Organizations from Around the World Gather to Launch ebXML Global Electronic Business Initiative

Boston, MA, USA and Geneva, Switzerland-1 December 1999-- The Electronic Business XML Initiative (ebXML), a joint effort of the United Nation/CEFACT and OASIS, attracted the participation of major industry standards organizations and companies from around the world at its inaugural meeting in San Jose, CA, USA. ebXML is an open, vendor-neutral initiative to establish a global technical and semantic framework that will enable XML to be used in a consistent manner for the exchange of electronic business data. More than 120 representatives from organizations as varied as ACORD, Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12, Commerce One, DataChannel, DISA, UN/EDIFACT, IBM, OAG, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, Inc. and others joined together to launch the ebXML initiative. "A primary objective of ebXML is to lower the barrier of entry to electronic business in order to facilitate trade, particularly with respect to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and developing nations," said Ray Walker, Chair of UN/CEFACT's Steering Group and Special Advisor on Trade Processes and Electronic Business to the UK Department of Trade & Industry, "The success of global electronic business is analogous to the success of the telephone--unless everyone has simple and inexpensive access, it won't work."

"ebXML is an independent, vendor-neutral forum through which anyone can contribute to a single, global XML framework for electronic business," said Klaus-Dieter Naujok (Harbinger Corporation), chair of the ebXML Initiative. "This open technical specification will enable XML to be used in a consistent and uniform manner, contribute to a level playing field, and rapidly increase responsible growth in electronic business."

"OASIS and UN/CEFACT have come together on ebXML to minimize the fragmentation in XML specifications for industry that might otherwise occur," said Robert S. Sutor (IBM), vice-chair of the ebXML Initiative. "The scope and significance of ebXML is so far-reaching that many standards organizations, vendors and users are already committed to working together to realize its potential."

"This cross-industry initiative is proof that the technology industry, often a hotbed of competition, can work together for the benefit of the end consumer," said Bill Smith (Sun Microsystems), president of the OASIS board of directors and director of the ebXML Initiative. "Through the ebXML Initiative, OASIS and UN/CEFACT have entered a strong, important union whose impact will be far-reaching and positive." Directors of ebXML include Klaus-Dieter Naujok and Ray Walker of UN/CEFACT and Robert S. Sutor and Bill Smith of OASIS. The Advisory Board includes Jon Bosak of Sun Microsystems, co-author of the XML 1.0 specification, and is being expanded to include key industry players from around the world. Laura Walker, executive director of OASIS, will serve as secretary of the board. Project teams were identified at the inaugural meeting and began work on the following:

* ebXML Requirements
ebXML project teams will teleconference until the next face-to-face meeting, scheduled for 31 January - 4 February 2000, in Orlando, Florida. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for 8 - 12 May in Brussels, Belgium, 7-11 August in the United States and 6-11 November in Tokyo, Japan. "If a practical, easy and affordable electronic commerce solution is critical to the success of your nation, organization, or business, you should be involved in ebXML," said Laura Walker, executive director of OASIS. "This collaboration by two of the world's most influential organizations, both of which are dedicated to vendor-independent trade facilitation, is a critical element in enabling a truly accessible, global and interoperable infrastructure for electronic business. ebXML will make a deeply meaningful, highly valuable contribution to the future of the digital world. We encourage interested organizations to learn more about the effort, including details on how to get involved, by visiting http://www.ebxml.org."

About ebXML

ebXML (www.ebXML.org [1]) is an International Initiative established by UN/CEFACT and OASIS with a mandate to undertake a 15-18 month program of work to research and identify the technical basis upon which the global implementation of XML (Extensible Markup Language) can be standardized. The goal is to provide an open technical specification to enable XML to be utilized in a consistent and uniform manner for the exchange of electronic business data in application-to-application, application-to-person and person-to-application environments.

About UN/CEFACT

UN/CEFACT (www.uncefact.org [2]) is the United Nations body whose mandate covers worldwide policy and technical development in the area of trade facilitation and electronic business. Headquartered in Geneva, it has developed and promoted many tools for the facilitation of global business processes including UN/EDIFACT, the international EDI standard. Its current work programme includes such topics as Simpl-edi and Object Oriented EDI and it strongly supports the development and implementation of open, interoperable global standards and specifications for electronic business.

About OASIS

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