

MINUTES OF MEETING – WCO – ESA – REGIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR GROUP (RPSG) 2nd WEBINAR – 4 APRIL – 10H00 TO 11H00 (CAT)

1. Welcome

Juanita Maree (JM) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants to the webinar. The following participants were present:

- Faith Mosongo – WCO – ESA Region
- Jennifer Mwijukye - CEO – Unifreight Cargo Handling Ltd – Uganda
- Desiderio Fernandes – MD Decom Ltd – Mozambique
- Tinashe Kupuya – SADC member
- Mauritius - could not participate but we did have a personal conversation during March on their suggestions

JM then provided some background to the formation of the ESA - RPSG (Regional Private Sector Group), and mentioned that the ESA region was leading the way forward for other regions.

2. Sharing of documentation: (as articulated in the invitation of the meeting)

- I. Draft TOR
- II. Prev. webinar minutes of meeting
- III. Regional focus
- IV. AEO participation
- V. World Bank rating – Ease of Doing Business in the Region.

JM asked members if they had any concerns or comments regarding the documents that were shared, if they can please send written communication as the webinar does not allow for a good dialogue on these documentation – due to the time constrain. No serious comments or concerns were raised with regards to the TOR, or any other of the documents.

3. List of priorities from participants

JM requested that participants share their experiences on issues that they may have with regards to Customs and Trade Facilitation matters within their respective countries and regions. The following comments and concerns were raised:

Mozambique (Desiderio Fernandes (DF):

- DF mentioned that their main concern is with the duplication of documentation and customs declarations in the case with in-transit movements through Mozambique and Zimbabwe. DF said that their experience is a frustrating one where goods having been cleared on the Mozambican side of the border are requested to go through the same declaration process on the Zimbabwean side of the border. This process is both time consuming and creates bottlenecks.
- This experience indicates the lack of customs-to-customs communication, e.g. Mozambique to Zimbabwe documentation have to be resubmitted.
- DF further mentioned that different customs platforms are used, which creates inefficiency. DF then stated that it would be beneficial for the WCO to assist in advocating for creating a single platform in which Customs can talk to each other with the same data fields and not a recapturing of manual information on borders.
- Further suggestions were to create a type of one stop border post, or customs single window. DF mentioned that the Maputo corridor from South Africa is currently working well compared to the Beira corridor to Zimbabwe. An example was provided where the 1st customs declaration from South Africa to Mozambique requires a Certificate of Origin and takes about 4 hours to complete. The 2nd customs declaration is then a simple case of 'process and release'.
- The final remark from DF was in terms of Bond Guarantees. DF mentioned that there is a significant financial burden on especially agents in terms of Bond Guarantees. Customs still insisted on in-transit guarantees; only releasing cargo after final confirmation. These guarantees should rather be nominal guarantees.

Uganda (Jennifer Mwijukye (JenM):

- JenM mentioned the importance of the AEO program and reaffirmed that this is the way forward for the RPSG. She states that they are happy with it and the update take in the region with the owners of the supply chain and the operators in the extended supply chain – agents, terminals, ports, customs brokers, transporters, etc.
- In adding to this, there should be a greater involvement with the operators in the extended supply chain, for example like the in clearing and forwarding. This will portray a real type of program on partnering.
- JenM outlined their main concern: Client recognition in the corridor. The great benefit of an AEO program is mutual recognition in terms of role players whom are consistently compliant. This benefit should therefore be realised, which will be critical for the success of the Northern corridor.
- JenM mentioned that the current situation of Bond guarantees is not beneficial – these guaranteed need to be waived.
- JenM concluded by stating that AEOs should be recognised by other Customs Administrations when goods are exported to another region. Mature AEO programs are needed and can be created when recognised. The long-time delay in program needs to be address and a greater focus should be deployed to make this program more successful and work towards a greater uptake in the region,

4. Comments from Tinashe Kapuya (TK) - SADC

- TK agreed on the issues mentioned by the participants and stated that he had no further comment on them.
- TK mentioned the issue of single window and the current issue being faced by exporters in terms money flows. In the case where they are charged duties, should exporters not be reimbursed?
- TK recalled a recent case study of fertilizers moved from South Africa to Mozambique. JM asked whether the example could be sent to the group, to which TK agreed. The real case study will be articulated to give a holistic context to the problems

experience on the ground, as policy makers don't always understand the impact on the ground, where the real trade and happenings are taken place.

Action number 1:

TK to send the case study details of fertilizer moved from South Africa to Mozambique.

5. Conclusion and wrap up

JM thanked all participants for joining in the webinar. JM confirmed that all comments will be written up and minutes would be sent out for comment in the following days.

ENDS