

Report of UN/CEFACT Rapporteur for Asia

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From :

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1.0 Introduction :

The subject of Trade Facilitation (TF) and e-Business (eB) is gaining considerable momentum. The Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (CEFACT) has made coordinated efforts with member countries and economies for the promotion and development of trade facilitation and electronic business related activities and few of such initiatives have been covered in this paper. Also in the Asia Pacific region the subject has been addressed by many national and international organisations who have mandates of similar nature along with the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT). The issues and the activities addressed by this institution have also been integrated into this paper.

2.0 UN/CEFACT led developments:

2.1 UN/CEFACT announced the release of Core Components Technical Specifications

The Technologies and Methodologies Group (TMG) of the UNCEFACT has announced the final release of its Core Component Technical Specification (CCTS), Version 2.0, prepared under the UN/CEFACT Open Development Process.

Using the UN/CEFACT Open Development Process, interested parties from around the world have collaborated in the design and verification of the Specification through actual implementation. Parties interested in the CCTS can download it from the TMG's Web Site http://webster.disa.org/cefact-groups/tmg/doc_tmg.html under "Approved Documents".

2.2 UNCEFACT released the first revision to the code list for UN Recommendation No. 23

UN/CEFACT's Information Content Management Group (ICG) has announced the release of the first revision to the code list for UN Recommendation No. 23 (Freight Cost Code - FCC). This revision includes a number of new freight charge codes.

2.3 Second International Forum on Trade Facilitation

The Second International Forum on Trade Facilitation held at Geneva from 14-15 May 2003 discussed how to help developing and poorer transition countries and SMEs get a fair share of the benefits from trade facilitation, and how to avoid a situation when the new security measures in international trade will create discrimination and additional barriers to trade.

The Forum dealt on to define new, practical measures to progress trade facilitation in the new world environment and highlighted possible ways of constructing an equitable mechanism of facilitating trade, where small and large countries and businesses will share the benefits. It pointed to innovative methods for resolving the dilemma between heightened security measures and the necessity for faster movement of goods, services and information. The representative of United States, Customs made a keynote address referring to US initiatives on container security and public-private cooperation for improving security in international trade.

2.4 UN/EDIFACT D.03A version released:

UN/CEFACT has released D.03A the latest version of the UN/EDIFACT (United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport) directory. The D.03A UN/EDIFACT directory is now available for download from the UNECE Web Server.

2.5 UN/LOCODE 2003.2 code list issued

UN ECE Secretariat has issued the UN/LOCODE 2003.2 code list. It contains 3000 additional entries in comparison with previous issue.

2.6 UN/CEFACT announced the completion of ebXML technical standards work programme with OASIS.

The UN/CEFACT has announced the successful completion of the ebXML technical standards work with the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS). UN/CEFACT continues to capitalize on the gains made from ebXML in the further development of technology-neutral and implementation-neutral global e-Business standards for government, industry and commerce.

2.7 UN/CEFACT delegation visit the Asian e-Business community

A senior delegation of UN/CEFACT Steering Group members visited the Asian e-Business community, ahead of the UN/CEFACT Forum meeting in Seoul. Between September 1 and the 12, 2003 a delegation consisting of Ray Walker (Chair, UN/CEFACT Steering Group), Kenji Itoh (Vice Chair UN/CEFACT), Klaus-Dieter Naujok (Chair, UN/CEFACT Technologies and Methodologies Group) and Dave Welsh (Chair, UN/CEFACT Business Process Work Group) visited six countries and explained how UN/CEFACT is organized and how its Business Collaboration Framework (BCF) delivers an e-Business driven technology vision.

Starting in Taipei, then Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul the UN/CEFACT delegation met leaders in government, industry, and academia who are developing e-Business and trade facilitation standards for Asia.

2.8 Third International Forum and BCF Group

At the UN/CEFACT Forum meeting in Seoul held from 15-17 Sep. 2003 participants from the Asian region decided to submit to AFACT steering committee, a recommendation for the creation of a Business Collaboration Framework (BCF) group for their region. The draft terms of reference include initiating and guiding implementation projects within and between AFACT members, and communication and promotion.

3.0 AFACT led developments :

The 20th session of the Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) back to back with an Electronic Commerce and Trade Facilitation International Conference/Exhibition called “EDICOM 2002” was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 27th to 30th Oct. 2001 and 31st Oct. to 1st Nov. 2002 respectively. This time around 300 participants from Chinese Taipei, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam participated in the meeting. However Australia, Mongolia, People’s Republic of China and Philippines could not participate.

The Joint working group meetings for various working groups were held on 28th and 29th Oct. 2002. The Working Groups (WGs) discussed the methods of co-operation between member countries to promote/implement TF and eB solutions in respective sectors. The XML WG conducted a special one day session called ebXML day on 29th Oct. 2002 to promote ebXML in the region.

The Plenary was held on 30th Oct. 2003 and the major issues discussed/resolutions passed are as given below :

- All HODs to create parallel working groups and coordination among member nations for cross border initiatives.
- The application of Mongolia for induction as member of AFACT was approved by the plenary.
- The ebXML Asia Committee was inducted as an Associate Member of AFACT.
- The proposal for AFACT restructuring based on the new UNCEFACT structure was discussed and member’s comments are invited by March 2003. This would be compiled by AFACT Secretariat, for taking formal view.
- The Plenary approved candidature of Korea and Singapore to become the new elected members of Steering Committee (StC) of AFACT.
- All the Chairperson of joint working groups presented their reports.
- UNCEFACT Rapporteur for Asia presented update on activities of UNCEFACT, AFACT as well as regional developments in the one year period since last AFACT meeting at Jakarta, Indonesia.
- UNESCAP representative presented report and stressed on greater collaboration between AFACT and UNESCAP.

- AFACT secretariat presented proposal on eAsia award and expo on eAsia award winning programs and other outstanding eB and TF programs, which was accepted by plenary.
- The next meeting Chair, Mr. Javed Akhtar, announced the venue and dates for the 21st AFACT meeting and EDICOM 2003, which would take place in Karachi, Pakistan from 12 – 17 October 2003.
- It was agreed that the 22nd AFACT Plenary would be held in Singapore and 23rd in Vietnam.

The highlights of 20th AFACT session are as given below :

3.1 Web update and hyperlinking

The new web site of AFACT i.e www.afact.org is linked to member web sites. It contains information related to Electronic Business (eB)/ Electronic Commerce (eC) Standard and Trade Facilitation (TF) issues/status, event calendar etc. All relevant meeting documents have also been hosted.

3.2 Joint Working Group (JWG)

Some of the important issues discussed/emerged out of JWGs like Inter-Networking Implementation Committee, XMLWG, Awareness and Education WG, Customs WG, E-Commerce WG, Financial WG, Technical Assessment WG, Transport WG, Security WG, Purchasing WG, Air Transport WG, Legal Working Group are as given below:

- XML WG will coordinate with UNCEFACT ebXML initiative through ebXML Asia Committee, which will provide related forum and interoperability testing platform, since ebXML Asia is the associate member of AFACT.
- A handbook on EDI is being compiled by the WG, which would be circulated to all members on completion.
- Member countries were encouraged to closely cooperate with each other in order to develop security framework and to exchange security information.

- The participating members recognised the need for joint studies of methodologies adopted by member countries for eBusiness adoption in air cargo community.
- It was agreed that Security WG (SWG) will make a recommended practice on PKI.

3.3 EDICOM 2002

The EDICOM 2002 conference was organised from 31st Oct. – 1st Nov. 2002. The EDICOM 2002 was inaugurated by Y. B. Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas, Dy. Minister of the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia. The focus of EDICOM 2002 was linking the value chain through e-business. The main topics/issues discussed in the conference were Supply chain management, E-Business incentives for SMEs, E-Business perspective (How can everybody benefit from e-business), Challenges in implementing e-business through XML/EDI over the Internet, Customs e-Solutions, Key for secure and efficient international trade, Harmonisation of laws, Global trends of e-business, Regional cooperation for e-business etc.

A large number of companies participated in the exhibition including Microsoft Malaysia (XML web services), Sun Microsystems Malaysia (Manufacturing, financial services, education etc.), GITN SDN BERHAD (integrated communication and computing infrastructure), Dagang Net (electronic trade communities in diverse sectors; from logistics and manufacturing to retail and government), KPMG Consulting, Mitech (information technology and asset management), Commerce Dot Com, MyEG Dot Com (electronic payment), Myspeed.Com (e-services) etc.

3.4 eAsia Awards

The AFACT secretariat has taken an initiative to start eAsia Awards. The eASIA Award campaign aims at promoting the mutual inspiration and experience sharing on electronic business and trade facilitation in Asia Pacific Region.

4.0 Other initiatives in the region

4.1 Pan-Asia e-Commerce Alliance

The Pan-Asian e-Commerce Alliance (PAA) held its 11th Steering Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the first time from 20 to 21 February 2003. Hosted by alliance member Dagang Net Technologies Sdn Bhd (DNT), the meeting was attended by Tradelink, CrimsonLogic, CIECC, KTNET, Trade-Van, TEDI Club, DNT and the alliance's newest member, TEDMEV. Representatives from EDI Indonesia attended the meeting as observers. Members were informed that substantial progress have been made in the pilots for the PAA Secure Cross Border Transaction Service.

4.2 GEPIR

The GEPIR (Global EAN.UCC Party Information Register) an XML based registry is operated by EAN member organizations. With the growing acceptance and usage of the service and to decide on future strategy, a (GEPIR) meeting was held on 20-21 January 2003 at New Delhi, India. Fifteen people joined from all over the world including Switzerland, Turkey, Russia, France, Sweden, India, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Sweden, Iran. Agenda of the meeting included finalization of version 3 of the specification draft, Preparation of GEPIR business plan, whitepaper, connecting GEPIR to UDDI and detailed discussion on overall architecture.

4.3 ebXML Asia Committee :

ebXML Asia Committee has announced starting of ebXML interoperability certification program and issued ebXML interoperability certification on ebXML Message Service specification 2.0, including basic functions and reliable messaging, for 12 companies and organizations, which passed the interoperability test. Interoperability is one of key issues to realize Internet based B2B eBusiness using multi- vendor implementations, even across countries. The 10th meeting of the committee will be held in Okinawa, Japan from 4-6 Dec. 2003.
