 15 January 1999, for the CSG positions that would be up for election in March 1999.

12. The delegation of Germany then nominated Mr. Peter Guldentops (S.W.I.F.T.) to be a member of the CEFACT Steering Group. This nomination was seconded by the United Kingdom and Mr. Guldentops was unanimously elected.

Agenda item 3 - CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) Reports

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1998/10	[Final] Report from the March 1998 session of the Meeting of Experts on Data Elements and Automatic Data Processing (GE.1)
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/14	Report of the CSG Meetings of January and March 1998
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.22	Report of the CSG Meeting of June 1998
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/13	Report of the CSG Chair to the CEFACT Plenary

13. The Plenary approved the final, March 1998, Report of the Meeting of Experts on Data Elements and Automatic Data Processing (GE.1) as found in document TRADE/CEFACT/GE.1/1998/10 and, in adopting this report, brought to a close the work of this body.

14. The Plenary noted the Reports from the January and March 1998 and June 1998 CEFACT Steering Group meetings (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/14 and TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.22).

15. The Chair of the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG), Mr. R. Walker (United Kingdom) introduced document TRADE/CEFACT/1997/13, Report of the CEFACT Steering Group Chair to the CEFACT Plenary. In opening his statements he noted that the CSG had already met during the morning of 14 September and, at that meeting, had approved publication by the secretariat of the D.98B UN/EDIFACT directory based on a clean audit statement from the Directory Audit Team (DAT) and the recommendation of the Chair of the UN/EDIFACT Working Group.

16. The Plenary noted the Report of the CSG Chair to the CEFACT Plenary document (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/13), after having made the following decisions based on the contents of that report.

17. The following procedure for approval of the CEFACT Plenary report was approved on a trial basis for this session in order to eliminate the need for delegations to remain in Geneva for an additional day in order to approve the report. The use of this procedure will be reviewed at the March 1999 session.

- **In order to ensure that decisions are approved before the close of the session, the concept of a summary decision list will be introduced. This will work as follows:**

  - **At the beginning of the second, and any subsequent days, the summary text of decisions taken the day before will be approved.**

  - **On the last day, at the end of the final session, the summary text of decisions for that day will be approved.**

  - **These approved texts will then be incorporated into the draft report.**

- **Paper copies of the draft report will still be available at the end of the day following the close of the meeting for those delegations who remain in Geneva and wish to have it.**

- **Between 48 and 72 hours after the close of the meeting, an electronic copy will be circulated by e-mail and, where requested, by fax.**

- **With the exception of the approved decisions, which cannot be modified, delegations will have 30 days to comment on the contents of the draft report.**

  - **Changes to the report which refer to a delegation's own position, statements or comments will be accepted verbatim by the secretariat.**

  - **Changes that relate to other matters will be approved by a team consisting of the CEFACT Chair, or officer(s) of the Plenary nominated by the Chair, and the secretariat.**

- **The resulting, final report will be published both electronically on the World Wide Web (WWW) and officially by the UN.**

- **At the beginning of the next Plenary meeting, acceptance of the report will be confirmed.**

18. The Plenary approved the following rules for the submission of documents to the CEFACT Plenary:

- **Documents for the Plenary will be accepted from:**

  - **UN/CEFACT delegations;**
  - **The CSG and its Chair;**
  - **UN/CEFACT Rapporteurs;**
  - **Chairs of working groups, provided the document in question has been approved by their working group;**
  - **The secretariat, after joint review by the head of the secretariat and the Chair of the CSG.**

- **Personal submissions will not be allowed.**

- **Input documents will not be accepted if they carry any copyright.**

19. CEFACT also approved the following procedure in order to ensure that requests and communications between working groups and between working groups and the CSG take place on a timely basis as well as to establish a central record of such requests.

- **All formal communications between working groups, or between the CSG and working groups, are to be by resolutions (i.e. approved by the working group that is generating the request/communication).**

- **Resolutions must be copied to the UN/ECE secretariat.**

- **The UN/ECE secretariat will establish a central record containing all resolutions.**

- **The UN/ECE will regularly circulate this central record via a list server to the chairs of all the working groups and the CSG members.**

Agenda item 4 - Reports from Mandated Groups and other, related papers

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/7/Rev.1	Draft Recommendation No. 16 - UN/LOCODE - Code for Ports and Other Locations
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/23	Report from the Chair of the ITPWG
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/24	Report from the Business Analysis Working Group (BAWG)
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.33	Business Analysis Working Group meeting Report
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.23	Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMWG) - Chairman's report
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.26	Report from the EWG Group
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.28	Business Analysis and Modelling Guidelines for BPAWG
- TRADE/CEFACT/19988/CRP.29	Explanation of TMWG decision to use UML for Business Process and Information Modelling
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/25	Report from the SIMAC
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/25/Add.1	Report from the SIMAC - Add.1
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.25	Proposal for a UN Repository for XML Tags

20. The secretariat introduced a revision of Recommendation 16 – UN/LOCODE – Code for Ports and Other Locations. A previous draft had been discussed at the March 1998 plenary.

21. The Plenary approved the revised Recommendation 16 as found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/7/Rev.1, subject to the secretariat undertaking a final verification as to whether or not the words "such as place of receipt and delivery" should be deleted in the third paragraph of the Recommendation.

22. The following reports from the UN/CEFACT working groups were noted by the Plenary, as well as oral presentations from the Codes Working Group (CDWG), and the Legal Working Group (LWG):

- **International Trade Procedures Working Group, ITPWG (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/23)**
- **Business Analysis Working Group, BAWG (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/24 and TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.33)**
- **Techniques and Methodologies Working Group, TMWG (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.23**
- **UN/EDIFACT Working Group, EWG (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.26)**
- **Ad hoc group on SIMPL-EDI and Forms and Web-based EDI, SIMAC (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/25 and TRADE/CEFACT/1998/25/Add.1)**

23. Highlights from the above reports and subsequent discussions are given below. Further information on all of these groups can be found at the UN/CEFACT Internet site at http://www.unece.org/cefact.

ITPWG

24. There are currently two proposed new Recommendations under development on System Audit Based Controls (SABC) and Pre-Shipment Inspection (PSI). It is planned to present pro-forma Recommendations to the March ’99 Plenary with adoption planned for the March 2000 Plenary. The new Recommendation on pre shipment inspection (PSI) was seen as essential and complimentary to that on system audit based controls.

25. A major ITPWG priority was the development of a revised Recommendation 4 (National Facilitation Committees) following requests from a large number of countries. The latest draft had been produced jointly by the UN/ECE and UNCTAD secretariats and would be sent to Heads of delegation by the end of the year with the objective of having it adopted at the March 1999 Plenary.

26. A potential Recommendation on Aligned Documents and their Electronic Equivalents is being considered, but development is on hold until the ad hoc group on SIMPL-EDI, forms and Web-based EDI submits its report, and the outcome of the SITPRO ElecTra (previously ADEEP) project trials are known.

27. By 31 October 1998, at the latest, there will be a complete, revised, basic model of the International Trade Transaction (ITT) available on the UN’s website (www.unece.org/cefact). As well as the basic model, and the available national models, the group intends to develop ‘framework models’ of border-crossing activities in support of the border crossing project of the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI).

28. The delegation from the Netherlands, speaking on the part of the World Customs Organization (WCO), reported that, in respect of the new recommendation on PSI, it was important to publish a recommendation with a balanced trade facilitation point of view and they welcomed the announcement that a draft recommendation would be available for the March 1999 Plenary. Concerning system audit based controls, the Kyoto revision will address this in the Customs area and will provide guidelines in related areas such as risk assessment. WCO is of the opinion that audit based controls are crucial for

the customs function. However, their use may be limited to areas such as the collection of customs duties and taxes and the oversee of other financial regulations. Their relevance is less evident in areas such as the enforcement of prohibitions and restrictions where illegal activities, by their very nature, do not leave an audit trail and immediate intervention on the frontier may be necessary. He requested that the working group take these elements into account.

BAWG (now BPAWG)

29. The group had met the previous week in Brussels. At this meeting they discussed their original plans to develop an example based on electronic tendering within public procurement, deciding that this particular example would take to long to complete. They, therefore, decided to, instead, to develop an example based on the International Trade Transaction (ITT) model. The choice of the ITT model was based on its being a major component of UN/CEFACT’s work programme.

30. Successful completion of an example based on the ITT model would confirm whether the template proposed for this work by the TMWG was adequate for other groups to use in identifying their specific business problems. An example based on the ITT model could also serve as input to the business process analysis work at the highest trade facilitation level as well as for the basis of a possible submission to the WTO. Within UN/CEFACT, it would complete the first stage in the new process for defining data needs based on the object-oriented approach.

31. A request from the Business Analysis Working Group (BAWG) to change their name to the Business Process Analysis Working Group (BPAWG) was approved by the Plenary.

TMWG

32. Four ad hoc task groups had been established: Education and Awareness, OF-Edi, Liaison to Business Analysis and Trade Facilitation Work, and Modelling for EWG as prerequisite for UNM.'s.

33. The TMWG had selected the Unified Modelling Language (UML) as the modelling technique for use by UN/CEFACT. It was noted that UML was a modelling "notation" or technique that would have to be applied within methodology that had yet to be formulated by the TMWG.

34. At the last meeting, earlier in the month in Belgium, two major documents had been developed: TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.29 which explains the TMWG decision to use the UML modelling technique for Business Process and Information Modelling and TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.28 with Business Analysis and Modelling Guidelines for the BPAWG.

EWG

35. The EWG had held its first meeting in Miami, USA in April 1998 and its second meeting, in Brussels, immediately prior to this session of UN/CEFACT. Both meetings had been very successful and attended by well over 200 experts from 27 and 32 countries, respectively. At the first session Mr. Barry Keogh (Australia) had been elected Chair and Mr. Pierre Georget (France) Vice-Chair.

36. At the Brussels meeting the EWG had processed successfully processed 20% more maintenance requests (over 1000) than at any prior meeting of the EWG or its successor, the JRT. This reflects a successful migration to the new structure as well as the group’s responsiveness to user requirements.

37. During this meeting two significant decisions had been the approval of new message design rules in support of version 4 of the EDIFACT syntax, with an implementation plan as well as the establishment of a single International Technical Assessment Group/Process.

38. The delegations from EAN and France complemented the Chair and Vice Chair of EWG for the very effective and professional migration to the new structure.

39. The delegation from France, however, also commented that, given the number of experts in the EWG, they believed that the decision process could not be the same as for other groups and would need more strengthening in order to ensure that a consensus of all participants could be secured and well recorded.

40. The CSG Chair confirmed that while it is up to each UN/CEFACT group to develop their own procedures, they are reviewed and registered by the CSG. He further indicated that he would consult with the concerned parties on this issue in order to determine, and encourage , any appropriate action.

CDWG

41. The Chair reported that there had been two CDWG meetings. One result of those meetings had been the establishment of a sub-group responsible for the UN Location Code (Recommendation 16). The next CDWG meeting would be the 21-23 September 1998 where important topics would be the maintenance process, how to secure quality assurance, proposals for new recommendations and the processing of change requests which had been submitted against Recommendations 20, 21 and 24.

LWG

42. The convenor of the LWG reported that at the last meeting which had taken place the previous week Ms. Anne Troye (Commission of the European Community) had been elected chair and David Marsh (United Kingdom) and XXXXX (Sri Lanka) had been elected vice chairs. He also noted that the group hoped to have an electronic commerce interchange agreement available for consideration at the March 1999 Plenary.

43. The delegation of France noted that the purpose of this electronic commerce interchange agreement work was to adapt the existing EDI interchange agreement to EDI requirements in an open environment.

44. The Chair of the Plenary also noted the very interesting proposal made by the LWG for the development of a legal convention in support of cross border electronic commerce and invited the group to come back to UN/CEFACT with more details at a future meeting.

SIMAC

45. The Chair reminded the Plenary that SIMAC’s mandate was to identify potential areas of work for UN/CEFACT and to recommend which groups should be charged with that work. The group had held its first meeting in Geneva on 19-20 June 1998. Some important information coming out of that meeting was that:

- companies willing to review and simplify their processes would be able to use SIMPL-EDI for processing 80% of their transactions automatically.
- some work had already been done on using the UN Layout Key (Recommendation 1) as the basis for developing specifications for harmonised electronic forms (E-form), especially in relation to the UNTDED (see also TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.16).

46. The group had also been informed about XML/EDI developments (XML being a mechanism for transmitting information). The areas related to XML/EDI of concern to SIMAC were strategic issues such as the need for global repository of XML data definitions in line with simplified business processes. It was decided that a clear problem statement should be drafted and that the group would recommend to UN/CEFACT to make a statement -in a certain time frame-

regarding the need for further global alignment of data reducing the danger of a proliferation of proprietary repositories. If it were decided to undertake such a project, the existing UN/EDIFACT directories and data definitions were seen as being the foundation of this work (see further discussion on this topic below).

47. It had also been agreed that while XML/EDI was one of a number of technologies available for use with SIMPL-EDI, the work of the SIMAC group should focus primarily on ratifying the concept of SIMPL-EDI, making the necessary recommendations and, only then, examining how to implement the concept using existing applications and future technologies such as XML/EDI.

48. A list of definitions can be found in *Annex II* to the current report in order to clarify the concepts addressed by the group. In this context, they were requesting that the Electronic commerce ad hoc group insert the word "standardisation" in their definition of EC and add ‘automated data capture using bar-code methodology’ in the parentheses. The addenda to the report (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/25/Add.1) contains the first draft of the SIMAC work programme. The final report from SIMAC will be available for the March 1999 session.

49. The CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) Chair reminded the Plenary that the key issue was simpler processes and that this was the major issue to be addressed.

50. The delegation of France commented since business processes cannot always be simplified, the simplification of processes was only one issue. Another was how to use technology as an enabler, providing SMEs with access to even complicated business processes.

51. The CSG Chair concluded by emphasizing that this technology needed to be in the form of final products to comply with the needs of SMEs as they were not necessarily interested in the technological aspects of the work of the Centre.

XML/EDI (Extensible Mark-up Language/Electronic Data Interchange)

52. The Plenary listened to a presentation and discussion by several experts in the room on XML/EDI, during which a number of important points were made. Among these were the:

- potential for using XML/EDI as a transfer mechanism for data over the Internet World Wide Web;
- ability of XML/EDI, with appropriate software, to allow both humans and computers to see/process the same data;
- existence of three different ways to use XML and the need to select one;
- existence of competing technologies;

- need for a consistent, generic foundation in the form of a global repository of data element descriptions in order for XML to become more widely used;
- importance of consensus building and management in any global repository, an area where UN/EDIFACT has considerable experience as well as an existing “catalogue” of work;

53. The TMWG Chair introduced his group’s view on this topic as found in TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.27, noting that TMWG was addressing the technological aspects of XML, i.e. how and if it might be used as a future syntax for data exchange and noted that the TMWG had identified three different possibilities for the use of XML. He pointed out any work on a repository needed to ensure that it was expandable to fulfil the requirements as needed as part of the “next generation” work on EDI, which would include the capability to store UML diagrams.

54. **The Plenary requested that the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG) review all of the information on XML/EDI which had been provided to the Plenary and authorized the CSG to decide whether a “proof of concept” project in this area should be undertaken. The documents containing information related to this topic were: TRADE/CEFACT/1998/25 (Report from the SIMAC), TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.25 (Proposal for a UN Repository for XML Tags based on UN/EDIFACT) and TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.27 (Review of the Report from SIMAC). The Plenary then noted the last two documents, the first one having been noted as a report from an ad hoc working group.**

Miscellaneous

55. The following conference room papers containing information of interest were noted by the Plenary: TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.28 (Business Analysis and Modelling Guidelines for BPAWG) and TRADE/CEFACT/19988/CRP.29 (Explanation of TMWG decision to use UML for Business Process and Information Modelling).

Agenda item 5 - UN/CEFACT Rapporteurs

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/16	Report of the CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/17	Draft Terms of Reference for a CEFACT Standards Liaison Rapporteur

56. The UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia, Mr. Kenji Itoh (Japan) informed the Plenary that, at its last meeting in Tehran, which had 140 participants, the Asia EDIFACT Board had re-organized to better work in coordination with UN/CEFACT and was now the Asia Council for the Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (AFACT). Details on this new organization were contained in his report.

57. The delegation from the Republic of Korea reported that the next AFACT meeting would take place in Seoul on 6-8 September 1999 and would be followed by the EDICOM 1999 conference.

58. The delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran indicated that AFACT would be placing more emphasis on promotional work to encourage even more participation from countries in the region.

59. The CSG Chair then thanked the delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran for their excellent support of the July 1998 meeting as well as the following conference and indicated that he would be working with the head of delegation to help make the papers from that conference available to all UN/CEFACT delegates.

60. After having heard, with great interest, this summary of recent developments in Asia from the UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia, the Plenary noted his report as found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/16.

61. Terms of reference for a UN/CEFACT Standards Liaison Rapporteur, as found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/17, were approved with the addition of the words "and the CEFACT Steering Group" after the word, "Plenary" on the first line. The final terms of reference can be found in annex to this report.

62. The delegation of Japan nominated Mr. Klaus-Dieter Naujok (Canada) to be the UN/CEFACT Standards Liaison Rapporteur. This nomination was seconded by Germany and Mr. Naujok was unanimously elected.

Agenda item 6 - Promotion of CEFACT Objectives
Document:
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.24 CEFACT Promotion Advisory Ad hoc Working Group Report

63. The Vice-chair responsible for promotion introduced the report from the Promotion Advisory Ad hoc Working Group. He emphasized that the principle task of their group was to develop a communications/promotion plan for UN/CEFACT and to develop related items in support of promotion of UN/CEFACT as a whole (i.e. at the Plenary level). Nonetheless, it was essential that individual working groups contribute to this work in order to be sure that it supported their own promotion work and met their needs, particularly since the vast majority of UN/CEFACT's outputs were the direct result of working groups. He indicated that further communications in this regard would be addressed to the chairs of working groups during the next two to three months.

64. The Plenary noted the report of the CEFACT Promotion Advisory Ad hoc Working Group as found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.24.

65. The Plenary approved and recommended the use of the name UN/CEFACT rather than just CEFACT to designate itself. It then further approved the UN/CEFACT logos found in Annex C of TRADE/CEFACT/1998/13.

66. The Plenary recommended that a promotion document outlining UN/CEFACT's vision be developed based on the contents of TRADE/CEFACT/1998/19 (see agenda item 7).

Agenda item 7 - Strategy and Programme of Work

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/19	Strategic view of CEFACT's work
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/20	Consolidated CEFACT Work Programme
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/20/Add.1	Consolidated work programme - Activity planning worksheets - BAWG/CDWG
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/20/Add.2	Consolidated work programme - Activity planning worksheets - EWG
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/20/Add.3	Consolidated work programme - Activity worksheets - ITPWG, LWG, TMWG
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/21	CEFACT Priorities, Summary submitted to the CTIED

67. The Plenary adopted, as the vision and general strategy of UN/CEFACT, document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/19 (UN/CEFACT - A vision and strategy for the new millennium).

68. The CSG Chair indicated that the CSG would come back to the March 1999 session with a revision to TRADE/CEFACT/1998/19 which would include a statement on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

69. The Plenary approved the UN/CEFACT work programme as found in document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/20 and its three addenda with the understanding that this was a living document that would change at each session in response to the advancement of the work, the decisions of the Plenary and external developments.

70. Following an inquiry from the delegation from Ireland, delegates were informed that comments regarding the work programmes of individual UN/CEFACT working groups should be submitted to either the Chairs or management teams of the groups in question.

71. The delegation from the EAN noted that they had undertaken a study which indicated a large number of obstacles, many of them legal, even within the European Union, to the electronic exchange of information across borders. Examples given were: the legal acceptance by one country of only electronic invoice originating from enterprises physically located within the country and the widely varying invoice information requirements across countries. He,

therefore, believed that this was an area of work where UN/CEFACT could do more than it currently was.

72. The delegation from Ireland supported this statement and suggested that, in addition to more detailed work in support of cross-border trading, UN/CEFACT should, as soon as possible, issue a document with a policy statement in support of cross-border trading.

73. It was agreed that a summary document on activities in support of coordination between UN/CEFACT working groups and prioritization would be prepared by the CSG for the March 1999 session.

74. Document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/21 (CEFACT Priorities, Summary submitted to the CTIED) was noted by the Plenary, who were informed that an updated priority list would need to be submitted every year to the CTIED. Therefore, delegations also were requested to send comments they might have on the priorities given in this document to the secretariat prior to 31 December 1998 in order that these might be taken into consideration for the next update.

Agenda item 8 - Reports from Regional Commissions and Regional Advisors
Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.31	Reports from Other UN Regional Commissions
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.31/Add.1	ESCAP Case Study from Sri Lanka
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.31/Add.2	ESCAP Case Study from Macau
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.31/Add.3	ESCAP Case Study from India
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.32	Report from the UN/ECE Regional Advisor on Trade Facilitation

75. The secretariat introduced the Reports from other Regional Commissions (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.31), noting that there was now a UN/CEFACT focal point within the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), that contact information for all UN Regional Commission focal points was included in the report, and the interesting national case studies which had been submitted by ESCAP and included in the addendum to this document.

76. The secretariat also introduced the Report from the UN/ECE Regional Advisor on Trade Facilitation (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.32), highlighting the:

- proposal for UN/CEFACT to develop a global trade facilitation index;
- the creation of six new national facilitation committees under the auspices of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI);
- The formal launching in late March 1998 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, of the joint UN/ECE and ESCAP Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) and the emphasis in the programme on transport infrastructure and trade facilitation;
- contribution of the Czech Republic to the UN/ECE trade facilitation trust fund which had allowed the Regional Advisor to cooperate with FITPRO (the Czech national facilitation committee) on the

development of workshops for transition economy countries which had not previously participated in trade facilitation work.

77. The Plenary noted all of the above documents which had been submitted, for information, under this agenda item.

Agenda item 9 - Implementation of CEFACT's work

78. The secretariat reported that no work had been done on this item, as very few responses had been received to the questionnaire on implementation of UN/CEFACT's work which had been distributed by the secretariat to Heads of Delegation.

79. The Plenary recommended that UN/CEFACT delegations who had not yet submitted their responses to the trade facilitation questionnaire make an effort to do so prior to the next session.

Agenda item 10 - Cooperation with other International Organizations

Documents:

- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/22	MoU between UN/ECE, ISO and IEC
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/34	Conference Room Paper from ISO
- TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.30	Cooperation with other international organizations

ISO

80. The CSG Chair reported that after negotiations with the ISO and IEC, a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had been forwarded for signature to the Chief Executives of the three organizations. The scope of the MoU had been expanded to cover electronic business within and between enterprises and to include participation from user organizations with defined standardization requirements, the first of these being CALS International and the NATO CALS Organisation.

81. The inclusion of participation by user organizations had been a response to the report of the ISO High-Level Steering Group on CALS (HLSGC). Participating International User Groups must satisfy the criteria defined in the MoU, and their participation be mutually agreed upon between the standardization organizations.

82. UN/CEFACT understood that the IEC was prepared to sign the memorandum and expected it to be submitted for signature by all Chief Executives after the next meeting of the MoU Coordinating Committee on 18 September 1998.

83. The Plenary took special note of the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ISO, the IEC and the UN/ECE (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/22), which had been approved, in accordance with procedures, by the CEFACT Steering Group in June 1998.

84. The Plenary further recommended that UN/CEFACT members take contact with the relevant authorities within their countries to encourage them to support the adoption of the MoU by the International Standardization Organization (ISO).

85. The Plenary than approved the nomination of a new MoU management committee (which will become the MoU management group under the revised MoU) consisting of Ray Walker (United Kingdom), David Dobbing (Australia), Pierre Georget (France), Klaus-Dieter Naujok (Canada), Kenji Itoh (Japan), François Vuilleumier (EUROPRO), Rory Power (Ireland) and a member of the secretariat.

86. The Standards Liaison Rapporteur gave an update on the status of the nine parts to version 4 of the EDIFACT syntax which had been submitted during 1996 and 1997 to ISO for fast-track approval by UN/CEFACT and its predecessor organization, WP.4.

87. Having been informed of ISO's approval of the parts of version 4 of the EDIFACT Syntax (ISO 9735) listed below, the Plenary approved an implementation date for these parts of the syntax on 1 April 1999.

Part 1 & Tech. Corrigendum	**Syntax rules common to all parts, together with syntax service directories for each of the parts.**
Part 2:	**Syntax rules specific to batch EDI**
Part 3:	**Syntax rules specific to interactive EDI**
Part 4:	**Syntax and service report message for batch EDI (message type - CONTRL)**
Part 8:	**Associated data in EDI**

88. The Chair of the UN/EDIFACT working group (EWG) indicated the support of that group for the above decision on implementation of version 4 of the syntax.

WTO

89. A member of the delegation from WTO made a presentation on WTO's role in trade facilitation. He emphasized the importance WTO attaches to trade facilitation and explained that WTO currently is undertaking exploratory and analytical work to assess the potential scope of WTO work in this area. Further, he informed the Plenary that a series of informal meetings were to be held focusing on customs procedures, movement of goods and electronic transfer of information and that he hoped UN/CEFACT would contribute to these activities. After these informal meetings, the Council for Trade in Goods would report to the General Council who would then decide on any future steps to be taken.

90. The secretariat confirmed the UN/ECE's wish to cooperate with WTO in this area and that the UN/ECE would participate in the informal meetings.

91. The delegation from the European Community reported that the European Union favoured negotiating an agreement in WTO on simplification of trade procedures and that UN/CEFACT had a clear role to play in this field. Further, he said that the European Union would be making a proposal for a binding convention under which WTO members would agree to use and accept UN/ECE standards, codes and recommendations as the basis for their regulatory and administrative procedures for import and export. He noted that this proposal would give added value to UN/CEFACT's work and emphasized the importance of UN/CEFACT delegations giving their support to this proposal and coordinating this support with their country delegations to the WTO in order to ensure support for UN/CEFACT's interests within the WTO environment.

EUROPRO

The delegation from EUROPRO gave an overview over its activities and emphasized the need to supply traders with practical trade facilitation solutions.

OECD

92. The secretariat introduced TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.30 Cooperation with other international organizations. He noted that the document covered recent activities, but did not cover all of the organizations which cooperate with the Centre. He then informed the Plenary that the OECD is emphasizing the importance of Electronic Commerce and has taken an initiative for an action plan for global cooperation in electronic commerce. A ministerial meeting will be held in October this year on the theme of realising the potential of global electronic commerce. The UN/ECE has made a contribution to developing this action plan and will participate as an official observer at the Ottawa meeting

UNCTAD and ITC

93. The UN/ECE continues to cooperate closely with UNCTAD and ITC. Joint projects and missions are coordinated through an Intersecretariat Task Force. Current cooperation includes the UN/ECE's participation in the UNCTAD " Train for Trade project and the UNCTAD Partnership for Development conference which will take place later this year in Lyon. UNCTAD also participates actively in the ITPWG and has made a valuable contribution towards the revision of Recommendation 4 on establishing national trade facilitation bodies.

94. The Plenary noted the report of the secretariat on recent cooperation activities with other international organizations (TRADE/CEFACT/1998/CRP.30).

ITU

95. At the invitation of the secretariat, the delegation from ITU made a presentation and informed the Plenary about a major forum and exhibition organized by ITU, "TELECOM 1999" which will be held in Geneva from 10-17 October 1999.

Agenda item 11 - Other Business

Document:	
TRADE/CEFACT/1998/26	Poland: Recent Progress on Trade Procedures Facilitation and on the UN/EDIFACT National Implementation Plan

96. The delegation of Austria requested the identification of a party or group responsible for providing clear, unambiguous definitions of UN/EDIFACT related information, capable of interpretation into multiple languages. The CSG Chair acknowledged this issue and suggested that the UN/EDIFACT (EWG) group address it and that the valuable work in this area of the Austrian delegation be channelled into that group. The EWG Vice Chair informed the meeting that the Technical Assessment Group had just established a support team to provide better terminology and definitions and that this work would be taken on board by that group.

97. The delegation of Poland reported on the work of their electronic commerce and electronic data interchange (EC/EDI) community during the last two years under the new economic and technological environment. In particular, Poland continued to work on national adoption of Recommendation 25 on the use of UN/EDIFACT so that it becomes the universal standard for electronic data interchange in administration, commerce and transport also in Poland.

98. EDI Centre - Poland (CEDIP), the organization for the development, promotion and implementation EC/EDI in all aspects, re-organised their work to be more effective. The most important part of the CEDIP programme for the near future is to develop an EC/EDI and UN/EDIFACT National Implementation Plan for Poland .

99. Information about the implementation of EC/EDI systems in Poland can be found at Internet WWW address: “http://www.ow-simp.home.pl”. The address of the Polish National Body for EC/EDI is as follows: POLPRO, c/o CENTRE EDI – POLAND (CEDIP), OW-SIMP Warszawa , 3/5 Czackiego Str. 00-240 Poland, tel./fax. + 48 22 8270-244, e-mail : ow-simp@home.pl

100. The Plenary noted with interest document TRADE/CEFACT/1998/26 (Poland: Recent Progress on Trade Procedures Facilitation and on the UN/EDIFACT National Implementation Plan).

101. A member of the delegation from the Czech Republic informed the meeting of a conference on “European Standardization” that will be held in Berlin, 15-16 March, 1999.

102. The delegations from the ECEA and IAPH also informed the meeting of events focusing on “Electronic Business” (29 October 1998, Brussels) and “Ports in the new electronic commerce environment” (6 November 1998, Barcelona, Spain) respectively.

103. The secretariat then informed delegates of the following meeting dates and deadlines for document submission:

		Deadlines	
CEFACT meeting beginning.	Translation	Issuance as an "R" Document	Reproduction as a CRP
Monday, 15 March 1999	4 January 1999	16 Jan. 1999	26 Feb. 1999

104. CEFACT noted the following meeting dates:

CEFACT Plenary Session	- 1999 March 15-17, Geneva
CEFACT Steering Group	- 1999 Jan. 25-27, Frankfurt - 1999 June 21-25, Geneva - 1999 November 22-26, to be confirmed

Ad hoc Group on SIMPL-EDI and Forms and Web based EDI (SIMAC)	- 1999 January 6, London - 1999 February 15, London
UN/EDIFACT Working Group (EWG)	- 1999 March 22-26, Atlanta - 1999 September, Australia
Business Process Analysis Working Group (BPAWG)	- No meeting planned to-date
Codes Working Group (CDWG)	- 1999 March 10-12,Geneva - 1999 November 17-19, Geneva (To be confirmed)
International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG)	- 1999 January 13-15, Geneva - 1999 April 14-16, Geneva
Legal Working Group (LWG)	- 1999 January 20-22, Geneva
Promotion Advisory Ad hoc Working Group (PROMO)	- No meeting planned to-date
Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMWG)	- 1998 November 30-December 4, Nice - 1999 February 22-26, Boulder - 1999 July 19-23, Vienna

105. Contact information for submission of comments, as requested in the above minutes can be found below. **In all cases, submission of comments via e-mail is preferred.**

106. For comments to be considered by the Working Groups, please contact:

Ad Hoc Group on SIMPL-EDI and Forms and Web based EDI (SIMAC)

Chairman:
Mr. Alex de Lijster
Manager, Senior Adviser
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Emmalaan 23, 2405 G.A.
Alphen Aan den Rijn
Netherlands

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Fax: +31 10 400 6187/0172 499 648
e-mail: lijster@tip.nl

Business Process Analysis Working Group (BPAWG)

(Chairman to be confirmed)

Codes Working Group (CDWG)

Co-Chairmen:
Mr. David Dobbing
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Data Logistics Pty Ltd.
505 Darling Street, Balmain
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Australia

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Mr. Alex de Lijster
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Fax: +31 10 400 6187/0172 499 648
e-mail: lijster@tip.nl

Electronic Commerce Ad hoc Working Group (ECAWG)

Chairman:
Mr. Ray Walker
Special adviser to the DTI
on International EDI Standardization
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United Kingdom

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tel/fax: +32 2 660 2039 (Brussels)
e-mail: raywalker@ibm.net

EDIFACT Working Group (EWG)

Chairman:
Mr. Barry Keogh
Electronic Commerce Business Advisor
Tradegate ECA
2nd floor, the Tea House
28 Clarendon Street
South Melbourne VIC 3205

Tel: +61 3 9645 9566
Fax: +61 3 9645 9599
e-mail: talbar@mail.att.net

International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG)

Chairman to be nominated.

Legal Working Group

Chairperson:
Ms. Anne Troye-Walker
Rapporteur pour les questions juridiques
Administrateur principal
Commission des Communautés Européennes
DG III/F6 (N105/5/48)
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Vice-Chairman:
Mr. David Marsh
Partner
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Fax: +44 171 831 8254
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Promotion Advisory Ad hoc Working Group (PROMO)

Chairman:
Mr. Santiago Mila
Secretary-General
Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC)
International Association of Ports
and Harbours (IAPH)
Port of Barcelona Authority
Portal de la Pau 6
08039 Barcelona
Spain

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e-mail: iaphtfc@apb.es

Techniques and Methodologies Working Group (TMWG)

Chairman:
Mr. Klaus-Dieter Naujok
Director, Standards & Technologies
Harbinger
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Antioch, CA 94509
United States

Tel: +1 925 602 2000, Ext. 2791
Fax: + 925 825 9184
e-mail: klaus@templar.net

107. For comments to be considered by the CEFACT Steering Group (CSG), Plenary officers or other matters related to UN/CEFACT, please contact:

Mr. Hans A. Hansell
Trade Facilitation Section
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Palais des Nations, Room 442
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 917 0037
E-Mail: hans.hansell@unece.org

Other information

108. For constantly updated information on Trade Facilitation and UN/EDIFACT work, as well as documentation for the next meeting, delegates can refer to the:

UN/CEFACT Internet World Wide Web home page
ADDRESS: http://www.unece.org/cefact

Item 12 - Adoption of the report

109. Under the new procedures for adoption of the report approved under agenda item 3, **UN/CEFACT adopted the decisions made during its fourth session on the basis of draft texts prepared by the secretariat.**

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Annex A

UN/CEFACT STANDARDS LIAISON RAPPORTEUR MANDATE

The UN/CEFACT Standards Liaison Rapporteur shall:

- provide strategic advice and guidance to the Plenary and the CEFACT Steering Group on matters relating to formal or de facto standards, or Publicly Available Specifications, in the area of electronic commerce, electronic business or EDI, that are part of, or related, to the CEFACT work programme(the area of interest);

- coordinate the representation, of UN/CEFACT's interests and views in any relevant work being carried out internationally, especially in the ISO, IEC, and ITU ;

- identify and recommend formal or informal liaisons for the Plenary, the CSG, or Empowered Working Groups, that are relevant to UN/CEFACT's area of interest and where liaison has been established a)develop the process necessary to manage and maintain them b) in conjunction with the relevant CEFACT Group, monitor and maintain, any required communications and c) periodically review established liaisons;

The Rapporteur shall ex-officio be a member of the ISO/IEC/ECE MoU Management Committee and the Leader of the CSG team for MOU matters.

Reporting Relationships

The Rapporteur shall serve as the UN/CEFACT focal point for information about these liaisons to the Plenary, CSG and the Empowered Working Groups and shall provide to the CSG regular reports regarding relevant external developments. The Rapporteur, if not a CSG member, shall be entitled to attend the CSG as an observer.

In addition, the Rapporteur shall submit a summary report of their activities to each Plenary session of UN/CEFACT.

Duration of Appointment

Initially for three years, thereafter renewable every two years.