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**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF
DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY
HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION
AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS**

Sub-Committee of Experts on the
Transport of Dangerous Goods

Thirty-second session
Geneva, 30 June-9 July (a.m.) 2008
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**MISCELLANEOUS PROPOSALS OF AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL
REGULATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS**

Identification of Approval Country in Marking

Transmitted by the expert from Canada*

Background

1. The required markings for small packagings, pressure receptacles, large packaging and IBCs include a requirement to identify the approval country by using a code which is “the distinguishing sign of motor vehicles in international traffic” (sections 6.1.3.1(f), 6.2.2.7.1(c), 6.3.4.2(c), and 6.5.2.1.1(e)).
2. The distinguishing signs of motor vehicles in international traffic are stipulated under the Geneva Convention on Road Traffic of 1949 and the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic of 1968. Countries must notify the Secretary General of the United Nations of their identifying sign

* In accordance with the programme of work of the Sub-Committee for 2007-2008 approved by the Committee at its third session (refer to ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/60, para. 100 and ST/SG/AC.10/34, para. 14)

so that it is recognized under those conventions. Currently, there are 152 distinguishing signs recognized, with another 28 listed as being commonly used by countries who are not contracting parties to those conventions, for a total of 180. (<http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/Distsigns.pdf>)

3. Other codes for identifying country names have been increasingly used and have been standardized. In particular, the codes in ISO 3166 “**Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions**”, Part 1 (three character codes) and Part 2 (two character codes), are now commonly used for applications other than motor vehicle traffic. Currently, 246 two character and 246 three character country codes are standardized under ISO 3166.

4. Not only does the ISO 3166 coding system cover more countries (which would make it a more universally applicable system), in some cases the code specified for a particular country under ISO 3166 is different from the distinguishing sign for international motor vehicle traffic. This is the case for Canada where the ISO codes are “CAN” and “CA” and where the motor vehicle distinguishing sign is “CDN”. The competent authority of Canada has always prescribed the code “CAN” for display on UN dangerous goods containers that it has authorized. Similarly, we have noted that the country of approval codes seen on UN dangerous goods containers authorized by other countries are not always those under the Geneva and Vienna conventions on motor vehicle traffic, but are frequently those standardized under ISO 3166.

Proposal

5. In Canada’s view, the current requirements in sections 6.1.3.1(f), 6.2.2.7.1(c), 6.3.4.2(c), and 6.5.2.1.1(e) of the UN Model Regulations may no longer be appropriate for use on UN packaging. The expert from Canada would like to invite discussion on whether the three and two character codes in ISO 3166 should be prescribed instead or, at least, as an alternative to the distinguishing signs for motor vehicles in international traffic. Based on comments received, the expert from Canada would make a formal proposal for revision of the Model Regulations for the December 2008 session.

6. The codes according to ISO 3166 and the distinguishing signs used on vehicles in international traffic are reproduced in informal document INF.5, with comments from the expert from Canada.
