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Advisory Group on the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations

Use of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations for the Agreement on Port State Measures

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) secretariats presented this paper to propose the use of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) for the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group at its fourth annual meeting on 27 November 2020. The UN/LOCODE Advisory Group agreed to the proposal of including all PSMA-designated ports in UN/LOCODE and supports a tailored procedure to harmonize the maintenance of UN/LOCODEs assigned to those ports and the maintenance of the PSMA-designated ports in the FAO database.

Document ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2021/21 is a slightly revised version of the before-mentioned paper and is submitted by the secretariat to the twenty-seventh UN/CEFACT Plenary for information.



I. About UN/LOCODE

1. The United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations (UN/LOCODE) is the flagship product of collaboration in the framework of the joint trade facilitation effort undertaken within the United Nations.
2. UN/LOCODE is described in United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Recommendation No. 16¹. This five-character code system is used to identify locations along the international supply chain, such as place of departure, place of origin, place of entry and place of destination. The first two digits of this code indicate the country/territory code, based on ISO 3166-1, and the last three digits are for the location, which is unique and unambiguous in the country/territory.
3. The UN/LOCODE is not only used for international trade and transport but also in other areas, for example maritime security and environmental protection. It is adopted by other international organizations and industry associations to introduce UN/LOCODE child code systems for different purposes, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Port Facility Number.
4. The UN/LOCODE directory is currently managed, maintained and published by the UNECE secretariat with the support of the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group, including the UN/LOCODE Focal Point Network and the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team. The publications of the UN/LOCODE directory are currently released twice per year on the UNECE website, free of charge².

II. About PSMA

5. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a global challenge hindering fisheries management, and impacting the biological, social and economic sustainability of fisheries. To combat IUU fishing, information sharing for transparency and traceability is essential at the national, regional and global levels, including information on IUU fishing in flag States, port States, coastal States and market States.
6. The 2009 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing is the first binding international agreement to specifically target IUU fishing. Its objective is to halt IUU fishing by preventing vessels engaged in IUU fishing from using ports and landing their catches. In this way, PSMA reduces the incentive of such vessels to continue to operate while it also blocks fishery products derived from IUU fishing from reaching national and international markets. The effective implementation of PSMA ultimately contributes to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems.
7. Currently, there are sixty-six Parties to the Agreement, with the European Union as a single Party. PSMA is seen to be a cost-effective and potent tool to combat IUU fishing. It lays down minimum standards and processes which port States need to apply when foreign fishing vessels or vessels engaged in fishing-related activities seek entry into their ports.

¹ UNECE Recommendation No. 16: United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations is available at (<https://unece.org/trade/publications/recommendation-ndeg16-united-nations-code-trade-and-transport-locations>). The fourth edition was approved by the UN/CEFACT Plenary in 2020.

² See <https://www.unece.org/cefact/locode/welcome.html>.

III. How is PSMA implemented and does its implementation require UN/LOCODE?

8. The fight against IUU fishing needs global information exchange to be effective. PSMA mandates that Parties establish a system to inspect foreign vessels coming to their designated ports and that they share the results of these port inspections with all stakeholders involved (flag States, coastal States, regional fisheries management organizations, FAO, etc.).

9. Consequently, if a port State denies a vessel entry or use of its port because it is suspected of having conducted IUU fishing, it must notify the flag State – the country where the vessel is registered – and any other State or international organization related to the case, including the State of which the vessel's master is a national, relevant coastal States, relevant regional fisheries management organizations and FAO.

10. The identification of ports is needed at various levels of the PSMA implementation. This includes when countries designate their ports under the Agreement, or when completing documentation related to the Agreement such as inspection reports.

11. Furthermore, the need for information exchange to implement the Agreement further emphasizes the need to clearly identify ports. For the PSMA implementation, it is important to uniquely identify the ports where controls take place with a standard code.

12. For the sake of improved data quality, harmonization of data formats and data exchange, the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group (GRWG) and the PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE)³ consider UN/LOCODE as the preferred option. The report of the second meeting of PSMA TWG-IE indicates the following⁴:

- The observer from IMO highlighted the importance of the UN/LOCODE as an international standard to guarantee consistency and accuracy when designating ports;
- The TWG-IE noted that certain States faced difficulties with the designation of ports as these were, in some cases, under the authority of the transport agency or another relevant agency, and therefore, reinforced the need to improve inter-agency coordination at the national level, involving the UN/LOCODE National Focal Point; and
- The TWG-IE agreed to include a supplementary question in the draft PSMA Questionnaire for the review and assessment of the effectiveness of PSMA, where Parties are asked whether they have allocated UN/LOCODE for all their designated ports under PSMA.

13. Considering that UN/LOCODE is widely used as an international standard to identify locations, and most of the PSMA-designated ports are already assigned with UN/LOCODEs, UN/LOCODE provides a practical solution to uniquely identify the PSMA-designated ports.

14. By adopting UN/LOCODE as the unique identifier for PSMA-designated ports, FAO does not need to establish and maintain its own coding system. It also ensures that the use of locations in PSMA messages is consistent with the use of locations in trade, transport and other regulatory documents and messages.

³ The PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE) is an informal open-ended technical working group created by the Parties to guide the elaboration of information-exchange mechanisms and other technical matters, including the need to provide for varying levels of access depending on the nature of the information provided.

⁴ See <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1544en/CB1544EN.pdf>

15. In addition, according to the conclusions of the fifth meeting of GRWG, the importance of using standardized reference lists for the submission of data within the Global Record Information System is highlighted. In this context, the group saw the potential of UN/LOCODE as a suitable international standard for identifying ports in the system.

IV. Characteristics of PSMA ports

16. A PSMA-designated port is selected and officially designated by the Party to receive foreign vessels that are conducting fishing and fishing-related activities. As per the requirements of PSMA, Parties should provide their list of designated ports to FAO, which shall give it due publicity. FAO has developed an application to enable Parties to submit information on their designated ports electronically.

17. FAO has so far received 433 designated ports, which are published through the FAO PSMA website⁵.

18. The size and functions of PSMA-designated ports might differ from country to country depending on the level of development, but also on the value and quantity of commercial species caught in the country's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), and on its strategic position for international trade or supplies, etc.

19. A typical port would have at least landing facilities for the fish and spaces available for storage, sale and/or processing of fish. It would very likely have other facilities to resupply the vessel before its departure. Every designated port will have facilities for government regulatory bodies to control the vessels and landing, and to report on inspections.

V. PSMA-designated ports and current coverage by UN/LOCODE

20. According to the revised UNECE Recommendation No. 16 on UN/LOCODE, Function "1" and "8" are related to ports:

- Function "1" is for maritime or seaports; and
- Function "8" is for inland water ports.

21. At present⁶, of the 433 designated ports on the FAO PSMA website⁵, 226 ports (52%) include a UN/LOCODE. Of the remaining 167 ports, we find two possibilities:

- A UN/LOCODE has not yet been assigned; and
- A UN/LOCODE has already been assigned to the location, but the Party has used a different location name when registering the designated port with FAO.

22. The challenge in the latter case is that the fisheries authorities who register the ports often identify a port location with the name of the terminal where fish is landed and processed. However, in terms of UN/LOCODE, different terminals that belong to one port should share only one UN/LOCODE assigned to this port.

⁵ FAO PSMA website: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/port-state-measures/psmaapp/?locale=en&action=qry>

⁶ June 2020.

VI. Proposed solution for inclusion and maintenance of PSMA-designated ports in UN/LOCODE

23. The UNECE secretariat proposes to the UN/LOCODE Advisory Group that it
 - recognize the role of PSMA to combat IUU fishing, and
 - agree to include all PSMA-designated ports in UN/LOCODE.
24. Upon the agreement to this policy, a specific UN/LOCODE maintenance procedure for PSMA-designated ports will be put into place to support the inclusion and maintenance of PSMA-designated ports in UN/LOCODE:
 - Under this maintenance procedure, PSMA National Contact Points (NCPs) will be registered as the UN/LOCODE Data Maintenance Request (DMR) submitters in the new UN/LOCODE maintenance system;
 - Before NCPs register a new designated port in the FAO system, they will, ideally, first identify the UN/LOCODE assigned to this port;
 - If no UN/LOCODE exists yet, NCPs will be able to submit a UN/LOCODE DMR for a new UN/LOCODE;
 - The UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team will offer a priority to validate DMRs related to PSMA-designated ports; and
 - Once NCPs have received the new UN/LOCODE, they can update the port in the FAO application for designated ports.
25. In identifying UN/LOCODEs for designated ports, NCPs should consult with the UN/LOCODE National Focal Points (NFPs) if it is nominated. Both the UNECE and FAO secretariats recognize the importance of the internal coordination between the UN/LOCODE NFPs and the PSMA NCPs and will provide information and assistance to the NCPs.
26. For those designated ports that have already been registered in the FAO database, the UNECE and FAO secretariats will endeavour to work together with the NCPs and the NFPs to resolve discrepancies and raise UN/LOCODE DMRs if necessary.
27. In case of dysfunction of a port, NCPs need to submit a DMR to inform the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team of this modification.
28. All PSMA-designated ports are flagged in the UN/LOCODE database. If a DMR submitted by a non-FAO stakeholder affects the UN/LOCODEs used by those ports, the UN/LOCODE Maintenance Team will pay attention to the validation of the DMR to avoid negative impacts on the PSMA-designated ports.
29. The FAO secretariat will update the next meeting of the Parties to PSMA (scheduled for June 2021) about this arrangement to facilitate information exchange in support of the PSMA implementation, including through enhanced interagency coordination.