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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE  
FOR TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS**

The Executive Committee adopted the following at its twenty-ninth meeting on 27 February 2009:

1. The UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) held several meetings in 2008 to review the work of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and provided opportunities for the UN/CEFACT Chairman to present papers and participate in the discussions of the EXCOM, both in informal and formal settings.
2. Throughout these discussions, there was strong agreement that the work of UN/CEFACT was appreciated by member States, that it had a unique market niche in the trade facilitation area, that its outputs were of high value to member States and that this work should continue. The participation of the UN/CEFACT Chair and Vice-Chairs in the above meetings and the various papers prepared by UN/CEFACT for the Committee were also highly appreciated. The EXCOM took note of the electronic Business, Government and Trade (eBGT) initiative of UN/CEFACT, which had already been endorsed by the EXCOM in 2007 and is expected to facilitate the participation of interested stakeholders in the work of UN/CEFACT.
3. Members determined that UN/CEFACT should enhance and advance its work in the areas of information access (in particular, enhancement of the website), governance and transparency, participation of transition economies and capacity building. More specifically, member States indicated their desire to see actions taken in the following areas in order to strengthen UN/CEFACT and facilitate wider involvement in the development and implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations:

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- A. *Information-sharing and communication to foster broader transparency and participation*
- (i) Develop, with the support of the secretariat, a more user-friendly website to include the following information:
    - (a) Summary details on projects (including such items as project initiator, participants, extrabudgetary resources mobilized, supporters, expected deliverables, timeframe, current status, how newcomers can participate, etc);
    - (b) Consolidated, summary information about UN/CEFACT procedures and processes;
    - (c) Simple, clear and concise information on UN/CEFACT policy and decision-making processes, especially related to the identification, selection and development of standards;
    - (d) Information on UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation.
  - (ii) Provide a registry and tracking system for project proposals.
- B. *Intergovernmental governance and oversight of the work of UN/CEFACT, including strategy and priority setting and the use of the United Nations label*
- (i) Continue to enhance the transparency of the UN/CEFACT policy and management process through which decisions are made on the selection of specific standards for development. In this regard, the proposed standards should respond to a minimum of common interest expressed through support by at least three countries.
  - (ii) Encourage meaningful participation of member States in the development of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations.
  - (iii) Ensure that priorities expressed by member States (through UN/CEFACT plenary, bureau and other channels) are adequately taken up in the UN/CEFACT programme of work and effectively implemented. For this purpose, the UN/CEFACT Plenary should agree upon priorities at each annual session and ask the Bureau to oversee their implementation and to report to the Plenary on their status.

- C. *Ensuring balance between UN/CEFACT's work on electronic business standards on the one hand and on Recommendations for trade facilitation on the other hand, with due reflection on the budgetary allocation*

To take steps to further strengthen the development of trade facilitation Recommendations and to promote their implementation through promotion initiatives, such as publications, seminars or workshops, with particular attention to the needs of countries in transition.

- D. *Greater involvement of countries with economies in transition*

(i) Develop a strategic action plan and implement specific actions, in collaboration with the secretariat, to facilitate the participation of transition economies in the work of UN/CEFACT, and especially to enable their experts to contribute substantively to the elaboration of standards.

(ii) Take steps, with the support of the secretariat, for information about all key UN/CEFACT recommendations and standards to be translated into Russian.

- E. *Capacity-building activities to promote implementation of UN/CEFACT standards and recommendations*

In collaboration with the secretariat, develop an integrated strategic capacity building plan on the use and implementation of UN/CEFACT instruments, and initiate supporting actions, with particular attention to the needs of transition economies. The secretariat should have the key role in implementing this plan and undertaking relevant capacity-building activities.

- F. *Cooperation with other institutions*

Explore areas for enhanced cooperation between UN/CEFACT and other institutions, especially in the framework of the Trade Facilitation Negotiations of the World Trade Organization.

**In conclusion:**

4. The Executive Committee invites UN/CEFACT, with the active participation of the secretariat and interested EXCOM members, to develop the strategic action plans mentioned under D and E above no later than June 2009, to undertake specific actions to address all the other points also noted above and provide an overall progress report to EXCOM no later than December 2009.

5. In developing such actions, EXCOM also requests that UN/CEFACT accommodate any related decisions that may be taken as a result of the parallel review of the Committee on Trade.

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