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# Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation

# Newsletter

VOLUME I, ISSUE I

MARCH, 2012

Welcome to the first edition of the regional trade facilitation newsletter.

This electronic newsletter is part of a new mechanism launched by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) - at the request of its member countries - to enhance cooperation and coordination among Asia Pacific regional organizations and programmes working on Trade Facilitation (TF).

This newsletter aims to provide information on recent as well as planned trade facilitation project and activities of the various organizations active in this area, as well as on relevant publications and documents that may be useful across the Asia Pacific sub-regions. National and regional news on trade facilitation and paperless trade will also be featured in future issues. We hope you enjoy the first edition and find the information useful. We look forward to your contributions of news and information to future issues of the newsletter, which may please be sent to escap-tisnet@un.org







#### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

#### **Events and Meetings**



We are pleased to report that in October of 2011, UNESCAP and ADB, in collaboration with WCO, successfully held the "Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum

2011" in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The Forum focused on how trade facilitation can enhance supply chain efficiency. A number of other side in events on trade facilitation were also held parallel or back to back with the Forum. Details about these events and others can be found on page 3.

In addition, some upcoming events:

- Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2012
- ESCAP-ADB Capacity Building Workshop on Single Window Implementation
- WCO Global AEO Conference
- ECO-ESCAP Joint Trade Facilitation Workshop on Paperless Trade and Single Window

More details can be found on pages 8 and 9...

#### **Publications**



On this edition:

• APEC: Facilitating Electronic Commerce in APEC: A Case Study of Electronic Certificate of Origin, this report analyses the benefits of an Electronic Certificate of

Origin (e-CO) between exporters in Korea and importers in Chinese Taipei.

- UNESCAP: Facilitating Agricultural Trade in Asia and the Pacific, this report provides an overview of the status of agricultural trade as well as constraints in facilitating trade and their remedies in the Asia-Pacific region.
- WCO: Coordinated Border Management:
   (CBM) from Theory to Practice, This report
   provides an overview of the evolution of the
   concept of CBM, it focuses on institutional and
   some practical border arrangements developed
   in several countries as part of a CBM implementation strategy.

Details on these publications and others can be publications and others can be publications.

#### In Focus:

PROJECT: Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction: Building Capacity for the Implementation of Pro-Poor Trade Facilitation Policies and Measures in Developing Asian Countries.

Details on these ongoing and upcoming projects can be found on pages 6 and 7.

## Dialogue on Regional Cooperation for Trade Facilitation: Building on Existing Regional/Sub Regional Frameworks and Action Plans

In July 2011, ESCAP Member States explicitly recommended the Secretariat to support the creation of a region wide coordination mechanism, bringing together representatives of key regional organizations active in trade facilitation.

Following up on this recommendation, ESCAP organized a Dialogue on Regional Cooperation for Trade Facilitation. The Dialogue provided opportunities to:

- Develop collaboration among existing regional organizations.
- Determine trade facilitation focal points of each organization.
- Identify best practices or initiatives for possible replication.
- Harmonize trade facilitation data collection methods or indicators.

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**Recommendations:** The meeting agreed that it was important to improve regional connectivity and trade facilitation performance of the region, improve market access for the members, and to develop a more harmonized environment for trade across the region. To do so, the meeting considered a number of concrete actions including:

- Organizing Dialogue on Regional Cooperation for Trade Facilitation should be continued and consideration should be given to invitation and participation of a few more organizations.
- Identification of "official" focal points in each organization for trade facilitation.
- Establishment of a restricted online discussion group among Dialogue participants to facilitate sharing of information on trade facilitation.
- As a first step towards exchanging information, an electronic newsletter would be launched and circulated among the group every quarter.
- Sharing of names and contact of national trade facilitation focal points should be pursued to the extent possible both to facilitate implementation of individual activities as well as a way to avoid duplication and foster coordination on Trade Facilitation at national levels.
- The development of a common trade facilitation performance monitoring framework across the wider region, and based on existing frameworks, should be discussed again at future dialogues.

The Dialogue programme, list participants, and selected presentations are available at: < <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/rctf.asp">http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/rctf.asp</a> >

The meeting brought together 8 regional organizations active in trade facilitation, each organization provided a briefing on their trade facilitation activities including an introduction to their existing trade facilitation, implementation and monitoring frameworks.

It is hoped that more regional organizations will join this initiative in the near future.



Oceania Customs Organisation Secretariat













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#### **Recent Publications**

# STUCKES IN TRACE AND INVESTMENT 17 TRACE FACULTATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND ANALYSIS OF IMPORT AND EXPONENT AND EXPON

#### **ESCAP:**

Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific: An Analysis of Export and Import Processes (available online, pdf version, 4.30 MB, 79 pages)

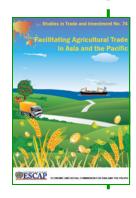
Given the earlier findings by the Asia Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) suggesting that benefits of trade facilitation measures critically depend on how they are coordinated and implemented on the ground, the ARTNeT Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee endorsed the launch of a new regional study on Improving Import-Export Processes and Procedures in Asia in late 2009This publication brings together the main research findings and outputs produced by the ARTNeT team during 2010/11, with the support of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT).

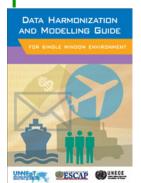
Published Date: December 2011 < http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2615.pdf >

Facilitating Agricultural Trade in Asia and the Pacific (available online, pdf version, 6.75 MB, 79 pages)

This study provides a comprehensive look at Trade Facilitation for agricultural products in the Asia - Pacific region. The report includes an overview of the status of agricultural trade as well as constraints in facilitating trade and their remedies in the Asia-Pacific region.

Published Date: December 2011 < <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2616.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2616.pdf</a> >





Data Harmonization and Modelling Guide for Single Window Environment (available online, pdf version, 1.03 MB, 76 pages)

This UNNExT Data Harmonization Guide for Single Window Environment is developed as a tool to assist governments and businesses in harmonizing and standardizing the international trade data required in fulfilling all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements through the elimination of redundant data and duplication in exchanging and recording information.

Published Date: March 2012 < http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2619.pdf >

Climate-smart Trade and Investment in Asia and the Pacific: Towards a Triple-win Outcome (available online, pdf version, 2.86 MB, 276 pages)

Managing climate change caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has been recognized as one of the world's greatest challenges in current times, in particular in Asia and the Pacific which accounts for most of the world's GHG emissions. Trade and investment indirectly contribute to GHG emissions through the energy used in associated production and transportation processes to the extent that energy is generated on the basis of fossil fuels. However, if technologies can be developed and distributed which are clean and contribute to energy efficiency and conservation or use renewable energy, then trade and investment will be part of the solution rather than the problem. The publication therefore makes a strong case for trade and investment in climate-smart goods and services, in particular climate-smart technologies

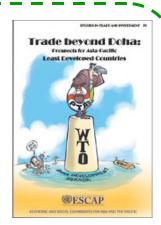
Published Date: March 2012 <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2614.pdf">http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2614.pdf</a>



Trade beyond Doha: Prospects for Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries (available online, pdf version, 2.87MB, 276 pages)

The Doha Round of negotiations, also known as the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), was launched in 2001 with the aim of continuing to make markets more accessible for all WTO members, but especially for developing countries, since one of the Round's fundamental objectives is to improve these countries' trading and development prospects. However, after four ministerial conferences and several high-level group meetings, the Round is still at an impasse and its outcome remains uncertain. It is, hence, crucially important for the LDCs to have free and easy access to international markets, since trade, being an important driver of development, can be very helpful in conquering poverty.

Published Date: March 2012 < http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2614.pdf >





#### **ADB:**

Greater Mekong Subregion Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement Instruments and Drafting History (available online, pdf version, 2.69 MB, 305 pages)

The Greater Mekong Subregion Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement (GMS CBTA) Instruments and Drafting History is a compendium of agreements, instruments of accessions, and memoranda of understanding forged between the GMS countries and compiles in one publication all the documents that form the CBTA instrument. It reflects previous policy dialogues, including outcomes of negotiations between various government agencies from the GMS countries since the inception of the CBTA. This publication aims to strengthen stakeholders' understanding of the technical aspects of the CBTA as well as to draw attention to the crucial issues on transport and trade facilitation.

Published Date: November 2011 <a href="http://beta.adb.org/publications/gms-cbta-instruments-and-drafting-history">http://beta.adb.org/publications/gms-cbta-instruments-and-drafting-history</a>

#### Other recent ADB publications:

Improving Accessibility of Financial Services in the Border-Gate Areas to Facilitate Cross-Border <u>Trade</u>: The Case of Viet Nam and Implications for Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation,

Please find more details at

<a href="http://beta.adb.org/publications/improving-accessibility-financial-services-border-gate-areas">http://beta.adb.org/publications/improving-accessibility-financial-services-border-gate-areas</a>

#### **APEC:**

Facilitating Electronic Commerce in APEC: A Case Study of Electronic Certificate of Origin (available online, pdf version, 1.18 MB, 73 pages):

The study, conducted for the Paperless Trading Sub-Group (PTS), analyzed the benefits of an Electronic Certificate of Origin (e-CO) between exporters in Korea and importers in Chinese Taipei and found that there have been significant benefits to traders in terms of time and cost savings. The study estimates that, on average, exporters experienced a reduction of two days in processing time and total savings of USD 274, while importers experienced a reduction of three days in processing time and total savings of USD 397

Published Date: November 2011 <a href="http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1215">http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1215</a>



Advancing Free Trade for Asia-Pacific Prosperit

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Situational Review of the APEC SME Logistics Service Provider (available online, pdf version, 2.20 MB, 48 pages): This report provides a basic understanding of the logistics situation of local/regional logistics sub-providers in the APEC region, and summarizes the key growth issues these SME companies are facing. It also indicative of the evolving focus of APEC initiatives from resolving border issues, to investigating and resolving behind-the-border issues to trade.

Published Date: November 2011 <a href="http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?publid=1219">http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?publid=1219</a>>

#### APEC Outcomes and Outlook 2011/2012 (available online, pdf version, 4519.94 KB, 56 pages)

APEC 2012 will focus on elaborating concrete measures aimed at boosting trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific in order to make an inclusive comprehensive response to the arising world economic and financial challenges. This publication also looks back at the outcomes of APEC USA 2011 and the 19th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting at Honolulu.

Published Date: January 2012 <a href="http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1247">http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1247</a>>



#### Other recent APEC publications:

- Enabling Electronic Commerce: The Contribution of APEC's Data Privacy Framework, Please find more details at:
  - < http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1205 >
- Aggregate Measurement of Trade Transaction Costs Reduction in APEC 2007-2010, Please find more details at:
  - < http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1212 >
- APEC's Ease of Doing Business Interim Assessment, Please find more details at:
  - < http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1217 >
- APEC's Achievements in Trade Facilitation 2007-2010 Final Assessment of TFAPII, Please find more details at:
  - < http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\_id=1211 >



#### WCO News - Annual Council Sessions (available online, pdf version, 3.26 MB, 56 pages)

WCO news magazine brings loads of insight into the Customs world. This edition, mainly focus on engaging the trading community in Customs Modernization; it includes a variety of topics: engaging the trading community in Customs modernization: The Brazilian experience, discussions about aid for trade, among others.

Published Date: October 2011 <a href="http://www.wcoomd.org/files/1.%20Public%20files/PDFandDocumentsAbout%20Us/OMD%20Actu%2066%20oct%202011%20uk.pdf">http://www.wcoomd.org/files/1.%20Public%20files/PDFandDocumentsAbout%20Us/OMD%20Actu%2066%20oct%202011%20uk.pdf</a>



**Coordinated Border Management: from Theory to Practice** (available online, pdf version, 582 KB, 16 pages)

This paper considers the meaning of the "Coordinated Border Management (CBM)" concept for the customs community in particular and border agencies in general. It provides an overview of the evolution of the concept, which serves as a theoretical underpinning for further policy development. As the CBM concept is broad and offers numerous interpretations, operational arrangements, such as joint mobile teams, hot pursuit, joint risk management, and targeting centres are not addressed, nor does the paper analyze information exchange systems, in particular the Single Window that forms an intrinsic part of CBM. Instead, the paper focuses on institutional and some practical border arrangements developed in several countries as part of a CBM implementation strategy, and concludes by suggesting areas for further research. <a href="http://www.wcoomd.org/files/1.%20Public%20files/PDFandDocuments/research/19\_CBM\_Polner\_EN.pdf">http://www.wcoomd.org/files/1.%20Public%20files/PDFandDocuments/research/19\_CBM\_Polner\_EN.pdf</a>

# **On-going and Upcoming Projects**

#### **UNESCAP:**

- → Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction: Building Capacity for the Implementation of Pro-Poor Trade Facilitation Policies and Measures in Developing Asian Countries
  - Objective: Increase the capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement more
    effective and coherent policies on trade, investment, enterprise development ad technology
    transfer with a specific focus on trade facilitation for poverty reduction and regional connectivity.
  - Results: Increased capacity of officials and business representatives in least developed and other developing countries members of ESCAP to implement trade facilitation measures contributing to poverty reduction.
  - Duration: 2012
  - Planned Events:
    - Expert Group Meeting (EGM): Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction, 5-6 March, UNCC, Bangkok
    - Dissemination workshop of the Studies on Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction,
       September and October (tentative)
  - Partners: The International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC) and China International Electronic Commerce Center (CIECC)
- "Network for knowledge Transfer on Sustainable Agriculture Technologies and Improved Market Linkages in South and Southeast Asia" (SATNETAsia)
  - Objective: To contribute in part to improve food security in South and Southeast Asia by enhancing regional trade facilitation for food products.
  - **Results:** Effective trade facilitation measures for food products are defined and recommended in six South and Southeast Asian countries.
  - **Duration:** 2012 2014
  - Planned Events:
    - Project Launch Meeting, 3-4 March, Indonesia
  - Partners: The Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA);
     Trade and Investment Division (TID), ESCAP; The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT);
     The World Vegetable Centre; and Food Security Centre (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim in Germany
- → Project: United Nations Development Account 7th Tranche Project: Strengthening the capacity of developing countries and transition economies to access the global supply chains
  - Objective: The main objective of the Roadmap is to develop a model of the information exchange and processing taking place in modern international supply chains, to identify the specific opportunities that better information sharing can bring to exporters of developing and emerging economies and to identify a list of enabling prerequisites and activities that Governments and companies should take to participate in future information supply chains.

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#### • Results:

- 1. Increased knowledge by policy makers & managers of techniques to detect regulatory, procedural, organizational barriers to trade and of international standards and best practices to address them.
- 2. Enhanced capacity by policy makers & managers to formulate and implement trade facilitation policies, measures and instruments for linking to global supply chain.
- 3. Improved coordination at inter/intra regional level among key institutions for trade facilitation & improved dialogue with the business community.
- **Duration:** September 2011 August 2013
- Activities: Background Study on "Roadmap: enhancing information exchange in international supply chains" by each UN Regional Commission
- Partners: Lead ECE; ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA

#### ADB:

- ightarrow Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation: Working with the Private Sector in Trade Facilitation
  - Objective: To support the design, implementation and monitoring of key trade facilitation and private sector development activities under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC). Specifically, it will establish and provide institutional support to the National Joint Transport and Trade Facilitation Committees (NJCs) and the Regional Joint Committee on Transport and Trade Facilitation (RJC); conduct performance measurement and monitoring of selected CAREC transport and trade facilitation corridors; and organize private-public sector dialogues to enhance business environment for trade development, and explore opportunities of public and private partnership (PPP) in support of trade logistics development.
  - **Results:** National and regional collaboration, including partnerships between the public and private sectors, will be strengthened in managing the key CAREC corridors and addressing broader issues of transport and trade facilitation.
  - Please find more details at: < http://pid.adb.org/pid/TaView.htm?projNo=43078&seqNo=01&typeCd=2 >
- → Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Transport and Trade Facilitation: Border Crossing Point Improvement and Single Window Development Project
  - **Objective:** To support NSW development in selected CAREC member countries and develop a regional platform for the networking of NSWs for the CAREC region through public private partnerships and the establishment of the Alliance of National Single Window Operators of CAREC. It aims to maximize the regional public good feature of BCP and SW development through a regional approach.
  - **Results:** The outcome of the proposed project is speedy, low cost and predictable processes for cross-border transport and trade activities. This is to be achieved by eliminating bottlenecks to trade and transport and development and by developing single filing and well as streamlined and cost efficient trade and transport clearance processes.
  - Please find more details at:
    - < http://pid.adb.org/pid/TaView.htm?projNo=44048&seqNo=01&typeCd=2 >
- → Integrated Trade Facilitation Support for Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
  - **Objective:** Sustained economic growth and improved living standards through the expansion of international and intraregional trade.
  - **Results:** Greater volume of trade intra- and extra- regionally from time and cost savings resulting from harmonized cross-border regulations, procedures, and standards; and improved logistics.
  - Please find more details at: < <a href="http://pid.adb.org/pid/TaView.htm?projNo=40015&seqNo=01&typeCd=2">http://pid.adb.org/pid/TaView.htm?projNo=40015&seqNo=01&typeCd=2</a> >

## **Upcoming Events and Meetings**

#### **ESCAP:**

- → ARTNeT/WTO Research Workshop on Emerging Trade Issues in Asia and the Pacific: Meeting contemporary policy challenges
  - Objective: ARTNeT Research Workshop is dedicated to the study and discussion of recent theoretical and empirical advances in trade, investment and integration. The goal is to use the research findings to gain better understanding of the present day problems and policy challenges faced by developing countries in Asia and the Pacific, in their efforts to create growth opportunities and increase level of intraregional trade and integration.
  - Organizers: UNESCAP Trade and Investment Division World Trade Organization
  - Date: 4-5 April 2012
  - Location: Nakorn Pathom, Thailand
- → ESCAP-ADB Capacity Building Workshop on Single Window Implementation
  - Objective: The Workshop aims to provide capacity building support to the key stakeholders from Central Asian countries in implementing a Single Window, with a focus on creating an enabling legal environment. The Workshop is also accompanied by site visits to trade facilitation facilities such as an inland container depot and a Customs office to provide participants an opportunity to witness the application of trade facilitation measures in real time.
  - Organizers: ESCAP, ADB in collaboration with the Pan-Asian Alliance for e-commerce (PAA) and the Korea International Trade Association
  - Date: 23 26 April 2012
  - Location: Coex, Seoul, Republic of Korea
  - Participants: More than 40 stakeholders from 15 countries in Asia are expected to participate in the Workshop.
- → UNNExT Business Process Analysis training for Paperless Trade in SASEC
  - Objective: The purpose of BPA training is to support the implementation of paperless trade and Single Window projects, in particular for member countries of South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC), in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and information flows throughout the supply chain.
  - Organizers: ESCAP and ADB, in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal
  - **Date:** 31 May 2 June 2012
  - Location: Kathmandu, Nepal
- → Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2012
  - Objective: Share experiences and knowledge on trade facilitation between countries of the greater Asia and Pacific region; Increased understanding and exchange of views between public and private stakeholders, as well with trade facilitation standards developers and technical assistance providers; Learn about and draw lessons from on-going implementation of national and regional trade facilitation measures; and introduce relevant international tools, instruments, and facilities aimed at increasing the efficiency of regional and global cross-border trade.
  - Organizers: ADB and UNESCAP
  - Date: October, 2012
  - Location: Colombo, Sri Lanka

#### ADB:

- → Ways Forward for Corridor-Based Transport Facilitation Agreements in the CAREC Region
  - Objective: Promote knowledge sharing on approaches to improving transport facilitation among the CAREC (Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation) countries.
  - Organizers: Asian Development Bank and CAREC Program secretariat
  - Date: 10-11 April 2012
  - Location: Beijing, Peoples' Republic of China: 10 April 2012 11 April 2012

#### **APEC:**

- → APEC Supply Chain Connectivity Measurement Framework Symposium
  - Objective: Discuss the design of a self-assessment survey, as one of the tools for measuring APEC economies' progress towards the 10% targeted improvement in SCI performance, and Stocktake the implementation of the SCFAP.
  - Organizers: APEC
  - Date: 31 March 1 April 2012
  - Location: Singapore

## ECO:

- → ECO-ESCAP Trade Facilitation Workshop on Paperless Trade and Single Window
  - **Objective:** Raise awareness of high-level stakeholders from Economic Cooperation organization (ECO) countries and beyond on importance of cross border paperless trade and Single Window.
  - Organizers: ECO in cooperation with AFACT and UNESCAP.
  - Date: 24 –25 May 2012.
  - Location: Kish Island, Islamic Republic of Iran

#### **UNECE:**

- $\rightarrow$  The I9th UN/CEFACT Forum
  - Objective: Implementing the decisions of the 18th session, advancing domain activities, formulating new projects, continuing liaison activities with external organizations and implementing Bureau Programme Support (BPS) activities
  - Organizers: The UNECE and UN/CEFACT
  - Date: 16 to 20 April 2012
  - Location: Palais des Nations, Avenue de la Paix, Geneva, Switzerland

#### WCO:

- → The WCO Global AEO Conference
  - Objective: Examine the successes and challenges of Customs administrations and the private sector in their efforts to implement AEO programmes ( http://www.aeo2012.org )
  - Organizer: The World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Korea Customs Service (KCS)
  - Date: 17-19 April 2012.
  - Location: Seoul, Republic of Korea

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# **Selected Past Events and Meetings**

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Meeting and Events	Organizers	
Global/ Regional/ Sub-regional		
Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2011: Trade Facilitation beyond Borders: International Supply Chain Efficiency Seoul, Republic of Korea, October 4 - 5, 2011 <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tfforum11.asp">http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tfforum11.asp</a>	ESCAP, ADB and others	
High-level Stakeholder Workshop for Sub-regional Trade and Transit Cooperation in Mongolian Trade Corridors Seoul, Republic of Korea, October 7, 2011 <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/mongo-tc.asp">http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/mongo-tc.asp</a>	ESCAP	
UNNExT Capacity Building Workshop on Addressing Legal Issues for Single Window Implementation and Paperless Trade Seoul, Republic of Korea, October 7 - 8, 2011 <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/legal-issues.asp">http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/legal-issues.asp</a>	ESCAP, ADB, ECE	
UNNExT Capacity Building Workshop on Data Harmonization for Single Window Environment Seoul, Republic of Korea, October 7 - 8, 2011 <a href="http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/swe.asp">http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/swe.asp</a>	ESCAP, ADB, ECE	
Workshop on Trade and Trade Facilitation in GMS Phuket, Thailand, October 18, 2011 http://beta.adb.org/news/events/workshop-trade-and-trade-facilitation-gms	ADB	
Sub regional Transport and Trade Facilitation Initiatives: Building Blocks Toward AEC-2015 Phuket, Thailand, October 19, 2011 http://beta.adb.org/news/events/subregional-transport-and-trade-facilitation-initiatives-building-blocks-toward-aec-2015	ADB	
6th ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATFJCC) November, 2011 <a href="http://www.aseansec.org/25680.htm#11">http://www.aseansec.org/25680.htm#11</a>	ASEAN	
GMS Customs Seminar on Trade Facilitation Kunming, China, November 9 -10, 2011 <a href="http://www.wcoasiapacific.org/ROCBwhatnew_detail.php?content_id=4884">http://www.wcoasiapacific.org/ROCBwhatnew_detail.php?content_id=4884</a>	WCO	
Regional Workshop on Intelligence Management, Melaka, Malaysia November 14 -18, 2011 <a href="http://www.wcoasiapacific.org/ROCBwhatnew_detail.php?content_id=4885">http://www.wcoasiapacific.org/ROCBwhatnew_detail.php?content_id=4885</a>	WCO	
World Customs and Trade Forum Guangzhou, China, November 24 - 25, 2011 https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=28121&	WCO	
Global Trade Facilitation Conference on Single Window and Supply Chains in the next decade, Geneva, Switzerland, December 12-13, 2011 <a href="http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=26693">http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=26693</a>	ECE	

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# Selected Past Events and Meetings (Cont'd)

UNNExT Capacity Building Workshop on Single Window Planning and Implementation, Geneva, Switzerland, December 14 -15, 2011 <a href="http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/capacity-building-for-trade-facilitation/global-trade-facilitation-conference/unnext-capacity-building-workshop.html">http://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/capacity-building-for-trade-facilitation/global-trade-facilitation-conference/unnext-capacity-building-workshop.html</a>	ESCAP, ADB, ECE
Greater Mekong Subregion Agriculture Information Network Service (GMS-AINS) and Paperless e-Trade Workshop, Bangkok, Thailand 22-23 February 2012	ADB in partner- ship with Trade Facilitate.
Consultation Meeting on Trade Facilitation for Poverty Reduction Bangkok, Thailand 5-6 March 2012 http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tfpoverty.asp	ESCAP
2012 WCO Technology & Innovation Forum Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 6-8 March 2012 http://www.wcoomd.org/files/2.%20Event%20files/PDFs/TI_2012/TI%20report_final.pdf	WCO
UNNExT Advisory Group Meeting on Legal Issues, Bangkok, Thailand 22-23 March 2012	ESCAP
ESCAP/ITD/WTO Capacity building programme on Trade in Services and Investment Liberalization Negotiations Bangkok, Thailand, 27-30 March 2012 http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tisiln.asp	ESCAP, ITD, WTO
National	
Sri Lanka Trade Facilitation Workshop: Towards a National Single Window Colombo, Sri Lanka, October 19 - 20, 2011 http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/swsl.asp	ESCAP, ADB, ECE
National Valuation Workshop for Mongolian Customs Ulaanbaatar Mongolia, October 24 - 28, 2011 http://www.wcoasiapacific.org/ROCBwhatnew_detail.php?content_id=4879	wco
National Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Workshop Bandung, Indonesia, November 23 - 25, 2011 http://www.wcoasiapacific.org/ROCBwhatnew_detail.php?content_id=4886	WCO
UNNExT Workshop on Business Process Analysis for Single Window Implementation Vientiane, Lao PDR, 8-10 February 2012 http://www.unescap.org/tid/unnext/bpasw12.asp	ESCAP and the Department of Import and Ex- port, Lao PDR
GTI International Capacity Building program for Trade Facilitation in NEA, Cheonan, Republic of Korea, 20-24 February 2012  http://www.tumenprogramme.org/news.php?id=1194	The Greater Tu- men Initiative (GTI)
Conference on Single Window, Data Exchange and Trade Facilitation	



#### **News Items on Trade Facilitation**

#### **GLOBAL/REGIONAL**

#### **ASIA PACIFIC**

<u>Lower Obstacles Create Business & Job Creation Opportunities</u>, Scoop independent News, 17 February 2012

Regulators from around the Asia-Pacific gathered in Moscow to study various approaches to improving the business environment and make progress toward the APEC-wide goal to make it cheaper, quicker and easier to do business across the Asia-Pacific region by 25% by 2015. According to APEC Policy Support Unit senior analyst, Carlos Kuriyama, APEC is on track to reaching this goal: Using the Trade Facilitation Impact Calculator, it was predicted that APEC developing economies would become much more efficient if they minimized document processing and reduced the time it takes to clear customs, handle goods at the ports, and improved inland transportation. McGill benchmarked these potential gains based on the success of ten reforming economies.

Accessed on 23 February

<a href="http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1202/S00462/lower-obstacles-create-business-job-creation-opportunities.htm">http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1202/S00462/lower-obstacles-create-business-job-creation-opportunities.htm</a>

**GTI Launches Capacity Building Training Program on Trade Facilitation**, Tumenprogramme, 17 February 2012

The GTI will hold an International Capacity Building Program on Trade Facilitation in the Republic of Korea from 20-24 February 2012. Organized by the GTI Secretariat, this training program aims to promote trade facilitation across the four GTI member countries: China, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The program will bring together senior officials from both national and local level Customs, Quarantine, and International Cooperation agencies of the GTI member countries, as well as representatives from international organizations including the UNDP, UNESCAP, GIZ and WCO. Training will focus on sharing information and best practices among participants, with the ultimate goal of building a substantial professional network of international organizations, national governments and local customs branches. Participating officials will travel to the Customs Border Control Training Center in Cheonan, Republic of Korea. The training program will be carried out over five days, with three days of instruction and two field visits to customs facilities at Incheon International Airport. The first part of the program will introduce the customs services of each member country and discuss the trade facilitation efforts of WCO, ESCAP and GTI. The second part is hosted by the Korean Customs Service and will provide participants with firsthand experience of the Incheon International Airport Passenger Clearance, RFID, and Cargo Management systems. Accessed on 17 February <a href="http://www.tumenprogramme.org/news.php?id=1193">http://www.tumenprogramme.org/news.php?id=1193</a>>

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#### **EAST ASIA**

**BIMP-EAGA** improving Customs Regulations, Manila Bulletin Publishing Corporation, 24 October 2011

Customs officials of the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), led by the new Customs Commissioner Rozanno Rufino Biazon have expressed commitment to implement a more efficient trade facilitation within the region. The Commissioner noted that they will institute and improve measures in order to come up with more reliable customs regulations and processes to ensure seamless transport and movement of goods across the BIMP-EAGA borders.

Accessed on 13 January <a href="http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/338822/bimpeaga-improving-customs-regulations">http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/338822/bimpeaga-improving-customs-regulations</a>

#### PACIFIC ISLAND

OCO Receives EU - EDF 10 Assistance for Trade Facilitation in Customs Cooperation Project, OCO Newsroom, 21 December 2011

The European Union signed an assistance of €12.3 million to increase Pacific-ACP countries' ability to benefit from global trade and regional economic integration. These activities are financed under the 10th European

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Development Fund (EDF-10) and are part of the Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration Through Trade (SPEITT) programme.

Accessed on 13 January

< http://www.ocosec.org/pages.cfm/newsroom/all-news/2011/oco-receives-eu-edf-10-assistance-for-trade-facilitation-in-customs-cooperation-project.html >

#### **SOUTH ASIA**

#### 7th meeting of CoE on SAFTA: Liberal SAARC visa policy for traders demanded, Daily Times, 17 February 2012

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) President Vikramjit Singh Sahney while making presentation in the 7th Meeting of Committee of Experts (CoE) on SAFTA held on February 15, 2012 in Islamabad demanded liberal SAARC visa policy for businessmen, substantial reduction in sensitive list, removal of para-tariff and non-tariff measures (NTMs) and exhibition of greater political will for swift execution of trade facilitation mechanism to ensure accelerated growth in intra-SAARC trade.

Accessed on 23 February

< http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C02%5C17%5Cstory\_17-2-2012\_pg5\_6 >

#### **AUSTRALIA**

#### WA outlines plan to improve port efficiency as exports boom, Mining Weekly, 2 February 2012

The Western Australian government on Thursday outlined plans to reform the state's ports in an effort to ensure that the wealth generated by the increased commodity exports delivered benefits to the state. Under the plan proposed by Transport Minister Troy Bushwell, seven of the state's eight port authorities would be consolidated into four regional port authorities, to improve efficiency and reduce red tape. This has been the largest reform undertaken in the state's ports, in decades.

Accessed on 18 February < <a href="http://www.miningweekly.com/article/wa-outlines-plan-to-improve-port-efficiency-as-exports-boom-2012-02-02">http://www.miningweekly.com/article/wa-outlines-plan-to-improve-port-efficiency-as-exports-boom-2012-02-02</a>

#### **AZERBAIJAN**

#### Azerbaijan Railways invites bids for administrative building construction, ABC News, 26 March 2012

Another construction tender has been declared by Azerbaijan Railways (ADY) within the framework of WB-financed Rail Trade & Transport Facilitation Project. According to ADY, bids for the tender for office building construction for the ADY oil spill liquidation team will be accepted till 5 pm on 8 May. Bids must be accompanied by a bank guarantee for AZN 21,000. Tender participation fee is AZN 160, and for obtaining tender documents the applicant should pay the courier service for AZN 100. The building should be built near Balajar depot (Balajari settlement of Baku). Contact person: Farrukh Eybatov. Tel: 4996395; email: office@ady-piu.org. In spring of 2008, the WB Board of Directors approved the allocation of a \$450 million loan to Azerbaijan for the entire project, which was the Bank's largest loan since 1995, when the WB opened the financing for Azerbaijan. The loan was granted through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for 17 years with four-year grace term. The project aims at improving the quality of rail services, improving the financial condition, payment and operational efficiency and capacity of ADY. The project with budget, which in 2008 was estimated at \$795 million, focuses on the development of the corridor to Georgia. Today, \$450 million from the WB and 250 million euros from Czech Export Bank are not sufficient, and the project's budget deficit is around 400-500 million euros.

Accessed on 26 March 2012 < http://abc.az/eng/news/main/63390.html >

#### **INDIA**

#### JK government to set up two trade facilitation centres along LoC, IBN Live, 8 February 2012

To boost trade with Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to set up two Trade Facilitation Centres along the Line of Control. Trade Facilitation Centre at Salamabad (Uri) in Baramulla district of North Kashmir, and Chakkan-Da-Bagh in Poonch district of Jammu region are being established at an estimated cost of Rs 8.95 crore and Rs 7.95 crore respectively to give boost to LOC trade in a big-way, minister for industries and commerce, SS Slathia said in Vijaypur area today. Besides, the trading days have been increased from 2 to 4 days in a week, the minister said. The government has also launched a massive skill up-gradation and entrepreneurship development programme to give boost to traditional handicrafts sector in J-K, he said. Under Rs 5.87 cr Integrated Skill Development Scheme of Union Ministry of Textiles, about 8,500 persons will be trained over a period of five years in carpet manufacturing.

Accessed on 8 February <a href="http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/jk-govt-to-set-up-two-trade-facilitation-centres-along-loc/960849.html">http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/jk-govt-to-set-up-two-trade-facilitation-centres-along-loc/960849.html</a>

#### **JAPAN**

#### Canada and Japan agree to enter negotiations on a free trade deal, Brandon Sun, 25 March 2012

Stephen Harper hailed the opening of free trade talks with Japan on Sunday as a "historic opportunity" while economic experts warned of the perils of opening borders to the world's third largest economy. The prime minister's long-anticipated announcement was made with his Japanese counterpart following a bilateral meeting here and came with pledges that an economic partnership would bring a bonanza of economic opportunity. "The potential for increased trade between us that will create jobs and growth and long-term prosperity is really enormous," Harper said at a media availability following one-on-one talks with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda. He estimated Canadian exports to the island nation could increase by two-thirds and pledged to do what he could to protect sectors that might be in danger. "We will make sure when we sit around the table, as we do in all these negotiations, that we will try and get a deal that's not just good for the Canadian economy as a whole, but protects all of our various sectors. That's our ambition, but we have to do what's best for the entire Canadian economy." To do that, trade experts say Canada will have to up its game because the Japanese are tough, skilled negotiators, and probably the most formidable the Harper government has faced since it launched its ambitious series of bilateral negotiations.

Accessed on 25 March <a href="http://www.brandonsun.com/national/breaking-news/canada-and-japan-agree-to-enter-negotiations-on-a-free-trade-deal-144134285.html?thx=y">http://www.brandonsun.com/national/breaking-news/canada-and-japan-agree-to-enter-negotiations-on-a-free-trade-deal-144134285.html?thx=y</a>

#### **KOREA**

#### Korea, Turkey sign tentative FTA, Korea Herald, 26 March 2012

The governments of Korea and Turkey on Monday provisionally signed a bilateral free trade agreement, completing three years of negotiations. "Turkey is an emerging economy with high market potential and promising export market that is showing stable growth," the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said in a statement. "With a geopolitically important location connecting Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, Turkey will serve as a bridgehead for Korean businesses' entrance to neighboring markets." Tariffs on all industrial products traded between the two countries will be eliminated within seven years after the FTA takes effect. Korean exporters of autos, auto parts, petrochemicals, steel and textiles are expected to benefit most in the long term. Korea posted a surplus of \$4.28 billion in trade with Turkey last year, with \$5 billion in exports and \$800 million in imports. Accessed on 26 March 2012 <a href="http://www.koreaherald.com/business/Detail.jsp?newsMLld=20120326001037">http://www.koreaherald.com/business/Detail.jsp?newsMLld=20120326001037</a>

#### **LAO PDR**

#### Lao PDR Roadmap for Faster Customs Clearance Launched, Philippine Information Agency, I February 2012

The roadmap for the establishment of a Lao National Single Window (NSW) for faster customs clearance and linking it to the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) was launched at the workshop, conducted in partnership between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the ASEAN Secretariat, the Lao Customs Department, and the Ministry of Finance.(ASEAN/DFA), in the Vientiane Province. In a release from the ASEAN, the workshop provided the forum to present and discuss a roadmap for developing the Lao NSW and seek input and feedback from both the relevant government agencies and the private sector. The workshop also provided the opportunity for these two parties to arrive at a common understanding of the various trade facilitation initiatives in Lao PDR and to take onboard private sector interests.

Accessed on 18 February < <a href="http://www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=1781328052180">http://www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=1781328052180</a> >

#### **MYANMAR**

#### Economic dimensions in Myanmar's opening, The Jakarta Post, 23 February 2012

Just as Myanmar's long-detained icon, Aung San Suu Kyi, began campaigning for a parliamentary seat, the country's President Thein Sein made a state visit to Singapore accompanied by a high-level delegation, which concluded with an agreement for technical assistance and training in a number of key areas including finance, investment law and trade facilitation. These two events over the same week demonstrate the ambitious pace of change and growing confidence in Myanmar.

Accessed on 23 February

< http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/02/07/economic-dimensions-myanmar-s-opening.html >

#### Myanmar Eases Investment Laws, The Wall Street Journal, 25 March 2012

A raft of new investment laws are expected to make Myanmar draw more foreign interest if sanctions are lifted in the coming year. But the overhaul leaves some problems unresolved—and might stoke new ones. A plan to give tax holidays and other incentives to foreigners is expected to be approved as early as this week, ahead of a closely watched April I parliamentary by election. That vote could put democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi into elected office for the first time. Ms. Suu Kyi suspended campaigning Sunday after she fell ill from heat exhaustion in southern Myanmar, her doctor said. Other major changes in the works include plans to simplify the unwieldy foreign-exchange system, give more independence to the central bank and open theeconomy to foreign phone companies and banks. The new laws follow other reforms that over the past year have generated rising enthusiasm among Western leaders and business executives. Some are pressing to end decades of sanctions to end

decades of sanctions against Myanmar, which transferred power to a parliamentary government from a military regime last year. U.S. and European leaders have indicated they are likely to begin easing key sanctions soon if the April I vote, being held to fill a small number of parliamentary seats vacated over the past year, is free and fair.

Accessed on 25 March

<a href="http://online.wsi.com/article/SB10001424052702304177104577303394089043030.html">http://online.wsi.com/article/SB10001424052702304177104577303394089043030.html</a>

#### **NEPAL - CHINA**

#### Rasuwagadi border to aid cargo movement, Himalayan News, 30 March 2012

KATHMANDU: Rasuwa–Jilong, one of the six trading points with China, is soon going to be operational for overland cargo movement. According to Nepal–China Bilateral Agreement there are six different trading points along the two countries for overland trade. However, apart from Tatopani–Lhasa, the other border points have nominal border trade. Rasuwa-Jilong, Hilsa (Humla)-Pulan, Olangchunggola-Riwuand, Kimathanka-Chentang, Nechung (Mustang)-Lizi are the other five border points between Nepal and China which currently have nominal border trade. "The Chinese government has been developing infrastructure for a full fledge overland trade movement in other remaining border points," said joint secretary at Ministry of Commerce and Supplies Naindra Prasad Upadhyaya and also added that Rasuwa–Jilong will be the next trading point after the Tatopani customs. "Besides overland cargo movement, Rasuwagadi will help minimise cargo traffic at Tatopani," he said. China is providing assistance and technology for construction of a dry port in Tatopani and it will help ease the traffic there.

Accessed on 30 March

<a href="http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?">http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?</a>
headline=Rasuwagadi+border+to+aid+cargo+movement+&NewsID=326020>

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#### **NEW ZEALAND—THAILAND**

#### New Zealand-Thailand agreement leads to growing trade, Voxy, 13 November 2011

Trade Minister Tim Groser announced that New Zealand Closer Economic Partnership Agreement (TNZCEP) is delivering increased trade between the two countries. The TNZCEP is delivering demonstrable trade and economic benefits to both countries through improved market access, improved customs procedures and trade facilitation, increased efficiency, and enhanced profitability, and the transfer of technology and skills for businesses.

Accessed on 13 January

<a href="http://www.voxy.co.nz/politics/nz-thailand-agreement-leads-growing-trade/5/107391">http://www.voxy.co.nz/politics/nz-thailand-agreement-leads-growing-trade/5/107391</a>

#### **PAKISTAN**

#### Government asked to ensure trade facilitation, Brecorder, 14 March 2012

The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Tuesday asked the government to reduce impact of the system on international trade by simplifying and harmonising the cumbersome procedures. It will reduce cost of doing business, ensure predictability, benefit governments and taxpayers, guarantee higher revenues, attract investment and improve the international rating of the country, it said. Dr Murtaza Mughal, President PEW, said that exporters and importers are facing issues like unnecessary documentation, lack of transparency and rapid legal redress, excessive clearance time, absence of co-ordination between concerned agencies, and absence of modern customs techniques. The initiatives taken so far left much to be desired except for introduction of Pakistan Automated Customs Computerised System (PaCCS) which was a step towards adoption of international best practices, he said.

Accessed on 14 March < http://www.brecorder.com/business-a-economy/189/1165199/>

#### Automation can bail out limping economy, The News, 25 March 2012

ISLAMABAD: Tariq Mahmood, Chairman, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Standing Committees on Pharmaceuticals and Law and Order, said on Saturday that automation is the only way to ensure trade facilitation and steer the country out of the fiscal mess, a statement said. Talking to women entrepreneurs at the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI), he said that the movement of goods should be improved by reducing cost, maximising efficiency and boosting forex reserves, as well as tax collections. The government faces a revenue shortfall of around Rs30 billion, while inflows from the coalition support fund and 3G auction remains doubtful. The worrisome situation may deteriorate further until automation is introduced, which can help put the

economy back on the track, he said. Tariq Mahmood, who is also Attock Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) president, said that the rollback of Pakistan Automated Customs Computerised System (PaCCS) has complicated the overall process, hurting the business community and tax collections. Reintroduction of semiautomatic and manual clearance procedures was a blow to the trade facilitation efforts, which is resulting in delays, penalties, lost business opportunities and reduced competitiveness, said Mahmood.

Accessed on 21 March <a href="http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-99317-Automation-can-bail-out-limping-economy">http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-99317-Automation-can-bail-out-limping-economy</a>

#### **PAKISTAN—INDIA**

Banking, rail communications vital for Pakistan, India trade, Pakistan Observer, 23 February 2012

Opening of bank branches, rail communication, and removal of non-tariff barriers are some of the important areas pointed out by trade and industry for normalization of trade between Pakistan and India. Speaking at the dinner reception hosted by Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in honour of India's Commerce Minister, Anand Sharma and trade delegation, S M Muneer, president of India-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IPCCI), suggested that trade facilitation through expeditious border crossings, streamlining documentation requirements, border agency coordination, opening of new border crossings, quick customs clearance, electronic data interchange, telecommunications, improved transport links, shipping protocols and easing visa restrictions for businessmen should be carried out immediately.

Accessed on 23 February < <a href="http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=140536">http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=140536</a>>

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#### **PHILIPPINES**

**IAC** names prohibited and regulated products for export anew, Philippine Information Agency, 9 February 2012

The Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) on Executive Order No.1016 headed by the Department of Trade and Industry recently released the revised list of products that are prohibited and regulated for export. Revision of the said list was made in response to the growing clamor from exporters for an updated reference of prohibited and regulated products for export to avert confusion and delay in export trade facilitation.

Accessed on 18 February < http://www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=1461328750205 >

#### **SINGAPORE**

All Exports to be declared in advance come 2013, Singapore News, 12 January 2012

Singapore Customs will require declarations for the export of all goods to be submitted prior to their leaving Singapore. The initiative, known as Advance Export Declaration (AED), aims to strengthen Singapore's supply chain security and align its export declaration practices with international norms. Accessed on 13 January

< http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporebusinessnews/view/1176286/1/.html >

#### wco

WCO and United Nations agree to enhance cooperation and high level interaction, WCO, 21 February 2012

Secretary General of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Kunio Mikuriya, met Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Ban Ki-moon, for comprehensive talks at UN Headquarters in New York on Tuesday, 21 February 2012. Expressing appreciation for the wide ranging contact between the two organizations, both leaders pledged to continue to enhance cooperation and high level interaction in the future. Noting the many areas of common interest and complementary actions, some initial discussions as to how the relationship between the UN and the WCO could be further enriched were proposed. Discussions covered security, protection of the health and safety of citizens from illicit trade, such as narcotic drugs and fake medicines, trade facilitation as a basis for economic growth, sustainable development and environmental challenges, such as hazardous waste, inter-agency

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cooperation, and alignment of objectives for maximum impact. The meeting concluded with an undertaking for further high level consultation between the WCO and the UN in the immediate future to progress the ideas discussed during the talks. "I appreciate the daily interaction between the two organizations," said Secretary General Mikuriya. "This enables the Customs community to align with the global agenda and strengthen connectivity."

Accessed on 21 February < <a href="http://www.wcoomd.org/press/default.aspx?lid=1&id=292">http://www.wcoomd.org/press/default.aspx?lid=1&id=292</a>>

#### **WTO**

**2012 Should Not be a "Wasted Year," Lamy Urges WTO Members**, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, 15 February 2012

2012 cannot and should not be a wasted year", WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy told delegates in Geneva on Tuesday 14 February. Instead, WTO members should use this year to try taking "small steps" in their efforts to move the Doha talks out of their current stalemate, and avoid setting "unattainable targets or packages." A couple of areas that could see movement this year are trade facilitation and least developed country issues, the Director-General told members. The Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation has already met once this year. However, the ensuing three-hour discussion at Tuesday's meeting on what "new negotiating approaches" could be pursued this year led some country groupings to remind members that the focus should not shift away from the topic that had helped launch the Doha Round - agriculture.

Accessed on 23 February < <a href="http://ictsd.org/i/news/bridgesweekly/125553/">http://ictsd.org/i/news/bridgesweekly/125553/</a> >

# COUNTRIES BEYOND ASIA-PACIFIC NIGERIA

Customs to introduce single window for goods' clearance, vanguardngr.anguardngr, 26 March 2012

LAGOS — The Nigeria Customs Service is to introduce a single window platform that will facilitate clearance procedures for imported and exported goods. Comptroller-General of Customs, Mr Abdullahi Dikko, told newsmen, yesterday, at the closing ceremony of the 17th Conference of Customs Directors-General of the West and Central Africa regions of the World Customs Organisations, WCO, in Cotonou, Benin Republic. He said the single window procedure, which formed the major focus of the conference, would be implemented electronically, adding that the system, which would ensure that all documents were processed electronically through one platform, would save time and cost. He said all Nigeria needed at the moment was time to study the single window procedure to avoid problems that might occur in the future. He said: "You can see each and every country's presentation came with a problem, so Nigeria, we will like to study it very well to understand how the single window works in other countries. "So we are taking our time. We are not yet late and soon we are going to have our own and am sure is going to work perfectly." The customs boss said that the service would do all within its powers to minimise the problems of clearance procedure. He commended President Goodluck Jonathan for supporting the the reforms in the customs. Dikko said the Customs Staff College of the WCO in Gwagwalada, Abuja, would begin courses from March 20 for officers in the West and Central Africa regions.

Accessed on 26 March <a href="http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/03/customs-to-introduce-single-window-for-goods-clearance/">http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/03/customs-to-introduce-single-window-for-goods-clearance/</a>

#### **UGANDA**

#### **URA** moves to ease trade facilitation, Monitor, 26 March 2012

Businesses that involve in international trade should can hope for better days as the tax body unveils a trade facilitation programme - Authorised Economic Operators, tomorrow. Authorised Economic Operators (AEO) programme is a fulfillment of the second pillar of the global Security and Facilitation (SAFE) framework that calls for 'customs to business partnership'.

#### Impact

In a pre-launch interview, Mr Dicksons Kathesumba, the Assistant Commissioner Customs Audit at Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) told Daily Monitor that the AEO programme is aimed at improving international trade and encouraging compliance to customs. "We are going to start granting a special status to businesses that consistently demonstrate commitment to compliance with custom regulations and procedure. This special status is the Authorized Economic Operators Programme. This status will come with several benefits that will reduce business costs and time wastage at the international trade level," Mr Kathesumba said.

Accessed on 26 March < http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/-/688322/1373362/-/4ydt3d/-/>