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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in
2012 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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

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I. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has concentrated its actions in implementing the outcomes of WSIS on development-related issues, and on finding solutions that use the Internet and other ITC tools to facilitate the achievement of development goals while dedicating special attention to sustainability-related concerns.

2. While there has been considerable progress in improving the infrastructure and technological capacity of ITC in many of the UNECE's emerging economies there have been an increasing number of legal regulations and other restraints on the access to information. Thus, increasingly the constraints on the access to the world's information in parts of this region are political and not technological.

3. The internet in many of the UNECE economies is not particularly robust and subject to potential disruptions; this is due largely to the fact that there are very few providers at their international frontiers. This is the case for the central Asian economies, especially Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the Caucasus, south-east Europe, the Baltics, and Belarus.

4. The work of the UNECE to support the WSIS objectives is carried out at a sub-programme level. The UNECE relevant sub-programmes deal with sustainable energy, environment, economic cooperation and integration, housing and land management, statistics, trade and transport.

5. The following sections describe the work done by the various UNECE sub-programmes to support individual WSIS Action Lines.

II. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

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

1. Economic Cooperation and Integration

6. The Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme has been supporting the follow-up to WSIS targets mainly in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. It has taken the lead in establishing a Project Working Group on ICT for Development (2005-2007) and then a Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (2008 onwards) under the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECAs). These are attended by high-level government officials. A number of ICT related capacity-building activities have been implemented in support of these Project Working Groups.

2. Trade

7. The Trade subprogramme through the UNECE's United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), undertakes work aimed at facilitating national and international trade and business transactions. This includes the joint development by the public and private sectors of electronic business standards which are freely available to all. Its work supports the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 8 "to develop a global partnership for development". In particular, UNECE 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

1. Economic Cooperation and Integration

8. The Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme organized the International Conference on Knowledge-based Development and Innovative Entrepreneurship in Baku, Azerbaijan on 24 and 25 November 2011. One of the substantive sessions discussed the role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in financing ICT infrastructure development. It considered the question of using PPPs as one model for bridging the gap between existing and required ICT infrastructure needs. The Conference provided a platform for discussions and a broad exchange of experiences and lessons learned among ICT policymakers, representatives of business, academics and other experts and practitioners.

2. Transport

9. UNECE is committed to placing Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) on the agendas of policymakers. ITS are a main element in shaping the future of sustainable mobility. See www.unece.org/trans/theme_its.html.

10. At the Inland Transport Committee's 2012 policy segment, 143 participants from 37 countries, the European Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and 35 international, non-governmental and ITS related organizations discussed ITS. The Ministries of Transport of France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the Russian Federation, as well as the European Commission, ITS Russia, ITS Netherlands, ITS South Africa, ITS United Kingdom and ITS Europe (ERTICO) gave presentations.

11. The ITS strategy package was unveiled. This package of three publications may be a cornerstone for the United Nation's future activities in this area. They provide: i) a general overview of ITS; ii) a strategic note on the gaps and the impediments in using ITS; and iii) the UNECE Road Map on ITS, which identifies 20 global actions for UNECE's work programme from 2012 to 2020.

12. It was also at this event that ITS was identified as needing an institutional basis. UNECE, as a regional commission albeit reaching worldwide, could provide assistance to policymakers, could define and disseminate best practices and could provide capacity-building and coordinate research. Governments and stakeholders further underlined their support for such issues as resolving liability questions, developing a common definition for ITS, advancing variable message signs (VMS), developing a framework of regulations on ITS standards and organizing workshops.

13. UNECE undertook to host round tables on ITS annually. "ITS in Emerging Markets — Driver for Safe and Sustainable Growth" is the first of these workshops. Among other things it will address the issues of distracted driving. Scheduled for 27 June 2013, the workshop is jointly organized with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

14. Within the Transport Division of UNECE, harmonization of minimum requirements in ITS is underway:

- The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) established an informal working group on design and control principles for Advanced Driver Assistance Systems.
- RID/ADR/ADN, under the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), and an informal working group on telematics aim to improve the speed and efficiency of emergency responses involving dangerous goods in transport.
- The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) discussed the consistency between the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic and the vehicles' legal instruments concerning liability.
- The Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) dedicated 2012 to ITS. The year's highlight was a special session on "Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS): Opportunities and Challenges in Intermodal Transport".

- UNECE took an active part in the ITS World Congress and its Ministerial session, on "Accelerating ITS Deployment - The role of policy making", as well as in the round tables on ITS specifications (EU) road safety and ITS (ITS UK) and the infrastructure and vehicle challenges (IRF) (Vienna, 23-26 October 2012).

C. ACTION LINE C3: ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

1. *Sustainable Energy*

15. The Sustainable Energy subprogramme provides on-line access to reports, background documents, official documents, publications, studies (such as the "Energy Series"¹). It also disseminates electronically reports, recommendations and results of the study: "Underground Gas Storage in Europe and Central Asia" to primary users and stakeholders in UNECE member states. Finally, it maintains an "online bookshelf" in selected fields of its work (see <http://www.unece.org/energywelcome/publications.html>).

16. During the past year, the Sustainable Energy subprogramme has also introduced and tested the concept of virtual intergovernmental conferences, in which some of the intergovernmental meetings and expert group sessions were organized as 'hybrid' meetings with a mixed physical and virtual presence of participants.

2. *Environment*

17. The 'PRTR cost model' is a tool to assess the cost involved in the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) to the Aarhus Convention². The cost model enables the development of detailed estimates of the magnitude of costs of monitoring emissions (releases) of substances, contained in the annex to the Protocol, to different environmental media (air, water and land) in order to assist Parties to the Protocol with its implementation. The cost model files are available at <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/protocol-on-prtrs/areas-of-work/envppprtrcb/prtr-cost-model.html>

18. The UNECE Industrial Accidents Notification System This is a web-based tool for notifying of accidents and seeking assistance, linking into national and international emergency and civil contingency centres. (The tool is also listed under C7). <https://www2.unece.org/ian/login.jsf>

19. THE PEP Clearinghouse is a web-based portal for information related to sustainable transport and mobility. A product of the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP), the Clearinghouse provides information (uploaded and downloaded by users) on sustainable transport policies, legislation, research and good practices with a particular focus on countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia as well as South-Eastern Europe. It addresses in particular the needs of national and local authorities as well as transport planners in the design, communication and implementation of sustainable transport policies. The Clearinghouse is accessible at <http://www.thepep.org/CHWebSite/> in English, French and Russian languages.

3. *Trade*

20. In 2012, in the framework of the UNECE trade subprogram, a new activity on "education on standardization" was launched (joint project between UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies and UN/CEFACT) . It foresees the promotion of standards-related matters (including

¹ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/cmm/pub/BestPractGuide_MethDrain_es31.pdf

² The full title of the Aarhus Convention is the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

information standards) by encouraging governments and educational institutions to include standardization into the curricula of universities and vocational training programmes for governmental officials.

21. A Guide for Trade Facilitation Implementation was also published. The Guide ins an innovative interactive tool to help countries simplify cross-border trade. It shows policymakers and implementers how to identify relevant trade facilitation measures and instruments for dealing with issues such as: avoiding waiting times at border crossings; setting up a Single Window for exports and imports; using modern information technologies for trade facilitation. Case stories illustrate with concrete examples how developing and transition economies have succeeded in dealing with these issues. The Guide includes the work of key organizations involved in trade facilitation and covers the related measures currently being discussed at the WTO. It is available in English, and will be translated into French and Russian.

D. ACTION LINE C4: CAPACITY BUILDING

1. Economic Cooperation and Integration

22. The information and communication technologies (ICT) have been a key driver for enhanced competitiveness and sustainable development in past decades. These technologies, if efficiently applied, and if supported by appropriate policies, have the potential to transform the society, enabling innovation and productivity increase, thus reducing the poverty. At the same time, their application gives rise to a variety of legal and regulatory challenges for policymakers.

23. Within the framework of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, ECID has been actively supporting capacity-building of policymakers of the transition economies for their endeavour to reform existing legal frameworks to meet new legal challenges related to ICT. The Seminar on ICT Policy and legal Issues for the Heads of Ministries and Agencies of Turkmenistan, organized in Ashgabat in June 2012 is an example of such supports in this area. So far, ECID organized the similar high-level national and regional events on ICT policy and legal issues in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These capacity-building events allowed policymakers better prepare issues related to legal certainty, security, protection and deterrence against ICT related crimes and other challenges associated to ICT. ECID produced a publication, "ICT Policy and Legal Issues for Central Asia – Guide for Policymakers" (United Nations, ECE/CECI 1) to supplement these efforts.

2. Environment

24. The Environment subprogramme (Aarhus secretariat) manages a database of capacity building activities from around the world on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR, available at <http://apps.unece.org/ehlm/pp/NIR/RLsearch.asp>) (see paragraphs. 29-32 below). The Aarhus 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 of capacity building activities, including National Focal Points and stakeholders who wish to add information.

3. Trade

25. During the past year, the UNECE has provided a wide range of advisory services e.g. at Cross-Border workshops on trade facilitation, Single Window (for export and import procedures) and data harmonization in Bishkek, Moscow and Odessa. The secretariat, in cooperation with the Commission of the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation organized a trade facilitation conference on the Single Window in Moscow 7-8 April 2011. Following joint studies and a series of seminars with the Inter-parliamentary

Assembly of EurAsEC (the EurAsian Economic Community), trade facilitation and, in particular, work on Single Window was included in the EurAsEC work plan.

26. UNECE also worked with its sister organisation, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to strengthen the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT). This is a community of experts from developing countries and transition economies in the Asia and Pacific region who are involved in the implementation of electronic trade systems and trade facilitation. UNECE and UNESCAP supported the UNNExT Briefing Series, including a Regional Meeting of Central Asian countries in Kuala Lumpur, the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum, a Peer Review of the Mongolian Single Window Master Plan, a Workshop, "Towards a Single Window Environment," in Nepal, national workshops on Business Process Analyses in Cambodia, Mongolia and Nepal as well as regional workshops for Central Asian countries in Bangkok and Astana.

27. Based on the success of the excellent collaboration in this area during the recent past between UNECE and ESCAP, and indeed all of the other UN regional commissions (UNRCs), the Executive Secretaries of all five UNRCs have launched the Joint UN Regional Commission approach to trade facilitation, to provide a unified voice and approach on Trade Facilitation matters. In support of this initiative, UNECE submitted and received approval for a United Nations Development Account project to assist developing and transition economies from all five regional commissions to participate in global supply chains. The first event under this project took place in December 2011. This event, "Connecting International Trade: Single Windows and Supply Chains in the Next Decade", was attended by over 200 leading representatives from governments, business and relevant international organizations. This event looked at the latest trends, opportunities and technologies for Single Window and information exchange in global trade in order to identify efficient strategies, business models and policy approaches. It also supported the development of strategic priorities for more efficient and secure cross-border trade, in line with the on-going WTO negotiations in the Doha Round and allowed the participants to share experiences and lessons learned. In closing, the Conference requested the UN Regional Commissions to prepare a Road Map for the further development of Single Window and Supply Chain automation for cross border trade over the next decade.

28. In connection with the project for the development of the Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, UNECE obtained funds from the Swedish Development Agency, for dissemination and capacity building activities. In 2013, six regional workshops will be organized and conducted in all regions of the world, in collaboration with the other UN regional commissions and UNDP. The workshops target policy makers in charge of reform experts and experts in charge of capacity building programs for trade facilitation in developing and transition economies.

4. Gender

29. UNECE Gender and Economy program collaborates with the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Centre (MCTC) in Haifa and Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in organizing training workshops for professional women from Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. These workshops focus on two main topics: support systems for women entrepreneurs at national and local levels regarding information and communication technologies (ICTs).

30. Since the first jointly organised workshop in 2006, over 300 women entrepreneurs from government institutions and SME support agencies, NGOs dealing with small business support and development, women's business associations and academia have received training on ICTs.

31. These workshops contribute to capacity building and provide support, guidance and managerial tools to women entrepreneurs on the use of information communication technologies in doing business. The workshops

discusses how the new technologies can influence small business management and in what ways women entrepreneurs can both benefit from and cope with the challenges of ICTs. Participants acquire new skills and knowledge on how to analyze the role of ICTs in small business management, widen their knowledge of support systems for small-scale entrepreneurs as a tool for regional and local development, get acquainted how to set up and expand technological incubators.

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

1. Housing and Land Management

32. In 2011, the Housing and Land Management subprogramme published a “Study on the Challenges of Fraud to Land Administration Institutions”. This publication presents the results and conclusions drawn from the analysis of a survey on online access to land-registration information that was distributed among UNECE member States. The study consolidates and presents good practices in the detection and prevention of fraud in land registration systems in UNECE countries and, in particular, the protection of information against misuse by fraudsters. The study is available in English and Russian on the UNECE website, at <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/fraud.study.e.r.pdf>.

2. Trade

33. In 2012, the secretariat continued to work closely with the expert groups of the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC). The Secretariat helped RCC experts to prepare a project on “Transboundary trust space” (i.e. on the validation of e-documents) which was presented at the 2012 UN/CEFACT Plenary and at the UN/CEFACT Forum held in April 2012.

34. The open dialogue on this project, among RCC and UN/CEFACT, allowed identifying areas of mutual interest. The RCC decided to cooperate with UN/CEFACT in revising the UNECE Recommendation number 14 on authentication of trade documents by means other than signature. The secretariat believes that this kind of cooperation could be the way forward to involve transition economies in the practical work of the UNECE.

F. ACTION LINE C6: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

1. Economic Cooperation and Integration

35. The Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme organized a capacity-building seminar on ICT policy and legal issues in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan in June 2012. The seminar aims to support the creation of enabling legal environment to allow the country to develop its information economy including ICT systems and applications

2. Trade

36. Since 2010, the secretariat has been organizing in Russia conferences on information standards with the latest (INFOSTANDART -2012) held in October 2012. These events provide for a discussion of not only Russian issues but also of the experiences and problems of government and business in the Customs Union (i.e. including Belarus and Kazakhstan) as well as discussion on relevant UN/CEFACT tools and approaches. The participants (every year around 150-180) noted that this event has become a platform for a dialogue on e-related matters between interested stakeholders in Russia and in Customs Union countries and it was decided to hold it annually.

G. ACTION LINE C7: ICT APPLICATIONS

1. *C7.B e-Business (Trade)*

37. Since 1989, UNECE has developed and maintained electronic business standards through the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)³. 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 60000 entries and is used by transport and postal authorities around the world. Among its other recommendations are the United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents; the Single Window Recommendation (Number 33), launched in 2004 to enhance the efficient exchange of information between trade and government; and a Core Component Library (CCL) and related products.

38. Recent key deliverables from UN/CEFACT include the Cross Industry Invoice which has become the basis of the European Core invoice implementation guidelines that the European Committee on Standardization (CEN) published in September 2011. UN/CEFACT also issued two new recommendations to support the implementation of the International Trade Single Window (Recommendation 34 on Data Simplification and Standardization for International Trade and Recommendation 35 on Establishing a legal framework for international trade Single Window) and several updates of its key standards, such as UN/EDIFACT and UN/LOCODE.

39. In addition, revisions of UN/CEFACT Recommendation 5 "Abbreviations of Incoterms®" (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2011/5) and Recommendation 12 "Measures to facilitate Maritime Transport Documents" (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2011/4) were approved and progress was made on a draft Recommendation 36 on Single Window Interoperability. . The UNECE secretariat worked with the Russian branch of ICC and contributed to the release of a new Incoterms guide in Russian (proofreading, preparation of promotion materials).

2. *C7.C e-Learning (Environment)*

40. 'An introduction to industrial accidents - prevention, preparedness and response' is a 3-hour on-line training platform on an introduction to industrial accidents. It is nearing release in English, French and Russian and is the result of a collaboration between UNECE, UNEP and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. It is available at <http://www.eecentre.org>

3. *C7.F e-Environment*

41. In May 2012, the Environment subprogramme (Aarhus secretariat) sent a message to national focal points and stakeholders throughout the world to promote the use of electronic tools for Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR). The tools include the PRTR global portal (www.prtr.net), the UNECE Public Participation website (<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html>), and the Aarhus Clearinghouse for environmental democracy (<http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/>).

42. The following are examples of UNECE managed web portals that provide access to environmental information and knowledge:

³ <http://www.unece.org/cefact/index.html>

- The UNECE Environmental Policy website (<http://www.unece.org/env/welcome.html>), which provides information on all UNECE environmental activities; and
- The above-mentioned PRTR global portal, which provides information on activities from countries and organizations around the world. PRTR.net is a joint venture of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Grid Arendal and UNECE and is a remarkable example of inter-organizational cooperation.

43. Recent improvements to the PRTR portal include:

- A mechanism for PRTR National Focal Points and stakeholders to add data to the PRTR capacity building activities database;
- Integration between PRTR.net and PRTR Learn;
- Updates made in 5 languages: En, Rus, Fr, Es, De;
- A mechanism to provide feedback on the website to the Aarhus secretariat.

44. The Aarhus secretariat also manages the Aarhus Clearinghouse Mechanism which is dedicated to promoting the exchange of information and good practice in implementation of the Aarhus Convention and Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.⁴ Contributions to the Aarhus Clearinghouse are welcomed and encouraged in order to showcase news and information on laws and practices relevant to the public's environmental rights, including the right to access environmental information.

H. ACTION LINE C8: CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

1. Sustainable Energy

45. Most of the contents of the sustainable energy webpages are available in the 3 official ECE languages (English, French and Russian). In addition, some studies (e.g. the “Energy Series”) have been translated into Chinese, Arabic and Spanish. Moreover, a continued effort has been made to achieve an appropriate gender balance at capacity-building workshops held in the field, in particular among the participants sponsored by UNECE.

I. ACTION LINE C11: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. Economic Cooperation and Integration

46. The Economic Cooperation and Integration subprogramme has been supporting the follow-up to WSIS targets mainly in Central Asia and Azerbaijan. It has taken the lead in establishing a Project Working Group on ICT for Development (2005-2007) and then a Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development (2008 onwards) under SPECA programme. These are attended by high-level government officials. A number of ICT related capacity-building activities have been implemented in support of these Project Working Groups.

2. Statistics

47. Participants from 40 national and international statistical organisations attended a meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems held in Washington DC in May 2012. The meeting was organised by the UNECE Statistical Division, in cooperation with the statistical office of the European Union

⁴ Principle 10 reads as follows: “Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities”.

(Eurostat), and OECD. Delegates were particularly interested in the opportunities and challenges offered by "open data", and the potential for significant efficiency savings through shared software development, facilitated by developing common information architectures. The UNECE has also continued to develop and promote standards for statistical data and metadata, including a Common Metadata Framework, a Generic Statistical Business Process Model, a Generic Statistical Information Model, and standards for data and metadata exchange. The activities above are overseen by a High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services, comprising the heads of ten national and international statistical organisations.

48. The UNECE has also continued to develop and promote standards for statistical data and metadata, including a Common Metadata Framework, a Generic Statistical Business Process Model and standards for data and metadata exchange.

49. The activities above are now being overseen by a new High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics, comprising the heads of eight national and international statistical organisations.

3. *Trade*

50. Particular attention was focussed on regional cooperation, in particular among countries with economies in transition. Positive developments include:

- A regional meeting in Belarus in April 2011, where the Ministries of Communication of eleven CIS countries (Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications) nominated a group of its experts to work with UN/CEFACT. In October 2012, an information seminar on UN/CEFACT tools was organized for RCC experts in Geneva.
- The CIS Interstate Council on Standardization, Metrology and Certification (which unites standardization bodies of eleven CIS states), at their meeting in Turkmenistan in May 2011 decided to request UN/CEFACT to assist in preparing proposals for a potential regional standardization programme on information standards based on UN/CEFACT tools. In November 2011, the heads of the CIS national standards bodies agreed to include some UNCEFACT standards into their current programme of work for the inter-state standards for 2012.
- A series of training courses (which includes modules on information standards) at the OSCE Border Management College (Dushanbe) was continued with sessions in March, June and October 2012.