www.unece.org/press/pr2007/07trade_p03e.html

Geneva
Cutting red tape, simplifying trade procedures, reducing costs. These topics, which are close to the heart of any international business, were the focus of a recent United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Forum held in Dublin, Ireland.

Summarizing the Forum's results, Mike Doran, Chair of the UN/CEFACT Forum Management Group, detailed an impressive range of new developments and standards delivered during the event. He noted, in particular, the publication of the electronic Cross Industry Invoice and the Business Requirements Specification of the UN electronic trade documents project, UNeDocs. These products will greatly enhance the exchange of paperless trade information, both nationally and internationally.

UN/CEFACT's mission is to improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations from developed, developing and transitional economies to exchange products and relevant services effectively. A principal focus is facilitating national and international transactions by simplifying and harmonizing processes, procedures and information flows so as to contribute to the growth of global commerce (http://www.unece.org/cefact/).

Opening the special Forum session for Irish business and government officials, Irish Minister for the Information Society, Mr. Tom Kitt, emphasized the opportunities for Ireland presented by trade facilitation. "Paperless trade and single window processes represent a terrific step forward in achieving the goal of only having to submit all trade-related information and documents once, to a single point electronically. If the information flows can be simplified, this will be of great value. Ireland strongly supports these initiatives and it is heartening that the UN has devoted such energy and resources to advancing the process."

An initial meeting was also held during the Forum to progress the setting up of a joint project between UN/CEFACT and the World Customs Organization to develop an international Cross Border Reference Data Model. This groundbreaking initiative will enable trade and Government to standardize the exchange of international trade information between countries and regions.

Other important outputs of the Forum, which was attended by over 250 participants from over 30 countries, include the release of the UN/CEFACT eTendering specifications (21 schemas), which will allow the standardized exchange of eTendering information, the launch of an eProcurement initiative to address the needs of public procurement, and the revision of a series of code lists to standardize the definition of key business terms. Further information on these and other outputs from the Forum can be obtained at: http://www.uncefactforum.org/

The UN/CEFACT Forum meets semi-annually in various locations throughout the world. The next Forum meeting will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 24 to 28 September 2007.

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Ref: ECE/TRADE/07/P03