



East and Southern Africa
Region

ESA Newsletter

January - March 2020



**The WCO Secretary General
visits the WCO ESA ROCB!**

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	1
WCO SECRETARY GENERAL VISIT TO THE WCO ESA ROCB	2
VICE CHAIR'S VISIT TO THE ROCB.....	3
THE 15 TH GLOBAL MEETING OF WCO REGIONAL STRUCTURES, 11 TH SESSION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING COMMITTEE	4
THE ESA REGION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING.....	6
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)	7
URA CUSTOMS FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY	8
WCO SECRETARY GENERAL LAUDS KENYA'S CUSTOMS REFORMS AND MODERNIZATION	9
IMPROVING SOMALIA'S CUSTOMS	10
LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE INTEGRATED GOVERNMENTAL CLEARANCE CENTRE (IGCC)	11
INAUGURATION OF A NEW MOBILE CONTAINER SCANNER FOR BETTER CONTROL	12
DEALING WITH THE NEW CUSTOMS RISKS	13
WOMEN IN E-COMMERCE; CHANGING THE CURRENT NARRATIVE.....	14
ONGOING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND SECURITY THROUGH PROGRAMME GLOBAL SHIELD (PGS) WITH THE SUPPORT FROM WCO AND JICA.....	15
AEO PROGRAMME NEEDS UPTAKE	17
IT-CONNECTIVITY OF CUSTOMS IN THE ESA REGION	19
ROCB CONTACT LISTING	21



EDITORIAL

We are pleased to present to you our edition of the World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) newsletter for the first quarter of the year, 2020! This edition brings to you the high points of many outstanding regional events that have kick started the year 2020. They include the WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya's visit to the ROCB, the WCO ESA Vice Chair, Mr. Phodiso Valashia's visit to the ROCB, the Management Committee Meeting held in Mauritius, the 15th global meeting of WCO Regional Structures, 11th session of the Capacity Building Committee, the International Women's Day and the International Customs Day. This edition also features a special article from Somalia! The article discusses Somalia's federal government's efforts to reform its domestic revenue in three parts; it presents the historical journey on Somalia's customs from 1960 to 2020 and discusses the current reforms while concluding the vision of Somalia's customs going forward.

In this issue, we also highlight developments of the first quarter of 2020 and are happy to share developments in our administrations and beyond, including the development of a pool of regional trainers under the Master Trainer Programme (MTP), Mauritius laying the foundation to their new Integrated

Governmental Clearance Centre (IGCC), thoughts from the ESA Regional Private Sector Consultative Group (RPSCG) and highlights from our development partners, among others.

We continue to cherish and archive your stories in form of articles; for we have unceasingly showcased to the world the various salient capacity building activities taking place in the Region and within our national administrations.

Once again, we take this opportunity to appreciate all Members, WCO, Regional Training Centres, the African Union Commission, RECs, JICA, WCO ESA Project II and all other development partners for continually supporting the growth of the WCO ESA ROCB Newsletter through regular contribution of articles, we look forward to receiving more articles from you in the new year 2020.

Enjoy the read.

May you have a great year ahead and with the COVID-19 outbreak crisis, we wish you good health and prosperity.



*FAITH MOSONGO
PROGRAMME OFFICER.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Japan International Cooperation Agency
Kenya Revenue Authority
Mauritius Revenue Authority
Regional Private Sector Consultative Group
Somalia Customs
Uganda Revenue Authority

EDITORIAL TEAM

Larry Liza - Editor in Chief
Faith Mosongo - Programme Officer
and Editor
Eric Kaburu – Issue Editor and ICT Intern
Ana Secivanivic - Design and Layout



WCO SECRETARY GENERAL VISIT TO THE WCO ESA ROCB



The WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya during his visit to the ROCB. He is flanked by Mr. Larry Liza, the WCO ESA ROCB Director and Mr. Kevin Safari, the Commissioner of Customs and Border Control, Kenya Revenue Authority.

The Secretary General (SG) of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Dr. Kunio Mikuriya visited the WCO East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) on 4th February 2020, his visit was part of his two-day tour to Nairobi, Kenya to discuss and assess Kenya's co-operation and implementation of WCO initiatives and commitments. He was accompanied by the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), Commissioner of Customs and border Control, Mr. Kevin Safari and other top management officials from KRA.

The SG took note of the new state of the art ROCB Offices and congratulated Kenya for its commitment to support all the WCO initiatives and especially for hosting the ROCB. Kenya has over the years supported the office in provision of the office facilities as well as offering its technical and support staff to the region.

During his visit, the SG reiterated his support to the Regional structures and his wish for these structures to become independent. It is for this reason that the SG called on Kenya

to fast track the ROCB office registration process as this will allow for investment of the ROCB funds as well as ease the process of donor engagement.

The ROCB Director, Mr. Larry Liza, welcomed the SG to the ROCB and pointed out that it was the first time that the SG was visiting the ROCB. He assured the SG of the ROCB's commitment to support the WCO in implementing all capacity building initiatives in the region. Mr. Liza called on the WCO to support the ROCB in ensuring full implementation of the regional strategic plan through both financial and technical support. Finally, he stressed the importance of finalization of the ROCB registration process and pointed out that Kenya was fully committed to ensuring that this was done within the shortest time possible. Mr. Safari shared the Director's sentiments and confirmed that indeed Kenya was fast tracking the office registration process and that it will continue to support the ROCB in the delivery of its mandate and the especially the full implementation of the regional strategy.



VICE CHAIR'S VISIT TO THE ROCB



Mr Larry Liza, ROCB Director and the Vice Chair, Mr. Philiso Phodiso Valashia, during the signing of the MoU with Techno Brain

The meeting of the ESA Region Vice Chair's office, Botswana and the ROCB took place in Nairobi, Kenya from the 10th to 21st February 2020. The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chair, Mr. Philiso Phodiso Valashia, Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Botswana while the awareness sessions were facilitated by Mr. John Soopu, Manager, Strategy Management & Planning, Botswana. He was also accompanied by Chipu Mokgwathi, Senior Customs Officer.

The purpose of this meeting was to guide the Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) and Technobrain on how the "Development and Automation of the ESA strategy management framework project" scope will be managed, developed, monitored and controlled to ensure the framework is fully automated.

The WCO East and Southern Africa Region (ESA) strives to achieve its mandate and vision by delivering value to its member countries. To achieve this, the Region developed a 3 years (2018-2021) strategic plan. Execution of the strategic plan commenced on 1st July 2018 and it will be ending on 1st June 2021. Monitoring and review of the strategic plan have been ongoing, though without a

standardized process for monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan deliverables.

The Region took the initiative to develop and define an ESA strategy development, monitoring and evaluation framework. The framework that has been developed is a manual one and captures all features that will enable the Region to periodically develop its strategy, monitor and evaluate both strategic and operational performance. Furthermore, the framework has elements that will enable the region to communicate performance to its member countries.

Mr. John Soopu also guided the ROCB staff, with their input, to develop a new Performance Management System which the World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) shall follow to manage corporate and individual performance, identify performance development needs and ensure the alignment of employees with the regions strategic requirements.

During this meeting the Vice Chair, on behalf of the region, also signed an MoU with Techno Brain to act as guide on the terms and conditions of engagement between the Parties for Customs to Business Partnership.



THE 15TH GLOBAL MEETING OF WCO REGIONAL STRUCTURES, 11TH SESSION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING COMMITTEE



The ROCB Director, Mr. Larry Liza chairing the 15th global meeting of WCO Regional Structures

The ROCB Director and Programme officer participated in the 15th global meeting of WCO Regional Structures, 11th session of the Capacity Building Committee & the East and Southern Africa region side-line meetings. These meetings were held at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium from 2nd to 6th March 2020 and were also attended by the Vice Chair's office, RTCs as well as other Member administrations.

The ROCB Director, Mr. Larry Liza chaired the 15th global meeting of WCO Regional Structures took place on 2nd and 3rd march 2020. The meeting was aimed at aligning and strengthening the cooperation and collaboration of all WCO regional structures; namely ROCBS, RTCS, Vice-Chairs' Offices, RILOS, Regional Customs Laboratories and Regional Dog Training Centres.





The WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya during the opening of the joint session of the 11th Session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Committee (CBC) and the working group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFAWG).



Mr. Phodiso Valashia, WCO Council Vice-Chair for the ESA Region, Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS), delivering a key note address during the joint session of the 11th Session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Committee (CBC) and the working group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFAWG).

The following were the key outcomes/achievements of the meeting; All regional structures appreciated the invitation to the meeting and recognized the added value of involving specialized regional structures; The regional structures welcomed the new Capacity building strategy and its inclusive approach. This will provide a good platform to enhance intra and inter regional coordination and collaboration; Regional structures requested the Secretariat to update the WCO Website to include links for Regional Customs Laboratories and Regional Dog Training Centres under the WCO Regional Bodies section; The Regional Structures recommended the updating on the Best Practices Guidelines to include the new inclusions on the Global meeting to enhance sharing of best practices.

The 11th Session of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Committee (CBC), was held in Brussels, from 4th to 6th march 2020. On 4th march, the first day of the CBC, a joint session with the working group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFAWG) was held. During this meeting, Mr. Phodiso Valashia, WCO Council

Vice-Chair for the ESA Region, Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS), delivered a key note address on Customs at the forefront of designing solutions for a sustainable future. Mr. Valashia addressed the various challenges organizations like Customs face nowadays as they are increasingly engaged in multiple simultaneous changes and have a key role in government strategies and policies to foster sustainability for prosperity and contribute to national and global development. The key outcomes/achievements of the meeting were; The CBC endorsed the WCO Capacity Building Strategy and Operational Plan for submission to the June 2020 Policy Commission for finalization and approval; The CBC provided recommendations for further enhancement of the WCO tools and related capacity building initiatives; The CBC was informed about the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and discussed potential capacity building support under the framework of the Mercator Programme; Members shared national experiences regarding implementation of National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTFs) and related activities.



THE ESA REGION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING



The ESA Region Management Committee meeting was held on 7th February 2020 at the Regional Training Centre Mauritius in Port Louis, Mauritius. The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chair and Chairperson of ESA Management Committee (MC) Mr. Phodiso Valashia. Mr. Valashia welcomed all delegates to Mauritius and thanked Mauritius Revenue Authority for its hospitality. He informed the meeting that though the MC was formally appointed as the Executive of the WCO ESA region in May 2019, this was its first meeting. The Chairperson underscored the necessity for MC to meet to consider decisions from Governing Council and review what the Regional Steering Group (RSG) would have done in executing those decisions to provide proper guidance. He therefore acknowledged the participation by all MC members in particular recognising participation at the level of Commissioner General by the Chairperson of the Finance and Governance Committee, Malawi Revenue Authority. This, he noted, reflects commitment to execute Management Committee responsibilities by members.

The Management Committee received a brief on the outcomes of the 82nd Policy Commission of the WCO held in Seoul,

South Korea on 3rd - 5th December 2019. Policy Commission, which was chaired by the WCO Chairman, Commissioner Dickson Kateshumbwa (Uganda), considered key issues including the capacity building support to boost the use of technology and data analytics in Customs, Review of Harmonized System, the WCO Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and the Programme-Budget for financial year 2020-2021 among others.

The meeting appreciated that, as part of measures aimed at enabling the Region to adequately achieve its strategic goals, there is need to identify and close any proficiency (governance, administrative structure and technical acumen) and resource gaps that may exist within the ROCB. The MC was informed that a strategy retreat was organised on 10th - 14th February 2020 for the ROCB to cascade the ESA Strategy to all the officers of the ROCB and commence implementation of a Performance Management System-based annual contracts. During the meeting, the draft 2020-2021 Annual Performance Plan for the ROCB was endorsed by the Management Committee and will therefore be submitted for approval at the next Governing Council.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)

March 8th is a global day commemorating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. This day provides a useful opportunity to reinforce the fact that everyone has a role to play in forging a more gender-balanced world. IWD is for celebrating the achievements of women and calling for gender parity.

It's worth noting that the World Customs Organization (WCO) joined the international community in celebrating International Women's Day 2020, with the theme "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights." The WCO proactively promotes "Gender Equality and Diversity" and has included this topic in its capacity building agenda. Over the past few years, the Organization has stepped up its efforts – developing new tools and launching new initiatives. The WCO has also actively urged its Members to promote Gender Equality and Diversity through holding discussions during its Policy Commission Sessions; As a result, Members agreed to a number of actions to move the agenda forward, including the development of a WCO Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs. The draft Declaration was discussed at the 11th Session of the WCO Capacity Building Committee in March 2020 and is expected to be adopted by the WCO Council in June 2020.

Women are breaking stereotypes and creating history. From crossing the Atlantic, being pioneer pilots, being leaders in a male dominated arena, being leaders of peacebuilding networks, award-winning journalists, pioneer health practitioners, groundbreaking scientists, inventors, award-winning athletes, decorated army officers, talented musicians, dedicated activists, triumphant advocates, prolific environment conservationists, imaginative architects, fearless defenders of human rights, NASA engineers among other profuse capacities.



Superintendent of Customs, Maldives Customs, and member of the WCO Virtual Working Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, Ms. Fathmath Abdul Rahman sharing her experience on gender equality. She is flanked by Mrs. Velma Ricketts Walker, the Chairperson of the WCO Capacity Building Committee, also Commissioner for Customs (Jamaica) and Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, the Secretary General of the WCO.

Some of the challenges faced by women comprise patriarchy, not enough women at the table, sexism, racism, and economic inequality, trauma-centered feminism, access to equal opportunity, the lack of respect for caregiving, increasing rates of maternal mortality, campaigns to normalize misogyny, among other biased scenarios but they continue to prove their male counterparts wrong and forge their way forward for the generations to come.

The world has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. With more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life. Nonetheless more needs to be done in terms of economic fairness where one day we shall also witness equal pay for the same profession, position, posting or appointment as their male counterparts.





URA CUSTOMS FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY



A tree for Each: The Chairman WCO Council spearheading the Campaign

January 26th has been designated by WCO as the International Customs Day. During the 2020 celebrations under the theme “Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet,” it was time to celebrate the gallant officers of customs and honour their contribution. It was also a moment to replenish the planet through a country-wide Campaign dubbed “A tree for each.”

Officiated by the Chairman World Customs Council who doubles as the URA Commissioner Customs- Mr Dicksons C. Kateshumbwa, the day was started off with the main Customs parade at the URA Tower- Kampala which was conducted concurrently with all other stations.

Delivering his keynote, Mr Kateshumbwa highlighted the fact that Uganda was officially celebrating the International Customs day for its first time. He elaborated the importance of the theme and Customs’ role in environmental protection. “The role of customs is bigger than assessing entries, and issuing queries. We have to look at community development and society protection, the Chairman said.

Each officer was given a social responsibility to plant a tree at their homes and around their work stations.

Planting trees and protecting them is an effective strategy to assist in meeting sustainability goals while conserving the environment, especially in cities subjected with effects of urbanisation. “Trees promote health and social well-being by removing air pollution, reducing stress, and promoting social ties in communities”.

Article by Ivan Kayongo





WCO SECRETARY GENERAL LAUDS KENYA'S CUSTOMS REFORMS AND MODERNIZATION



The WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya and Mr. Kevin Safari, the Commissioner of Customs and Border Control, Kenya Revenue Authority.



The WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya meeting the Top Management of Kenya Revenue Authority during his visit to Kenya.

The Secretary General (SG) of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Dr. Kunio Mikuriya has lauded the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) for its implementation of recommendations of the WCO on Customs Reforms and Modernization. This happened during his two-day tour, 3rd – 4th February 2020, in Nairobi to discuss and assess Kenya's co-operation and implementation of WCO initiatives and commitments.

KRA has been a key stakeholder within WCO since Kenya joined WCO in 1965. KRA has supported the implementation of WCO conventions, agreements, declarations and resolutions and recommendations. Kenya hosts and supports the budget of, and secondment of technical staff to the WCO - East & Southern Africa (ESA) Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB), as well as the Regional Training Centre (RTC) for the Economic Competitiveness Package, at the Kenya School of Revenue Administration (KESRA), Mombasa Campus.

During the visit, KRA showcased technologies enhancing Kenya's customs modernization. Dr. Kunio toured key installations used in enhancing faster and secure cargo clearance at key points of entry i.e Integrated Scanner Command Centre (ISCC) established to curb cargo diversion, misdeclaration and illicit trade; misdeclaration reduction-98%, revenue

increase -18.8%, Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System (RECTS); a state-of-the-art technology for monitoring cargo transit in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. RECTS has reduced cargo transit time from an average of 16 to 4.2 days. The SG also visited the Inland Container Depot, Nairobi (ICDN), a facility bringing port services closer to customers in the hinterland.

In a joint Communique by the SG and KRA Commissioner General (CG), both agreed to partner in establishing a unified valuation system and database across the EAC to facilitate Customs data and information sharing to curb commercial fraud and illicit trade as well as support KESRA's national and regional capacity building initiatives for customs officers.

Finally, SG met representatives of the Ministry of Finance, National Treasury and discussed further assistance for KRA in order to improve Customs performance and strengthen the supply chain.

*By: Loice Akello
International Relations & Diplomacy Division (KRA)*





IMPROVING SOMALIA'S CUSTOMS

After three decades of civil unrest, the Somali government's recovery spending grew rapidly. This article discusses Somalia's federal government's efforts to reform its domestic revenue in three parts; it will present the historical journey on Somalia's customs from 1960 to 2020 and discuss the current reforms while concluding the vision of Somalia's customs going forward.

Somali ports have used the same Customs law since independence in 1960. The collapse of the Somali state in 1991 has destroyed public institutions and most of Somalia's ports have been closed for business. People and goods have entered the country unchecked. Some ports have operated with minimal supervision with manual systems. Somalia transitions from feuding factions into a vibrant functioning state,

The Revenue Directorate of the Federal Ministry of Finance commenced domestic revenue mobilization initiatives. Communication units were established to promote taxpayer education & public awareness campaigns. Custom's duty collection was simplified to deliver sound public service. Using Customs Management Information System (CMIS), ports have shifted from manual to automation. Four seaports and several airports are currently open for business. Somalia's WCO membership has been reactivated.

Somalia implemented reforms on customs activities. Harmonized Systems nomenclature 2017 version were implemented in Mogadishu customs and to roll out to other ports of the country. Customs officers attended the EU-WCO program for HS in Africa. Somali Single Administration Document (SOMSAD), an online system, which captures statistical data, allows importers and brokers to declare their consignments, was implemented. TIN numbers were also issued to importers and brokers. Risk Management unit, where

Ministry of Finance



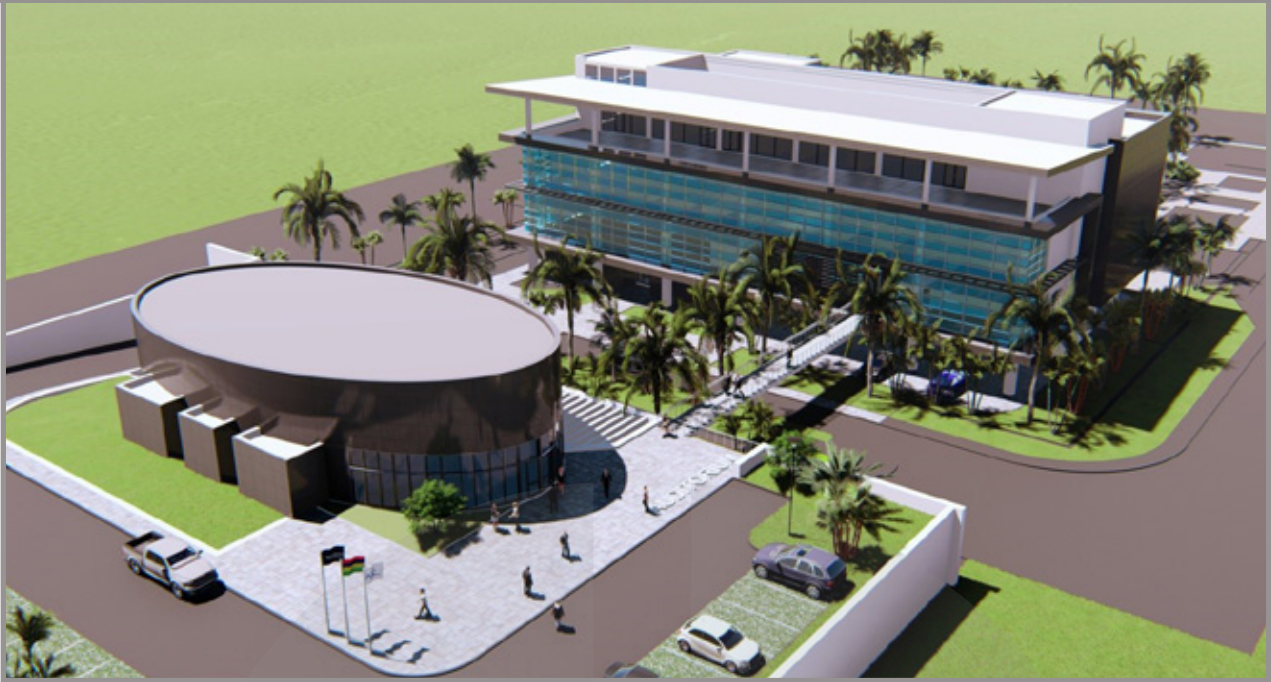
prohibited goods are assessed and smugglers checked, have been established. The 1960 Customs laws were amended to reflect the modern customs standards. Tax rates on some products have been harmonized throughout the country. These reforms resulted in a significant revenue increase of 109%.

Further efforts to modernize the CMIS systems are in place. Harmonizing customs reforms and remodeling its tariffs, while using neighbouring East African Community as a model, are works in progress. The federal government's mission and vision to peaceful and prosperous Somalia is on track. Professional customs officials with efficient automated tools will certainly make Somalia great again.





LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE INTEGRATED GOVERNMENTAL CLEARANCE CENTRE (IGCC)



The IGCC will be unique with a state-of-the-art architectural design. It will be equipped with all the necessary facilities and amenities to provide a value added service to the trading community; a welcoming office space for a better interaction between government authorities and their stakeholders, training room facilities, conference rooms for meetings and video-conferencing, a canteen and other welfare amenities.

IGCC: ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR THE CLEARANCE OF CARGO AT THE AIRPORT

The International Customs Day was celebrated by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) on Sunday, 26 January 2020. To mark the event, the Foundation Stone of a modern eco-friendly building, the Integrated Governmental Clearance Centre (IGCC) was laid. The IGCC will be a one-stop-shop to provide all necessary facilities for the clearance of air cargo at Plaine Magnien, next to the SSR International Airport.

The concept of the IGCC was recommended by the World Customs Organisation under the Coordinated Border Management Project, aimed at bringing under one roof all the related government agencies concerned with the processing of permits and authorisations and the clearance of goods. The IGCC will regroup the following clearance services: Customs, Health, Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, Food Import Unit, Mauritius Standard Bureau and the Pharmacy Board. The building will cost around Rs. 650 million and it is expected to be completed by June 2021.



The IGCC has been designed with a "green" concept such as the use of solar energy, maximum use of natural lighting, and rain-water harvesting systems.

The Foundation Stone of the Integrated Governmental Clearance Centre (IGCC) was laid by the Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Republic of Mauritius. Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Mr. Nayen Koomar Ballah, Chairperson, MRA Board, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, MRA, other Ministers, Members of Parliament and eminent personalities were also present during the ceremony.





INAUGURATION OF A NEW MOBILE CONTAINER SCANNER FOR BETTER CONTROL



With a view to further facilitating trade and to cope with the government's programme for port extension, MRA Customs is investing massively in non-intrusive inspection equipment which is a pre-requisite for safety requirements according to the WCO SAFE Framework of standards. In this regard, a new Mobile container scanner has been procured from Nuctech Ltd, the MT1213DE.

The new equipment has a fully autonomous system and can be used to scan goods anywhere in Mauritius. As per its mobile nature, the scanner will go towards containers, rather than having containers come to the existing fixed scanners. It adopts the advanced Interlaced Dual-Energy as the radiation source and can provide excellent screening features such as organic/ inorganic material discrimination, high penetration capacity, fast-scan and radioactivity monitoring.



The scanner can operate effectively in harsh weather conditions such as extremely low and high temperatures and rainy or windy. It can be deployed for use within 15 minutes. The new mobile container scanner provides Customs Department at the Mauritius Revenue Authority the best mobility and no doubt enhances the efficiency for combating illicit trafficking.





DEALING WITH THE NEW CUSTOMS RISKS



The URA Customs Central Command and Monitoring Centre Border Control, Kenya Revenue Authority.

Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) technology refers to technical equipment and machines which enable the inspection of cargo without opening and unloading consignments.

With the growing trade volumes which are rarely matched with increased staffing, the decision to physically inspect cargo can be time consuming and can ultimately affect the overall performance of Customs administrations. NII is meant to detect risks such as: under-declaration, mis-classification, explosives, illicit nuclear materials, illicit drugs, chemical and biological warfare agents and radioactively contaminated goods, currency and other contraband. Efficient non-intrusive inspection of cargo is therefore critical to trade and the protection of society.

No one NII machine can detect all the threats mentioned thus calling for a continuous update of profiles. Also, analysis decisions may not be foretelling in all cases and the high cost of equipment can be a discouraging factor to many administrations however, Standard 3 of Pillar I of the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards recognizes the worth

of NII technology for trade facilitation and recommends to it to Customs administrations.

Uganda has consistently invested in the technology since 2007 but during 2019/2020, the efforts were boosted by a generous donation from the Government of China of two sets of Container/ Vehicle Inspection Systems and 5 Sets of Baggage Inspection Systems. These together with the already existing equipment are now connected to a Modernized Management System at the Central Command and Monitoring Centre in Kampala and real time image analysis does not necessarily have to be conducted from scanning location anymore.

Finally, *“you don’t get lucky without preparation, and there’s no sense in being prepared if you’re not open to the possibility of a glorious accident.”* As non-conventional risks start manifesting, Customs administrations must adequately prepare for the worst if they are to be prepared at all.

Peter Tigatoola, Uganda





WOMEN IN E-COMMERCE; CHANGING THE CURRENT NARRATIVE



URA Customs Management and staff with Mirama Hills Women Cross border Traders under the women Traders' Trade Facilitation Framework

E-commerce involves buying and selling of goods and services or transmitting of fund or data, over an electronic network, predominantly the internet. Within the world spectrum there is increased recourse to E-commerce in both the developed world and the LDCs.

E-commerce has a great impact on the global supply value chain. It has for example reduced the use of middle men in transactions. It is important for women to participate in E-trade due to the benefits brought by increased participation of digitization globally which is creating employment opportunities, reducing marginalization and enhancing developments. If women are paid, **'the nation is paid'**

Entrepreneurship in e-commerce is a challenging journey for women in which they face specific constraints related to social Bias, lack of self-confidence, limited knowledge in internet access for business, low women visibility, Digital literacy and lack of finance to penetrate the global internet markets among a host of other challenges which need to be

incorporated into policy making processes linked to digital economy.

In order to change the current narrative of E-commerce among the women at all levels, the governments in ESA countries should consider inclusion of women in the policy design at national level linked to digital economy; changing the mind-sets by raising the profile of especially young women entrepreneurs as they tend to be more inclined to explore new opportunities; increase the visibility of successful women in e-commerce; improve the skills of the women in ICT especially those living in the countryside that are likely to add value; improve on the internet access; increase access of the women to valuable business information; link them to new export markets; market their products and services over the internet.

This will certainly overhaul the current narrative about E-commerce.

By Basseke Tendo Christina, Uganda



ONGOING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND SECURITY THROUGH PROGRAMME GLOBAL SHIELD (PGS) WITH THE SUPPORT FROM WCO AND JICA



East African Revenue Authorities, JICA and WCO confirmed the good progress of their Project on Trade Facilitation and Border Control at its 4th Regional Joint Coordinating Committee (RJCC) held in Bujumbura, Burundi

The 4th Working Group Activity of the regional Master Trainer Program (MTP) on Post Clearance Audit (PCA) was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 10 to 14 February 2020. The purpose of the MTP on PCA is to build their sustainable capacity in delivering training by developing regional trainers and regionally featured training materials in order to enhance their Customs administrations' capacity to conduct post clearance audit in more effective manner. With the support from the experts from the WCO, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Customs and EAC Secretariat, a total of 19 officials, who are nominated as the future master trainer on PCA from five Revenue Authorities in East Africa, worked on (i) improving their training delivery skills, (ii) developing and updating training materials (presentations on EAC PCA manual, cases studies, sample questions), and (iii) lectures by experts on concepts on PCA and WCO tools and instruments, and the information about WCO accreditation. Participants has improved their knowledge and training skills through developing and delivering training materials over the last four activities, and they will continue their assignments during the interval period and join the next 5th activity, in which they will be evaluated to be capable as trainers.



Further progress towards developing a pool of regional trainers and training materials under the Master Trainer Programme (MTP) on Post Clearance Audit (PCA) for East African Customs

On 30 January 2020, the 4th Regional Joint Coordinating Committee (RJCC) of the Project (Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa) was held in Bujumbura, Burundi. The RJCC participants include the Commissioners General and Commissioners Customs and senior officials of the East African Revenue Authorities (EARAs), the representatives from the Directorate of Customs of the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat, JICA Headquarters, JICA Rwanda and Burundi Offices, WCO (World Customs Organization), and they confirmed the progress and the planned activities for Customs capacity building and the targeted borders (Rusumo, Namanga, Malaba and Gatauna/Katuna) for OSBP (One-Stop Border Post) support of the Project. Following the discussions, the participants reviewed the project monitoring sheet that reflected inputs from each Revenue Authority and adopted it. At the end of the meeting, the Project awarded the best performing Master Trainers for Year 2019. The Master Trainers had been trained under the Project in the areas of Customs valuation, HS classification and Intelligence Analysis and subsequently contributed to capacity building through training of officers and stakeholders in the region last year. It should be noted that the number of trainees trained by those Master Trainers reached about 12,000 last two years alone.





Capacity building of border officers and stakeholders for effective OSBP operation at the Malaba OSBP

A total of 127 persons drawn from public and private sector agencies/organizations operating at Malaba and nearby Busia borders, from both Kenya and Uganda, participated in the training on effective OSBP Operation, with the support from JICA Project on Capacity Development for Trade Facilitation and Border Control in East Africa, from 18 to 20 February 2020.

The main objective of the training was to provide technical officers and stakeholders at the Malaba OSBP with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to effectively function within the OSBP control zone. The training modules were based on the EAC OSBP training curriculum, which provides a uniform and harmonized approach to building capacity for the management and smooth implementation of OSBPs in East Africa. Specific objectives of the training were understanding: (i) the EAC OSBP legal framework and procedures, (ii) border security and disaster risk management, (iii) coordinated border management, (iv) OSBP support programs (e.g., change management, ethics and integrity, gender mainstreaming, international relations), and (v) environmental and social safeguards.

The training was hosted at OSBP on the Uganda side and most participants were receiving OSBP training for the first time. All participants agreed that they would put to use what they had learned during the training session immediately.

OSBPs provide for more efficient border crossing by persons and goods, with resulting economic and social benefits. Located along the Northern Corridor between Kenya and Uganda and the busiest border crossing in East Africa, the Malaba OSBP was selected for support in the project. The construction of the OSBP is ongoing but expected to complete this year. JICA project also supported a meeting to sensitize border community residents in OSBP procedures and more than 250 border community residents attended in February 2020. These activities are part of the recommended activities for effective OSBP operations at Malaba, which are updated by the joint border committee for Malaba OSBP with the support from JICA.



AEO PROGRAMME NEEDS UPTAKE



The majority of the countries throughout the ESA region currently have an AEO programme in place; however, consensus is that the uptake of AEO needs to increase.

AEO programmes as discussed at the previous Webinar have reached various levels of maturity and implementation with Kenya, Mauritius and Tanzania currently leading the way with the most mature programme. However, the benefits of AEO for some stakeholders are not clear, particularly for SMEs. These benefits therefore need to be articulated and linked with the WCO SAFE and the MRA communicated and monitored in order to realize its impact. Customs Administrations will benefit from MRAs. AEO is the programme of the future, however AEO needs to be extended to all in the extended supply chain and must have an impact on border crossings.

An AEO (Authorized Economic Operator) is a party involved in the international movement of goods in whatever function that has been approved by or on behalf of a national Customs administration as complying with WCO or equivalent supply chain security standards. AEOs may include manufacturers, importers, exporters, brokers, carriers, consolidators, intermediaries, ports, airports, terminal operators, integrated operators, warehouses, distributors and freight forwarders.

The RPSG as a whole is in favour of the AEO programme and commented on the fact that AEO is based on a risk management profile, with certain benefits being available if a supply chain is safe, secure and compliant.

In practical terms however, the RPSG has established that the AEO programme across the 24 member countries is not at the same level of maturity and as a result is not facilitating regional trade optimally.





Nonetheless, in some regions, such as Eastern Africa, moderate progress has indeed been achieved, especially in terms of regional collaboration. In the EAC for example, there are currently more than 100 AEOs, with the programme especially recognizing the fact that benefits are not only confined to large corporations. Efforts are currently being made to branch out to other SADC countries.

Regionally there is a need to consolidate the progress and further promote AEOs through clearly articulating the benefits and providing education and training on AEO matters. In some countries, such as Zimbabwe for example, AEO awareness is not yet at an optimal level. To add to this, the process of AEO registration in Zimbabwe, which is done through the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) remains tedious and poorly managed, which discourages prospective AEOs.

South African has proposed migration from the Preferred Trader (PT) programme to an AEO programme, hopefully throughout the entire SACU region. The aim is that the AEO programme can be the platform for Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), since the fact that the PT programme has not taken off.

Private Sector in the SACU region, is nonetheless very optimistic with the pilot project which is currently underway in two industries, automotive and the textile industry. Similar to other regions, the hope of the AEO in SACU is to not only benefit the large corporations, but also the SMEs and possibly even the informal sector.

The South African Revenue Authority (SARS) has engaged with the Private Sector via two workshops. The Private Sector is of the opinion that the standards of various pillars of AEO (such as solvency, record keeping and safety) should not be lowered too much, but simplified.

In Namibia, the PT was initiated through 20 companies but all the excise customers, as well as clearing and forwarding agents within the Private Sector were excluded. The Private Sector pointed out that it is in fact the agents who normally execute the programme, not the traders. Consequently, by excluding the clearing and forwarding agents the programme has not taken off.



IT-CONNECTIVITY OF CUSTOMS IN THE ESA REGION



Customs-to-Customs connectivity and enablement is on the forefront of Customs Administrations' focus. A WCO initiative has been to connect two Customs Authorities through IT enablement. Customs Administrations are encouraged to exchange their respective datasets with each other and established the level of agreement and harmonizing between the declarations.

A successful pilot project was run between South Africa and eSwatini in the ESA Region where data matching was as close as 99.99%. Future projects will be between South Africa and Lesotho. Botswana and Namibia have also come on board with live implementation expected by mid-2020. The aim is to drive this project out to the greater region while in addition the AU has also spearheaded IT Connectivity and has held six meetings on IT Connectivity with Customs.

The RPSG has concerns regarding the rationale of enforcing trucks to stand at a border because the import declaration needs to be verified with the Customs Authority on the other side of the border. The RPSG therefore proposes that the WCO work with the different Customs Authorities to ensure that their data fields align thereby addressing the problem of trucks standing in long queues at the borders posts.

Research on this by the RPSG indicates that technological issues often arise, particularly in cases whereby countries operate on different customs interface platforms. Throughout Africa, most countries work on Asycuda, the computerized customs management system developed by UNCTAD. From a Private Sector point of view, the RPSG cannot understand why the verification of declarations sometimes takes so long. Nonetheless, the RPSG is encouraged that many countries use this system which can potentially facilitate mutual recognition with data fields given it's captured on the same interface platform.





The prescient aim of the RPSG is to establish a Working Group to work on Asycuda with the Private Sector contributing suggestions towards a better working solution around IT-Connectivity.

Namibian which also works on Asycuda raised the concern around data which is shared between countries but not necessarily with the Private Sector. In some countries, a link is created in Asycuda allowing one to work with your own data. Another concern is the fact that not all countries on Asycuda are at the same levels of automation, which sometimes creates a break down. For instance, Eswatini is running a fully automated Asycuda system which is paperless, whereas Namibia still relies on a paper trail system. The fact that all Customs Authorities are not aligned and on the same standard, creates pitfalls.

The RPSG has noted the problem. The WCO Data Model and Globally Networked Customs (GNC) have been developed so data fields can be harmonized for information exchange and inter-operability of Customs systems.

The SACU Connect project, aimed to promote the use of the GNC whereby specific utility blocks for Customs operations were identified to enable exchange information. Progress has been intermitted, especially with regards to country to country level commitment. The aim is to continue working from the regional perspective, whereby the political commitment and authority of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) can be leveraged as binding instrument to encourage members to implement the measures.

News from the WCO is that the same initiatives are being instituted in the SADC region. The SADC region has a number of corridors which support transit cargo where interconnectivity will be very useful. It was consequently requested that the RPSG provide some articulated narrative to support the promotion of IT-Connectivity.



ROCB CONTACT LISTING



LARRY LIZA
DIRECTOR

larry.liza@wcoesarocb.org



FAITH MOSONGO
PROGRAMME OFFICER

faith.mosongo@wcoesarocb.org



VINCENT GITUMA
FINANCE OFFICER

vincent.gituma@wcoesarocb.org



JUDY MWAURA
ADMINISTRATOR & PA TO DIRECTOR

rocb@wcoesarocb.org



FRANCIS OCHIEL
CLERK / ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

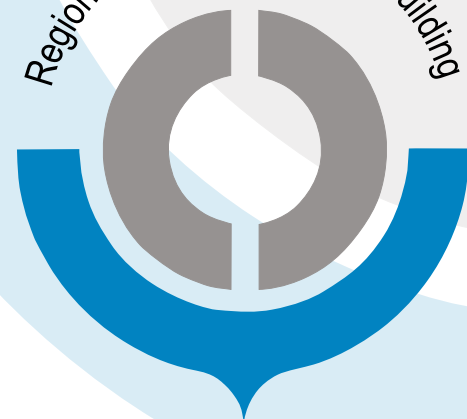
francis.ochiel@wcoesaroc.org



ERICK KABURU
ICT INTERN

erickaburu88@gmail.com

Regional Office for Capacity Building



**East and Southern Africa
Region**

CONTACTS

Larry Liza,
Director,
World Customs Organization,
East & Southern Africa,
Regional Office for Capacity Building,
P. O. Box 50581- 00200,
NAIROBI, KENYA.
Tel.: +254 70 901 1611/12/15
E-mail: larry.liza@wcoesarocb.org

