



# UN/CEFACT Quarterly Report

November 2005

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## Useful Links

UN/CEFACT:  
[www.unece.org/cefact](http://www.unece.org/cefact)

Forum Management Group:  
[www.disa.org/cefact-groups/fmg](http://www.disa.org/cefact-groups/fmg)

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## Introducing Your Quarterly Report

As part of the Bureau's initiative on improving communications, productivity and participation by member States and NGOs, we are distributing quarterly reports to organizations participating in UN/CEFACT. This is the first issue, and we encourage your feedback so that we can make the reports an effective communications tool for the group.

Please send your comments to the UN/CEFACT secretariat <[jean.kubler@unece.org](mailto:jean.kubler@unece.org)> and to the UN/CEFACT Vice Chair, Mark Palmer <[mark.palmer@nist.gov](mailto:mark.palmer@nist.gov)>.

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## External Evaluation Report on UNECE and its Relevance to UN/CEFACT

An external evaluation team published an evaluation of the UNECE entitled "The State of the UNECE" at the end of June 2005. The Bureau then developed a comprehensive position document, addressing the issues raised by the report. This was submitted to the Chairman of the UNECE Commission, Ambassador Roux of Belgium, by the Chairman of the CTIED, and was sent to UN/CEFACT Heads of Delegation (HoDs).

Negotiations within the UNECE Commission started in September on a working plan on ECE reform. As of early November, the Bureau's understanding of developments within the negotiations is that UN/CEFACT will continue with its present mandate but under a proposed new "Committee on Trade".

The decision on proposed reforms is expected before the end of year. Meanwhile, UN/CEFACT HoDs are requested to maintain close contact with their Missions in Geneva to ensure that the Centre's future is secure.



## UN/CEFACT Reaches a Landmark for Coherent XML Business Standards

A productive Forum, attended by over 200 experts from Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe and North America, was held this September by UN/CEFACT in Lyon, France. During this meeting, UN/CEFACT took the final steps to enable industry groups to use UN/CEFACT specifications to create XML-based (eXtensible Mark-up Language) business documents for electronic trading.

This opens up important new opportunities for the implementation of electronic trading. At the opening session, SAP AG, a leading company in enterprise software and business solutions, explained the significance of UN/CEFACT's work and how it was central to SAP's new Enterprise Service Architecture.

At the centre of this landmark development was the publication of the first extended list of reusable information components - the Core Components Library. This will allow industry and business groups to develop United Nations XML business documents for use in electronic trading and other information exchanges. The Library is based on a stable methodology and will be maintained through an open and extensive consultative process, thereby securing investments for the future. The ICG (Information Content Management Group) is completing the verification and audit of the first Core Components Library.

Throughout the week meetings were held with representatives of Global Standards One (GS1), the OASIS Universal Business Language (UBL) Technical Committee and the eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) Group.

GS1 has made great progress in providing the retail industry with XML-based standards. The largest user of the UN/EDIFACT electronic data interchange standard worldwide, it provides substantive input into the

UN/CEFACT process for harmonizing business information. Through that harmonization, UN/CEFACT offers to other industry sectors interoperability standards that are used by the retail community. "We see now how

UN/CEFACT is in the position to get endorsement from Governments for our work and to further develop it for use by other industry groups," said Mark d'Agostino, Standards Director for GS1, "We recognize the progress that UN/CEFACT has made and wholeheartedly support their efforts."

UN/CEFACT recognizes the contribution that the OASIS standard UBL has made to Governments and companies adopting concrete XML-based documents. Together with the UBL Technical Committee, UN/CEFACT is developing a plan to continue this work and further align it with UN/CEFACT Standards. By endorsing the UBL work UN/CEFACT will ensure the ongoing support and extension of this XML-based document approach. "The prospect of working within the UN to advance global electronic business standards is an exciting one," said Jon Bosak, Chair of the OASIS UBL Technical Committee "I look forward to completion of the plan to place UBL within the suite of technologies developed by UN/CEFACT".

XBRL, an open standard for financial reporting, presented its work to the meeting. It discussed with UN/CEFACT how to foster stronger linkages between business data and financial reports.

UN/CEFACT also decided to move forward on e-Government and Single Windows for export and import clearance. Governments are increasingly providing Internet-enabled services. The creation of the e-Government Working Group, with the formal support of France, India, New Zealand, and Viet Nam, as well as interest from Australia, Austria, United Kingdom and the United States, will allow Governments to benefit from UN/CEFACT's expertise and standards.



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In view of the international interest generated by the UN/CEFACT Single Window Recommendation and the current move by many countries to establish such Single Windows, UN/CEFACT will organize a three-day Conference on Single Window Standards and Interoperability in Geneva from 1-3 March 2006. This event, which will target operators of existing Single Windows and countries considering establishing such a facility, will also involve major international organizations. For information on this conference, please contact Mr. Tom Butterly in the secretariat <[tom.butterly@unece.org](mailto:tom.butterly@unece.org)>.

In addition, the Forum hosted presentations from SITPRO, the UK's Simplification of Trade Procedures organization, on their UNeDocs UK initiative. The initiative is providing valuable implementation verifications of the key UN/CEFACT methodologies including UMM, CCTS and the Core Component Library. A representative of the EU research project, ATHENA, joined the Forum for discussions about how UN/CEFACT standards could be represented in their EIC (Enterprise Interoperability Centre) programme. Finally, the Forum hosted a presentation from IATA, the International Air Transport Association. It described their new e-freight cargo initiative and their interest in working with UN/CEFACT on an alignment of standards approaches.

The Forum Management Group met throughout the week. They were joined by three additional Bureau members, Mike Doran, Tahseen Khan and Mark Palmer, as well as the Standards Rapporteur, Francois Vuilleumier and the Rapporteur for Asia, Lim Sang Won. The Permanent Groups all made significant progress during the meeting on both their individual work programmes and equally importantly on combined projects with other Working Groups within and across other Permanent Groups. In particular the following activities can be noted:

## **ATG (Applied Technologies Group)**

The UN/EDIFACT XML Naming and Design Rules have moved forward to step 6 of the Open Development Process with implementation verification projects submitted by SITPRO, UK and the TBG6 e-tendering project.

Over 145 Data Maintenance Requests (DMRs) for UN/EDIFACT were processed, which signifies a renewed interest in EDI by the market.

## **ICG (Information Content Management Group)**

ICG released the Requirements Specification Mapping (RSM) version 0.05. The code list projects were progressed along with the Registry Specification (V0.8).

## **LG (Legal Group)**

The Legal Group was relaunched and new interim officers were elected. The new Legal Group members met for one day, during which useful meetings with other Groups and Project Teams took place. It is planned that the Legal Group will participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> Forum meeting in Vancouver.

## **TBG (International Trade & Business Processes Group)**

Fourteen of the 16 working groups met at the Forum, all reporting good progress. TBG2 (Digital Paper), the latest addition to the TBG family which had been established at the previous Forum meeting, completed the formalities of registering its Terms of Reference and Procedures as well as voting in two vice-chairs, one from Malaysia and one from Africa. Two other new work groups were approved, TBG 18 for agriculture and TBG19 for e-Government.

The TBG Trade Facilitation Work Group, TBG15, conducted an interesting and well-attended workshop on Single Window implementations. The TBG harmonization Work Group, TBG17, issued the first official UN/CEFACT Core Components Library.



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## **TMG (Techniques & Methodologies Group)**

A combined project with TBG to provide UMM business process modelling support to the business Working Groups, met for a day before the main Forum meeting. They developed an implementation plan which has been submitted to the Forum Management Group.

The Architecture Working Group has been relaunched. Their work will support the UN/CEFACT Electronic Business vision and mission by documenting the implementation of the UN/CEFACT Electronic Business Strategy. It will show how all the UN/CEFACT methodologies and technologies fit together, e.g., CCTS, UMM, BCSS, NDR, UN/EDIFACT, UNEDocs, ebXML, and Web Services. The initial task will be to create an overview of the current specifications focusing on simplification, usability and implementability. The Group will present the results at the next Forum meeting.

In conclusion, UN/CEFACT has now reached the point where it is able to deliver the results of years of hard work to the business community. "The enthusiasm in the Forum is high, now that we have reached the landmark of producing a Core Components Library" said Dick Raman, Chair of the Forum Management Group. "This landmark, along with the support we have received for it in our discussions with global e-business organizations, will now enable us to produce coherent deliverables for the business community".

As a United Nations Centre where standardization organizations and industry groups can align, harmonize and share their work, UN/CEFACT enables them to get endorsement of their work by governments and industry at the highest level.

The next UN/CEFACT Forum meeting is scheduled for 13-17 March 2006 in Vancouver, Canada.

## **Interim PG meetings:**

Many of the permanent groups and work groups and several of the individual Forum Project Teams announced that they would hold interim meetings before the next Forum.

## **Schedule for Forum meetings:**

**Vancouver (Canada):  
13-17 March 2006**

**New Delhi (India):  
September 2006,  
dates to be confirmed**

**Cairo (Egypt): March 2007,  
to be confirmed**

**Europe: September 2007,  
to be confirmed**



## Additional News to Use

In response to the Plenary's request for member States to take a more active role in supporting and promoting the UN/CEFACT programme of work, Sweden is funding the preparation of a "Guide to Trade Facilitation Implementation". The guide is expected to be published by mid-2006. Sweden is also funding related capacity-building seminars for developing and transition economy countries.

During the 7th Forum in Lyon, TBG 15 launched two new publications that give practical information and advice: the Single Windows Repository and the Guide to Benchmarking. The first, an expandable and growing library, includes 10 case studies on how countries conceived and established a Single Window to make more efficient the exchange of information between trade and government organizations. Each case study gives a concrete example of the various business models used to design and deliver a Single Window. Using a standard template, the Repository gives details of the development of Single Window facilities, operational factors including technologies used, and the costs and benefits. This will enable other countries and companies to examine individual cases and assess which system best suits their business needs and meets official requirements. An Internet version of the repository can be found at [http://www.unece.org/cefact/single\\_window/welcome.htm](http://www.unece.org/cefact/single_window/welcome.htm).

The Guide to Benchmarking, similar to the brochures produced on Trade Facilitation and Single Window, explains the concept of benchmarking and its supporting principles and highlights the benefits. It also offers a simple methodology to conduct benchmarking projects. The advice it offers is flexible so that countries and companies can tailor their benchmarking initiatives to meet their own specific challenges in either improving business performance or optimizing official controls. The Guide helps users to establish a

starting point, set out a desired future goal and chart a practical path to reaching the objective while avoiding the pitfalls that may be found along the way. This approach should encourage users to contribute to the discussion and influence the decision on whether the application of benchmarking could prove useful as a trade facilitation tool in either their country or company. If the Guide is well accepted and creates a demand for further information, TBG 15 will consider developing it into a UN Recommendation.

For paper copies of the above two publications, please contact Mr. Tom Butterly in the UNECE secretariat <[tom.butterly@unece.org](mailto:tom.butterly@unece.org)>.

## Topics for Intersessional Action

- **The secretariat sent the draft report on the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary for intersessional approval on 13 July. Comments were received from 4 HoDs. The final document is currently being translated and will be circulated shortly.**
- **The principles of the Intellectual Property Rights Policy were approved. These have been set out in document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/MISC.3. The Special Contact Group, in cooperation with the Bureau, was requested to prepare a document that the secretariat can clear with the UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA). This document was submitted OLA on 4 August.**



## Communications with Heads of Delegation

Messages from the Bureau to the HoD list server		
Date	Sender	Topic
24 June	Mika Vepsäläinen	List of decisions made at the 11 <sup>th</sup> UN/CEFACT Plenary
27 June	Mika Vepsäläinen	Renamed document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/16 as per Decision 05-16 made at the Plenary
13 July	Mika Vepsäläinen	Draft report of the Plenary for intersessional approval process
18 July	Mika Vepsäläinen	Call for participation in the Legal Group
9 August	Stuart Feder	Chairman's briefing regarding the external evaluation
26 August	Mika Vepsäläinen	Call for participation in the work of the Legal Group
9 September	Stuart Feder	Chairman's message to Heads of Delegation regarding the external evaluation
12 September	Jean Kubler	The Bureau's communication to UNECE Chairman regarding the external evaluation
6 October	Mika Vepsäläinen	Press Release of 7 <sup>th</sup> UN/CEFACT Forum
11 October	Jean Kubler	Call for participation for TBG19
27 October	Mika Vepsäläinen	Final edited press release from Lyon

## Summary of Bureau Meetings and Action

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary, the Bureau has held monthly conference calls and electronic communications. In June 2005, the Bureau finished the text of the press release highlighting the achievements and important topics that would be discussed at the UN/CEFACT Plenary and the international forum. The Bureau also discussed both the draft IPR policy and the financing document that had been submitted to the Plenary. The Bureau requested the secretariat to update the list servers that UN/CEFACT was using.

In July, the Bureau completed the text of the UN/CEFACT 'Roadmap towards Paperless Trade', which had been launched at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Executive Forum on Trade Facilitation, "Paperless Trade in International Supply Chains: Enhancing Efficiency and Security". Other major issues discussed included the financing of the 8<sup>th</sup> UN/CEFACT Forum, which would take place in Vancouver, Canada, in March 2006. The Bureau also decided to organize one of the future UN/CEFACT Forums in Egypt.

In August 2005, the Bureau prepared a message to the Heads of Delegation about its plans to comment on the draft report on the UNECE external evaluation. When this message had been approved, the secretariat sent it to the HoD list server. The Bureau also discussed the UBL/UNEDocs alignment, which would be progressed at the Lyon Forum. The Bureau discussed and finalized its response to the UNECE Chairman concerning the UNECE external evaluation. The Bureau also discussed the organization of the 7<sup>th</sup> UN/CEFACT Forum that took place in Lyon, France on 26-30 September 2005.

The Bureau participated in that Forum and in the meetings of the Forum Management Group. In October and November 2005, the Bureau worked on comprehensively reviewing UN/CEFACT's programme of work, on improving coordination with the secretariat and with external organizations, and on strategic planning.



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## Planned UN/CEFACT Workshops and Events from November 2005 to March 2006

(as of 15 November 2005)

### 2005

DATE	TITLE	LOCATION	UN/CEFACT MAIN CONTACT
9 November	<b>TBG 15 Project e-invoice meeting</b>	Brussels, Belgium	Jean Kubler
5-9 December	<b>ICG Interim Meeting: release of UN/CEFACT Registry Specification, V1.0</b>	Paris, France	Mike Conroy

### 2006

9-13 January	<b>TMG Meeting</b>	Sydney, Australia	Gunther Stuhec Jim Wilson
1-3 March	<b>UN/CEFACT Workshop on Common Standards &amp; Interoperability for Single Window</b>	Geneva, Switzerland (Palais des Nations)	Tom Butterly
13-17 March	<b>UN/CEFACT Forum</b>	Vancouver, Canada	Jean Kubler Duane Nickull

## Recent Publications

Joint UNECE – ISO revision 2005 of the UN *Trade Data Elements Directory -UNTDED 2005/ ISO 7372:2005 (ECE/TRADE/362)*.

By producing this edition of the TDED, the Maintenance Agency delivered a directory that is:

- Supporting the UN Layout Key for Trade Documents (ISO 6422) by registering data elements that can be conveyed in such documents
- Fully consistent with the set of UN/EDIFACT directories supporting electronic data interchange;
- Multimodal (all means of transport)
- Multisectoral (trade/transport/Customs etc.)
- Technology and syntax independent
- Compliant with UN/CEFACT Core Components Technical Specification, providing the core component directory entry name and supporting the Controlled Vocabulary with a list of permissible words
- Backward compatible wherever possible.

The UNECE secretariat would like to thank Mr. Francois Vuilleumier, Chair of ISO/TC 154, for his support, which made the revision of the Trade Data Elements Directory possible.



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***“Recommendation and Guidelines on Establishing a Single Window, to enhance the efficient exchange of information between trade and government” - Recommendation No. 33. (ECE/TRADE/352).*** Within the context of the Recommendation, a Single Window is defined as a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfill all import, export, and transit related regulatory requirements.

To obtain these publications, please contact Ms. Karen Taylor at <[karen.taylor@unece.org](mailto:karen.taylor@unece.org)>.

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