

ESA Newsletter

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World Customs Organization East & Southern Africa Regional Office for Capacity Building

Beautiful Rwanda Hosts the 23rd WCO ESA Governing Council



Rwanda Prime Minister, Edouard Ngirente greets the WCO Secretary General, Kurio Mikuriya at the ESA governing council in Kigali, Rwanda

Rwanda's Prime Minister, Mr. Edouard Ngirente has called for increased building of capacities among customs officers to curb instances of insecurity, import of illicit drugs, human trafficking and trading in counterfeits which are on the increase. The premier was speaking at the 23rd World Customs Organization,

East and Southern Africa (WCO ESA) Governing Council Meeting at the Kigali Convention Centre. He noted that though a lot had been done in building the capacity of officers in charge of collecting and managing customs in East and Southern Africa Region, equipping them further with modern methods of conducting customs' activities, including application of IT, needs to continue. This is important as countries work against issues related to cross-border security, illegal importation of illicit drugs, human trafficking and illegal trading in general.

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EDITORIAL

We are pleased to present to you, yet again, the second edition of the global Newsletter of the World Customs Organization East and Southern Africa Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) newsletter this year, 2018. This edition mainly features the ESA Regional meetings held in Kigali, Rwanda in May, 2018.

It is said that photography is an art which can be done in several ways to enhance the beauty and charm of events. If accurately and perfectly done, it preserves the important events in our lives in a perfect form that can be referred to by many generations, it is with this in mind that the WCO ESA ROCB launched the East and Southern Africa (ESA) Sotho Photo contest as an Annual Contest to be voted for at the Governing Council in the year 2016. The winner is awarded a trophy and certificate with the runners-up awarded certificates. Zimbabwe won the contest in 2016, with Kenya winning the competition in 2017 and again in 2018!!

The newsletter also features various milestones that have been achieved by our Member administrations as well as the support that has been generously offered to the East and Southern Region by our development partners who are keen to ensure that the Region progresses its economic development agenda successfully.

Finally, we wish to thank all the Members, the Regional Economic Communities, stakeholders and development partners with special mention to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for continuously supporting the growth of the Newsletter through regular contribution of articles. Enjoy reading this newsletter and feel free to send us any articles you could like us to feature in the next edition.

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Programme Officer and Issue Editor

World Customs Organization



**East and Southern Africa
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The 23rd WCO ESA Governing Council- Kigali, Rwanda

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signed African Continental Free Trade Area agreement will increase the role and significance of custom authorities across the continent.

With the agreement expected to significantly increase cross-border trade, customs authorities will require increased skills to deal with emerging trends in trade. The premier's comments come at a time when regional revenue authorities have cited an increase of fraudulent practices, including attempts to smuggle. For instance, the move to raise taxes on

second-hand clothing imports, saw an increase in attempts to smuggle second-hand clothes as a section of traders seek to retain their profit margins. Rwanda Revenue Authority has so far intercepted about 230 tonnes of used clothing being smuggled into the country.

Rwanda Revenue Authority Commissioner General, Mr. Richard Tusabe, speaking at the same event said that through regional cooperation, Rwanda and other regional countries have made significant progress through cooperation initiatives.

"We have achieved a number of milestones like embracing coordinated border management through One Stop Boarder Post and Implementing Electronic Single Window for Trade Facilitation among others," Tusabe said.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, the Secretary General of World Customs Organization, said that capacities of local and regional customs authorities can, among other things, be enhanced by embracing technology.

Source: www.newtimes.co.rw



Kenya wins the ESA Sotho Photo Contest two years in a row!



Photo submitted by the Kenya Revenue Authority in the year 2017

The World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) launched the East and Southern Africa (ESA) Sotho Photo contest as an Annual Contest to be voted for at the Governing Council in the year

2016. The winner is awarded a trophy and certificate with the runners-up awarded certificates. Zimbabwe won the contest in 2016, with Kenya winning the competition in 2017 having presented a photo showing 335 pieces of Elephant ivory found concealed inside worked timber

which was stuffed into two 20 foot containers. The consignment was intercepted while in transit to Cambodia from Uganda through the port of Mombasa; they opted to keep the trophy and funded the purchase the 2018 winner's trophy.

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Kenya wins the **ESA Sotho Photo Contest** two years in a row!



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Photo submitted by the Kenya Revenue Authority in the year 2018, showing concealment of three high-end vehicles.



Up and Botswana the 2nd Runner Up. All the photos submitted will form the ESA Sotho Photo book 2018.

The trophy and certificate were presented by Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, the World Customs Organization Secretary General and Mr. Dicksons Kateshumbwa, the ESA Vice Chair and Commissioner of Customs, Uganda Revenue Authority to the Winner (KENYA) which was represented by Dr. Fred Mugambi, Ag. Commissioner, Kenya School of Revenue Administration and Mrs. Agatha Munyaka, Chief Manager, Customs and Border Control Department.

This year, 15 Members submitted photos showcasing Member history, activities and successes in exercising mandate. Kenya's

submission was yet again overwhelmingly voted as the Photo of the Year 2018 with Malawi voted as the 1st Runner

A dream of Creation of the **South Sudan National Revenue Authority** has come true

The South Sudan National Revenue Authority is a government agency charged with the responsibility of managing the assessment, collection and accounting of all central government revenue. It is a semi-autonomous body

that operates in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance and planning. The current chairperson of the NAR is Dr. Olympio Attipoe. The Offices of the NRA are located at the western part of the capital Juba

The commissioner General held his first meeting with the customs officials at the NRA premises to respond to queries that arose in the meeting, and also share the future plan of the NRA.

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African Union-WCO ESA ROCB Joint Regional Workshop On Corruption Risk Mapping

The African Union - WCO ESA ROCB joint Regional Workshop on Corruption Risk Mapping, hosted by the Mauritius Revenue Authority was held in Port Louis, Mauritius from 22nd to 25th May, 2018. It was attended by participants from 19 ESA Countries; Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the RTC Kenya, RTC Mauritius, RTC South Africa and RTC Zimbabwe, as well as the ROCB, AUC and the Chairperson of the AU Sub Committee of Directors General of Customs, Mr. Edwin Fongod, were also present in the meeting.

The workshop was officially opened by Dr. Navin Beekary the Director General, Independent Commission against



Corruption who highlighted the link between Risk Mapping and Corruption and laid emphasis on the importance of Risk Mapping in the prevention of Corruption. He encouraged Members to put in place institutions and adopt laws

to support the fight against corruption. He pointed out that at the global level, the Financial Action Task Force among other organizations focuses on the effectiveness of using the Risk based approach in the discharge of duties. He

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A dream of Creation of the **South Sudan National Revenue Authority** has come true

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H/customs Reforms and Modernization Unit at Juba -Headquarters

African Union- WCO ESA ROCB Joint Regional Workshop On Corruption Risk Mapping

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urged Members to adopt sectoral Risk Assessment and Management in the delivery of their mandate and pointed out the importance of allocating sufficient resources both human, technological and financial in the prevention of Corruption.

Mr. Aly Moussa, the Head of Customs Cooperation Division, Department of Trade and Industry, African Union Commission, pointed out that the AUC has already started work on Corruption Risk Mapping, this being the second workshop as a follow up to the first workshop that

Emphasis on the importance of Risk Mapping in the prevention of Corruption

was held in 2016, in Dakar, Senegal. Mr. Aly Moussa recalled the African Union theme of the year for 2018 on 'Fighting Corruption- for Sustainable Development' which also was the subject matter of the workshop.

He highlighted the need to fight corruption and unethical behaviour as well as the importance of balancing trade facilitation and the fight against corruption in organizations. He also pointed that African Customs Administrations are already addressing Corruption through the WCO Revised Arusha Declaration and National codes of conduct but there's still more that can be done. He concluded by urging participants to have frank discussions and to share experiences in dealing with unethical behaviour in Customs.

The workshop resulted in concrete outcomes and way forward for the ESA Region in regard to Corruption Risk Mapping.

SARS, as one of the four Regional Training Centres in the WCO ESA region, played host last week to the very first Gender Equality Workshop presented by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) to member states in Africa.

The workshop, which was attended by an equal mix of male and female representatives from the East and Southern Africa (ESA) region, including Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda,

in the Customs environment. It then became part of the WCO's capacity building agenda, with the Finnish government recently sponsoring the development of a training programme for the ESA region.

"The workshop is targeted at mid- and senior-level managers and looks at how to develop gender mainstreaming in Customs administrations," said Johanna. "Each organisation will now develop action plans to ensure they

Advancement of gender equality in Customs workshop – a first for the **WCO**

Mauritius, Kenya, eSwatini and South Africa, was held in Pretoria over five days.

WCO Project Co-ordinator, Johanna Törnström, said this pilot training programme was a "milestone" for the WCO and something they hoped to eventually make available to all member administrations.

She said it started in 2013 when they had a big conference on the topic of gender equality in the Customs workplace. One of the biggest outcomes of the conference was the development of a "gender equality assessment tool" which helped Customs administrations assess their policies and practices and implement greater gender equality

come up with practical plans on how to become more gender inclusive."

She said they will also make an eLearning module available on the WCO platform which will target all Customs officers for greater awareness of the topic.

At the end of the five days, delegates left with a greater understanding of what gender equality means in the Customs workplace.

"It has been an eye-opener," said Thabani Sibanda, Regional Manager of Zimbabwe Revenue Authority at Beitbridge Customs. "We do have certain policies in place at ZIMRA, but we need to review them to be in line with modern practices."



Delegates and officials who participated in the WCO gender equality workshop

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Comoros customs Migration to ASYCUDA World

The Administration of Comorian Customs is pursuing the reforms initiated since 2016, through the implementation of ASYCUDA World, a system using the latest modern technologies and offering complete functionalities. A lot is expected from the migration to the ASYCUDA World launched on 5th March 2018 because of the considerable opportunities offered by this system, to the customs services, the other public administrations and the economical operators involved in international trade.

Comoros, which is very far back in connectivity, will have a lot to gain from this system. The accessibility factor via internet or intranet allows exchange of information through

.....
ASYCUDA allows the use of new technologies for security and mobility

the web service with the systems of customs partners within the country in the context of digitalization of documents. This is the case with freight forwarders, but also with banks and other partners. The country is also winning with this advanced version of ASYCUDA which allows the use of new technologies for security (biometrics, electronic signature, certificate) and mobility (barcode reader, PDA). Furthermore, this latest version opted for by the Comorian Customs, gives the possibility to address

specific needs for Comoros.

By the end of April 2018, all customs centers will be equipped with the ASYCUDA World. Among the expected facilities, the implementation of the Exemption Management Module, the One Stop Shop and a module for performance measurement.

Comoros will also be able, through this new system, to use the functionalities of this application adapted to the

WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, the Revised Kyoto Convention and national legislation.

As with any change, the implementation of the ASYCUDA World faces certain constraints that preoccupy Comorian authorities. However, proposals for appropriate solutions for each constraint are studied in order to avoid risks that may jeopardize or delay the operationalization of the system.

- Some of the constraints identified include:
- Lack of appropriate technology.
 - Resistance to reform by some customs agents and other stakeholders.
 - Recurrent disruption of the local telecommunication network.
 - Lack or low involvement of customs officers and partners.
 - Lack of implementation strategy for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).
 - Lack of a supporting legal framework.

Advancement of gender equality in Customs workshop – a first for the WCO

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Zwide Mkhathshwa from the Swaziland Revenue Authority agreed that they needed to relook at their policies. “It’s not enough to just have equal numbers of male and female officers, we also need to look at issues like promotions, decision-making, etc.” Stella Kwera Kisuze from the Uganda Customs Authority said it was good to see that other countries in the region were interested in gender issues and were doing something about it. “But we’ve realised there are areas where we haven’t thought of gender issues. For Uganda and Kenya, one of our priorities will be to do more for the

small female traders who do business across our borders, to simplify some of the procedures and focus on education/training of the laws.” Viwe Mlenzana, SARS Group Executive: Integrated Talent Management and Head of RTC South Africa said in the closing address that the workshop was “vibrant, useful and enriching.” “I am looking forward to learning from your experience and being empowered as much as you are. Gender equality still remains a challenge in a significant manner in the world we live in. To this extent, organisations ought to be deliberate in their efforts of rooting out this scourge.”

Trade Facilitation Concepts and Strategic Implementation Requirements in the Sub-Saharan Africa

Trade facilitation promotes international trade through requirements for simplification of cargo declaration and clearance; movements and monitoring of transit goods besides application of information and Communication Technology in customs processes.

The phrase "Trade facilitation" sounds comprehensible yet is not well understood and effectively adopted by some customs administrations south of the Sahara. A successful and effective implementation of national trade facilitation strategies may have high revenue collection risks; hence government will power and support for its implementation is very much necessary.

The international standards and rules on trade facilitation spelt in the TFA. Section (iii) of the TFA requires members to have a national Committee to facilitate domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the agreement.

Studies have already shown that national trade facilitation efforts would lead to growth of economy, poverty reduction, conducive environment to both foreign and local investors,

increased revenue collection and expanded tax base due to investments, transfer of technology, creation of employment and job opportunities; the list is long. Unfocused implementation of the TFA without clear national strategy is definitely unlikely to succeed.

Trade Facilitation implementation requirements and challenges:

1) Political will

Trade facilitation as elaborated in the TFA is not yet fully adopted by many customs administrations in the sub Saharan region. Some of these countries are not contracting members to the agreement yet implement some of the recommended trade facilitation tools in the TFA.

Trade facilitation promotes international trade

2) Technical Capacity to customs administrations: Implementation of TFA will need empowerment of the customs administrations in the sub

Saharan region for effective results. Inadequate invest in relevant training of workforce cost customs and business community dearly.

3) Customs to business partnership in trade facilitation: Very few customs administrations have successfully crafted customs to business relationship. Customs looks at the business community with too many doubts. The negative views which customs holds against business entities end up increasing unnecessary transaction costs and sometimes without justifiable reasons.

4) Adequacy of the legal framework: Although customs substantive law may not have explicit provisions which cater for trade facilitation, quite a number of them are embedded with some of the trade facilitation stipulated tools. The custom law must be adequate enough to support legal implementation of the tools for trade facilitation.

5) Customs must increase chances of intercepting law breakers and punished severely. While customs endeavors to implement trade facilitation to attract more importing and exporting entities to comply with customs laws, regulations and established procedures, other efforts to discourage recalcitrant business entities from benefitting with wrongdoing must be discouraged.

This article highlighted requirements and elaborated the challenges customs is likely to face while implementing trade facilitation.

Trade facilitation Agreement (TFA) addresses three pillars which are:

- a) Expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit (Article V, VIII, and X of the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade or GATT);
- b) Effective cooperation between other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs on compliance issues;
- c) And enhancing technical assistance and support for the capacity building.

Launch of the WCO E – Learning Platform at the WCO RTC Kenya held on 04th April, 2018

The WCO RTC Kenya, proudly launched its E – learning platform on 04th April, 2018. The event was conducted in the presence of the distinguished Chief Guest; Chief Manager (CM), Container Freight Station (CFS) Operations, Mr. Kiprop Bullut, the WCO Programme Manager, ESA Project II, Ms. Riitta Passi, the WCO E – learning expert, Mr. Charansingh Dabeesing, the Acting Principal, RTC Kenya Ms. Winfred Jillani representing the Head RTC Kenya, and the entire RTC Kenya fraternity.

The project which is funded by the Finnish government under the framework of the WCO ESA Project II, aims to build sustainable capacity of the RTCs in the region. Under the theme “To progress the Trade Facilitation Agenda (TFA) within the framework of the WCO Mercator Programme in the East and Southern Africa Region, 2016 – 2019” an agreement between the WCO and the Ministry for Foreign



Affairs of Finland, made available a grant of 3 million Euros from the Finnish government to the Project over a period of three years.

organization development of the WCO. The e – learning platform was officially launched by Mr. Kiprop Bullut on behalf of the Regional Coordinator, Southern Region, Mr. Nicholas Kinoti.

“To progress the Trade Facilitation Agenda (TFA) within the framework of the WCO Mercator Programme in the East and Southern Africa Region, 2016 – 2019”

Mr. Bullut expressed his appreciation to the Finnish government and the WCO ESA Project II for their continued support. Further, he emboldened staff to utilize the platform.

The launch follows a two day training of trainers (ToT) session where trainers were introduced to the new platform as well as the WCO e – learning modules, especially those relevant to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

The project entails funding RTC’s in the region in their areas of specialization. RTC Kenya was identified as a Centre for Excellence for the Economic Competitive package, among other packages that include revenue, Compliance and enforcement, and



The Chief Guest, Mr. Bullut, giving the opening address.

KRA to combat serious customs tax evasion

The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) Commissioner General (CG), John Njiraini has expressed the commitment of the taxman to fight against customs tax evasion in the country.

Njiraini said those involved the concealment, misdeclaration and trafficking of prohibited goods have no place in Kenya. He said this in a speech read on his behalf by KRA Customs and Border Control Commissioner, Julius Musyoki during a capacity building workshop for the East and Southern Africa (ESA) region of the World Customs Organization (WCO) on Wednesday.

He said KRA has successfully lobbied for statutory underpinning for coordinated border management, out of which the Border Control and Operations Coordination Committee was established.

The committee brings together key border security management players, including KRA, immigration department, and national police service and port and airport management agencies.

He said KRA is prioritizing implementation of support infrastructure and tools, including scanners and detector dogs. "The authority is currently installing ultramodern scanners at the port of Mombasa which is hoped to boost surveillance and assist in deterring illicit trade at the port," he said.

He said KRA has commenced the implementation of the regional electronic cargo tracking platform agreed between Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. The new system's key strength is that unlike presently, the three countries shall use one system and on platform with seamless



The KRA Customs and Border Control Commissioner, Julius Musyoki with WCO Secretary General, Kunio Mikuriya arrive for the WCO Capacity Building Workshop at Sarova Whitesands Hotel Mombasa on Wednesday February 8, 2017. Photo by Hussein Abdullahi/KNA.

visibility from Mombasa to Kigali and eventually Juba in South Sudan.

Njiraini said the new approach will eliminate the opportunities presently exploited by tax evaders at the changeover of seals at border points by having only one common seal to be disarmed on arrival at destination.

The Finish Ambassador to Kenya, Tarja Fernandez, who attended the forum said her country is determined to provide support to customs authorities in the East and Southern Africa region so that they can effectively play their role.

Source: kenyanewsagency.go.ke

Improving Customs Processes Are Resulting In Faster And Easier Cross Border Trade

Strengthening the performance of customs services department has been the priority of government with the assistance from World Customs Organization (WCO) and other development partners.

The World Customs Organization -East and Southern Africa WCO-ESA

is the biggest regional body helping Revenue Authority Customs Services improve its capacity to facilitate international trade. Some of the gains include simplification, harmonization of trade procedures, modernization of customs and other regulatory structures to match global best practices.

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Improving Customs Processes Are Resulting In Faster And Easier Cross Border Trade

The head offices of Rwanda Revenue Authority

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“These services are founded on the principles of leadership, relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness and resilience. RRA has also benefited from WCO research and development programs,” said William Musoni, Commissioner Customs Services, RRA. In particular, the research and technical support has helped RRA adopt global customs classification knowledge, which is key during the classification of given items. The customs has also been quick to understand technology trends, and quickly adopted them for better services delivery.

Ultimately, this has resulted into efficiency of customs processing, translating into higher revenue collections, a decrease in average time to clear customs consignments and reduced trade costs. As such, importers and exporters are reporting improved turnaround times. Consignments which used to take 21 days to be delivered from port of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam on average arrive in Kigali within 3- 5 days.

One of the game changers in the customs reforms is the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program, which further aims to facilitate trade for compliant traders during the movement

of their cargo along the international trade supply chain.

The tax administration has recruited over 20 compliant traders into the Authorized Economic Operator program. Traders under this program enjoy expedited processing of entries/ declarations. Their consignments are not subjected to physical or document examination except for random or risk based interventions on exceptional cases. They enjoy automatic passing of declaration and expedited payment of refund claim

Lack of transparency increases incidences of corruption and burdens business with extra costs

Rwanda has also signed a number of Mutual Recognition Agreements/ Arrangements (MRAs) and with her East African Community member states aimed at further reduce costs of trade.

At regional level, EAC is negotiating for more with the rest of the world to allow traders enjoy benefits when trading with other regions of the world.

RRA implemented the WCO revised Kyoto Convention which was

adopted the WCO Council in June 1999 as the blueprint for modern and efficient Customs procedures in the 21st Century. The revised Kyoto Convention promotes trade facilitation and effective controls through its legal provisions that detail the application of simple yet efficient procedures. Rwanda has also embarked on improving infrastructure that supports trading across border and investment such as laying fiber optic across the whole country to support ICT, constructing and modernizing border stations to support the increasing volume of imports and exports, upgrading roads and bridges to support the increasing volume of traffic across the country.

The East African Community Committee on Customs says IT infrastructure by EAC member countries is set to increase transparent mechanism.

“Lack of transparency increases incidences of corruption and burdens business with extra costs. In order to resolve the problem of lack of information to business, Rwanda launched its trade Information Portal (TIP) on 23rd March 2018),” according to the Customs Committee.

COMESA-EAC-SADC Immigration Chiefs discuss free movement



Trucks queue to pick up imported fertilizer being offloaded from a cargo ship at Mombasa, East Africa's biggest and busiest port.

Chiefs of Immigration departments from the COMESA, EAC and SADC regions held a two-day meeting in Nairobi to discuss ways of introducing free movement of business persons within the context of the Tripartite Free Trade Area. The business community has long complained about the restrictive immigration processes that make it impossible and expensive for them to travel across the region.

Some of these include extensive visa procedures, lack of uniformity of procedures and multiple physical checks. Visa fees and other taxes on business persons are varied between member States with some charging as high as \$250.

In addition, there are high additional taxes that are not directly linked to Visas such as airport tax and some more taxes not linked to any administrative costs or service provided.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the meeting, Chairperson of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya described the restrictions as archaic and connected to colonialism. He said these processes are also preventing Africa from embracing the digital age. He added that it is a paradox that whereas under the free trade area goods originating within the member/partner States that qualify under the Tripartite Rules of Origin can move

freely, that is not the case with business people.

"I wish to submit that there can be no Union without the free movement of people including business persons," Mr. Ngwenya said who is also the Secretary General of COMESA.

This meeting held from 22nd -23rd May 2018 was necessitated by failure of immigration technical officers to find consensus, after several rounds of negotiations, on a number of important issues that are critical to the free movement of business persons, goods, services and investment across the Tripartite region.

Source: e-COMESA Newsletter #554 & Daily Nation Kenya



East African Revenue Authorities work together for trade facilitation and enhanced border control

Five Revenue Authorities of East Africa, namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, gathered in Zanzibar, Tanzania on 29 May 2018 for the first Regional Joint Coordinating Committee (RJCC) meeting of their newly launched “Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa”. The host Tanzania Revenue Authority Commissioner General Mr. Charles Kichere welcomed the delegates to Zanzibar and acknowledged the good work done by JICA and WCO for their support especially on the modernisation of the Customs administrations in the region.

This new Project was launched in December 2017 by the five East African Revenue Authorities with joint support extended by the JICA and WCO, which follow-up on the outcome made in the preceding projects in the

region. The Project is anchored in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) VI pronouncements by African Heads of States who highlighted the importance of economic development and security for the sustainable development of Africa and agreed to tackle “strengthening border control and enforcement capacity” as one of the priority actions in the Nairobi Declaration/implementation Plan issued at TICAD VI in addition to promoting trade facilitation. The new three-year and a half Project aims at improving efficiency of border operation and enhancing border control in East Africa with focus on (1) effective One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) operation and (2) Customs capacity building on (i) risk management, (ii) post clearance audit, and (iii) Program Global Shield (PGS). The meeting was attended by the Commissioners General,

Commissioners Customs and other senior officials from the Revenue Authorities of EAC Partner States, EAC Secretariat, WCO, JICA and Japan Customs. In this meeting, Commissioners reviewed the initial progress made in the first six month of the Project that include the contribution to the WCO global AEO conference, risk management fact-finding missions, and PGS awareness raising seminar. Commissioners recognized the good progress made and commended the efforts by the parties concerned while expressing their interest on the use of technologies to complement the improved knowledge of staffs and to further enhance their frontline operations. The JICA and WCO reaffirmed its commitment and support through the Project in deepening regional development and integration.

JICA Expert Team Building Capacity on HS for Customs Officers and Clearing Agents of South Sudan

The project for capacity development of South Sudan Custom Service (SSCS) for introduction of Harmonized System (HS) code (P.I.H.S.) started in 2016, with a project purpose of achieving customs administration based on HS code in the Republic of South Sudan by 2019.

As of June 2018, P.I.H.S. has held a series of trainings for 353 customs officers and clearing agents in both HS and trade statistics. The trainings aim to ensure smooth administration, efficiency and operations of customs procedures. The Republic of South Sudan is a landlocked country and depends on

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda for a large portion of foreign trade. In 2016, South Sudan became one of the six member countries of the East African Community (EAC) and the need for standardization of cross border management has increased. In addition, the process of establishing a revenue authority to enhance collection of non-oil revenue is underway.

Accurate

Consequently, correct classification is a legal responsibility and adjusting tax systems in line with HS is paramount in pursuit of a common policy objective. Therefore, the prowess obtained by

customs officers and clearing agents from JICA experts on accurate import and export declarations based on HS and trade statistics is vital. They will also use the HS to execute appropriate customs procedures and enumerate any applicable tariffs or duties for purposes of revenue collection and trade facilitation in the EAC.

P.I.H.S. continues its efforts and activities in line with the project design in 2018 and 2019. The project will implement trainings for customs officers and clearing agents in Juba and introduce the HS code into customs procedures in South Sudan.



WCO and SADC Secretariat deepen cooperation in the area of Trade Facilitation

At the invitation of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, the WCO attended the joint meeting of the SADC Sub-Committees on Customs and Trade Facilitation from 21 to 23 May 2018 in Gaborone, Botswana.

At this occasion, the WCO made a presentation on the Mercator Programme as well as its support to WCO Members in Africa and in particular the SADC region. The WCO took this opportunity to also highlight its support to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the WCO tools that have been developed to support both RECs and their members in their regional integration agendas particularly in areas of Customs and border procedures. The WCO also informed of the initiative to enhance cooperation with SADC in the context of the WCO-SADC MoU that was signed in July 2004.

The Sub-Committees noted with satisfaction that the WCO and the SADC Secretariats are exploring the possibility to launch a joint donor-funded regional programme in 2019 to support the SADC Membership with implementation of the SADC Regional Trade Facilitation Programme. The Sub-Committees acknowledged that the WCO expertise in Customs matters and other areas focused in effective border management will be particularly beneficial to the SADC Members in their regional



trade facilitation efforts.

The WCO also held bilateral meetings with institutional and development partners such as the EU, GiZ, USAID Trade and Investment Hub to discuss the SADC Trade Facilitation Programme in order to explore synergies and avoid potential duplication of activities.

While in Botswana, the WCO also

took the opportunity to meet with the Commissioner General of the Botswana Unified Revenue Services to discuss further cooperation between the WCO and that country on capacity-building matters in the framework of the WCO-SACU Connect project.

Source: www.wcoomd.org

East African Customs will work together to enhance border control through PGS



The Programme Global Shield (PGS) - a unique initiative introduced by WCO in partnership with INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) - aims at prevention of smuggling and illicit diversion of precursor chemicals and other components that could be used to build Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

The role of Customs is critical in its capacity to monitor cross-border movements of all goods and detect these threats in cooperation with other relevant agencies. Cross border trade has to be safe and secure from the threats that may hinder or damage the global trading system.

Under the Project on Capacity Development for Trade

Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa, jointly supported by JICA and WCO, the first regional seminar on PGS for East African Customs was held in Nairobi, Kenya, 15th-17th May 2018.

The seminar aimed at raising awareness amongst East African Customs on the threats posed

Capacity to monitor cross-border movements of all goods and detect threats

by IEDs as well as to provide a platform for the participants to share their experiences and to know the international best practices in relation to PGS implementation.

During the Seminar, the WCO experts provided updates on the

WCO Security Project's initiatives and shared information about the role of Customs in border security, technology deployment and operational activities. The briefing made by the expert from JIDO (Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization) set the scene in relation to the global harm and regional perspective of IED use. Japan Customs shared its experience how new technologies can help Customs in detecting these chemicals at frontline.

The seminar was successful and rich in its content; the participants are expected to utilize their learned information gained during the Seminar in their daily operations as well as to share them with other officials in their home administrations.

WCO ESA Project II activities (April - June, 2018)

The WCO ESA Project II office in collaboration with other organizations/donors has conducted a number of activities between April and June, 2018 in line with its agenda of strengthening the capacities in the ESA region in their modernization efforts to implement RKC and TFA/TF measures. The following activities were conducted between April and June, 2018.

1. E-Learning mission at the Kenya Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Mombasa from 2 – 4 April 2018. The aim of this mission was to integrate the WCO e-Learning modules through blended learning in the Customs training programmes at the Kenya Revenue Authority.
2. E-Learning mission at the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) in Kampala from 5 - 6 April 2018. The aim of this mission was to promote the use of WCO e-Learning modules through blended learning in the Customs training programmes at the URA.
3. As part of capacity building initiative, a Leadership and Management Development (LMD) Workshop was organized and took place from 15 – 26 April 2018 for 20 senior managers of the Uganda Revenue Authority. The overall objective of the two-week interactive workshop was to strengthen senior management capacity to lead and drive reforms within URA.
4. In collaboration with Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), the WCO ESA Project II organized Time Release Study (TRS) planning workshop to support KRA's preparations towards conducting TRS from 7 – 11 May, 2018 in Mombasa.
5. RCK Workshop was conducted in Burundi from 21 – 25 May, 2018 funded by the WCO ESA Project II within the framework of the WCO Mercator Programme in the East and Southern Region. 15 executives from the OBR Administration as well as private sector representatives and members of the Working Group on Burundi's accession procedure to the RKC attended. The workshop facilitated members with a sound grasp of the tools for RKC accession and implementation.
6. A Regional Gender and Equality Pilot Workshop was conducted from 23 May to 1 June, 2018 at the Regional Training Centre (RTC) in Pretoria, South Africa. The aim of this regional pilot workshop was to test and finalize the development of a training package on how to advance gender equality in customs administrations.
7. A Regional Pre-accreditation workshop on the Single Window Environment was conducted from 28 May to 1 June 2018, at the WCO Regional Training Centre in Port Louis (Mauritius), funded by the Finnish ESA Project (Phase II).





RECAP OF THE 23rd WCO ESA GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING 3-4 MAY 2018



1. Hon. Dr. Edouard Ngirente, Prime Minister **2.** Tusabe Richard, Commissioner General RRA **3.** Kunio Mikuria, Secretary General WCO
4. From left to right: CG RRA, Dr. Uzziel Ndagijimana, Minister of Finance and economic planning; Prime Minister; SG WCO. **5.** Participants at 23rd WCO ESA meeting, pose with SG WCO **6.** Participants at 23rd WCO ESA meeting pose with PM Rwanda Edouard Ngirente **7.** Participants at 23rd WCO ESA meeting attending dinner **8 & 9.** Awarding Ceremony **10.** CG RRA giving a gift to SG WCO



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