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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in 2015 to implement the outcome of the WSIS

Submission by

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 18th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

Progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels

I.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.   The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has focussed its actions in implementing the outcomes of WSIS on areas related to economic development and sustainability. The work of the UNECE to support the WSIS objectives is carried out at the subprogramme level and the variety of activities reflects the multi-sectoral character of the organization.

2.   UNECE remains very active on trade facilitation, in particular through its United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), which developed new recommendations in 2015 to reflect developments after the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement. It has continued to work with the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in support of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT). Numerous capacity-building activities have been carried out on trade facilitation and electronic business in different locations. In particular, UNECE has provided methodological support and technical assistance to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, including regarding business processes analysis to facilitate the use of electronic business and document exchange. A Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade (2014-2015) was conducted in collaboration with other international organizations.

3.   Access to information and knowledge on environmental matters through the use of electronic tools remains an important area of activity for UNECE, in particular in connection with the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). The Task Force on Access to Information monitors the implementation of Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools. Work is also being carried out on developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) across the UNECE region. UNECE manages a number of web-based portals that provide access to environmental information and knowledge.

4.   UNECE carries out regular assessments of innovation performance in countries with economies in transition, considering policy, institutional and regulatory aspects that influence the adoption and dissemination of technologies, including ICT. After concluding the review of Tajikistan, it is now discussing the scope and methodology for second-cycle reviews.

5.   UNECE remains strongly involved in the development of Intelligent Transport Systems and transport innovation, supporting the implementation of a Road Map on Intelligent Transport Systems. It has been involved on different activities regarding ITS, including communication protocols, information security, in-vehicle emergency call systems, location referencing and maps and improving security for the transportation of dangerous goods.

6.   UNECE will strive to adapt its tools to better support the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, including in areas related to the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS. It will continue to work with numerous partners, both in the private and the public sector, to advance these objectives.

II.   OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

The following sections describe the work done by the various UNECE subprogrammes to support individual WSIS Action Lines.

A.   ACTION LINE C1: THE ROLE OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AUTHORITIES AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROMOTION OF ICTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Economic Cooperation and Integration

7.   UNECE carries out Innovation Performance Reviews in countries with economies in transition. These policy advisory participatory exercises consider the factors that drive innovation in the country, including the use of ICT and the broader overall regulatory, policy and institutional environment that facilitates technology adoption and diffusion. In 2015, UNECE carried out a review of Tajikistan. An International Conference in November in Belarus will take stock of past reviews and discuss and compare lessons, challenges and opportunities in policy implementation. It will also examine the methodology used in the first cycle of reviews and prepare the ground for second-round reviews.

Trade

8.   The UNECE through its United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) aims at facilitating national and international trade and business transactions. Both the public and private sectors jointly develop, maintain and support recommendations and business standards at UN/CEFACT. The overall objective of the recommendations and standards is to support institutions in their efforts to increase efficiency and transparency in trade transactions. For example, the Single Window concept, which is promoted in the trade facilitation recommendations, encourages adoption of ICT based solutions by public and private actors to achieve efficiency and promote better governance of international trade. In addition, UN/CEFACT's activities support Target 5, aiming at "making available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications in cooperation with the private sector".

B.   Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

Transport

9.   UNECE is committed to placing Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) on the agendas of policymakers as ITS are key in shaping the future of sustainable mobility. Multiple ITS related activities were conducted in 2015. At the seventy seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), the status of the implementation of the Road Map on Intelligent transport systems was discussed and the Committee invited its subsidiary bodies to strengthen ITS activities linked to transport modes by addressing ITS issues in an integrated approach.

10.   UNECE organized jointly with ITU the "2015 Symposium on the Future Networked Car". The international symposium examined advances in the area of connected vehicles, from the perspectives of business, technology and regulation. Technical sessions highlighted the crucial roles of communication protocols, information security, in-vehicle emergency call systems, location referencing and maps. UNECE organized its annual flagship ITS workshop in Bordeaux during the ITS World Congress 2015, in collaboration with the French Ministry of Ecology (MEDDE) and with the support of the Michelin Bibendum Challenge (MBC). In line with the objectives of COP21, international experts and decision-makers presented how new services in mobility and ITS technologies can improve road safety and transport efficiency as well as be used to mitigate climate change, addressing the Lima Paris Action Agenda. Taking into account the significance of the

quick developments in the area of vehicle automation and vehicles connectivity, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) has refocused some of its resources to address this fast technological development within its Informal Working Group ITS/AD focusing on autonomous driving.

11.   Vehicle automation has become the catalyst for many ITS activities including the promotion of traditional ITS across all transport modes and their infrastructures. In 2015, the joint meeting of the RID Committee of experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), through its informal working group on telematics, continued its work on ITS applications. The aim is to deliver electronic transport information on dangerous goods carried and to connect the permanent availability of information with means of positioning to improve alert systems. Other applications (for example, regarding security or the passage of tunnels) could be developed at a later stage. So far, the elements of information to be transmitted electronically have been identified, the system architecture has been defined and adopted, and some pilot projects have been implemented in certain countries.

B.   ACTION LINE C3: ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Environment

12.   Timely, reliable, high quality and easily accessible environmental information is essential for evidence-based policies and informing citizens. At the same time, organizing a vast array of environmental data and making it available in a comprehensible manner is a challenging task. UNECE has been contributing to the development of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment is supported by the ECE secretariat and the European Environmental Agency. The two organizations, working in tandem, help to review the online availability and accessibility of data and information provided by the countries in the pan-European region under SEIS. In cooperation with UNEP, they also help to ensure that the data and information are compatible with those produced and shared at other governance levels, such as under the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process led by UNEP.

13.   Under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), a web-based platform has been established for a programme of pilot projects on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins.[1] The platform was initially limited to the UNECE region but now offers a forum for a worldwide exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

14.   Activities under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) are carried out under the auspices of the Task Force on Access to Information.[2] The work has been focused on the scope of environmental information, its quality and associated costs, the application of certain restrictions on access to environmental information, dissemination of environmental information through electronic information tools and further development of the Aarhus Clearinghouse for environmental democracy and national nodes. The Task Force has also continued monitoring the implementation of Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools to provide public access to environmental information adopted through decision II/3 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention[3].

15.   The Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) to the Aarhus Convention is the only legally binding instrument to ensure minimum standards for equal rights and transparency in the use of environmental data. It offers a legal framework for enhancing public access to information. PRTRs allow access to specific environmental information for everybody, with virtually no

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[1]   https://www2.unece.org/ehlm/platform/display/ClimateChange/Welcome
[2]   http://www.unece.org/env/pp/tfai.html
[3]   http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/a_to_i/1st_meeting/ece.mp.pp.2005.2.add.4.e.pdf

restrictions. Free web-based access to geo-referenced environmental data empowers the public, decision makers in government and industry, scientists and journalists to make informed choices. In 2015, work focused on how to improve knowledge sharing and access to information contained in PRTRs. A document on systemic issues concerning the implementation of the Protocol and recommendations on how to address them (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2015/5) [4] has been prepared by the Compliance Committee under the Protocol with the involvement of Parties and stakeholders. The document identifies implementation challenges, provides recommendations on how to address them and includes selected good practices linked to different aspects of the Protocol's implementation.

Trade

16.   The UNECE Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG) is a web-based, interactive knowledge management tool that covers all the major trade facilitation instruments from all key international organizations. It provides a single source where policymakers and implementers can find essential trade facilitation information. The TFIG helps policymakers and implementing managers identify, examine and select available solutions and possible paths for their trade facilitation reform efforts. It is a core tool to support the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The Guide is available in English, French, Russian, and Spanish and, since 2015, will also be accessible in Arabic.

C.   ACTION LINE C4: CAPACITY-BUILDING

Environment

17.   The Secretariat of the Aarhus convention manages a database of capacity-building activities from around the world on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers [5]. The Secretariat encourages National Focal Points and stakeholders to contribute to the capacity-building activities database as this greatly facilitates information exchange and the planning of future activities. Via the www.prtr.net website anyone can use this database, including National Focal Points and stakeholders who wish to add information.

Trade

18.   UNECE, together with UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, has continued supporting the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT). The network is a platform for exchange of knowledge and best practices in Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business. UNNExT has published a series of technical guides on Single Window Implementation in the areas of business process analysis (BPA), data harmonization, legal framework, Single Window masterplan development and design for aligned trade forms. UNNExT has also rolled out an intensive two-week capacity-building event titled the Masterclas on electronic business and single window.

19.   In 2015, UNECE and OSCE jointly organized a three-day training workshop on TFIG for Central Asia and Afghanistan. Three training events were organized on the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG) in Rome, Dushanbe and Kiev. Under a Technical Cooperation project for Greece, UNECE has undertaken a number of initiatives, including capacity-building events, study tours and advisory services.

20.   In 2015 UNECE provided methodological support and technical assistance to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation) and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) to implement advanced trade facilitation measures such as document harmonization and building Single Window facilities. UNECE led the organization of two training seminars on

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[4]   Available from http://www.unece.org/prtrwgp4.html#/.
[5]   http://apps.unece.org/ehlm/pp/NIR/RLsearch.asp

Business Process Analysis (BPA) and the development of a methodology for BPA. The Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union will use this training and methodology to carry out numerous BPAs, in order to reengineer business processes and adapt them for the use of electronic business and document exchange, establishment of Single Window mechanisms, and finalization of the Integrated Information System for Mutual and Foreign Trade (IISVVT) of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union using international standards for data exchange.

21.   UNECE continues its support for the Port Community System (local Single Window) in the Odessa region in Ukraine (see www.singlewindow.org). The system now services three ports: Odessa, Ilyichevsk, and Yuzhi. A peer review took place in June 2015 with the participation of similar advanced systems from Singapore (TradeNet) and Morocco (PortNet).

D.   **ACTION LINE C5: BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY IN THE USE OF ICTS**

Trade

22.   UN/CEFACT has an ongoing project to develop a Recommendation for ensuring legally significant trusted transboundary electronic interaction.

E.   **ACTION LINE C6: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

Environment

23.   Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs endorsed a proposal on a number of activities to help establishing PRTRs and promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This framework aimed at accelerated accession to the Protocol on PRTRs and the development of PRTR systems. Some of the challenges considered include the development of a methodology for making PRTR tools available free of charge; cooperation between countries with advanced experience in PRTRs and countries seeking to develop PRTRs and improved access to the Internet in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. A survey is being carried out in November 2015 to collect information on the current status of PRTRs in these countries and to assess recent developments with regard to the implementation of PRTRs.

F.   **ACTION LINE C7: ICT APPLICATIONS**

1.   ***C7. A e-Government***

Economic Cooperation and Integration

24.   UNECE contributed to the Second Regional Internet Governance Forum - Multi-stakeholder Platform for Regional Economic Growth and Cultural Development (3 December 2014, Baku, Azerbaijan) with a presentation on data-driven public innovation and the role of government. The Forum was organized by: the Ministry of Communications and High-Technologies of Azerbaijan; the Internet Governance Forum; the Azerbaijan Internet Forum; UNDESA and UNDP, in cooperation with many private sector partners and with ICANN.

2. **C7.B e-Business**

Trade

25.	Since 1989, UNECE has developed and maintained electronic business standards through the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)[6]. Among the most well-known and used of these standards is the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange Standard (UN/EDIFACT). This standard facilitates the exchange of information in many areas, including transport, customs, government and business procurement, just-in-time manufacturing and finance. UN/CEFACT also issues and continues to develop a host of data codes for exchanging information, including the United Nations Location Code (LOCODE) which has more than 100,000 Trade & Transport Locations used by transport and postal authorities in some 250 countries and territories. Among its other recommendations are the United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents; the Single Window related Recommendations (Number 33, 34, 35), to enhance the efficient exchange of information between trade and government, and a Core Component Library (CCL) and related products.

26.	Recent key deliverables from UN/CEFACT include UNECE Recommendation No. 40 on "Consultation approaches. Best Practices in Trade and Government Consultation on Trade Facilitation matters" and Recommendation No. 4 on "National Trade Facilitation Bodies" which has been revised to reflect recent developments in Trade Facilitation globally, especially the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement. A new recommendation on PPP in Trade Facilitation has been finalized. In the course of 2015, the following new projects were launched: Revision of Recommendation 1 on UN Layout Key for Trade Documents, Supply Chain Reference Data Model (SCRDM) Project, and eCROP data exchange.

27.	In addition, further progress was observed in initiatives initiated in late 2014, including on Multi Modal Transport Reference Data Model; Common Framework for Freight Information Exchange Project; Purchase Order Financing Project and Integrating Trade Finance & Supply Chain Finance into Trade Facilitation are well advanced.

28.	The Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade (2014-2015) was conducted by all United Nations Regional Commissions in collaboration with OECD, UNCTAD, ITC and other organizations. The Survey covered not only implementation of some important measures included in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) but also of measures aimed at enabling paperless trade, or the conduct of trade using electronic rather than paper-based data and documentation. The Survey was conducted in 27 countries in the UNECE Region and was based on 31 trade facilitation and paperless trade measures. The regional average for implementation is 62 per cent, with half of the countries scoring close to or more than 80 per cent.

*3.	C7.F e-Environment*

29.	In 2015, the Environment subprogramme (Aarhus secretariat) in collaboration with UNITAR and the OECD continued to provide up-to-date information on available electronic tools for access to environmental information and Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR). The tools include the PRTR global portal[7], PRTR Learn[8], the UNECE Public Participation website[9], and the Aarhus Clearinghouse for environmental

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6	http://www.unece.org/cefact/index.html
7	http://www.prtr.net
8	http://prtr.unitar.org
9	http://www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html

democracy[10].

G.	**ACTION LINE C11: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION**

Trade

30.	UNECE led an initiative to bring together a number of international organizations to issue a joint statement on a coordinated approach for delivering technical assistance for the implementation of the WTO trade facilitation agreement. The other signatory organizations include the International Trade Centre, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on behalf of the UN Regional Commissions of ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA, the World Bank Group, and the World Customs Organization.

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[10]	http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/