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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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Press Release ECE/TRADE/08/P02  
Geneva, 25 April 2008

## **GLOBAL STANDARDS ADVANCE AT MEXICO CITY FORUM**

(UN/CEFACT 12th Forum, Mexico City, 7-11 April 2008)

At its 12th Forum, held in Mexico City, the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) announced the release of new global standards for efficient and automated information exchange. These advances, which involve XML (eXtended Markup Language), will have an impact on the following areas:

**eTendering for Public Procurement**, covering more than 20 electronic transactions from information notice to contract award. The standard comprises a set of messages to standardize the information exchange in the field of electronic tendering/bidding across industries. It can be used in all kinds of tender and can be used in the works, goods and services domains.

**Project Schedule and Cost Performance Management**, involving 10 electronic transactions. The objective is to help the various parties in an architectural, construction or engineering project to exchange project-management-related schedules and cost data throughout the life of the project using a standardized information-exchange process and data-content framework.

**Small-Scale Lodging House Project**, providing messages to allow a customer to request and receive information on small-scale lodging houses for tourism (such as the *ryokan* found in Japan).

Opening the Forum, the Mexican Undersecretary of Industry and Commerce, Rocío Ruiz Chávez, said that UN/CEFACT efforts in trade facilitation that rely on emerging information and communication technology provided outstanding solutions for trade growth by helping to simplify procedures, customs requirements and document flows. She gave examples of recent steps Mexico had taken to improve international trade. It had decided to implement an electronic Single Window for export and import procedures. Mexico had also simplified the system of import taxes, reduced paperwork requirements and created a single, unified register for exporters.

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During the Forum, considerable progress was made on the preparation of the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, which is due for delivery in 2008. In addition, further collaboration was also achieved towards developing the next generation of Internet-based standards for information exchange in the following areas, with related standards expected to be released in the coming months:

- Finance
- Insurance Coverage
- Accounting Entry
- Sanitary Certificates
- Data Plot Sheets (for agriculture)

Three UN/CEFACT Groups (Supply Chain, Architecture and Construction, and e-Government) also moved forward by setting a roadmap for their joint project on electronic Public Procurement (ePP). A call for participation has been made and anyone interested can contact the project team leader: Adam Arndt ([adar@itst.dk](mailto:adar@itst.dk)).

The Forum also gave special recognition to the UN/CEFACT Group of Transport Experts, who celebrated 20 years of contributions to e-business standards development. The standards that this Group has developed are the most widely implemented e-business standards in the transport sector around the world.

The work being done by UN/CEFACT was praised by John Van Dinther, Director at the United States Defense Contract Management Agency, who noted that publication of the international XML standard for project schedule and cost performance management was the result of 25 countries working together to research and create this standard. The standard had quickly gained extensive support due to the immediate potential for significant savings and greatly improved management of large projects in both the private and the public sector.

He said, for example, that all reporting to his agency on earned value cost and schedule reporting now had to be done using UN/CEFACT Standards. As a result, many major project management software vendors were now making their software compatible with these developments.

More information about UN/CEFACT can be found at: <http://www.unece.org/cefact/>

For further information, please contact: [trade@unece.org](mailto:trade@unece.org)

## **NOTE FOR EDITORS**

The XML standards developed by UN/CEFACT build on a globally consistent framework of processes and data that are common across a wide range of industries and governmental transactions. They have been specifically developed to foster interoperability, i.e. data to be exchanged between different systems and organizations.