

April - June 2019

ESA Newsletter

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

THE GEM OF AFRICA HOSTS ESA



Botswana, the Gem of Africa, successfully hosted the East and Southern Africa (ESA) region's 24th Governing Council in Avani Gaborone Resort, Gaborone, Botswana. It also hosted the Regional Training Centers Head's meeting which was held on the 16th and 17th May, 2019 and the 30th Regional Steering Group meeting held from 20th to 22nd May, 2019. The ESA Vice Chair Mr. Dicksons Kateshumbwa (Uganda) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) Secretary General Mr. Kunio Mikuriya attended the Governing Council alongside other Directors General or their representatives, the African Union Commission (AUC), SADC, SACU, UN-OCHA, the ROCB and other dignitaries.

Speaking during the 24th Governing Council, **Mr. O. K. Matambo, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Botswana** called on the region to galvanise mitigators for the modern-day challenges while embracing free trade. He highlighted Botswana's commitment to international cooperation while acknowledging the region's commitment to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the central role played by Customs in economic integration, combating Illicit Financial Flows

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EDITORIAL



We are pleased to bring to you the second quarter edition of the ESA Newsletter for the year 2019. In this edition we review and commemorate how far we have come as a region, the major changes that took place and the continued collaboration of Members and other partners and stakeholders.

This year ESA region held elections for ESA positions where Botswana was elected to succeed Uganda as the outgoing Vice Chair. We take this opportunity to thank Mr. Dicksons Kateshumbwa for leading the region over the last two years and wish Mr. Phodiso Valashia well as he progresses the regional agenda.

In this edition look out for news from Botswana on their excellent hosting of the recently concluded ESA Governing Council, new ESA leadership, ESA Awards for 2018/2019, gender equality organizational assessment tool, foreign currency apprehended in Angola, enhanced IT interconnectivity in Africa, Harmonized System in Africa, WCO/JICA Master Trainers Programme on Customs valuation, Comoros hosting the first Africa Union Technical Working Group Workshop among other compelling stories.

Our aspiration is that this edition stimulates you to strive to build our Region towards our vision of being a region that facilitates trade efficiently and professionally while ensuring economic growth and intra-regional trade.

Larry Liza
DIRECTOR.

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Seychelles Revenue Commission
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ESA AWARDS

Surprise Winner!! Comoros wins the Communication Award!!

As is norm the ROCB awarded the Best Members in Communication as well as the Best National Contact Points. This awards have seen improvement in communication within the region over the years. There was a pleasant surprise as Island and French nations filled the top spots in ESA in 2019

The Best Member in Communication in the Year and Best National Contact Points are awarded a trophy and certificates during the Governing Council every year. This Year we recognised two leading Members, **Comoros** and **Burundi** for their swiftness, efficiency and effectiveness. Two National Contact points were also recognized for their exemplary communication skills. Burundi won the special communication award for being the most improved Member in communication.

Comoros has up scaled their communication with the ROCB and members, offering timely and conclusive responses while providing the ROCB with all information required, despite the language barriers, and improved in their communication from 15th to 1st.

Mr. Chabeeraj Hurry of **Mauritius** and **Mr. Solomon Mathivhulula** of **South Africa** won the Best National Contact Point of the year 2019 award. They have been fast, efficient and effective in communication, responding to all our matters as well as making necessary follow ups to ensure that all issues raised are addressed.

Last year, 2018, the ROCB introduced a special award in recognition of the Director General who has endeavoured to respond to all our inquiries despite their busy schedule.

Mr. Paul Barrack of **Seychelles** won the award for the year 2019. Mr. Barrack has endeavoured to improve communication and acknowledges all mail from the ROCB, WCO and any Members. In spite of his hectic schedule, he steps in to ensure all national and regional matters are responded to.



The trophy and certificate were presented by Dr. 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 (Comoros) which was represented by Mr. Souef Kamalidini, Director General Administration of Customs, Union of Comoros.



Special Communication Award presented by Dr. 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 (Burundi) which was represented by Mr. Gérard Sabamahoro, Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Burundi Revenue Authority.



Best National Contact Point Award presented by Dr. 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 Mr. Solomon Mathivhulula.



Best National Contact Point Award presented by Dr. 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 Mr. Chabeeraj Hurry.



Special Recognition Award presented by Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, the World Customs Organization Secretary General and Mr. Dicksons Kateshumbwa, the ESA Vice Chair and Commissioner of Customs, Uganda Revenue Authority and Mr. Valashia Phodiso, Ag. Commissioner General, Botswana Unified Revenue Services to the Winner Mr. Paul Barrack, Commissioner of Customs, Seychelles.

ESA AWARDS Zimbabwe Wins Member of the Year 2019 Award!!



Member of the Year Award presented by Dr. 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 (Zimbabwe) which was represented Ms. Faith Mazani, Commissioner General, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority.

The ROCB Introduced the “*Member of the Year Award*” in the year 2018 to recognize the Member who has been consistent and steadfast in their support to the Region, the ROCB and Members.

Zimbabwe has been consistent and steadfast in their support to the Region, the ROCB, RTCs and Members. During the year under review, the Zimbabwe hosted key regional meetings despite going through a tough economic time, they also offered to host the RILO and has since seen its operationalisation. Their Commissioner General has offered impeccable leadership, including in the region. Moreover, its RTC has lead the RTCs and supported them over the last year in achieving their objectives.

THE GEM OF AFRICA HOSTS ESA

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among others Key functions. **Mr. Dicksons Kateshumbwa, ESA Regional Vice Chair and Commissioner for Customs, Uganda** highlighted the increased competitiveness in international trade arena, disasters that have plagued the region, and other trade disruptions with the **WCO Secretary General Dr. Kunio Mikuriya** emphasizing the importance of

regional integration and the critical role of Customs in supporting regional trade. The **Botswana Unified Revenue Service Acting Commissioner General Mr. Valashia** echoed the minister's call for appropriate solutions to the difficulties facing Customs by emphasising the role of Customs in Enforcement and Security, adopting to the dynamic operational environment and providing the platform for unimpeded yet efficient environment for trade facilitation.

During the meetings various reports of the regional entities, the Regional Steering Group, the Finance and Governance Committee, Regional Economic Communities, African Union Commission, among others were deliberated. The regional strategy, the AfCFTA, baseline statistics collected by the ROCB,

efficient cross-border management during response to a disaster, among other topics were discussed.

Various leadership positions that became vacant during the year were also filled and all the outcomes of the meetings shared with the region.

Heads of Delegations, Commissioners Generals and Commissioners attending the 24th Governing Council. Seated from left to right are WCO ESA ROCB Director Mr. Larry Liza, WCO Secretary General Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Botswana Minister for Finance Hon. Matambo (centre), Ag. Commissioner General (Botswana) Mr. Phodiso P. Valashia, and the WCO ESA Vice Chair Mr. Dicksons Kateshumbwa (Uganda).



KENYA

Wins Again to Retain Trophy!



For the third year running Kenya won the ESA Sotho Photo Contest by a landslide having submitted a photo showing Heroine intercepted by Kenya Customs Officials at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport concealed in wooden art/sculptures. The consignment was destined for Greece. As such, Kenya gets to keep the trophy permanently.

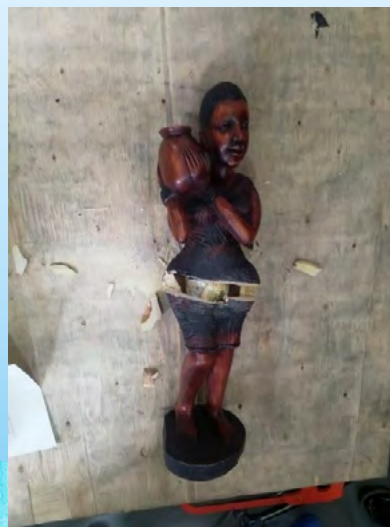
This year, 15 Members submitted photos showcasing Member history, activities and successes in exercising mandate. Kenya's submission was yet again overwhelmingly voted as the Photo of the Year 2019 with Zambia voted as the 1st Runner Up and Mauritius the 2nd Runner Up. All the photos submitted will form the ESA Sotho Photo book 2019.

Consignment was destined for Greece.

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 Mr. Kevin Safari, Commissioner of Customs and Border Control, Dr. Fred Mugambi, Commissioner, Kenya School of Revenue Administration and Mrs. Agatha Munyaka, Chief Manager, Customs and Border Control Department.



A photo showing heroine intercepted by Kenya Customs Officials at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport concealed in wooden art/sculptures.



New Leadership in ESA!

Various regional positions become vacant during the year. The 24th Governing Council elected new ESA Leadership with the new Management Committee comprising of Botswana (Vice Chair), Zimbabwe (Deputy Vice Chair) and Mauritius (Member of the WCO Policy Commission) taking over from Uganda, Botswana and Zimbabwe respectively.

South Africa and Burundi were retained in their positions as they still have one more year to serve in their respective capacities.

We wish all the elected Members all the best in discharging their duties.

	Position	Member
1.	Vice Chair	Botswana 
2.	Deputy Vice Chair	Zimbabwe 
3.	Member of the Policy Commission	Mauritius 
4.	Audit Committee Representative	Comoros and South Africa  
5.	Regional Governance & Finance Committee Representatives	Malawi, Rwanda, Madagascar and Zambia    
6.	Finance Committee Representative	Burundi 

ANGOLA THWARTS ILLEGAL EXPORT OF MORE THAN USD \$7.4 MILLION

At least 38* cases of illegal exporting of domestic and foreign currency have already been registered this year, in the Angolan customs area, by the Customs Control Department of the Angola Revenue Administration (AGT), between January 1st and June 3rd, resulting in the seizure of more than USD 7.4 million, EUR 52.4 million and EUR 56 thousand.

Of the total cases reported above, 29 (twenty nine) occurred in the Customs Delegation at the Passengers Terminal of 4 de Fevereiro International Airport in Luanda, 7 (seven) at the North Luvo Border Post (Zaire Province), 1 (one) at the Luau Post (Moxico Province) and 1 (one) at the Dundo Post (Lunda-Norte Province). Of the cases detected in Luanda, 6 were in January, 4 in February, 5 in March, 4 in April, 9 in May and 1 on 3 June.

Of the foreign exchange violations registered during the period under analysis, 20 were committed by national citizens or foreigners living in the country with fiscal resident status, and the remaining

**56,040 euros and
52,412,500 Angolan
kwanzas**

by non-residents and without fiscal status, being: Guinean (3), Nigerian (3), Malian (3), Congolese-democratic (2), Vietnamese (2), Senegalese, Ivorian (1) and Sao Tome (1).

The Customs Delegation at the Passengers Terminal of 4 de Fevereiro International Airport in Luanda, seized, particularly between May 31st and June 3rd, the amount of US \$ 346,050 (three hundred and forty-six thousand and fifty US dollars) from passengers who sought to transport illegally to the exterior of the country, the US

currency.

Added to the amount compiled between January 1st and May 15th this year by AGT Customs Surveillance Department, these two intercepted illegal transactions amounting to USD 7,430,865 (seven million, four hundred and thirty thousand, eight hundred and sixty-five US dollars) to which 56,040 euros and 52,412,500 Angolan kwanzas are added (1 USD is approximately 330 AKZ).

* Case number 38 happened on June 3, 2019.

The most used routes for illicit currency expatriation are Luanda / Addis Ababa, Luanda / Brazzaville and Luanda / Lisbon, as can be seen in the table below.

Table of total value seized per currency type per month

Moeda	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	TOTAL
USD	5.981 150	22 300	317 000	14 360	989 005	7.323.815,
EURO	3 900,00	310,00	8 900,00	41.780,00	50,00	54.940,00
AKZ			49 547000	265 000,00	2 600 500	52.412.500,00

Source: DFA Database, accessed on 05/31/2019.

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Table of routes most used by violators

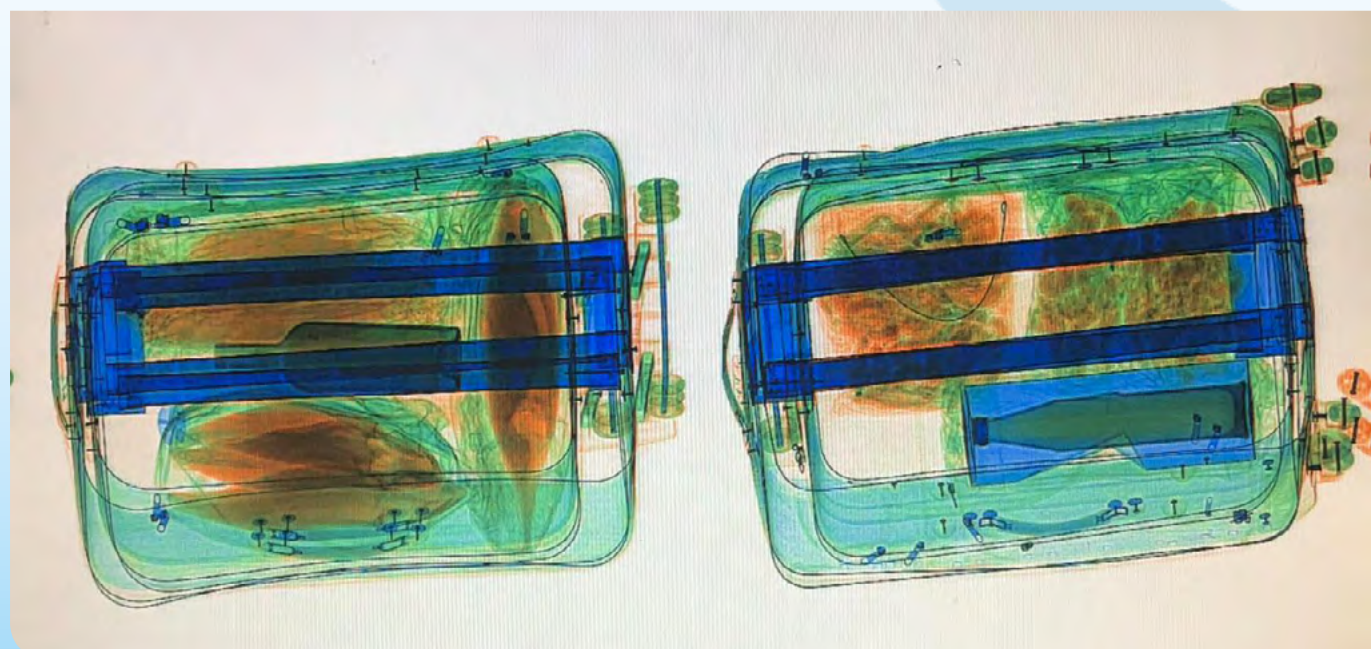
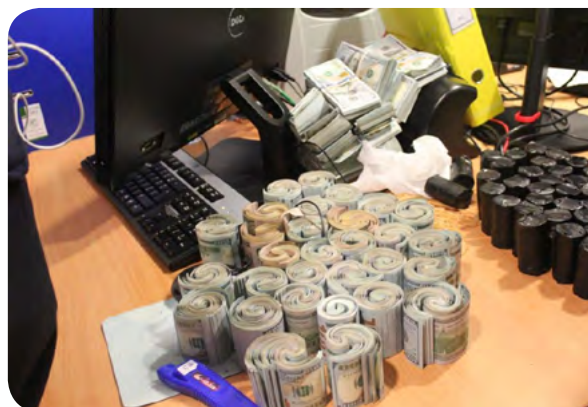
Rotas	Nº of occurrences					
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	TOTAL
Luanda-Lisboa	1		1	2	1	7
Luanda - Dubai		1	1		4	4
Luanda - Addis Abeba	4	2	2	1		9
Luanda-Casablanca (Via Libreville)		1		1	2	4
Luanda-Porto	1					1
Luanda-São Paulo					1	1
Luanda-Brazaville	2		6		1	9
Luanda-Joanesburgo			1			1
Luanda-São Tomé e Príncipe					1	1
TOTAL	8	4	11	4	9	37

Case table by *modus operandi*

Modus Operandi	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	Total
Hand luggage	6	3	5	3	6	23
Accompanied baggage		-	1	-	4	5
Body of the Passenger (attached to the body)	2	-	-			2
In the Passenger clothes		1	5	1		7
TOTAL	8	4	11	4	9	37

Source: DFA Database, accessed on 05/31/2019.

Photographs show a way of transporting money in the structure of suitcases in amounts of up to \$ 200,000 USD (Two Hundred Thousand USD)



East African Customs successfully conducted a Benchmarking Study on IPR Border Control in Thailand and Japan



A total of thirteen (13) Customs officials from the five (5) of East African Revenue Authorities (namely, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) and the Directorate of Customs under East African Community (EAC) Secretariat visited Thailand (7-10 May) and Japan (13-16 May 2019) to conduct a benchmarking study on how Customs authority can make effective border control of the goods infringing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). This study was organized jointly by JICA and WCO to support the efforts made by the above 5 Revenue Authorities in East Africa under the Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa, which started in December 2017. One of the Project aims is to further enhance risk management and border control capacity, in particular on IPR-infringed goods, as they are experiencing increasing flows of counterfeit goods coming to the countries.

Recordation

The benchmarking study participants accompanied by the WCO and JICA experts exchanged procedures and practices with Thai Customs and Japan Customs relating to IPR border control, such as legal/institutional framework, cooperation with relevant authorities,

partnership with IP right holders, use of the recordation system as well as ex-officio control, public awareness activities and human resource development / management. They also learned on the TRIPS agreement and IPR-related WCO tools/instruments from the WCO IPR expert attached to its Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P). In addition, the participants joined a roundtable discussion with the IP right holders in Japan to provide information on the current procedures and to discuss how Customs and IP right holders can work together.

Through the benchmarking study, the participants identified a number of useful good taken by Thai Customs and Japan Customs and consolidated the recommendations to their home administrations in order to further enhancing their border control functions on the goods infringing IPR.

East African Customs spearhead the training after Training-of-Trainer (ToT) workshop on Programme Global Shield (PGS)

Illicit

East African Customs are currently spearheading the training on Programme Global Shield (PGS) in various parts of the region to mitigate the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and demonstrating ways how Customs can contribute to control such threats. A series of training and awareness raising are

delivered by national PGS trainers, who attended the Training-of-Trainer Workshop on PGS held in Kampala, Uganda, on 22-30 January 2019. The PGS is a multilateral WCO initiative, which aims at building capacity of Customs administrations to counter illicit trafficking and diversion of chemicals and other components used by terrorists to manufacture IEDs. The workshop was supported by JICA and WCO experts (including the PGS experts from Sri Lanka and Georgia Customs) through the Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa, which is implemented by the five (5) East African Revenue Authorities (namely, OBR, KRA, RRA, TRA and URA). The WCO and JICA will continue to support the efforts by five East African Revenue Authorities to mitigate the threat of IEDs for more sustainable development of the region.

Customs administrations

Second workshop to develop "a Pool of PCA Trainers" successfully conducted in East Africa

Twenty (20) East African Customs officials, who are nominated to be the future Post-Clearance Audit (PCA) trainers, successfully completed the second regional workshop on the Master Trainer Programme (MTP) on PCA, held in Nairobi, Kenya on 4- 8 March 2019.

This workshop is the second in a series of activities to enhance their capacity on the implementation of PCA through the Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East African, which is implemented by the five (5) Revenue Authorities of East African, namely, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, with the support extended by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and the WCO. The Master Trainer Program or MTP is a program that has been implemented under the JICA/WCO Joint Project to develop sustainable and self-contained training capacity within the Customs administrations by 1) developing a



East African Customs successfully conducted a Benchmarking Study on IPR Border Control in Thailand and Japan

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pool of well-experienced trainers and (2) regionally featured training materials and program to be used by these trainers.

PCA

While the first activity (WG1) in September 2018 focused on the identification of regionally common issues and challenges in PCA and training needs and improvement of PCA knowledge and expertise, this second activity (WG2) placed more emphasis on the "training skills/knowledge", i.e. another important skills/knowledge to be quality trainers. Invited experts from Ukraine Customs (on behalf of the WCO), East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and Japan Customs shared their knowledge and expertise on PCA and training to improve the understanding of the participants on both the theory and practice to achieve the objective.

The participants actively participated in various working sessions including the training delivery on EAC PCA manual by each member, thereby improved skills and knowledge to be quality trainers. They are further expected to share knowledge and materials gained through the workshop to their colleagues and staff in the respective Administrations. Both JICA and WCO welcomed their positive progress and reaffirmed their support to the continuous efforts of Customs administrations in East Africa to ensure sustainable capacity development.

Development of Customs Risk Management Framework in Tanzania for further enhancement of its risk management function

Under the auspices of the WCO/JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Joint Project, the national workshop for Tanzania on the development of Customs Risk Management Framework was organized in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 18-22 March 2019. This



workshop was organized jointly by the WCO and JICA as a part of their supports to Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) through the Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa to enhance its RM functions further to meet the latest issues and challenges in Tanzania.

This follows the recommendations made by the earlier JICA/WCO joint risk management fact-finding mission to Tanzania held in April 2018. During the mission, TRA senior and operational staff had intensive discussions with the team of experts from WCO and JICA, with a view to further enhancing its risk management functions to ensure proper revenue collection, further trade facilitation and enhanced Customs control and recommended to establish a Customs Risk Management Framework for TRA. Thereafter, TRA established the Task Team responsible and sixteen (16) nominated Task Team members from the different divisions/units of TRA got together and reviewed the initial draft Customs Risk Management Framework prepared by the Task Team during this 5-day workshop. With the advice by WCO and JICA experts, the Task Team members intensively worked together and reviewed their risk registers as well as the draft framework. On the last day of the workshop, the progress of the work was reported to the Commissioner Customs.

The WCO and JICA commended the excellent work done by the task force members as well as the strong ownership demonstrated by the TRA on this critical

Japan Customs shared their knowledge and expertise on PCA and training to improve the understanding of the participants

work. It is expected that the updated draft Customs Risk Management Framework will be finalized and adopted soon and contribute to the smooth and effective Customs risk management operation to meet the latest issues and challenges surrounding TRA.

Southern African countries successfully completed their second step of their **Master Trainer Program**

Under the auspices of the WCO/JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) Joint Project, the Second Working Group Activity (sub-regional workshop) of the Master Trainers Programme (MTP) on Customs Valuation (CV) was held in Maputo, Mozambique from 18-22 March 2019, together with the same participants from the five countries in Southern Africa who participated in the first sub-regional workshop held in Zambia in October of last year.

This workshop is the second in a series of activities to be undertaken by these five Revenue Authority countries in Southern Africa, namely Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to enhance their capacity related to the implementation of Customs Valuation. The

Master Trainer Program or MTP is a joint endeavor under the WCO/JICA Joint Project to develop sustainable and self-contained training capacity within the Customs administrations by 1) developing a pool of well-experienced trainers and (2) regionally featured training materials and program to be used by these trainers.

In total, fifteen (15) nominated Customs officials got together again in Maputo, this time to continue work towards the ultimate objective of the MTP. While the first activity (WG1) in October concentrated on (i) identification of regionally common issues and challenges in CV and training needs and (ii) improvement of CV knowledge and expertise, this second activity (WG2) focused more on enhancing the "training skills/knowledge", and what the required

competencies are to become a quality trainer. Experts from WCO, Uganda Revenue Authority, and Japan Customs shared their knowledge and expertise on Customs Valuation and training matters to improve the understanding of the participants on both theory and practical aspects to achieve the programme objective.

Throughout the entire workshop, the participants demonstrated their complete commitment to the MTP and diligently participated in a number of working sessions/group discussions that were held. Both WCO and JICA welcomed the positive "can do" attitude by the participants and their efforts to ensure sustainable capacity development in the Customs Administrations of Southern Africa.



Comoros hosts the 1st African Union Technical Working Group Workshop

Under the auspices of the Trade and Industry Division of the African Union Commission, More than twenty delegates and customs representatives from West and Central Africa shared their experiences on outsourced customs services, commonly referred to as "pre-shipment inspection" (Pre-shipment), entrusted to private companies.

The purpose of the workshop was to accompany these African customs administrations to leave this system set up for the first time in 1963 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ex-Zaire).

Delegates exchange their experiences on outsourced customs services, long entrusted to private companies that should normally be in the hands of customs authorities.

Over the time, the expected performances could not be met by the outsourced companies. The latest were unable to raise revenue within the countries they were operating, according to numerous studies. Moreover, they failed as well in terms of capacity building and technicalities of the local staff members, which pushed many countries to end the contracts.

Nowadays, some countries have left this system of guardianship while others are still focusing on the services of these companies, often supported by networks of international institutions.

Comoros was late in terms of reforms but the great steps taken in recent years by Comoros customs administration lead the Administration to succeed in such



Comoros hosts the 1st African Union Technical Working Group Workshop

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a short time, in taking over all of its missions since in 2006 when the outsourced company has been closed.

"Today, we have to share our experiences and support our administrations to take over sovereign missions long under the influence of private companies," explained Souef Kamalidini, thanking the technical assistance of the

World Customs Organization (WCO), The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development the UNCTAD and the African Union (UA) by reforming and transforming all the customs in the world and African customs in particular.

The workshop, which mobilized more than twenty customs representatives,

2nd to the left, the Commissioner General of Sierra Leone National Revenue Authority, the Director General of Comoros Customs (President of AUSCDGD), Head of Trade & Industry Division of the African Union, Director of AOC, The Adviser of Minister of Finance and Budget of Comoros, Head of UNCTAD and the ex Director General of Comoros Customs.

should lead to the drafting of a "road map", which will indicate the form and stages of support for countries that have not always broken their inspection contracts with the outsourced companies.

The JICA project for Capacity Development of South Sudan Customs Service for Introduction of Harmonized System (HS) Code (P.I.H.S.), has successfully held a series of trainings in May and June for approximately 120 customs officers in total both in Juba and Nimule.

The National revenue Authority (NRA) Customs Division successfully implemented the new South Sudan Single Administrative Document (SAD) with HS code in Juba area last year. However, the number of officers who have the knowledge of HS code is still limited and they should develop appropriate understanding and capacity to HS classification. These trainings are also aimed to develop the capacity of South Sudan customs HS experts as trainers. During the training, Dr. Olympio Attipoe, the Commissioner General of NRA and Major. General Akol Ayii Madut, Director General of South Sudan Customs Services encouraged both trainers and trainees.

THE PROGRESS OF HS CODE INTRODUCTION IN SOUTH SUDAN



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THE PROGRESS OF HS CODE INTRODUCTION IN SOUTH SUDAN



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Dr. Olympio emphasized that the officers who have the knowledge of HS code are important human resources for NRA in his speech. He also mentioned that he would consider those with an appropriate knowledge of HS code as a big advantage for new recruitment in NRA. Lastly, they showed their appreciation to JICA for their co-operation with South Sudan Customs and contribution to the development of the capacity of customs officers.

Apart from these trainings, the project supported South Sudan Customs to establish the HS classification unit in Juba headquarters and Juba International Airport in April 2019. Their major TORs are to examine HS code declared in SAD, to determine the effective way to improve accuracy of HS code classification in SAD, develop references for repeatable cargos and train field staffs how to use it.

Gender Equality is more than a Goal!



The World Customs Organization has actively been promoting Gender Equality and Diversity as part of its Capacity Building agenda since 2013 where a self-assessment tool for Customs administrations, “Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool” (GEOAT) was launched. This allows Customs administrations to assess their policies and procedures to see where and how they can address gender equality issues. In 2017, the WCO established a Virtual Working Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, which holds meetings virtually and provides a platform for Members to exchange good practices on this topic. This working group has also allowed the WCO to gather several practical examples of good practices. The WCO has also disseminated two surveys to its Members on gender equality and diversity.

These surveys allowed the Secretariat to get a better overview of the situation of gender balance within administrations and the different initiatives employed by different administrations.

The funding of the WCO-Finland ESA Project II has significantly contributed in promoting Gender Equality in Customs. A regional workshop at the WCO RTC in [Pretoria, South](#)

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UNI-PASS at the MRA

Consultancy Project by the Korean Customs Service

The Korean delegation with members of the MRA Senior Management Team at Custom House, Port Louis



A team of Korean Customs Officials and IT experts led by the Deputy Director of the Korean Customs Service, Mr. Kyungwook Min, was in Mauritius for a duration of one month for the implementation of the 2nd phase of a consultancy project relating to UNI-PASS, the Korean Customs Management System. The team visited different economic operators along the logistic supply chain in order to understand the actual clearance process and make recommendations based on best practices.

MRA sought the technical assistance of the Korea Customs Service (KCS), which kindly agreed to share its expertise to benchmark MRA Customs' operational processes, risk management framework and the MRA Customs Management System with the Korean system.

The UNI-PASS System is Korea's e-clearance system developed and used by the KCS for more than 20 years now and has been internationally acclaimed for its functionalities, effectiveness and stability. The World Customs Organisation (WCO) has acknowledged UNI-PASS as Korea's automated customs administration system which has been implemented in over 10 countries including Kazakhstan, Nepal, Tanzania, Cameroon, Ethiopia,

and Ecuador. The UNI-PASS is at its 4th generation phase - adapting mobile concepts with the goal to create an intelligent customs administration system based on smart clearance. The World Bank Report on Ease of Doing Business has recognised the UNI-PASS as one of the first 100% electronic clearance systems comprising several modules such as Cargo Management, Clearance Management, Integrated Risk Management (IRM), Single Window, Investigation, Audit and Advanced Passenger Information System. The WCO Technology Network has appraised UNI-PASS for providing a complete customs administration solution, fully customizable to fit in any economic environment. Such a sophisticated system, if adopted by Customs Departments, promises to optimise customs clearance processes.

At the kick-off meeting of the consultancy project, the Director General of the MRA, Mr Sudhamo Lal expressed his gratitude to the government of South Korea for providing technical assistance and for funding this important project. He also stressed on the importance to reform and modernise processes at the MRA Customs with a view of attaining the conflicting objectives of trade facilitation and control.

Gender Equality is more than a Goal!

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Africa was delivered in May 2018 which resulted in the development of a one week training for middle and senior managers, focusing on the links between gender equality, customs reform and modernization and how to implement gender mainstreaming in Customs. The training also formed the basis for developing an e-learning module on gender equality in Customs, also funded by the WCO-Finland ESA Project II. This e-learning module was officially launched at the WCO Capacity Building Committee in April 2019, and is available at the WCO e-learning platform CLiKC in French and English.

In May 2019, WCO-Finland ESA Project II funded a second regional training on Gender Equality in Customs at the RTC, Mauritius with the participation of 9 countries from the region (Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Mauritius and Seychelles). This workshop sought to further build capacities for the ESA Region to practically implement gender equality initiatives in Customs with help of the WCO instruments.



WORKSHOP ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS

The Opening Ceremony of the Gender Equality in Customs Administrations Workshop in May 2019

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), in collaboration with the World Customs Organisation (WCO), hosted a five-day Gender Equality in Customs Administrations workshop at the MRA Custom House in May, 2019. The workshop aimed at enhancing the skills of participants of the East and Southern Africa region on how Gender Equality could be included in the overall training curriculum of countries. Developed by the WCO Secretariat under the framework of the Finland ESA Project, the workshop saw the participation of delegates from Eswatini, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Seychelles and Mauritius.

Honourable Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, G.C.S.K., Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare was welcomed by the Director General of the MRA, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, at the Opening Ceremony of the workshop in the presence of Ms. Riitta Passi, Project Manager, Finland ESA and members of the MRA Management Team.

The Vice-Prime Minister, in her keynote address, praised the MRA and the WCO for their effort to host the Workshop on Gender Equality in Customs Administrations and extended her full support to this initiative. She underscored that the MRA's formulation of the Equal Opportunity Policy and the inclusion of the Gender Statement in its Annual Report clearly illustrate MRA's will to be an equal opportunity employer. Honourable Jeewa-Daureeawoo concluded that there are potential avenues of collaboration that should be explored by the MRA and the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare for

the advancement of gender equality.

Ms. Riitta Passi, observed in her address to the audience that Finland was one of the leading countries of the world in fostering gender equality and the country has been taking actions to promote it.

In his address, Mr. Sudhamo Lal underlined that, since its inception in 2006, the MRA has been living up to its commitment of being an equal opportunity employer. Mr. Lal added that, in line with the Equal Opportunity Act 2008, the MRA has been engaged to minimise discrimination and promote recruitment, training, selection and employment on the basis of merit.



Workshop on enhanced IT interconnectivity in Africa

Participants from AU countries with the Director General of MRA and the WCO resource person

The Commission of the African Union held its 6th Technical Working Group Meeting on interconnectivity of Computerised Customs I.T. Systems in Africa in June 2019 at the seat of WCO-ESA Regional Training centre,

data exchange, as well as the WCO Data Model to allow harmonization of data elements.

The Seychelles Revenue Commission, for example, uses the IT platform, ASYCUDA (Automated System for Customs Data), as compared to CMS (Customs Management System) used by the Mauritius Revenue Authority, thereby making it difficult for exchange

can Continental Free Trade Agreement officially in force on the May 30, 2019. Mr. Ibouura Moussa, Head of Customs Cooperation Division, Department of Trade and Industry, African Union Commission, laid emphasis on the harmonisation of data by customs administrations among member states, in line with the model of the World Customs Organisation to enable exchange of



Mauritius Revenue Authority, Custom House, Mer Rouge. This meeting was a follow-up to the fifth workshop held from 19 to 21 June 2018 in Dakar, Senegal. It was equally recommended by the Directors General of Customs Administrations during the 10th Ordinary Session held in Moroni, Comoros in September 2018. They also proposed that member states adopt the WCO Globally Networked Customs (GNC) concept to allow interconnectivity and

of information. Hence, the aim of this workshop was to bring representatives of Customs Administration within the African Union to reflect, share ideas and elaborate on the way forward for the mapping of Data Elements so that African Union Member States can benefit from interconnectivity in a harmonised and coordinated manner. Mr Sudhamo Lal, Director General of the MRA, highlighted the need for interconnectivity in line with the Afri-

electronic data.

According to the participants, the workshop was a highly effective one. They emphasized that African countries, members of the African Union, could benefit from the expertise of Mauritius.

It makes no doubt that the use of ICT by Customs will reduce duplicative processes and that data capture will help increase efficiency of Customs administrations within the African Union.

MRA hosts the WCO Workshop on Small Island Economies



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) hosted a WCO workshop on Small Island Economies (SIEs) at Custom House, Port Louis in June 2019, for customs administrations in the Indian Ocean region. Officials from Comoros, Madagascar and Seychelles Customs administrations participated in the workshop along with their counterparts from the MRA.

The objective of the workshop was to assist SIEs in addressing their unique challenges in the pursuit of customs modernization and reform programmes, including accession to, and implementation of, key WCO instruments and tools. In a broader context, the aim of this workshop was to discuss and suggest potential measures to assist SIEs in integrating the global supply chain, while strengthening their

capacities for effective risk management, trade facilitation, security and revenue collection.

Such workshops are organised in 3 geographical locations: Caribbean Islands, Indian Ocean Islands and the Pacific Islands. The workshop in Mauritius will be followed by one in the Pacific Islands, after which virtual meetings will be held to apprise Small

Island Economies Customs Administrations about the outcome and possible solutions to challenges already being faced by Customs Administrations.

The Director General of the MRA, Mr Sudhamo Lal pleaded that small island states be treated differently. He added that these states have limited resources, low product differentiation and prone to natural disasters. Hence, their vulnerability must be acknowledged.

M. Samson Bilangna, resource person from the World Customs Organisation, underlined the importance of helping Small Island Economies facing difficulties due to their geographical positions. 'It is now more than necessary to equip Small Island Economies with the necessary tools and competences solely possible through regional cooperation', he said.

Launching ceremony of the SIE workshop in June 2019

Emerging Opportunities and Challenges of E-commerce and Cross Border Trade(CBT)



Cross border trade for a while now has been propelling the borderless world of ecommerce. This provides online traders with opportunities to increase their revenue abundantly since their products are visible internationally. E commerce is growing rapidly as compared to traditional retail due to the rise of online shopping. This is all because customers prefer online retail shopping since there's no geographical limitations, saves on time, easy way for traders to gain clientele via search engine visibility, remains open all the time, better prices, easy to use (user friendly platforms), easy price

comparisons (research capability), privacy for discreet purchases, increased variety, convenience, no crowds, and availability of information. Opportunities provided by e commerce in CBT include advancement of technology, many people now having access to the world wide web, online marketplaces receiving support from many people, improvement of logistics and infrastructure, e-commerce thriving in struggling economies, Multilingual

customer service enhancing customer loyalty, global payment platforms and the most important of all, the future is mobile.

We cannot overlook the challenges which are the costs involved in establishment, language barrier between traders and their foreign customers, cultural differences, local business practices, infrastructure and its maintenance, payment methods, different customer practices, fraud, local government laws, physical goods dominating cross border ecommerce, logistics and lastly but not least the misconception that cross border e commerce is too complicated.



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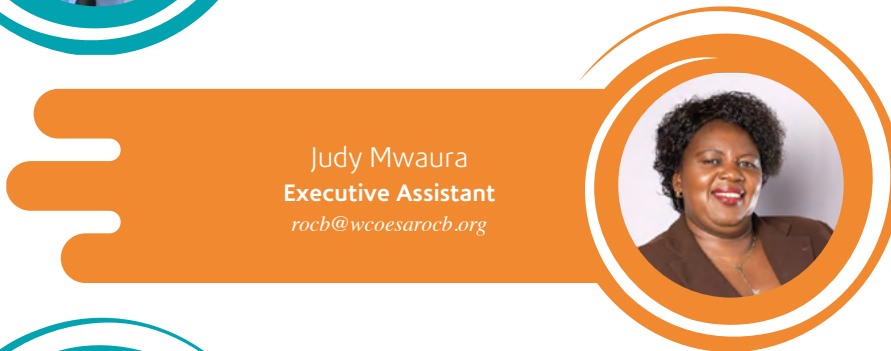
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