



East and Southern Africa
Region

WCO ESA ROCB

Half Year Report 2020/2021



WCO ESA ROCB HALF REPORT 2020/2021

Presented to

Extra-Ordinary Governing Council

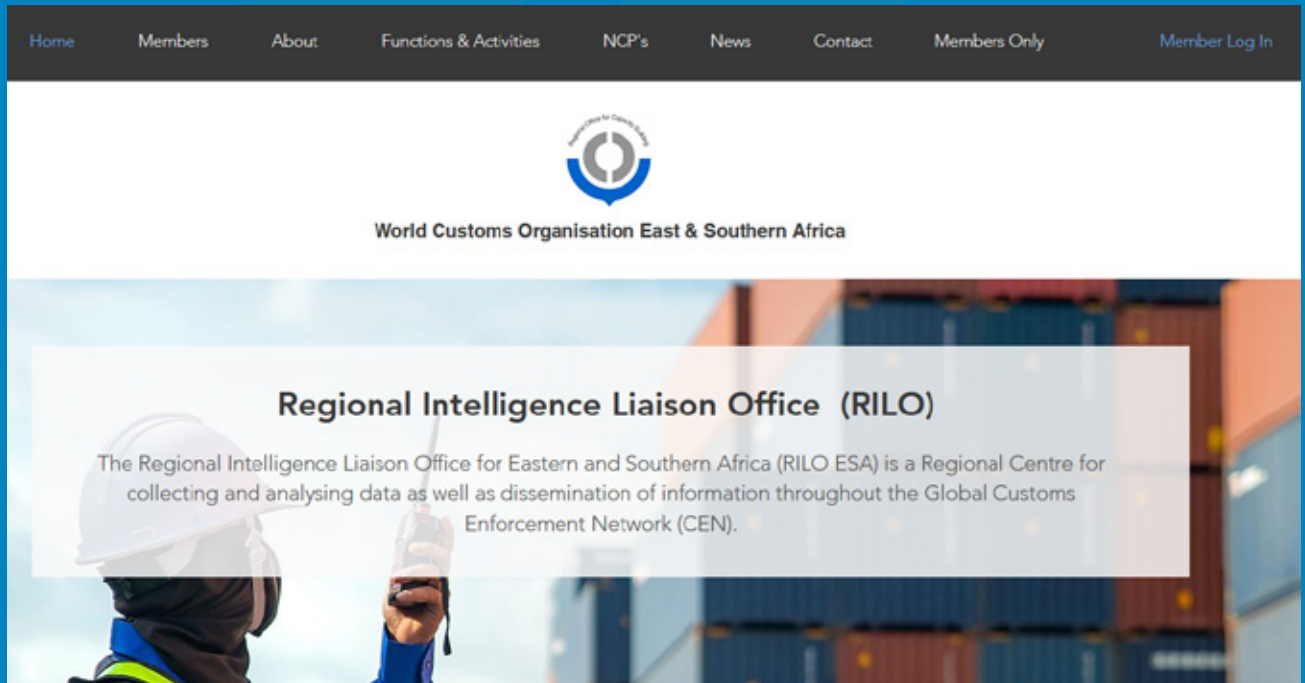
2020



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON

RILO website development and launch - July 2020

1



Private Sector Consultative Group engagement March - September 2020

2

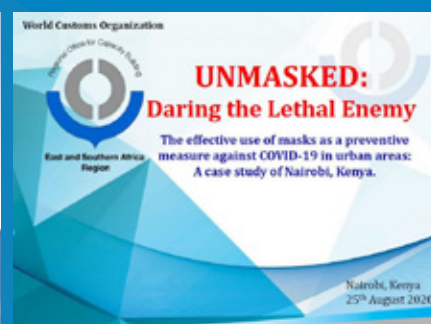
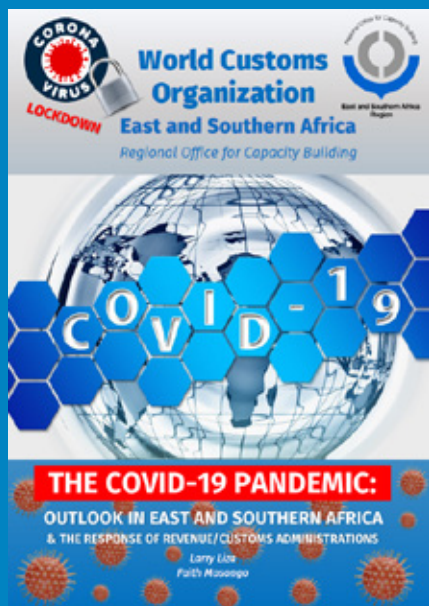




COVID Updates – March 2020 to Present

- Daily, weekly updates to region.
- Dedicated COVID-19 page on the website.

3



Staff Development

4



Strategy Execution Premium
Process Training



Certified Performance
Management Professional course



Financial Modelling



Trade Facilitation

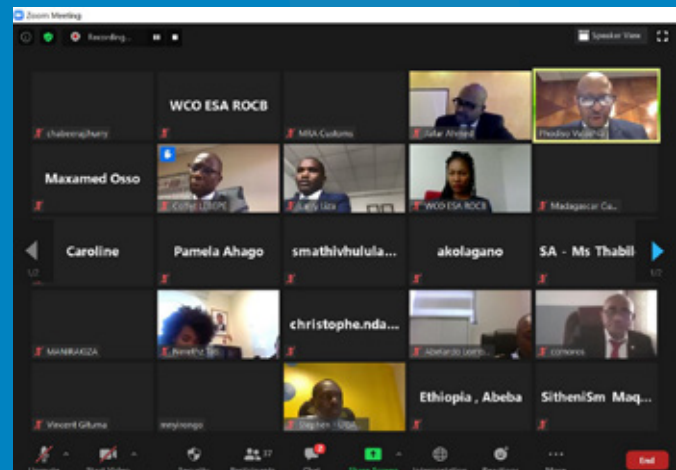
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Tanzania ratifies on 08.04.2020

Regional Meetings held virtually

6



Governing Council – June 2020

AUC Cooperation – Effective Implementation of the AfCFTA – October 2020

7

Effective Implementation of the AfCFTA:
What are the Needs and Challenges for Customs Authorities?

THE AFRICA WE WANT III

As of 1st February 2020, a total of 54 African Union member states have signed the Agreement and 29 of those have ratified it. The Agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019, after the minimum threshold of 22 ratifications had been reached and the AfCFTA was officially launched at the AU Summit in Nigeria on 7th of July 2019.

The AfCFTA will be operationalized starting 1st of January 2021, that will result in the free movement of qualifying goods in the continent. This will have an impact on Customs Administrations in that they will be required to facilitate the free and fast movement of goods across borders as they implement the negotiated tariff schedules.

The implementation is a major step and cornerstone in the success of the AfCFTA, with national Customs Administrations in Member States playing a key role to ensure the free flow of goods across the continent. However, a number of Customs Administrations will require technical assistance, mainly capacity building, in order to ensure the timely and effective implementation of the AfCFTA.

OCTOBER 2020

29

13.00pm - 14.00pm (CAT)

REGISTER

KEY SPEAKER
Mr. Duhiraj Kasseo
Senior Policy Officer, Customs Cooperation
Trade & Industry
(WCO)

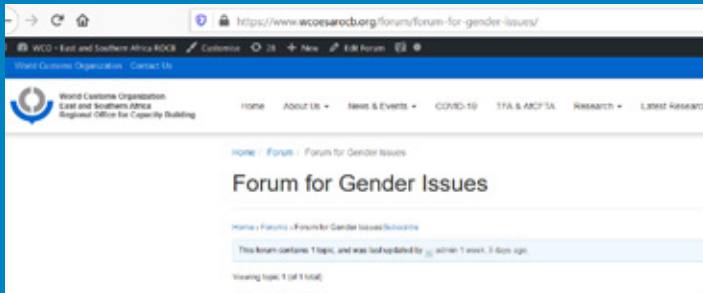
KEY SPEAKER
Mr. Willie Shumba
Senior Customs Expert & Advisor
(AU)

KEY SPEAKER
Mr. Larry Liza
Director of the World Customs
Organisation, East & Southern Africa
(WCO)

MODERATOR
Mr. Mark Goodger
C2 Consultant & Customs Expert
(WCO)

Development of Gender and Diversity platform

8



Experts Development – Accredited and recognized experts

9



Sustaining high performance during a crisis

10





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BACKGROUND

Membership

The WCO East and Southern Africa Region comprises 24 Member Countries;

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| i. Angola, | vii. Ethiopia, | xiii. Mozambique, | xix. South Sudan, |
| ii. Botswana, | viii. Kenya, | xiv. Namibia, | xx. Swaziland, |
| iii. Burundi, | ix. Lesotho, | xv. Rwanda, | xxi. Tanzania, |
| iv. Comoros, | x. Madagascar, | xvi. Seychelles, | xxii. Uganda, |
| v. Djibouti, | xi. Malawi, | xvii. Somalia, | xxiii. Zambia, |
| vi. Eritrea, | xii. Mauritius, | xviii. South Africa, | xxiv. Zimbabwe. |



Vision

A region that facilitates trade efficiently and professionally while ensuring economic growth and intra-regional trade.



Purpose statement

To develop gender equitable, professional and modernized Customs administrations that are fair, efficient and effective in revenue collection and border management service.



Goal

To contribute to the economic growth of the Region in trade, security, social protection and human capital development



Values

- Transparency
- Probity
- Commitment
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Cooperation



Abbreviations / Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|---|
| AEO | Authorised Economic Operator |
| AfCFTA | African Continental Free Trade Area (African CFTA) |
| AFEC | African Financial & Economic Crimes Forum |
| AUC | Africa Union Commission |
| CBM | Coordinated Border Management |
| CCF – China | Customs Cooperation Fund - China |
| CCF – Japan | Customs Cooperation Fund - Japan |
| CCF – Korea | Customs Cooperation Fund – Korea |
| COMESA | Common Market for East and Southern Africa |
| CFTA | Continental Free Trade Area (African CFTA) |
| CG | Governing Council |
| EAC | East African Community |
| ESA | East and Southern Africa |
| HS | Harmonized System |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| MC | Management Committee (of the ESA region) |
| PICARD | Partnerships in Customs Academic Research and Development |
| PSCG | Private Sector Consultative Group |
| RECs | Regional Economic Communities |
| RILO | Regional Intelligence Liaison Office |
| RJCC | Regional Joint Coordinating Committee |
| RKC | Revised Kyoto Convention |
| ROCB | Regional Office for Capacity Building |
| RSG | Regional Steering Group |
| RTC | Regional Training Centre |
| SACU | South African Customs Union |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| WCO | World Customs Organization |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |



INTRODUCTION

This is the Half Year Report for the period 2020/2021 of the World Customs Organization, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building. The report highlights capacity building activities and initiatives, programs and projects, and other statuses in regional matters and decisions over the said period. The format of the report takes up the flow of the Regional Strategy in line with its objectives aiming to; Promote Growth in Intra-Regional Trade, Promote Fair and Efficient Revenue Mobilization, Strengthen Intra-Regional Compliance and Enforcement and Enhance Integrity and professionalism in Human Capital. The Financial Statements, reviewed by the Region's Finance and Governance Committee (FGC), are presented separately.

This report is presented for discussions by the Extra - Ordinary Governing Council and the Regional Steering Group meetings in November 2020.

The 25th Governing Council of the WCO ESA took place on Monday 22nd June 2020, virtually and attended by 40 delegates from our Member countries. The ESA Vice Chair, Mr. Philiso P. Valashia, Botswana, chaired the meeting. The GC focused on countering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, WCO Policy Commission matters, regional strategy, as well as finance and governance matters. The meeting was initially meant to be hosted by Madagascar, which remains to host the next physical meeting. Uganda was crowned the winner of the ESA Photo Contest 2020, followed by Kenya (which previously won the contest 3 years in a row) with Mauritius coming third.

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The top bar indicates 'Zoom Meeting' and 'Recording...'. The main area displays a grid of video feeds for participants. The top-left feed is labeled 'WCO ESA ROCB'. Other visible participants include 'chabeeraj.hurry', 'MRA Customs', 'Jafar Ahmed', 'Phodiso Valashia', 'Maxamed Osso', 'Coffet LEBEPE', 'Larry Liza', 'WCO ESA ROCB', 'Madagascar Cu...', 'Caroline', 'Pamela Ahago', 'smathivhulula...', 'akolagano', 'SA - Ms Thabil', 'MANIRAKIZA', 'Nerehtz Tali', 'christophe.nda...', 'Abelardo Lomb...', 'comoros', 'Vincent Gituma', 'mnyirongo', 'Stephen - UGA...', 'Ethiopia, Abeba', and 'SitheniSm Maq...'. On the right, a 'Participants (37)' list shows names with status icons (e.g., microphone, video). The bottom toolbar includes controls for 'Unmute', 'Start Video', 'Security', 'Participants', 'Chat', 'Share Screen', 'Interpretation', 'Reactions', 'More', and 'End'.



Status and outcomes of the 25th Governing Council

The 25th Governing Council was held virtually on the 22nd of June due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. The meeting focused on four items;

- arrangements for the upcoming virtual WCO Council meeting,
- confirmation of regional representations to WCO committees
- the request from Brazil regarding the post of Director Tariff and Trade Affairs and,
- consideration of the Finance and Governance Committee Report and approval of proposed budget to allow Regional structures to continue running.

Below, please find the status of the implementation of the decisions arising from the discussions.

Status of the implementation of the decisions arising from the discussions of the 25th Governing Council

The arrangements for the upcoming virtual WCO Council meeting

The GC noted:

- The ongoing preparations towards the 135th /136th Council sessions; and
- The agenda for the meeting and committed to participating at the Council sessions.

Confirmation of regional representations to WCO committees which is to be endorsed by the Council

The GC noted that:

- The office of the Vice chair had informed the WCO Secretariat on ESA regional representation.

The request from Brazil regarding the post of Director Tariff and Trade Affairs

The GC noted:

- The progress on Brazil's request for extension of deadline for the post of Director, Tariff and Trade Affairs;
- The Vice Chair and Commissioner of Customs Services - Botswana, Mr. P. Valashia's candidacy for the post.



Consideration of the Finance and Governance Committee Report and approval of proposed budget to allow Regional structures to continue running.

The GC:

- a. Appreciated Kenya's efforts to settle the registration of the ROCB matter by the next Governing Council; The process of registering the ROCB with the Government of the Republic of Kenya is at its final stages as the registration documents are currently with the Kenya Government Cabinet sub-committee. The delay of approval was occasioned by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which hindered the proper gathering of meetings and shifted focus to emergency responses.
- b. Directed the ROCB to indicate timelines for implementing the Management Letter Issues; Issues addressed by the Management Letter have been resolved so far.
- c. Approved the Audited Financial Statements for 2019/20;
- d. Approved the recommended training for the ROCB Finance personnel; Finance personnel trained on Financial Modelling Excel Course.
- e. Approved the engagement of a Forensic Auditor to investigate the issue of the unaccounted funds, the report of which should be submitted by the 30th September 2020; Kenya made a call for a forensic auditor. A committee was formed to evaluate the applications and a report of the Forensic Audit Evaluation Committee, managed by Kenya was tabled to the management Committee. The MC adopted the report and appointed Geomatrix Consulting to the position. The Management Committee approved the redirecting of the amounts budgeted for the PICARD conference for the Forensic Audit. This audit process was concluded in early October 2020.
- f. Noted that the ICT intern has now signed a year's contract; and
- g. Directed the FGC to come up with a proposal on the possibility of a permanent arrangement for the ICT Intern.

Integrated ROCB and RILO Budget

The GC:

- a. Directed the FGC to review the Budget to reflect COVID-19 impacts;
- b. Directed FGC to incorporate Strategy Implementation in the Budget;
- c. Directed FGC in collaboration with RILO to develop modalities for the regional financial support;
- d. Directed the ROCB with the support of the WCO to lay out a strategy for implementing the strategy digitally given the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic;
- e. Approved the Integrated (ROCB & RILO) Budget for 2020/21;
- f. Directed that FGC undertakes a Mid-year review of the Budget by 30th September 2020;
- g. Adopted the Hiring Policy and Investment Policy for implementation;
- h. Noted that Madagascar has settled her pending subscription fees for the years 2016/17, 2017/18 and are currently processing payment for the year 2018/19. This will be reconciled accordingly.

NB: The Governing Council will interrogate the FGC report.

Way Forward on Regional Meetings (RSG and GC).

The GC:

- a. Noted that Madagascar is still committed to host the Governing Council within the year 2020 or in the year 2021;
- b. Empowered the MC to make decisions on Regional strategy issues until next GC meeting; and
- c. Endorsed the proposal to ensure that all Regional Structures convene by November 2020. These to be undertaken virtually, if circumstances so dictates.



ESA STRATEGY

The Regional Strategy (2018-2021) was operationalized upon approval by the 23rd Governing Council meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2018. Further to the approval, the 24th Governing Council meeting in May 2019 directed that the work of the regional structures should be geared towards progressing the implementation of the Strategy.

Promoting of Growth in Intra-Regional Trade

The *Promote Growth in Intra-Regional Trade* strategic objective seeks to enhance and foster the opportunities for increased intra-regional trade amongst ESA member countries. The activities under the strategic objective are at different levels of implementation. The activities include, encouraging and supporting Members' accession to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA), supporting Members to implement TFA, educating and establishing cooperation frameworks of informal cross-border traders, adopting roadmap for regional transit management systems, establishing cooperation framework with RECs and private sector and promotion of cooperation between Customs and Tax services.

Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC): 15 out of 24 ESA members have acceded to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC). There have been no accessions to the RKC in the past two years in the region. Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan and Tanzania are yet to accede to the RKC. The WCO is however supporting Burundi and Comoros on accession to the RKC.





List of contracting Members to the RKC

| No. | COUNTRY | DATE OF RATIFICATION |
|-----|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Angola | 23.02.2017 |
| 2. | Botswana | 26.06.2006 |
| 3. | Burundi | In process of accession |
| 4. | Comoros | In process of accession |
| 5. | Djibouti | In process of accession |
| 6. | Eritrea | In process of accession |
| 7. | Ethiopia | In process of accession |
| 8. | Eswatini | 31.10.2012 |
| 9. | Kenya | 25.06.2009 |
| 10. | Lesotho | 15.06.2000 |
| 11. | Madagascar | 27.06.2007 |
| 12. | Malawi | 06.09.2013 |
| 13. | Mauritius | 24.09.2008 |
| 14. | Mozambique | 11.07.2012 |
| 15. | Namibia | 03.02.2006 |
| 16. | Rwanda | 21.11.2011 |
| 17. | Seychelles | In process of accession |
| 18. | Somalia | In process of accession |
| 19. | South Africa | 18.05.2004 |
| 20. | South Sudan | In process of accession |
| 21. | Tanzania | In process of accession |
| 22. | Uganda | 27.06.2002 |
| 23. | Zambia | 01.07.2013 |
| 24. | Zimbabwe | 10.02.2003 |

Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA): As at 30th September 2020, **153** out of 164 WTO Members have domestically ratified a [Protocol of Amendment](#) and notified the WTO of their acceptance of this Protocol. This provides a ratification rate of 93.3%. The implementation rate currently stands at 66.2%. 19 Members from the Region have ratified the TFA; **Mauritius, Botswana, Kenya, Zambia, Lesotho, Seychelles, Madagascar, Swaziland, Mozambique, Rwanda, Malawi, South Africa, Namibia, Djibouti, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola Burundi and Tanzania.**



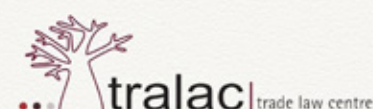
| No. | COUNTRY | DATE OF RATIFICATION |
|-----|--------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Angola | 09.04.2019 |
| 2. | Botswana | 18.06.2015 |
| 3. | Burundi | 12.12.2019 |
| 4. | Comoros | In process of ratification |
| 5. | Djibouti | 05.03.2018 |
| 6. | Eritrea | In process of ratification |
| 7. | Ethiopia | In process of ratification |
| 8. | Eswatini | 21.11.2016 |
| 9. | Kenya | 10.12.2015 |
| 10. | Lesotho | 04.01.2016 |
| 11. | Madagascar | 20.06.2016 |
| 12. | Malawi | 12.07.2017 |
| 13. | Mauritius | 05.03.2015 |
| 14. | Mozambique | 06.01.2017 |
| 15. | Namibia | 09.02.2018 |
| 16. | Rwanda | 22.02.2017 |
| 17. | Seychelles | 11.01.2016 |
| 18. | Somalia | In process of ratification |
| 19. | South Africa | 30.11.2017 |
| 20. | South Sudan | In process of ratification |
| 21. | Tanzania | 08.04.2020 |
| 22. | Uganda | 27.06.2018 |
| 23. | Zambia | 16.12.2015 |
| 24. | Zimbabwe | 17.10.2018 |

The ROCB established the requirements for ratifying the TFA and challenges experienced by Members in ratifying the TFA and this will be presented to the Governing Council for assessment and further guidance. The challenges raised by members that have not acceded to RKC nor ratified the WTO TFA include lack of political will and frequent changes in their Customs leadership to progress work already achieved in this area.

AfCFTA

The secretariat was commissioned on 17th August 2020, virtually, and currently still setting up its structures. The agreement is governed by 5 operational instruments: The Rules of Origin; the online negotiating forum; the monitoring and elimination of non-tariff barriers; a digital payments system and the African Trade Observatory. 28 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification with the AUC Chairperson. 12 ESA members have ratified the AfCFTA, namely: Kenya, Rwanda, Djibouti, Eswatini, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Angola and Somalia. Angola and Somalia are however yet to formally deposit their instruments.

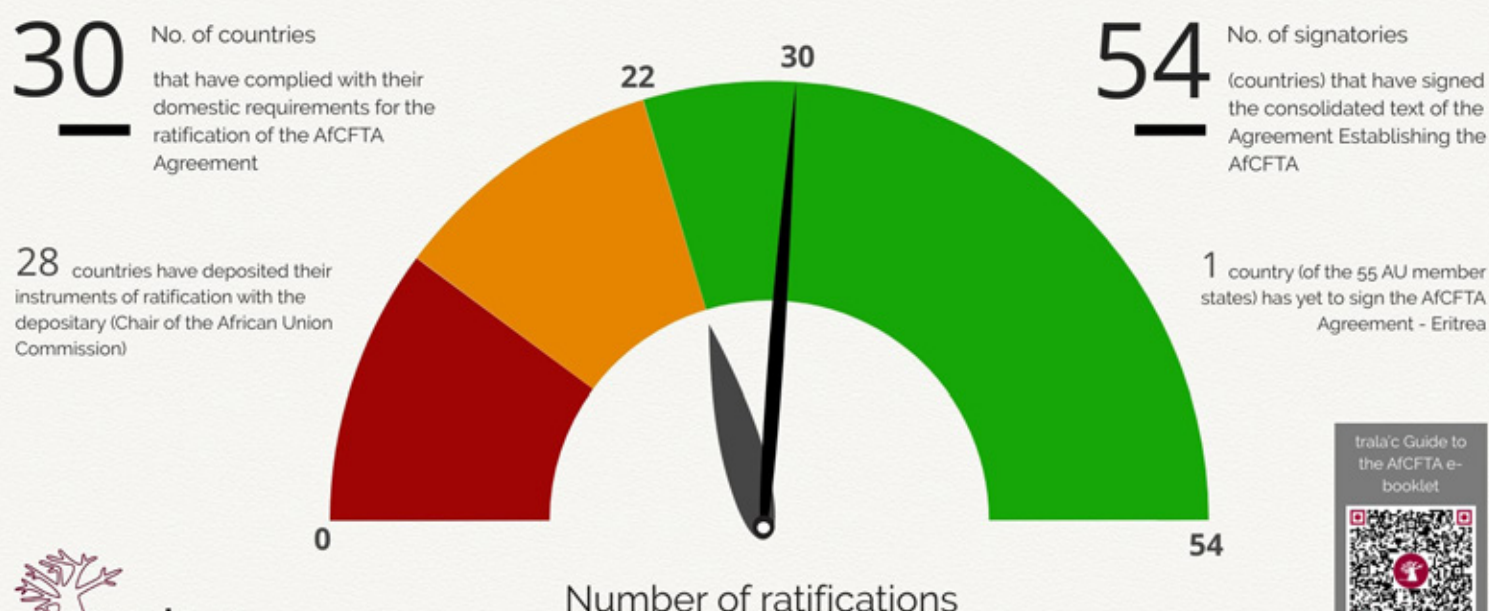
AfCFTA



Towards the African Continental Free Trade Area

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019 for the 24 countries that had deposited their instruments of ratification with the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson. On 7 July 2019, at an Extraordinary Summit of the African Union, the operational phase of the AfCFTA Agreement was officially launched.

AfCFTA Ratification Barometer





Automation

The ROCB carried out a survey on automation of Customs processes in ESA; Most of the ESA members have implemented the automated system to manage customs transactions with the exception of South Sudan and Somalia. Somalia is in the process of this automation. It was noted that Asycuda is the preferred system for most Members because of the following reasons: It's a web based application, accessible everywhere; Can easily interface with other systems; Availability of technical support; May be customized and it streamlines customs clearance operations and revenue collection.

Other systems in place include: CMS II (In-House developed by the Mauritius Network Services), Integrated Customs Management System (ICMS) by Kenya, SYDONIA World, Tanzania Customs Integrated System (TANCIS) and SARS Service Manager and Customs Automated Risk Engine. It is worth noting that Somalia and South Sudan are currently in the process of automating their systems.

About 62% of members have not implemented the Single Window, the main challenges experienced being the high cost of funding as well as cooperation with other Partner Government Agencies (PGAs). Members that have successfully implemented Single Window include Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia while some other members have submitted requests from technical assistance at the WCO.

HS Implementation in ESA

ESA members have been implementing the HS2017. Following the adoption of HS 2022, and with the support of the EU-WCO HS Project for Africa, various ESA Members have identified and submitted to the WCO request for technical assistance towards migration and therefore successful implementation of the new HS when it enters into force in 2022.

South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea have however not implemented HS2017, the first two mainly pointing to the political instabilities that have characterized the countries, and that the HS being relatively complex and difficult to implement without very extensive training.

At SACU level the process commenced with a regional workshop in January 2020 at Cape Town, where a follow up engagement is planned for further engagements. EAC Secretariat on the other hand, provided experts to facilitate a training where representatives of the six Partner States of the East African Community (EAC) gathered between 10 and 13 September 2019 in Mombasa, Kenya, to review their work in the area of implementation of the Harmonized System (HS). The meeting took place at the premises of the WCO Regional Training Centre in Mombasa and was organized in the context of the EU-WCO Programme for HS in Africa. SADC and COMESA have not reported any HS related developments recently.



Strengthening Intra-Regional Compliance and Enforcement

The 24th Governing Council meeting directed that RILO aligns its activities to the Regional Strategy to enhance proper coordination and consolidation of support. RILO has in some cases missed important WCO and other international meetings due to lack of funding, including inability to host their annual National Contact Persons (NCP) meetings. RILO therefore takes charge of the implementation of this Strategic Objective.

The RILO launched the RILOESA Website (www.wcoesarilo.org). The website was developed with the support of the ROCB and Global Trade solutions. The virtual launch was held on 20 July 2020 and was graced by the WCO Secretary General, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, Vice Chair for the ESA Region and Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Botswana Unified Revenue Services (BURS) Mr. Philiso P. Valashia, ZIMRA Commissioner General, Ms. Faith Mazani and all Director Generals from the region. Also in attendance were MD of GTS, Ms. Louise Wiggett and ROCB among other delegates.

A virtual Admin User training was conducted on 13 August 2020. All RILOESA office staff members were trained including some members from ZIMRA ICT and Corporate Comms divisions (who will be assisting RILOESA in maintaining the website). A walk through for all NCPs on how to contribute and use the website will be conducted in due course.

The top five countries with the highest number of recorded seizures are: South Africa recorded **869 cases**, followed by Uganda with **815 cases**, then Zimbabwe with **335 cases**, Malawi **68 cases** and Mauritius **61 cases**. RSG will note that this may not be a true reflection of what transpired in different RILO members, noting that lack of reporting to the RILO by other members may have attributed to the outcome. Burundi on the other hand has opted to join the RILO Central Africa Region because of the language for reporting.

13 out of 19-member states recorded seizures in CEN during the reporting period representing Year usage percentage of 68%; of the total only 6 Member States recorded more than 10 Entries. The highest user still remains South Africa. While drugs used to top the list, there has been a significant shift where Tax & Duty Evasion has taken the lead. Tax & Duty Evasion recorded 44.11% of the Seizures recorded followed by Drugs at 37.42%. Tobacco is 3rd at 10.10% from 5th from the previous analysis. The top 5 Items are Tax & Duty Evasion, Drugs, Tobacco, other prohibitions & restrictions, and CITES.





Enhancing Integrity and Professionalism in Human Capital

Training of Trainers is currently being undertaken through different programmes including the Master Trainer Program (MTP) funded by JICA. MTP is implemented through the strong collaboration between the WCO and JICA to help Customs administrations develop more sustainable and self-contained training capacity on a variety of key issues necessary for Customs modernization. The programme was launched in Lusaka, Zambia in October 2018 with the participation of Customs officials from Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the SADC region.

It is important for member administrations to utilise the expertise developed for the officials representing at the training activities for Customs officers on Valuation. The EAC runs a Training of trainer's workshop and in June 2019 held a workshop targeted at enhancing knowledge and skills of the officers with a view to boosting their capacity to implement the EAC Common Market Protocol and other border management related matters.

The participants included Immigration and Customs Officers drawn from different border posts namely; Namanga, Holili, Sirare and Labour Officers from the Ministries responsible for Labour in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar as well representatives from the EAC Partner States' Ministries responsible for

EAC Affairs. COMESA runs the ToT programme and is currently running Training of Trainers National Workshops on the Online NTB (Non-Tariff Barriers) System aimed at providing technical training to Member States to users of the online NTB monitoring reporting and resolution system. More work is required on the development of more experts is therefore required on Rule of Origin and HS.

The 3rd ESA Regional Research Conference

The 3rd ESA Regional Research Conference – bringing together Customs experts, scholars, analysts, Customs officials, private sector practitioners, as well as aspiring researchers was scheduled to take place in March 2020 but was postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be hosted by the WCO Regional Training Centre (RTC), Mauritius, and sponsored by CCF-Korea. Should the pandemic and its effects therein persist long into 2020, the region will explore hosting the conference virtually. The conference will focus on opportunities presented by emerging issues in Customs and Trade. The papers presented at the conference will be published in a book.



ESA Sotho Photo Contest

Uganda, won the ESA Sotho Photo Contest having submitted a photo showing an Intercepted mother carrying a 'baby' aboard a Bus at Mpondwe Border of western Uganda, by Uganda Revenue Authority Customs Enforcement. She had crossed into Uganda from the Democratic Republic of Congo on the 8th of January 2020.

It turned out that the 'baby' was a dummy containing banned Cosmetics which contain Hydroquinone and Mercury other cancer causing chemicals.

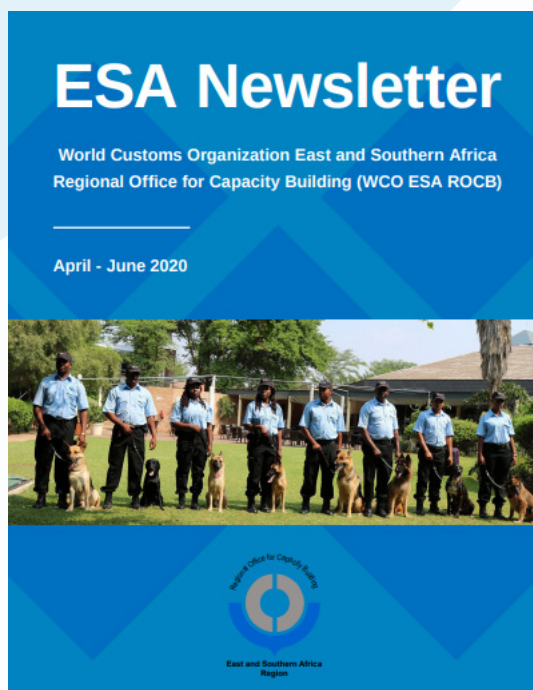
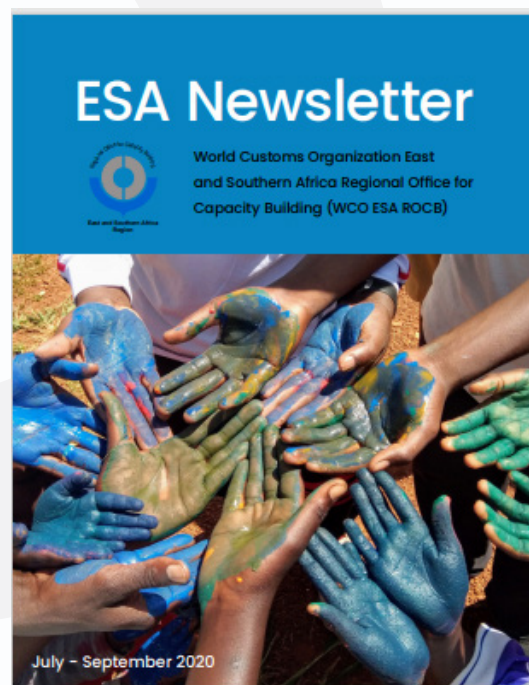
For the 2020 contest, we received photos from 12 out of our 24 Members countries, with Uganda winning the contest! followed by Kenya who had previously won the competition three years in a row and Mauritius who were also the 2nd runners up in the 2019 Contest. All the photos submitted will form the ESA Sotho Photo book 2020.



UGANDA'S Toxic Baby!! The photo shows an Intercepted mother carrying a 'baby' aboard a Bus at Mpondwe Border of western Uganda, by Uganda Revenue Authority Customs Enforcement. She had crossed into Uganda from the Democratic Republic of Congo on the 8th of January 2020. It turned out that the 'baby' was a dummy containing banned Cosmetics which contain Hydroquinone and Mercury other cancer causing chemicals.

Newsletter Publication

The ROCB aims to publish eNewsletters quarterly and urges Members and stakeholders to submit their articles to the ROCB on a rolling basis. During the reporting period two newsletters were published and shared with the region and the global Customs family. There issues herein are: April - June 2020 issue, and the July - September 2020 issue.





Monitoring, Reporting Tool and Evaluation of the Strategy

Since its adoption, execution of the Regional strategy has proven to be challenging mainly due to technical and financial constraints. The process to engage and establish partnerships with the development partners on the implementation of the Strategy has been ongoing, with a view to address the bottlenecks including the acquisition of office for the ROCB. In view thereof, the office of the Vice Chair took the initiative to approach the governments of Finland, and Embassies in Kenya being; Germany, Japan and China with a request to support the implementation of the WCO-ESA Strategic Plan. None of the governments have responded except that, the Finish government has undertaken to consider the matter as an extension of the current WCO-ESA Project. In order to bring more focus to the request for technical support, the ROCB developed a Request for Technical Support Document. 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 has been ongoing, though without a standardized process for monitoring and evaluation of the strategic plan deliverables. It is against this background that 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. It is important to note that Techno Brain has offered to develop an IT solution that will translate the strategy framework from a manual system into an online platform. Techno Brain will provide the services under the auspices of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Company and ROCB. The development and automation of the ESA strategy management framework will provide for design, development and automation of the ESA strategy management framework that aligns with principles of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). The online system will have features that will enable the region to perform several activities including, to update, monitor and evaluate performance based on the regional Annual scorecards; update, monitor and evaluate project progress at a regional level; Update, monitor and evaluate project progress at member country level; Update, monitor and evaluate member country and regional strategic risks; Develop individual performance scorecards for the ROCB staff that are linked to the Annual scorecards; and Generate biannual individual performance appraisals for ROCB staff.



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. In order to ensure that the ROCB is properly positioned to enable the Region to achieve its vision of meaningfully contributing towards economic growth and intra-regional trade across the Region, the WCO Secretariat was requested to consider identifying an expert(s) to undertake a diagnostic assessment of the ROCB's capacity to deliver. In the main, the diagnostic exercise will focus on the following: governance; administrative structure; technical expertise; financial management framework; performance management framework; human capital framework; and financial and other

resource requirements. It is anticipated that, recommendations coming out of the envisaged ROCB diagnostic would give the Region an opportunity to more objectively explore options for strengthening this very important office. The WCO had indicated their support in this regard at a meeting on the margins of Capacity Building Committee sessions in March 2020 and were hoping to have achieved this by July 2020. This initiative is however yet to be finalized.

The Vice Chair's office organised and held a strategy retreat from 10th – 21st February 2020 to cascade the ESA Strategy to all the officers of the ROCB and commence implementation of a Performance Management System-based annual contracts.



Governance

Management Committee

The Vice chair informed the WCO Secretariat on the ESA regional representation as follows; Vice Chair (Botswana), Deputy Vice Chair (Zimbabwe) and Additional Policy Commission member (Mauritius), WCO Finance Committee (Burundi) and Audit Committee (Comoros and South Africa) mandates will run until June 2021 when elections will be held for the region. However, South Africa, whose term as member of the WCO Audit Committee had elapsed, agreed to continue until 2021.

Financial Report

The WCO ESA Financial Report is an independent report and will be presented to Members as an annex of the ROCB Annual Report. The Financial Report from FGC comprises of the following:

1. Unaudited Financial Statements for the past half Financial Year
2. Reviewed proposed Budget for the next half financial year
3. Decisions of the management Committee

Twelve Members have paid their membership subscriptions, the other twelve are expected to pay in the next half of the financial year;

Reminders will be sent to the members with pending subscriptions. The ICT intern has a contract with ROCB; the ROCB has fixed funds with current bank amounting to USD 350,000 at 3% interest rate whilst awaiting ROCB registration to enable the amount to be invested in financial instruments that attract better return; Training of the finance office on financial modelling has been completed; and, forensic Audit on Unaccounted funds has been completed. Madagascar has not paid for three years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, which may require that Management Committee engages with Madagascar on their challenges.

Previously the Management Committee (MC) considered and noted the contribution made by Kenya raising a concern that this has a bearing on the governance and management of the ROCB staff by the region when Kenya contributes almost the whole of the Budget. FGC is in the process of drafting a Proposal with clear recommendations and options on the host administration contribution and how it should be spent, to allow the GC to reflect on this matter and make a determination on how to properly engage KRA at its next meeting. This Paper will spell out the requirements for hosting the ROCB with a view to providing guidance on what it would take for the region to acquire its own office instead of the KRA doing so.



Legal Status of the ROCB

The process of registering the ROCB with the Government of the Republic of Kenya is at its final stages as the registration documents are currently with the Kenya Government Cabinet sub-committee. The delay of approval was occasioned by the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

ESA Regional Meetings amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19, commonly known as the Coronavirus (disease) was discovered and first reported in Wuhan, in the Hubei Province of China in November 2019. As new cases and deaths mounted in China, it spread to other parts of the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic on 11th March 2020. The WHO declared it a pandemic on 11th March 2020. The first case of the virus was reported in Africa in Egypt on 14th February 2020, and in East and Southern Africa in South Africa on 5th March 2020.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Governments drafted measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, key among this measures were closing of international borders. The Governments enforced travel bans with the aim of combating the spread of the Coronavirus globally. As a result, most capacity building/regional activities planned by the ESA Region for the financial year 2020-2021 were postponed indefinitely. Some regional meetings; RTC Heads meeting, Finance and Governance Committee (FGC) and the Management Committee meetings have since been held virtually.

The meeting of the WCO ESA RTC Heads, ROCB and the WCO, which was initially expected to be hosted by Malagasy Customs took place on the 7th and 8th May 2020 via the Google Meet Platform. It was attended by the Heads of the RTC Kenya, RTC Mauritius, RTC South Africa, RTC Zimbabwe as well as the ROCB, and the WCO. The Finance and Governance Committee (FGC) took place on 22nd May 2020, also through the Google Meet Platform while the Management Committee meeting took place on the 11th June 2020 via the Zoom Platform.

The importance of the region leveraging on technology to ensure business continuity was emphasized in these meetings and as a result the 25th Governing Council was held virtually on the 22nd June 2020 via the Zoom Platform. The Chairperson of the meeting, Mr. P. Valashia, Botswana, opened the meeting by welcoming the GC to the virtual meeting and thanked the ROCB for organizing the meeting. He informed the meeting that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the region has not been able to hold meetings as originally scheduled. He pointed out that Madagascar had since been engaged and is willing to host the region once the travel restrictions are lifted. The meeting focused on the three items, in particular noting the importance of decisions on the proposed budget to allow Regional structures to continue running.



ESA Region Change Management Approach

In June 2020, the ROCB with the support of the Vice Chair's Office, Botswana, re-designed the organizational direction following major disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This disruption forced the region not only to change the ESA Region Annual Work Plan (AWP), but it also dictated change in the structure of the operational environment. The post COVID-19 work environment is characterized by travel restrictions, and adoption of remote interaction. It is therefore crucial that the Region adopts new working methods in order to continue with business, and equally not expose Members to the COVID-19 while at the same time adhering to the health measures adopted by Governments to contain the pandemic.

Visibility: Website & emails

To enhance visibility, ESA ROCB regional website will continue to be updated regularly so as to provide Members with up to date information. The ROCB will also continue to communicate with Members via emails while

leveraging on various social media platforms for informational purposes. The ROCB has also approached the Global Trade Solutions (GTS), who developed the RILO website. This website will be utilised in relaying real time intelligence information to Members during and post COVID-19.

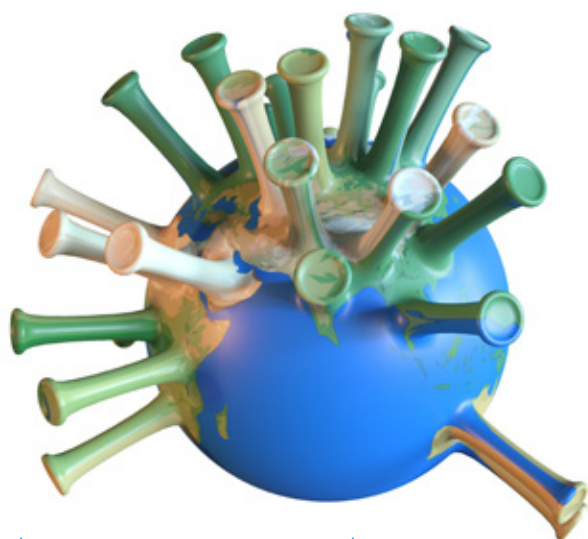
Virtual Meetings

The travel bans imposed by Governments in order to combat the spread of the COVID-19 meant that Members were unable to travel to scheduled workshops/events and it was also impossible to have technical experts deliver trainings in different Member states. The ROCB has been leveraging on various virtual conferencing platforms, especially Zoom, Google Meet, Skype and GoToMeeting. The office has also since purchased a ZOOM Business Licence that will enable the region to have online/virtual engagements using the ZOOM Platform.

Creation of the WCO ESA App.

The ESA Governing Council is requested to consider acquiring a WCO ESA App. This app. will be expected to have the following features;

- Integrated virtual engagement forums to support Virtual Working Groups;
- Other discussion forums, to cover matters related to the Regional Office for Capacity Building, the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office, the WCO Regional Training Centres in Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Zimbabwe; and
- Portals for registration of meetings; conference/meetings details.





Development of an advanced online library/repository

The ESA Governing Council is requested to consider acquiring services from IT service providers to assist the region in the development of an advanced digital library/repository that will enable member countries and other stakeholders to access books, journals and activity reports on different topical areas in real time. This takes note that the need goes beyond research materials only but any other information that may be useful to Customs.

Updates from the Regional Private Sector Group (RPSG)

Despite the difficulties created for trade by the global pandemic, the Regional Private Sector Group (RPSG) has had a productive time of late. As a reminder, the RPSG was formed in an attempt to create an official platform to inform and advise regional Customs administrations, members, stakeholders in trade, and society on customs and trade-related matters from the perspective of the private sector in the ESA Region. Furthermore, the RPSG in the ESA Region serves as a pilot programme for regional private sector collaboration globally, as well as to inform the WCO Private Sector Consultation Group (PSCG).

As has been the global experience, recent highlights have taken place in the cloud and have included two webinars, as well as the in-depth development of a stellar, modern

website. The RPSG encourages all role players to partake on the platform created by this private sector initiative.

6th RPSG Webinar - Fast-tracking Cross Border Flows in a Crisis

The RPSG held their 6th official webinar on the 21st of May, with the theme “***Fast-tracking Cross Border Flows in a Crisis***”. The event — held online via Zoom — emphasised several challenges that countries in the ESA region faced due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The webinar was chaired by Dr Juanita Maree (RPSG and SAAFF). She was joined by four leading customs panellists, which included two regional experts in Larry Liza (ROCB Director) and Patrick Gyan (WCO), as well as two distinguished international guests. The guests included Fermin Cuza and Kazem Asayeh. Fermin Cuza is the International President of the World Business Alliance for Secure Commerce Organization and a member of the WCO-PSCG. Kazem Asayeh is the Senior Advisor - TIR and Transit Services, World Road Transport Organisation, who is also a member of the WCO-PSCG.

Fermin Cuza highlighted the fact that the COVID-19 experience has taught us how connected and vulnerable we all are and how much we need each other. The issues faced in one region may easily be the same issues faced in other parts of the world.



Reporting on some experienced gained from the private sector in North America, Fermin Cuza mentioned that their region tried to move forward in three areas revolving around border operations. These areas include (1) virtual audits, (2) training sessions and workshops, and (3) creating a collaborative environment around border operations. Similar lessons can be learned in the ESA's experience.

Concerning cross-border road flows, Kazem Asayesh provided some background from the World Road Transport Organisation. Some of the lessons learned are the need to implement measures in a coordinated and unified way, as well as to communicate changes in enforcement measures on vehicles, drivers, and cargo. Further lessons included avoiding unnecessary checking of commercial vehicles

at borders and designate priority lanes. Once more, these lessons can also be learned within the ESA region.

The expert panellists were posed several questions by the RPSG members present, which can be viewed on the RPSG's website under the tab of '[Webinars](#)'.

In summary, the webinar highlighting the need for collaboration and reliance on expert guidance. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has truly shaken up the world. However, evidence from the recent experience shows that a substantial amount of work can be done if done collectively.

The webinar was recorded and is available on the RPSG's YouTube channel.



Impacts of Covid-19 on Road Transport

WCO ESA-RPSG Webinar

21 May 2020

Kazem Asayesh,
Senior Adviser, TIR and Transit Services



7th RPSG Webinar - Linking ESA via SMART borders and Trade Single Windows: Border lessons learned during COVID-19

The RPSG held their 7th official webinar on the 6th of August, with the theme “*Linking ESA via SMART borders and Trade Single Windows: Border lessons learned during COVID-19*”. The event — once again held online via Zoom — shed light on some important technological cross-border developments.

The webinar was once again chaired by Dr Juanita Maree (RPSG and SAAFF). She was joined by six leading customs panellists, including the ROCB’s very own Larry Liza. Others included Patrick Gyan (WCO), Willie Shumba (AU), Trudi Hartzenberg (Tralac), and Jason Blackman (DHL).

Lastly, the RPSG was also honoured to have Valentina Mintah from Ghana — recently elected to the ICC Executive Board — in their midst.

The outbreak of the pandemic has been impacting life on all levels of business and society. The impact has also been experienced at borders, further emphasising the need to improve trade facilitation.

The SMART borders concept — as created by the WCO — encourages members to delve into the realm of technology to find solutions to facilitate the flow of people, goods and conveyances at borders.

The ultimate objective of SMART borders and Single Windows is to reduce the time on the cost of trading internationally. As such, the key message was that priorities — specific to each country — need to be put in place to achieve these objectives. The RPSG further calls to review national trade facilitation strategies and create blueprints rapidly, because there is a long road ahead towards economic recovery for the region. Having these foundations in place will allow countries to bounce back more quickly.

Finally, fast-tracking and achieving the paperless customs agenda in Africa and the recognition that digitalisation is an integral part of a modernised customs environment needs to gain momentum.

As with the webinar above, the 7th webinar was also recorded and is available on the RPSG’s YouTube channel.



ROCB STAFF ESTABLISHMENT

The current ROCB staff comprises the Director, one Programme Officer, Finance Officer, Administrator/PA to the Director and a Clerk. All staff are from Kenya. The office received virtual support from the following Members: Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.



Larry Liza
Director



Faith Mosongo
Programme Officer



Vincent Gituma
Finance Officer



Judy Mwaura
Administrator &
PA to Director



Francis Ochiel
Clerk /
Assistant
Administrator



Erick Kaburu
ICT Officer