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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Matters Arising since the twenty-ninth Plenary**Matters arising since the twenty-ninth Plenary*****Submitted by the secretariat***Summary*

In this document the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat reports on matters arising during the period of September 2023 to May 2024. The report provides a summary of the secretariat's work in support of the of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), as well as intersectoral and technical cooperation activities. The report also showcases activities responding to emerging trends for sustainable and digital trade facilitation and the strategic goals of the sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions of the Commission.

Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2024/3 is submitted to the thirtieth session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary for information.

The activities of the ECE Regional Adviser, selectively covered in this report, are also further detailed in a separate document (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2024/INF.1).

* The present document was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

I. Introduction

1. The report provides a brief overview of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat's efforts to support work of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) for the period September 2023 to May 2024.
2. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes international trade as “an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction” and that it “contributes to the promotion of sustainable development” as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. Trade facilitation serves as a driver for international trade, enhancing trade competitiveness, improving the integration of countries into regional and global value chains, and ultimately fostering economic growth. Trade facilitation can also bring significant benefits to both the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability and help make value chains more resilient. Fostering sustainable, inclusive and resilient international trade is particularly important in today's context of the escalating climate emergency and conflicts impacting the global economic landscape.
4. Hosted in the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD) of the ECE, UN/CEFACT embodies the organization's trade facilitation workstream. Specifically, UN/CEFACT serves as the focal point for trade facilitation recommendations and e-business standards, which cover all the steps of the supply chain process bridging all modes of transport and industry actors and facilitating information flow across border and regulatory systems on the national, regional and global level.

II. Trends in sustainable and digital trade facilitation

5. The activities of UN/CEFACT are closely aligned with the cross-cutting priority themes of ECE: the circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources and the digital and green transformations for sustainable development. These themes reflect the growing acknowledgement among governments and industries about the importance of sustainability and circularity across value chains. They also recognize the increasing emphasis on utilizing advanced technologies and digital transformation to increase the efficiency of supply chains and bolster responses to future economic crises.
6. UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations are playing a pivotal role in this transformation by providing digital solutions, fostering electronic exchange of information and promoting automation. UN/CEFACT activities include the production of trade facilitation related policy recommendations and e-business standards, the conduct of policy advice and dialogue, and technical cooperation activities. UN/CEFACT also supports pursuit of SDGs, including SDG 8 on decent work and inclusive economic growth, SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, and SDG 17 on partnership for the goals.
7. To date, UN/CEFACT has developed 49 policy recommendations and over 950 e-business standards that can be used by governments and businesses to advance sustainable and digital trade facilitation policies and measures at the international, regional and national levels. They also support the implementation of important aspects of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

III. Contribution to Economic Commission for Europe strategic goals

8. The seventieth Commission session, held in April 2023, focused on “digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region”. The session invited subsidiary bodies to replicate and scale up existing approaches to facilitate broad and effective use of appropriate instruments. Member States agreed that that progress could be achieved through capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities. The work of UN/CEFACT is highly relevant to the Commission’s priority goals emerging from both its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, and directly supports digitalization in the ECE region and beyond, as well as the transition towards the circular and green economy.

9. Regarding the “digital transformation”, health pandemics and geopolitical tensions resulting in supply chain disruptions have highlighted the increased need for dematerialization and electronic documents, which are instrumental to advancing paperless trade and decreasing trade costs. This is particularly relevant in landlocked countries, which are the most vulnerable to shocks and experience more challenges in the recovery and transition phases. The following are examples of UN/CEFACT work in support of the transition to a digital, green and circular economy model:

- (a) *ECE Recommendation No. 48: Private Sector Participation in National Trade Facilitation Bodies*¹ (NTFBs), adopted at the 2023 UN/CEFACT Plenary, provides guidance on how to encourage private sector representatives to enhance the efficiency and impact of NTFBs. Such bodies are a driving force in trade facilitation reform and can foster the digital transformation of trade infrastructure and operations in United Nations Member States;
- (b) A joint ECE-ESCAP² conference entitled “Progress and Way Forward on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation”³ was held at the 41st UN/CEFACT Forum in October 2023 in Bangkok. Bringing together speakers from relevant United Nations agencies, this policy dialogue reviewed ways to accelerate climate action and advance the green and digital transformations. It showcased numerous policy tools and instruments, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Review of Maritime Transport 2023⁴; the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA)⁵; and the ESCAP Cross-Border Paperless Trade Database⁶;
- (c) A joint ECE-UPU⁷ session entitled “The postal network as an enabler for e-commerce and trade facilitation” was conducted at the UNCTAD eWeek in December 2023 in Geneva. The session showcased the use of UN/CEFACT standards in support of the postal industry;
- (d) The annual release of flagship e-business standards for trade and transport facilitation included the UN/EDIFACT⁸ directories (D.23A and D.24B), the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) directories (2023-1 and 2023-2),

¹ Document ECE/TRADE/479 is available at: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/ECE_TRADE_479E_PrivateSecParticipation-NFBs_0.pdf.

² Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

³ More info at: <https://unece.org/trade/events/41st-uncefact-forum-ece-escap-joint-conference>.

⁴ UNCTAD.org, “Review of Maritime Transport 2023”, available at <https://unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2023>.

⁵ For information on the CPTA, see <https://www.unescap.org/projects/cpta>.

⁶ ESCAP Cross-Border Paperless Trade Database, available at www.digitalizetrade.org.

⁷ Universal Postal Union (UPU).

⁸ The United Nations rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UN/EDIFACT).

the Core Component Library (versions D.23B and D.24A), the XML Schema Library (versions D.23B and D24A), and the continuous update of the over 950 UN/CEFACT standards. These were released in collaboration with the UN/CEFACT Methodology and Technology Programme Development Area. These interoperable standards allow for simple, efficient and digital information exchange, scaling up business processes and operations;

- (e) The UN/LOCODE application system was successfully upgraded to address critical cybersecurity issues and to enhance its overall user friendliness. There are ongoing efforts to secure additional funding to facilitate a comprehensive overhaul of the UN/LOCODE system, this being a flagship ECE standard, used globally by major transport and logistics operators; and
- (f) Joint activities were conducted with ESCAP, UNCTAD, GIZ and UNCITRAL⁹ at the 11th Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum “Leveraging Digitalization for Sustainable Supply Chains”¹⁰.

10. Regarding the circular economy and the green transformation, UN/CEFACT has been instrumental in advancing responsible production and consumption patterns by ensuring availability of and access to reliable information. UN/CEFACT has developed norms, standards, and tools to facilitate policy coherence, regulatory compliance, interoperability of systems and collaboration among value chain actors. Work has been focused on priority sectors for the transition to a circular economy, including agrifood, critical raw materials and garment and footwear. Examples of UN/CEFACT work in this area include the following:

- (a) A joint ECE-ECLAC¹¹ study regarding the excess of used clothing in Chile, with a focus on Europe as an origin and Chile as a destination. An executive summary¹² was presented to the 2023 UN/CEFACT Plenary and the full study will be presented to the 2024 UN/CEFACT Plenary for information;
- (b) *ECE Recommendation No. 49: Transparency at Scale: Digital Solutions for Trust, Resilience and Sustainability* is undergoing public review from 19 April to 19 June 2024 and is scheduled for discussion at the 2024 UN/CEFACT Plenary;
- (c) UN/CEFACT has been supporting the Team of Specialists (ToS) on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Circular Economy, which develops policy recommendations and guidance for ESG monitoring and reporting, and traceability of ESG products performance along international value chains in critical sectors for the circular transition (i.e. agrifood, critical raw materials, textile and leather); and
- (d) The Circular Data Protocol: Use Case and Data Structure Supporting Product Circularity for Textiles and Leather was launched and will be presented to the 2024 UN/CEFACT Plenary for noting.

IV. Intersectoral activities

11. The ECE secretariat has continued to support intersectoral activities with other sectoral committees and initiatives of ECE, particularly within the ECTD Division, and with the ECE Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Energy and Environment Divisions.

⁹ United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

¹⁰ More info available at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/2024/asia-pacific-trade-facilitation-forum-2024>.

¹¹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

¹² Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2023/18 is available at <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/ECE-TRADE-C-CEFACT-2023-18E.pdf>.

12. Within the ECTD, UN/CEFACT has contributed to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards to address regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and advance the circular transition in the ECE region. It has also engaged in, together with the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public Private Partnerships, in capacity-building activities aimed at enhancing the use of advanced technologies such as blockchain in transition economies in the region (e.g. in Uzbekistan).

13. UN/CEFACT has pursued synergies with the Sustainable Transport Division (STD), advancing collaboration on (i) transport facilitation (TIR and the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods); (ii) road transport (CMR Convention¹³ – for which UN/CEFACT has developed the eCMR data exchange standard, aligned with its Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model and is now working to cover multimodal B2B data exchange requirements for road transport); and (iii) dangerous goods. The examples of joint activities include the following:

- (a) In response to a request from the SPECA¹⁴ countries, the ECTD and STD jointly supported the production of a draft roadmap for digitalization of data and document exchange, using UN/CEFACT standards, for the Trans-Caspian Corridor; and
- (b) UN/CEFACT and its secretariat contributed to the working sessions of the Group of Experts on Operationalization of eCMR and participated in a workshop organized during the 118th session of the Working Party on Road Transport (WP.30), along with FIATA¹⁵, IRU, the European Commission and the UN/CEFACT Chair.

14. The secretariat will also continue to foster synergies with the ECE Environment and Sustainable Energy Divisions, among others, in support of the ECE nexus theme “sustainable use of natural resources”, with UN/CEFACT tools such as the e-Basel standard (in support of the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste); the eCITES standard (in support of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora); the FLUX¹⁶ standard, which combats illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and the Traceability and Transparency standard¹⁷ (in support of the Aarhus Convention¹⁸ and the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources). Examples of UN/CEFACT work in this area include the following:

- (a) Jointly with the Sustainable Energy Division, the secretariat contributes to the work of the Working Group on Transforming the Extractive Industries for Sustainable Development, which involves the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the five United Nations Regional Commissions (UNRCs), and the World Economic Forum Working Group on Securing Critical Minerals for the Energy Transition. It also includes partners such as United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, commodities traders and think tanks; and
- (b) The ECE secretariat actively engages in Aarhus Convention capacity-building initiatives. This reporting period, this included attending a workshop on advancing public access to environmental product information in Geneva, Switzerland (November 2023).

¹³ Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR).

¹⁴ United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

¹⁵ International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA).

¹⁶ Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (FLUX).

¹⁷ BRS for Traceability and Transparency in the Textile and Leather Sector is available at: [Traceability for Sustainable Garment and Footwear | UNECE](#).

¹⁸ Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

V. Technical cooperation activities

15. Through extra-budgetary projects the ECE secretariat and the Regional Adviser actively provide technical assistance and capacity-building support. This support fosters positive change at the country level, on the ground, through cooperation with United Nations country teams. Countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan have benefited from these projects. Examples of technical cooperation activities include the following:

- (a) A technical assistance project called “Enhancing capacity to develop evidence-based policymaking for digital and sustainable trade facilitation to support the accession to the WTO of targeted beneficiary countries in the Central Asian region” has been implemented. This involves the following activities:
 - (i) The uptake of UN/CEFACT recommendations, standards (e.g. MMT RDM¹⁹ for harmonized intermodal transit corridors) and solutions;
 - (ii) The production of policy briefs, building on the results of the United Nations 2023 Global Survey, with a focus on Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, to support their accession to the WTO; and
 - (iii) The conduct of a technical workshop in Baku, Azerbaijan on 20 November 2023 during the 18th Session of the SPECA Working Group on Trade, and collaboration on the 2023 SPECA Economic Forum, in collaboration with ESCAP, with high-level participants from the Republic of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.
- (b) A National Trade Facilitation Roadmap for Uzbekistan is being developed, along the lines of roadmaps previously developed for Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. It will be launched in 2024;
- (c) A policy and regulatory analysis on the application of blockchain technology in Uzbekistan is being jointly produced with the UNRCs under the UNDA 14th tranche project “Blockchains for facilitating trade and enhancing competitiveness”, to be launched in 2024. A multistakeholder workshop was conducted in Tashkent in October 2023 as part of the national InnoWeek, which was led by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation;
- (d) Progress was made on the ECE-UN/CEFACT product traceability approach and standards, which were adopted in 2021 and tested in blockchain pilot projects with industry partners. Use cases were developed to trace products back to their origin, providing sustainability credentials that allow for substantiated claims regarding fibre content, chemical use, social and environmental performance and animal welfare. ECE has finalized 19 use cases across 23 countries, including Türkiye and Uzbekistan, which are ECE programme countries;
- (e) There has been significant progress related to the dissemination of the Sustainability Pledge Call to Action for ECE *Recommendation No. 46*. To date, it has received more than 100 pledges from companies and stakeholders, from across 28 countries, involving a larger network of about 750 industry actors. These pledges involve measurable actions with specific key performance indicators (KPIs) to advance traceability and transparency in the garment and footwear industry; and
- (f) The secretariat supported UN/CEFACT multimodal digitalization projects, including through the UNDA project “COVID-19 Trade and Transport Connectivity”, in partnership with several other organizations. Digitalization of

¹⁹ UN/CEFACT Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model (MMT RDM).

alternative trade routes is currently being explored as part of the United Nations support to Ukraine and a draft roadmap for digitalization of data and document exchange is being developed for the Trans-Caspian Corridor using UN/CEFACT standards.

16. During the reporting period, UN/CEFACT and its secretariat produced reports on the status of sustainable and digital trade facilitation implementation, both globally and in the ECE region; developed guidance materials to address gaps, share good practices and help identify strategic directions; conducted policy dialogues, training workshops and advisory missions, particularly for programme countries of the ECE region.

17. The ECE secretariat, UNCTAD and the other UNRCs jointly produced the fifth United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation and released the *ECE Regional Report 2023*, which will be presented to 2024 UN/CEFACT Plenary. Responses from 161 United Nations Member States and 48 ECE member States were collected in the survey. Findings and recommendations, including on innovative practices, were presented and discussed with Member States at events hosted by the UNRCs and UNCTAD in September 2023 (WTO Public Forum), December 2023 (UNCTAD eWeek) and April 2024 (Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum).

18. The ECE secretariat updated the United Nations Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG)²⁰ e-learning platform under the UNDA 14th tranche project “Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity (trade and transport nexus) in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Western Balkans”²¹. This interactive learning tool is available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Launched at the 2023 UN/CEFACT Plenary, the new version of this web-based tool has been presented at national workshops in Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Uzbekistan.

VI. Cooperation with other organizations

19. At the global level, UN/CEFACT and the ECE secretariat have continued to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, including international standards-setting organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UNRCs, and other United Nations agencies including UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre (ITC), International Maritime Organization (IMO), UPU and UNEP.

20. Furthermore, the secretariat has continued its participation in the activities of the Annex D+ organizations, led by the WTO, which coordinates the efforts of international organizations in support of the WTO TFA implementation through its TFA Facility. For example, during UNCTAD eWeek 2023, “Shaping the future of the digital economy”, the ECE secretariat co-organized a joint session with ESCAP and UNCTAD entitled the “United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation”.

21. The ECE secretariat, jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has continued to explore the potential of using UN/LOCODE to fight IUU fishing. For example, UN/LOCODE could be used to identify Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) ports and fishery ports for the FAO Global Record and could support the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies²², once entered into force.

²⁰ Available at <https://tfig.unece.org/>.

²¹ This UNDA project was jointly implemented by ECTD and the Sustainable Transport Division. For more info on the project, see <https://unece.org/sustainable-mobility-and-smart-connectivity-trade-and-transport-nexus-central-asia-caucasus-and-0>.

²² Available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_e.htm.

22. The ECE secretariat has also continued to support the CITES secretariat and its member States in the fight against illegal wildlife trade through the development of the eCITES, UN/CEFACT-aligned standards and through the organization of capacity-building workshops. ECE and ESCAP also host the Task Force on Electronic CITES Permit Exchange pilots, which provides a platform for interested parties to engage in cross-border electronic exchange of CITES permits.

23. In the e-business domain, ECE is one of the four signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding on e-Business (ebMoU) between the ISO, IEC, and ITU, which was signed in 2000. This is a high-level agreement for coordination in the field of e-business. The ECE secretariat is taking on the role of secretary (which happens on a rotational basis among the four signatories) for its management group (ebMoU/MG) until the end of 2024.

24. The following activities within the ebMoU took place during the reporting period:

- (a) The 45th Meeting of the ebMoU/MG was held on 12 and 13 December 2023. Hosted by IEC and chaired by ISO, the meeting, attended by member organizations and user groups, focused on e-business standards and coordinating work programs. The following areas for coordination were highlighted: privacy by design, semantic harmonization, trust and trustworthiness, digital health certificate, SMART standards, industry data and artificial intelligence (AI). At this meeting the four signatories discussed the need to look into the future of the ebMoU, particularly on modalities to achieve efficient use of secretariat resources in support of relevant coordination activities; and
- (b) In the framework of the ebMoU, the ECE secretariat has had official liaisons with ISO technical committees (TCs) such as ISO/TC 46 (information and documentation); ISO/TC 154 (processes, data elements and documents in commerce, industry and administration); ISO/TC 315 (cold chain logistics); ISO 321 (e-commerce); ISO TC8 (ships and marine technology) and ISO/TC 323 (circular economy). UN/CEFACT experts have contributed to these relevant ISO activities.

25. In the last year, UN/CEFACT has experienced a significant rise in interest in its work on dematerialization and its related standards and it has created the following partnerships and liaisons:

- A new joint working group was established in 2023 between ECE and ISO technical committee 154 called “ISO/ECE joint working group for information exchange of supply chain aligned to UN/CEFACT semantic” (ISO/TC 154/JWG9). Under ISO/TC 154/JWG9, several joint projects are under development, such as the fast-tracking of the UN/CEFACT Buy-Ship-Pay Reference Data Model as ISO 20197 and the updates to the United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (UNTDDED), also published as ISO 7372;
- UN/CEFACT collaborated with the Global Standards 1 (GS1) organization to align its ongoing work with the Buy-Ship-Pay Reference Data Model; and
- The ICAO²³ and the IMO have sought UN/CEFACT support in transitioning their processes to digital formats. The secretariat has provided experienced experts to support the liaison between these organization and the work of UN/CEFACT.

26. At the regional level, the secretariat has continued to support UN/CEFACT cooperation with several European Commission directorate-generals (DGs):

- ECE participated regularly in the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF) subgroup workshops, studying the documentary requirements in transport and logistics and their

²³ International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

dematerialization. UN/CEFACT semantic standards are well positioned to assist this group with its data requirements. Two new European Union regulations, supported by the DTLF, are also directly supported by UN/CEFACT experts;

- The European Union Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union (DG TAXUD) has contributed to UN/CEFACT work on recommendations. DG TAXUD and the European Union member States were active in the revision of *Recommendation No. 33*, on establishing a single window, and how this will apply to a regional European single window. The recent UN/CEFACT publication of a cross-border view on the Buy-Ship-Pay Reference Data Model is aimed at facilitating linkages between the trade and government sides of a single window by aligning semantic names and definitions; and
- The ECE secretariat and UN/CEFACT are also engaging with the Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV); Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE); Directorate General for Informatics (DG DIGIT); Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA); and Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) on a number of issues, including on work to advance the sustainability and circularity of value chains in European Union member States and other regions of the world (e.g. in the critical raw materials, fisheries, textiles and transport sectors).

VII. Conclusions and way forward

27. The conclusions of the evaluation which the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had carried out on subprogramme 4: Economic Cooperation and Integration, and subprogramme 6: Trade (implemented by the ECE ECTD) were presented to the twenty-ninth Plenary, noting that the Division had “found its niche in a crowded space of trade and economic cooperation by leveraging its comparative advantages towards strengthening member States’ economic cooperation and integration”. At the thirtieth Plenary, delegates will be briefed on the progress on implementing the recommendations of the evaluation as they pertain to UN/CEFACT.

28. The Plenary also welcomed the recommendations provided in this evaluation and called upon United Nations Member States and development partners to work with the secretariat to support the implementation of the ECE strategies on resource mobilization, partnerships and technical cooperation. Furthermore, delegates emphasized the importance of the following prospective directions for UN/CEFACT work that will be further addressed in its activities in 2024 and beyond:

- (a) Strengthening UN/CEFACT contributions to the ECE cross-cutting themes of the circular economy and green transformation, especially in critical sectors such as agrifood, critical raw materials, textiles and clothing, and focusing on the digital transformation in the domain of supply chain security and trade facilitation in trade and transport corridors;
- (b) Ensuring the sustainability of flagship information exchange standards such as the United Nations Core Component Library (UN/CCL) and its RDMS, UN/EDIFACT, UN/LOCODE, UNTDED, and the UN/CEFACT code lists, including through raising additional extrabudgetary resources and obtaining the necessary support from the ECE Information Support Unit regarding the user-access challenges encountered in the migration to a new version of the ECE website;
- (c) Focusing efforts and resources by examining the relevance and impact of UN/CEFACT projects and deliverables and reviewing the existing strategy; and

- (d) Enhancing outreach and communication on UN/CEFACT solutions so that they become better known and more widely implemented and providing targeted support to small actors in emerging economies.

29. UN/CEFACT will continue to advance sustainable and digital trade facilitation and e-business approaches and solutions. It will further develop recommendations and standards to help United Nations Member States and trade actors implement the WTO TFA and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. UN/CEFACT will also provide policy advice and dialogue and offer demand-driven technical assistance and capacity-building with extrabudgetary funding.

30. For example, UN/CEFACT and the ECE secretariat will engage in the following activities in 2024:

- (a) Hold the Sustainable and Digital Trade Facilitation Week, on 8-12 July 2024, featuring the 42nd UN/CEFACT Forum and 30th UN/CEFACT Plenary;
- (b) Convene the 43rd UN/CEFACT Forum in Rome in December 2024;
- (c) Produce the new ECE *Recommendation No. 49: Transparency at Scale: Digital Solutions for Trust, Resilience and Sustainability*, which will be discussed at the 2024 Plenary and slated for adoption at the 2025 Plenary;
- (d) Strengthen the existing, robust, global supply chain semantic Reference Data Models and e-business standards and make best efforts to assist other organizations to align with or adopt these models and standards;
- (e) Support the integration of UN/CEFACT recommendations and standards into relevant international, regional and national policies and regulations, such as the UN/CEFACT Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model (MMT RDM), in the two new European Union transport regulations on electronic freight transport information (eFTI)²⁴ and the European maritime single window (EMSWe) environment;
- (f) Continue to produce research and provide guidance on advanced technologies in support of the UN/CEFACT programme of work, including on blockchain use, AI, internet of things (IoT), application programming interfaces (APIs) and similar; and
- (g) Continue to advance circularity, sustainability and the green and digital transformations as a follow-up to the sixty-ninth and seventieth ECE sessions.

31. The unique success of UN/CEFACT across its different pillars of activities (normative, implementation and technical assistance) is possible thanks to a strong partnership with a wide range of international agencies and the work of UN/CEFACT Bureau, domain coordinators and experts.

32. Today, the deliverables of UN/CEFACT are needed more than ever, and so is their timely implementation on the ground, facilitated through technical cooperation and capacity-building, undertaken in cooperation with partner agencies and the respective United Nations country teams. The challenges arising from multiple ongoing crises are particularly pronounced in the 17 ECE programme countries in Central Asia, Southern Caucuses, Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. From a trade facilitation perspective, the status of many countries as being landlocked deserves particular attention.

33. The ECE secretariat is therefore calling upon donors and development partners to help mobilize the extrabudgetary funds needed to respond to capacity-building and technical assistance needs in the most effective and timely manner.

²⁴ See https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13661-Electronic-freight-transport-information-eFTI-procedures-and-access-rules-for-competent-authorities_en.