

ROCB E-Newsletter No.62

WCO Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building



📌 Essay on Combating Environmental Crime: Challenges and Possible Solutions

📌 Central Customs Laboratory of Korea was designated as WCO Regional Customs Laboratory

📌 Thai Customs Talent Management

📌 Building technology-driven organizations: the experience of China Customs



FOREWORD

Dear Readers,

Greetings from Bangkok!

Thailand is now in the middle of rainy season and there are scattered squalls almost every day, especially in the evening, causing bad traffic jams in the city of Bangkok. Talking about the weather, I always recall a typical risk management anecdote I heard many years ago from one of the WCO-accredited risk management experts, which suggests the application of risk profiles and advance data and taking appropriate enforcement actions. Some of the readers may recall an incident of a football team and their coach being trapped in a cave due to sudden heavy rain and a rapid increase of the water level inside the cave. Thanks to excellent crisis management exercised by the coach and disciplined behaviors of these boys, as well as dedicated rescue activities, they were all able to come out although a rescue team member deceased in the course of the intense rescue operation. It is quite worrisome that the scale of typhoons are increasing and causing hundreds of casualties and tremendous devastation around the world, including the recent ones that hit the region, including Pacific islands, the Philippines and Japan among others.

The lessons learned shows us the need to be prepared for these risks. Nowadays, thanks to the well-developed weather forecast and monitoring systems, supported by super computers, we are able to know the projected movement of typhoons well in advance and have live/spot information on raining and windiness via TV broadcast and web news, so that we may take certain preparations against the anticipated storms. Likewise, although it is not such easily visible like the weather data, Customs are now able to use readily available advance information on cargo and passengers, which gives Customs an abundance of opportunities and potentials avenues to conduct advance risk assessment and take pertinent intelligence-led actions, including deployment of resources to these high-risk areas. I sincerely hope that the Member administrations apply best use of the existing WCO technical guidelines and tools to exercise good risk assessment and management for their sake.

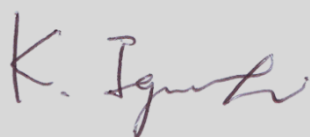
This issue of E-Newsletter features the ROCB A/P's activities in the 1st quarter of FY2018/19. Normally, the first quarter of the fiscal year is fairly quiet because it is the

period of summer vacation and, for the ROCB A/P, the time to coordinate with the Secretariat and the Regional Training Centers for the delivery of newly budgeted capacity building assistance programs. However, given that there are a number of national and regional workshops carried forward and, a couple of regional workshops were planned with anticipated earmarking, this year's first quarter had a good number of activities. One of the impressive missions I undertook was a visit to the Solomon Islands for the purpose of urging high-ranking government officials for their WCO Membership, which was arranged in the wake of an informal consultation with the Customs Controller at the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Annual Meeting held in June 2018 in Australia. In addition to the Solomon Islands, there are a couple of more OCO Members expressing their interest in the WCO Membership. I very much look forward to welcoming them to the WCO Membership and collaborating with them for furthering reform and modernization under the flag of the WCO and in good partnership with the OCO.

This issue also carries several special contributions from the regional Members. As mentioned above, the application of technology is another imperative need of the day for Customs administrations with a view to providing better risk management capability and conducting necessary controls against fraud and smuggling of contraband and restricted goods at the border while assuring facilitated cross-border movement of legitimate trade. In this regard, I am quite pleased to have an additional special contribution from China, which is a reproduction of the keynote address delivered to the WCO IT Conference held in Lima, Peru, and tells us how China Customs copes with the supply chain security challenges and assuring trade facilitation. As part of the Member administrations' tangible progress in institutional capacity building, I would like to draw the readers' attention to the special contribution from the Thai Customs Department on talent management. Activities of the second A/P regional Customs laboratory in Korea may also be of interest. I hope that this publication provides you some food-for-thoughts.

The ROCB A/P always welcomes and looks forward to the readers' feedback and suggestions to this E-Newsletter as well as activities undertaken by us. Please rest assured that I will do my very best to ensure the ROCB A/P lives up to the Members' various expectations for the rest of my tenure. Your continued support and guidance are much sought to this end.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. Igarashi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kazunari Igarashi
Head of the ROCB A/P

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Essay on Combating Environmental Crime: challenges and possible solutions



By Sopagna SENG
Deputy Chief of Bureau
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With the support from the Chinese Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/China) and the WCO Regional Office for Capacity Building for Asia/Pacific (ROCB A/P), the World Customs Organization (WCO) organized a Regional Workshop on the Green Customs Initiative from 23 to 27 April 2018 at the Regional Training Centre in Shanghai, China.

The Workshop was aimed at improving knowledge and strengthening the existing capabilities of Customs administrations of the Asia/Pacific region on Green Customs Initiative issues such as illegal trade in wildlife, waste, chemical weapons, ozone depleting substances, etc. Representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga and Vietnam were invited to participate in the above workshop.

During group discussion in relation to the exchange of experiences and learning from each other while aiming to provide a set of recommendations in general as well to reflect on our individuals administrative work, respective organizations and the partnership among relevant law enforcement agencies (LEAs), country participants have recognized the need to further pursuit more actions.

In this respect, participants identified some major obstacles, possible solutions including support and cooperation in order to implement and enforce multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in which the following questions have been answered and suggestions have been raised:

1. National customs experiences and major obstacles to implementation and enforcing MEAs and in dealing with Environmentally sensitive commodities?

2. What support and assistance is needed by customs, and where could this support and assistance come from?
3. How is the cooperation with stakeholders related to the control of environmentally sensitive commodities and Cooperation between countries in the Region and what could improve?

In response to the above concerns, participants have shared some common understanding and obstacles as law enforcement agencies the following points:

- Lack of experience, skills, and knowledge of the customs officers on wastes especially ODS. No sufficient funding for the seized ODS treatment, and no proper facility to store the seized ODS nor tools or equipment to protect officers when dealing with the hazardous wastes;
- Lack of communication and raising the awareness within the domestic country and between countries regarding changes of national legislation on waste importation and exportation restrictions. This includes the updates that country members obligated to inform the coordinated organizations such Basel Secretariat or UNEP;
- Different level of restrictions on the wastes import/export in different countries – countries with less restrictions could be targeted and sometimes used as transit for illegal traffic this would include illegal wild life trafficking and life animals;
- Waste Management Rules in every Country; Every sovereign nation should be able to effectively manage its waste generated and there should be no import of export of waste;
- Non-clear definition has been provided within the national legislation in which it impedes the implementation of MEAs for some countries;
- While there is a lack on intra-governmental coordination, capacity building for customs officers as well as different legal systems in various countries the import of waste in developing countries is profitable and attracting foreign and local smugglers; and
- Among some countries, revenue collection has been, to some extent, taken as excuse for not being prioritized enough to combat illegal trades especially in response to the enforcement of MEAs.

Having raised all the obstacles above, there are some possible solutions including supports and cooperation among relevant agencies both domestically and internationally in which our participants have suggested:

- Trainings/capacity building activities for front line customs officers, in terms of MEAs, identification and classification of wastes. The application of post clearance audit (PCA) could be further introduced and strengthened;
- There should be international, regional and national awareness workshops/meetings aimed to raise the awareness of the International Environmental Agreements and Domestic Laws;
- Funding for proper treatment of the seized ODS/hazardous wastes, locations to place the seized ODS, assistance should come from WCO and involved UN agencies (in the case of absence in treatment the illegally imported wastes are repatriated to the export country while the costs will be charged to the exporter);
- All countries should be able to manage their own waste and the ultimate goal should be that the trade of waste should be scrapped in which the augmentation of manpower and physical infrastructure should be included and scheduled its operation in national strategic work plan and modernization programs;
- More coordination between intra-governmental agencies where information could be further shared between customs, especially for suspicious shipments. The information sharing shall be real-time and in an efficient way (i.e. providing details such as container number, vessel name, consigner, consignee, departure port, etc.). An updated list of national contact / focal points should be available on an agreed website and accessible;
- Initiatives of the government to engage stakeholders for better waste management and recycling with the balance of health safety and trade that could affect the livelihood of the local community;
- A balance approach in border control and facilitation should be introduced through of an effective use of the application of risk management; and
- Information & Intelligence sharing- The Information & intelligence should reach the frontline enforcement officer.



Taking this opportunity, after the successful Regional Workshop in Shanghai, I wish to share some of personal thoughts and suggestions for the future development of Customs-related Environmental topics as below.

Country administrations should require border controls to be administered by a single agency, which may involve merging those duplicate agencies, which currently have overlapping responsibilities, which require a greater degree of coordination between Customs and a number of government bodies. According to Xinhua News Agency published in March 2018 on the State Council's Institutional Reform Program, it is worth to take note on the recent example from Chinese General Customs Administration in merging Entry and Exit Inspection and Quarantine under the management of customs.

In addition, country administrations should have a mechanism to ensure continuity and sustainability its implementation of reform and modernization programs and to conduct an evaluation of previous reforms. This should include a review of customs laws, regulations, administrative guidelines, and procedures, harmonized and simplified to reduce unnecessary duplication and red tape. The review should place emphasis on the need for risk-based inspections and the implementation of post clearance audit, additional automation and other initiatives aimed at improving the trading environment and increasing the international competitiveness of business. For instance, the Columbus Program and other capacity building programs have been provided by the WCO.

Significantly, to be effective in their reform and modernization program, country administrations should focus on ten core areas: (1) leadership and strategic planning; (2) organizational and institutional framework; (3) resources (human, financial, and physical); (4) external cooperation and partnership; (5) good governance; (6) customs systems and

procedures; (7) the legal framework; (8) change management and continuous improvement; (9) information technology; (10) management information and statistics. This would allow the respective administrations to review the effectiveness and the efficiency in the relation the enforcement of combating illegal trading.

According to an article released by gbtimes.com, it is a great example from Hong Kong administration in response to the continues effort to fight against elephant poaching and illegal ivory trafficking that Hong Kong has also just increased the maximum penalty for smuggling and trading endangered species from two years' imprisonment to 10 years. The coverage of the penalty includes species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix I. Specifically, mammal such as ivory, rhino, the rare totoaba fish and the pangolin have been noticed as the highest illegally trafficked species globally.

While having laws and regulations in place, the supports from WCO and UNEP Secretariat as well as other relevant UN agencies are substantially important and witness for actions contributed by county participants and their capacity to put these actions forward to other relevant donor agencies and developing partners to assist countries to achieve as per action plan.

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Mr. Sopagna is a Deputy Chief of Bureau with a demonstrated history and experienced of working in the customs administration industry at airports for more than a decade. With expertise in border control, revenue collection, and illegal goods detection, Mr. Sopagna holds a Master's degree in Int'l Customs Law & Admin (MICLA) from University of Canberra's Centre for Customs and Excise Studies (CCES) in Australia.

Central Customs Laboratory of Korea (K-CCL) was designated as WCO Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL)

Contribution by Mr. Jong-Myeong KIM
Director General of Central Customs Laboratory,
Korea Customs Service (KCS)

Organization and Operation of Central Customs Laboratory



Central Customs Laboratory of Korea (hereinafter referred to as K-CCL) has been carrying out various tasks such as product analysis, technical support, and HS classification to solve fundamental challenges of Customs Service for over 57 years, since it started as an analysis department of the Ministry of Finance in 1961.

While classification on goods for the purpose of taxation on imports was the main function at the time of its beginning, such work area as analyzing hazardous goods for the safety of a human being/the environment and identifying country of origin has been greatly expanded and diversified.

The organizations responsible for Customs analysis in the Korea Customs Service are K-CCL which controls the entire administration of analysis, and five Local Customs Laboratories which are established in each regional headquarter of Customs houses to deal with urgent requests for analysis.

Currently, the number of staffs working in K-CCL is about 30 members. There are coordination section and three analysis sections. While the coordination section is in charge of overall administration, budget, and planning, three analysis sections are responsible for Customs analysis. In addition, there are about 50 staffs who are working in Local Customs Laboratories. So, the total numbers of Customs analysis staffs are over 80.

The main tasks of K-CCL are detailed analysis and HS classification which are necessary for identification of the specifications, standards and constituent materials of the analyzed commodities

These accurate taxation and confirmation of the requirements for Customs clearance of imported and exported goods are essential functions of K-CCL. Furthermore, task range is expanding into legal/illegal drugs, and products containing illegal and harmful substances.

Since the importance of country of origin is increasing because of trade disputes and negotiations between countries with the changes in the world trade environment, needs for technical support and cases of service offering are also growing. Likewise, standard analytical methods have been established and distributed to five Local Customs Laboratories together with technical consultation on products, which ensured uniformity and consistency of Customs analysis in Korea.

Main Items for Customs analysis in Korea

Korea is highly sensitive to imports of agricultural products, and some of the items are subject to high tariffs when they are in a natural state as compared to a processed condition.

For example, in the case of rice, which is the staple food of Koreans, it is subject to a low rate of Customs duties. However, in case of cooked rice, high tariffs are imposed on it, and some imports are even restricted. So, there might be some importers who would wrongly clear their products with the intention of tax evasion. To prevent this kind of illegal act, we are checking gelatinization degree.

In addition, the classification criteria and specific analytical methods have been set up and operated to differentiate between dried red pepper which cause a high tax rate and its preparation which cause relatively low tax rate. Similarly, various products such as starch

preparations, cereals, sugar, alcoholic beverages, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, chemical preparations, plastics and rubber products, apparel, steel products and mineral products are analyzed and confirmed through Local Customs Laboratories at Customs clearance stage.

When it comes to the number of analysis cases carried out by K-CCL, it goes over 4,000 cases. This number covers the items which are requested by Local Customs Laboratories for more precise examination and by Customs Valuation and Classification Institute for Customs analysis among the items from Advance Classification Ruling. As for the number of cases analyzed by five Local Customs Laboratories nationwide, it is around 15,000 items.

Capacity of Korea Customs analysis

Due to changes in world trade patterns, development of science/technology, and various demands of consumers, the types and forms of imported goods have also been diversified. It has even become complex and difficult to grasp the authenticity of commodities to be analyzed. As a result, equipments for analysis have been upgraded, and efforts are being made to design accurate and transparent analysis results by setting up standard analysis methods and by sharing analysis materials through all the Customs laboratories for coherent application of Customs analysis.

K-CCL has 50 kinds of high-performance analytical equipments such as GC-MS, IR-MS, ICP-MS, HPLC, XRD, XRF and SEM, and is recognized as an internationally standardized testing institute which complies with the general requirements for international organization (ISO/IEC 17025). Besides, it publishes and shares more than 300 research materials and guidebooks on HS classification, which have been accumulated since 1986 through its own seminars.



Efforts to achieve Globalization of Customs analysis

At first, the international activities of K-CCL have been conducted mainly through participation of WCO HSC, RSC and SSC, which are HS classification cooperation working bodies, and through international workshops and business consultations with other countries' Customs offices in order to keep in step with global issues and trends on Customs analysis.

However, from 2016 onward, we have recognized the need to expand the scope of international activities, and have sought to find ways to perform those activities. For example, we tried to analyze the WCO HSC issue items (blanched peanut, fish oil preparation etc) voluntarily and shared the result. In the same way, we held WCO A/P Customs analysis Workshop and get designated as WCO Regional Customs Laboratory (hereinafter referred to as RCL) A/P so that we could support the mood to cooperate among Customs laboratories in A/P region, together with Japan RCL.

In the near future, K-CCL will do a lot of works as a WCO RCL A/P, and would make various efforts for this. For example, we would share the latest analysis trends and techniques by carrying out WCO International workshops and training programs for A/P member Customs officers, which will help improve the analysis capacity in A/P region. Moreover, we would do our best to find out the solutions for issues on Customs analysis.

Steps to become WCO RCL

It was a difficult challenge for K-CCL to be designated as the WCO RCL. Actually, Japan CCL has already been actively engaged in the international activities as WCO RCL A/P. Specifically, It has been operating Customs training programs for A/P member countries and dispatching their staffs directly to developing countries to conduct high-level consultation related to Customs analysis.

As a result, we thought it would be hard to be appointed as an additional WCO RCL, considering the fact that there were only three WCO RCLs worldwide. Opinions of the WCO Secretariat were not different too. It was natural to be of the opinion that the activities would be duplicated if there are two RCL in A/P region. What is more, the international commitment of Korea CCL was not that outstanding at that time.

However, there was a way. First of all, it was necessary to agree with and cooperate with the Japan CCL, as well as to spread the information on current level and capability of Korea CCL to A/P member countries. That way, we got much closer to the appointment as WCO RCL.

In April 2017, there was a Director General's meeting with Japan CCL. It was emphasized that it would be possible to jointly promote various cooperation projects in case that Korea CCL officially become WCO RCL, and to have sufficient synergy effect in establishing a standardized system of Customs analysis including analytical techniques and operations in A/P region. Therefore, Japan CCL showed their agreement on this idea and stance to provide support for Korea CCL's designation as WCO RCL.

Similarly, we tried to build up close relationship with Russia Customs laboratory, which was also WCO RCL in Europe region. In July 2017, the Customs analysis staffs, including the Director General of Korea CCL, participated the International Scientist Conference in Vladivostok, Russia, and noted that Korea CCL had been trying to get appointed as WCO RCL. Thanks to this event, Director General of Russia Customs laboratory with the high-level staffs visited Korea CCL, which allowed us to directly show the scale and capacity of our laboratory.



Our efforts continued. As a matter of fact, Korea Customs Service has been sponsoring Customs Cooperation Fund for developing countries. By means of this fund, training programs or various cooperation projects have been being conducted at WCO Regional

Training Center of Korea for WCO member countries. Similarly, as part of the Customs cooperation project, Korean CCL promoted WCO A/P Regional Customs Analysis Workshop in order to inform the competence and size of our laboratory, and to strengthen cooperation among WCO member countries. We also wanted to have an opportunity to draw attention and need to designate additional WCO RCL for more active environment in A/P region.



The international workshop was held in Busan city Korea in April 2018, inviting 25 members from 22 countries in A/P region. It introduced the Customs analysis system of each member country, and shared analysis methods for HS classification, together with the analysis methods for the products containing harmful substance. Over 28 topics were presented during the sessions, and various discussions have been made among the analysis experts of each country. This workshop received highly positive responses from the participants, and finally formed close connection with the member countries by sharing the sense of homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity.

In May 2018, WCO A/P Regional Customs Commissioners' Meeting approved the designation of WCO RCL A/P for Korea CCL with generous support from Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia. At the end of June, the WCO Council finally designated K-CCL as WCO RCL A/P by signing the Memorandum of Cooperation with Korea Customs Service. We take it as the result of the positive expectation and support of the A/P member countries, which led us to feel special responsibility and heavy burden, as well as our firm will and active effort to become RCL.

We will keep searching for the way to contribute to the development of Customs analysis as a member of the A/P region and hope it will succeed.

Action plans as WCO A/P RCL

With the wish to play an important role in the field of Customs analysis in A/P region, we are planning to conduct following three main activities.

The first point is to support for strengthening capacity of Customs analysis. As the Japan RCL and some Customs laboratories do, training programs are planned, which cover the general contents of Customs analysis, HS classification of items, and direction of analytical equipments for Customs officers in developing countries.

The second point is to assist Customs analysis itself. We would share analysis result of the items issued in HSC agenda which need Customs analysis, and support the analysis of imported items and harmful substances in the developing countries that do not have the Customs laboratory. This would also lead to managing joint analysis for the unidentified materials and the products that have different HS opinion among countries.

The third point is to reinforce global network. Based on close cooperation with the Japan RCL, we would hold Customs analysis technology workshops on a regular basis to make it a platform for communication in A/P regions. We will proceed to translate domestic standard methods and domestic seminar materials for Customs analysis and share them soon.

As new products emerge, and the trade system becomes more complex in a rapidly changing international trade environment, much more efforts would be needed to identify and classify the goods.



In conclusion, now that it is our first time to become global organization for a new start, we would look forward to the attention and encouragement of the WCO member countries, which would lead us to faithfully fulfill our role as WCO RCL A/P and to become a leading Customs laboratory for A/P region.

Thai Customs Talent Management

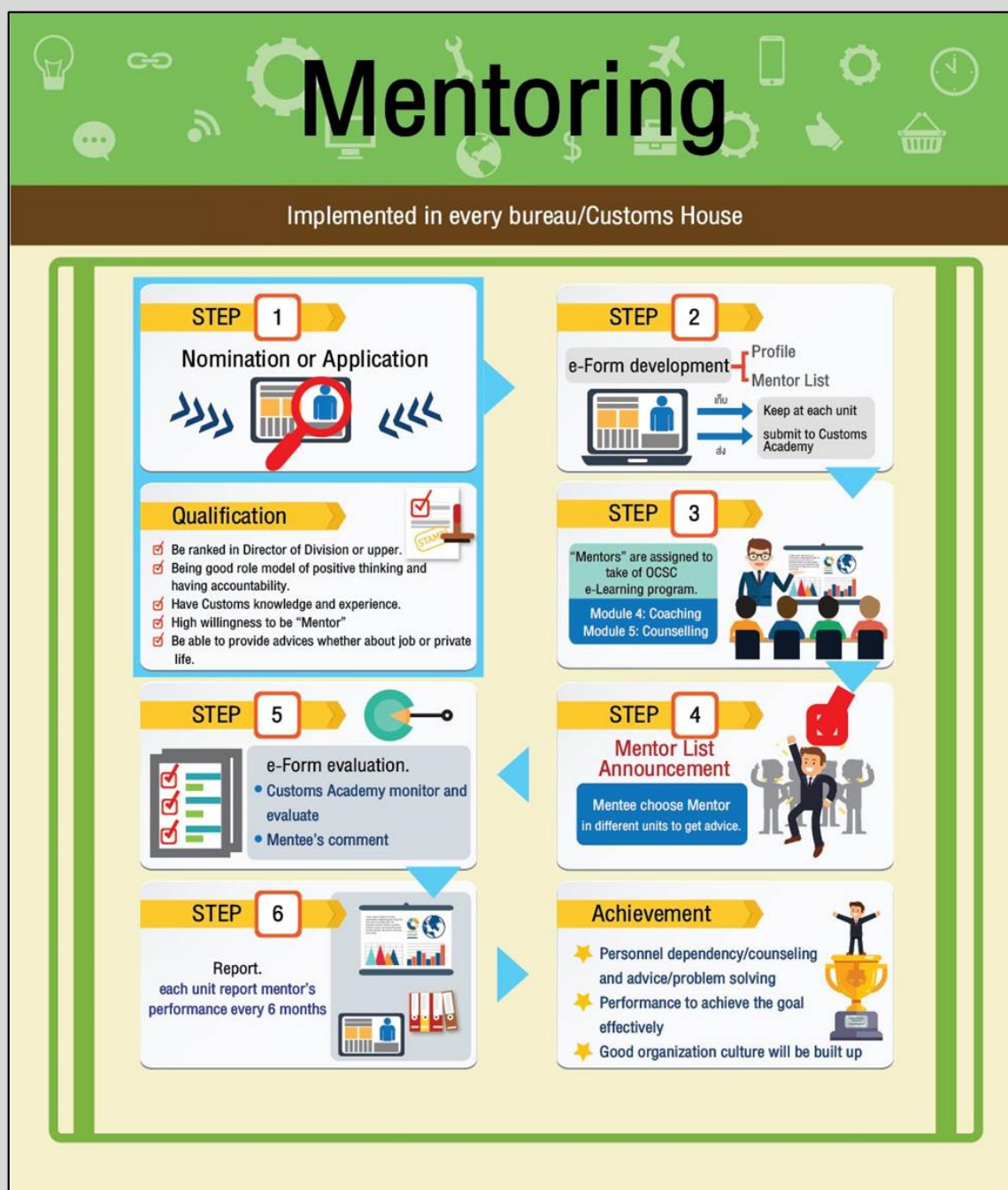


Mr. Prawat Chuenchavalit
Expert on Human resource Development
Thai Customs Department

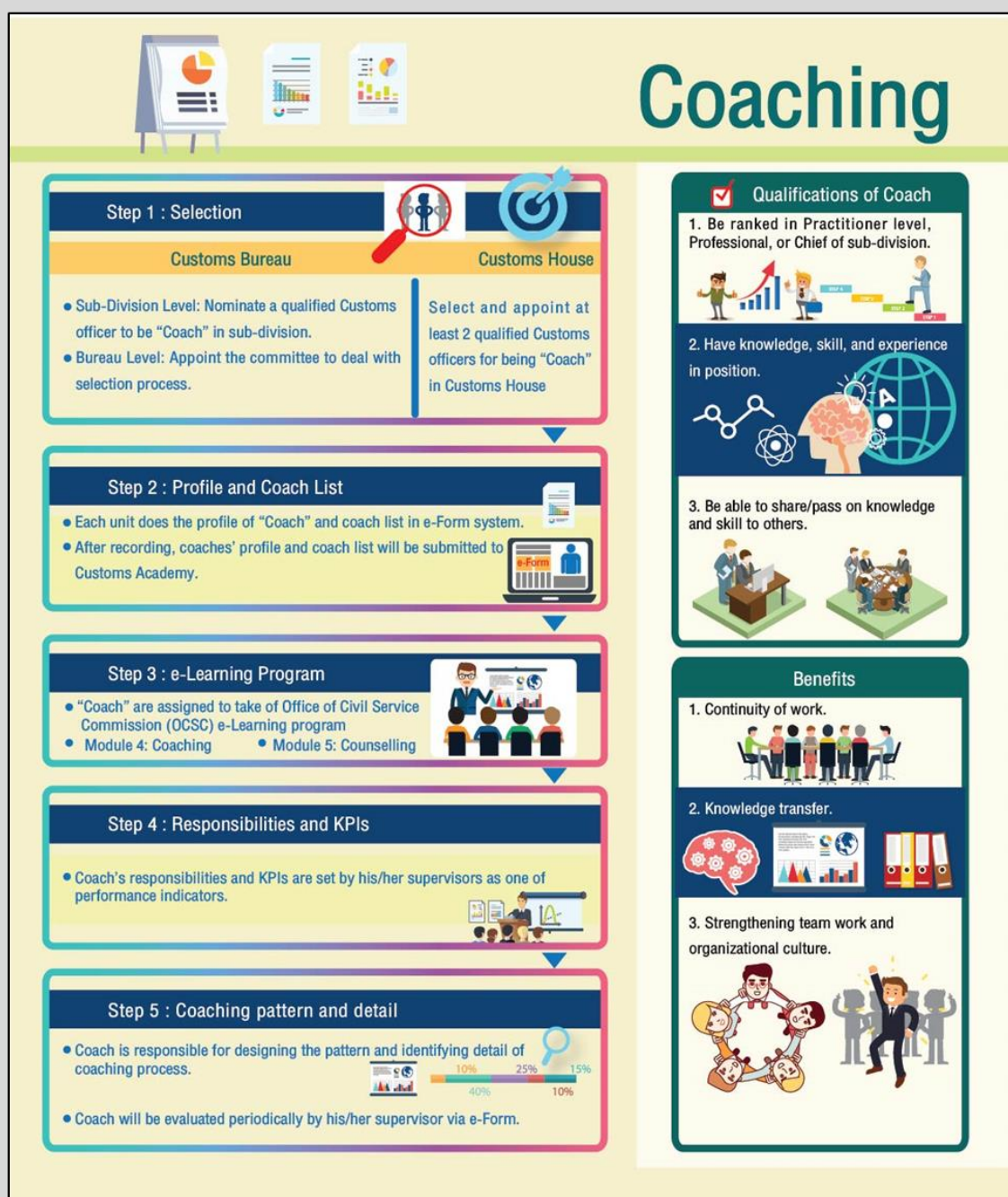
Due to the large amount of retired Customs Officers in the last 3 years, around 200 retirees a year, Customs knowledge, skills and experiences, which have been collected by those senior Customs Officers, are fading away. Also, the big gap between the senior and the younger Customs officers, who have difference in age, knowledge, and working style, causes the problem of knowledge transfer. To collect, maintain and pass on the Customs knowledge, Human Resource (HR) Management Bureau has created a project called “Customs Talent Management” as a significant HR tool to collect Customs knowledge from the seniors and pass it on to the younger generation including to build up Customs specialists or experts. The project’s selection process consists of 2 main parts: project presentation and competency-based interview. The applicants are required to be not over 45 years old, rank in chief of sub-division or lower and have responsibility on self-learning. The “Pre-Talents”, who pass the selection process, will be trained and developed intensively by Customs experts or experienced officers including the speakers from outside



having expertise in related areas. In addition, those Pre-Talents will be assigned to take WCO e-Learning (CLiKC!), on the job training (OJT) program and attend some managerial training and the executive programs, so that they are able to gain the knowledge, skill and experience not only Customs matter but also the management skill. Under this project, there are 17 areas of Customs knowledge identified by the Department as followings: namely, Valuation; classification of goods of heading 07, 27, 30, 39, 72-73, 84-85 and 87; IPR; Drugs and Precursor; CITES; WMD; ROO; Risk Management; Passenger control; Tax Incentive; and PCA. The Customs Department aims to proceed this project continually and have 6-month evaluation. The first evaluation will take place in the end of this fiscal year.



Besides this project, Human Resource Management Bureau has set up Coaching and Mentoring Project in order to have coaching and mentoring system in each unit. By setting a coach for each sub-division to coach new comers and 1 or 2 mentors for each bureau to provide counsel or any necessary advice to Customs officer from other bureau. To ensure that the project will be run smoothly by each sub division, KPIs of the project have been set and evaluated in every 6 months.



Apart from that, to develop the suitable training programme to bridge the learning gap, Customs Knowledge Test (CK Test) has been developed as the significant evaluation tool of Customs Knowledge level. In the first test, only Customs law and regulation was included

in the CK Test, since the new Customs law has been entered into force in November 2017. Other Customs matters: Valuation, Classification, ROO, etc., will be included in the next CK Test. All of above-mentioned HR tools would be out-of-date or ineffective because the world is changing rapidly. HR has to develop new tools to deal with new challenges all the time.

Special contributions by regional members on the application of innovative technologies in Customs

Application of innovative technology is quite hot issue among Customs executives and no Customs administration can afford ignoring it with a view to keep the frontline Customs operations up with the nations' expectations for trade facilitation, protection of society and assurance of revenue collection while coping with increasing volume of cross-border movement of goods, people and means of transport. The WCO provide various opportunities to introduce these innovative technologies to the attention of the Members and led a series of discussion and experience sharing at the various platforms.

In the A/P region, under the initiative of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS), the former WCO Regional Vice-Chair for the A/P region, organized the Private Sector Engagement Meeting back-to-back with the recent Regional Heads of Customs Administration Conference in May 2018 in Fiji and provided the high-level Member delegations with a platform to learn state-of-art technologies readily available for their daily applications and discussed foreseen implication of further advancement of the technologies, including disruptive technologies, and its innovation to the trade and commerce. FRCS' initiative was highly appreciated by both Customs and relevant stakeholders.

One of the prominent occasions for the global dialogue on the technological innovation to Customs is the WCO IT Conference, which is organized almost every year in different regions with expectation of wider and diversified participation of the Member administration delegations and stakeholders in the respective regions. As the readers of this E-Newsletter may be aware, the most recent WCO IT Conference was organized on 6-8 June 2018 in Lima, Peru. For more information on this event, the readers may visit the [WCO homepage](#) at and the [ROCB A/P home page](#). To add-value to this well-attended WCO event,

two high-level representatives from the A/P regional Member administrations, namely China and Japan, delivered their keynote addresses to set the scene and provide insightful food-for-thought. The ROCB A/P has the honor to be able to reproduce keynote addresses delivered by China Customs Vice Minister in our E-Newsletter, as the second featured contribution.

The ROCB A/P thanks China for their kind consent to share their views and hope that the readers may be inspired from their experiences for furthering on-going discussion on the advancement of the Customs operation in the innovation age.

Building technology-driven organizations: the experience of China Customs

Mr. Wang Lingjun

Vice Minister of the General Administration
of Customs of China (GACC)



A new Customs agency

In March, 2018, the Chinese government decided to integrate China's entry-exit inspection and quarantine duties and workforce into China Customs. Since April 20, the previous entry-exit inspection and quarantine officers in 306 ports nationwide have started to work as Customs officers, which marks the birth of the new China Customs. Indeed, this reform has brought us not only opportunities, but also challenges.

The first challenge is how to achieve full integration of Customs and Inspection and Quarantine. The inclusion of inspection and quarantine requires completely new clearance procedures and IT systems. Only by integrating the IT platforms of the two agencies can we stimulate a "chemical reaction" that truly transforms our Customs, and bring about the "1+1>2" result. By simplifying the declaration items of enterprise, adopting international standards, optimizing and reconstructing the database structure according to different business lines, the external service capability of the IT system has been improved in an all-

round way, and the document cost of the enterprise and the supervision administrative cost of Customs have been reduced simultaneously. It realizes a "win-win" situation between enterprises and Customs.

The second challenge is how to safeguard the national gateway. The new Customs shoulders greater responsibilities in terms of border security and risk prevention in areas such as revenue collection, public health security, bio-security, food safety, illegal items and goods.

The third challenge is how to achieve comprehensive opening-up and to better manage e-commerce transactions. In recent years, the trade volume of cross-border e-commerce in China has been soaring. For example, in 2017, China Customs handled 1.89 billion inward and outward parcels. On November 11, the most popular shopping day in China also known as Double Eleven, our Customs Clearance System for Cross-Border E-Commerce processed 16.19 million overseas shopping manifests.

New solutions for new challenges

With limited resources, we turned to technology to improve efficiency and save human resources, thus bringing about technology-driven changes. We have already made some progress in the last 5 years. Some of them are presented below.

Increased non-intrusive inspection capacities

- In 2017, we explored AI application in centralized and smart equipment inspection image system such as x-ray、Back Scatter、Millimeter-wave) . As a result, more accurate and faster intelligent inspection is achieved. In this regard, we have carried out mid-term pilot programs in some Customs districts and managed to seize prohibited and restricted items with our new measures.
- We used Facial Recognition (FR) technology to build a centralized sharing facial database of frequently incoming and outgoing passengers for real-time detection, which reducing Customs manpower input while ensuring passenger clearance efficiency. Officers target key suspects at passenger inspection channel, and conduct non-invasive examinations with Millimeter Waves (MMW) body scan equipment. Illegal concealing and smuggling activities have thus been greatly deterred.
- We have deployed robots to answer passengers' questions and guide them through customs clearance. We are also exploring robot-assisted inspection and radiation

detection, where we use robots instead of human resources to answer various consultations of enterprise users through friendly human-computer interaction on site.

More accurate targeting



The new Customs information system has been built to integrate and analyses “Big Data”, aggregated from various sources and in multiple forms to the “Customs Brain”. A Big Data Application Center and a Big Data Platform have been also established. We have gradually shaped the operating mechanism which combines expert risk analysis and machine intelligence assistance in law enforcement. Through accurate data analysis, we can effectively balance the relatively limited human resources and the growing supervision

workload. For example, experts have transformed thousands of successful cases into algorithm models, which was in turn used in anti-smuggling practices. Hundreds of smuggling cases were thus cracked down, involving a value of over 16 billion RMB.

Now, China Customs has realized real-time monitoring and command-deploy, with three levels of centers hierarchically monitoring over 1900 customs operation cites via CCTV. The platform displays the real-time Customs operation nationwide, helping our headquarters implement accurate monitoring and effective order issuance.

Digitalization

We have established an integrated platform, with the merged functionalities of both Single Window and Internet +Customs, provides almost all necessary ports and Customs services online. In 2017, 50% of declaration of main documents was made through Single Window, which is predicted to reach 70% by the end of this year, where 98% of customs declaration is paperless, so that enterprises can avoid the duplicate submission of the same data to

different agencies. We have fully opened access to Customs operational data, which allows enterprises to learn about the declaration process through the Internet, mobile APP or popular social network system(SNS) APP. Furthermore, we have carried forward integrated Customs clearance reform through establishment of the Customs Targeting Center and the Supervision Centre for Revenue Collection, which aim at entry risk analysis and tax risk analysis separately, thus achieving unified enforcement in both institutional and technical terms. Wherever they are located, enterprises now can enjoy Customs service at the same standard. With these initiatives, Customs clearance time of imports and exports in 2017 was reduced by one third compared to 2016.

Way Forward

We believe that, to improve control mechanisms, our IT application must reach international standard. The exploration and implementation of new technology is an on-going process that will never end. We are now focusing our resources on research of new technology such as blockchain as a way to develop trusted, safe and efficient trade chains by collecting and sharing data covering all the stages of the domestic and overseas production, processing, storage and usage. We are also looking at virtual reality (VR) and the possibility of using it to train officers to handle terrorism attacks, deliver epidemic control or manage vessels inspection. At present, we are promoting some pilot projects at different Customs units.

More information

Please write to Mr. WANG Xiang wangxiang@mail.customs.gov.cn & Mrs. WANG Sijia cus_wangsijia@126.com at National Information Center, General Administration of China Customs, PRC.

WCO Global Mercator Program Advisor Seminar



2-6 July 2018, Brussels, Belgium

The second WCO Global Mercator Program Advisor (MPA) Seminar was held at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, on 2-6 July 2018 with a view to continuously providing a platform for MPAs to share experiences in their respective missions under the Mercator Program and update the recent developments in the initiatives undertaken by the WCO and its development partners so that the MPAs may provide the down-to-the-earth support in the tailor-made track approach. About 20 participants, who have been involved in activities pertaining to the Mercator Program, took part in the Seminar. Ms. Saori Nojima, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, participated in the seminar as one of the fully accredited MPAs.

The Mercator Program was launched in 2014 to support the WCO Members to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the MPAs are Members' experts with the capacity to support administrations with an organizational gap analysis, planning and implementation of the TFA, typically at a strategic level.

WCO Sub-Regional Workshop for ASEAN Member States on Border Enforcement on Counterfeiting and Piracy



9-13 July 2018, Langkawi, Malaysia

The WCO Sub-Regional Workshop for ASEAN Member States (AMS) on Border Enforcement on Counterfeiting and Piracy was held on 9-13 July 2018 in Langkawi, Malaysia, under the sponsorship of Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). The Workshop was organized in cooperation with the Royal Malaysia Customs Department (RMCD) and the ROCB A/P. The commitment of the RMCD as a Country Coordinator of Strategic Plan of Customs Development (SPCD) 10 on Public Security and Protection of the Society under the ASEAN Framework realized the joint arrangement of the Workshop with the RMCD. A total of 24 Customs officials representing nine AMS, two observers from ASEAN Secretariat, and one observer from ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation attended the Workshop. Resource persons from the WCO Secretariat and Japan Customs respectively facilitated the sessions and Ms. Saori Nojima, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, also took part in the Workshop as a resource person and facilitator.

Representatives gave presentations on the basics of intellectual property rights (IPR), international agreements regarding the IPR including the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), border enforcement of trademarks and copyrights, among other things, and the participants shared their administrations' practices to deepen their understanding on the IPR legal frameworks and

learn good practices. In the course of the Workshop, the participants developed training materials pertaining to the afore-mentioned focused subjects, which are expected to be utilized for their training opportunities. In addition, joint sessions with rights holders were conducted to learn product identification techniques and discuss the way forward for effective border enforcement while strengthening the cooperation between Customs and right holders. The Workshop was successfully concluded with participants' clear recognition about their roles in self-sufficient and sustainable domestic trainings and the possible way forward toward better IPR enforcement at the border.

ROCB A/P joins the Assumption Ceremony of India' A/P Vice Chair



16 July 2018, New Delhi, India

At the invitation of the Central Board of Indirect Tax and Customs (CBIC) of India, Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, attended the Assumption Ceremony of WCO A/P

Vice Chair of India, which was held on 16 July 2018 at a hotel in New Delhi, India, back-to-back with the WCO A/P Regional High-Level Seminar on Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards. Nearly 200 guests, including Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, Minister of State for Finance of India, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, as well as high-level representatives from the A/P regional Member administrations, Indian government authorities and business industry associations, and local media.

At the Ceremony, in the wake of lighting of sacred lamps by chief guests, Shri S. Ramesh, Chairman of the CBIC delivered his welcome address, in which he touched upon 4 key guiding principles as new WCO Vice Chair, including enhancement of regional capacity building and capacity building activities in cooperation with the ROCB A/P and other regional bodies, such as WCO Regional



Training Centers and Regional Customs Laboratories. Then, Dr. Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, and Shri Shukla, India's Minister of State for Finance, made keynote addresses respectively. Mr. Visvanath Das, Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service and out-going Regional Vice Chair, and Mr. Atsushi Iizuka, Director General of Japan Customs and Tariff Bureau, made their congratulatory speeches. In the second part of the Ceremony, guests from the Member administrations and Indian business and industry associations made their congratulatory remarks and speeches on the Ceremony's theme of "Customs – Facilitating cross border clearance." In the course of the vote of thanks, Joint Secretary of Indian Customs complimented Head of the ROCB A/P as a co-initiator of this successful Ceremony and expressed continued close collaboration in their tenure of Regional Vice Chair and beyond. The ROCB A/P is going to work closely with the CBIC for the sake of optimizing the regional collective efforts and cooperation towards the Customs reform and modernization, so that the regional Customs community may contribute to furthering legitimate trade, which contending a series of challenges ahead.

For more information, please refer to the [WCO homepage](#), [CBIC homepage](#) or write to us at rocb@rocbap.org.

WCO A/P Regional High-Level Seminar of Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards



16-17 July 2018, New Delhi, India

The WCO, in cooperation with the ROCB A/P and the Central Board of Indirect tax and Customs (CBIC) of India, organized the WCO A/P Regional High-Level Seminar of Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards (FoS) on 16-17 July 2018 at a hotel in New Delhi, India, with financial sponsorship of Customs Cooperation Fund of Japan (CCF/Japan). More than 40 high-level representatives from 26 WCO A/P Member administrations and the resource persons participated in this very first WCO regional event organized after the launch of the WCO Cross-border E-Commerce FoS, which was adopted at the recent WCO Council Session in June 2018 (refer to the ROCB A/P [web article](#) and the WCO [homepage](#)). This High-Level Seminar was organized back-to-back with the CBIC's Assumption Ceremony of WCO A/P Regional Vice Chair. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P, and Mr. Poonyawee Sroythong, Program Manager, participated in this Seminar as facilitators.

At the Opening Session of the Seminar, Mr. Atsushi Iizuka, Director general of Japan Customs and Tariff Bureau, made his opening remarks in which he stressed the need for Members' collective actions towards the implementation of the FoS and his administration's determination in continued contribution to the WCO's technical assistance and capacity building supports. Mr. P.K. Das, Member of Customs of the CBIC, gave his keynote address,

in which he highlighted the challenges and opportunities associated in the universal implementation of the WCO FoS.

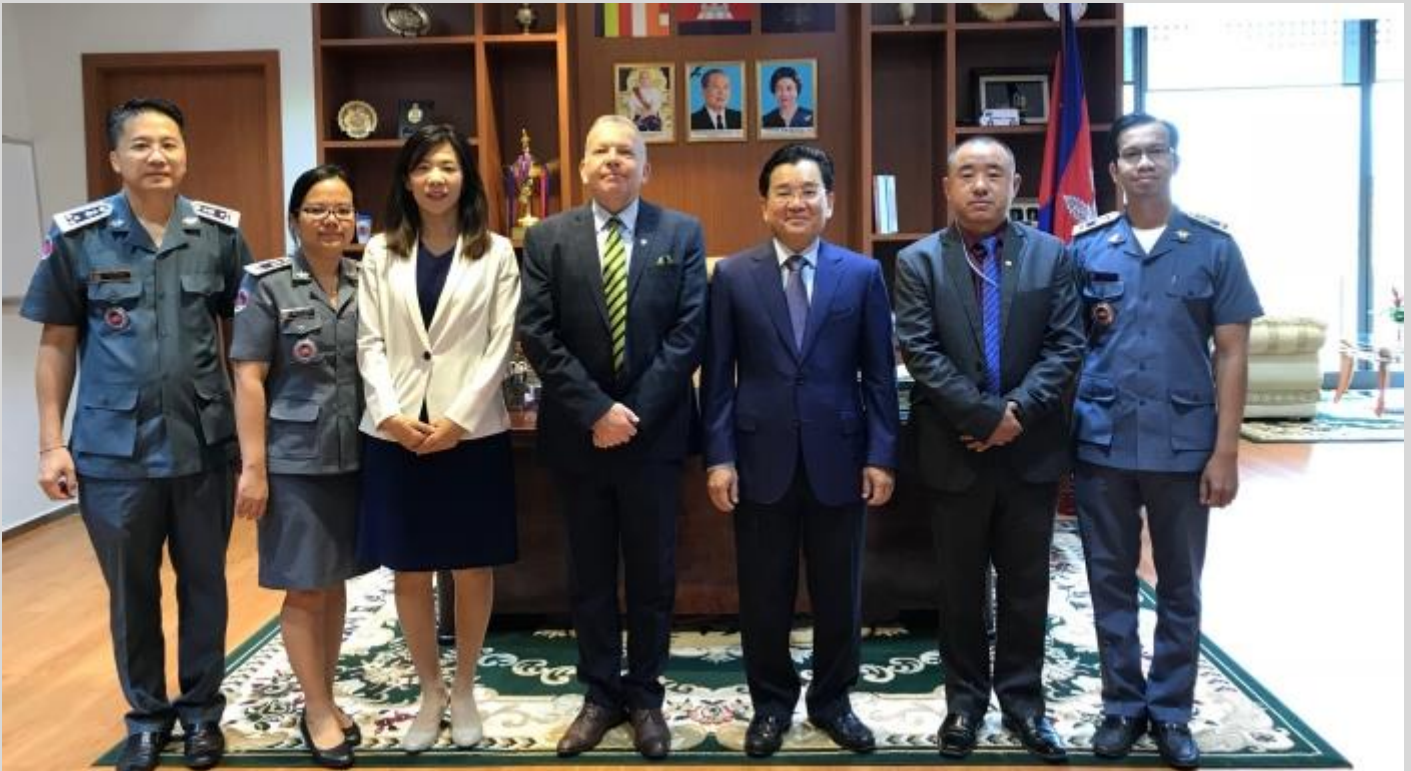
Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, also made keynote address highlighting the macro-and micro economic impacts of e-commerce and continued works to be undertaken by the WCO to remedy remaining technical and operational challenges. Mr. Visvanath Das, Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service and outgoing regional Vice Chair, addressed his views on the significance of the WCO 's leading role on devising technical



standards, including this FoS, and the economic and social impacts from the island country's perspective. He also recalled the private sector's future business models with e-commerce and disruptive technologies introduced at the recent Private Sector Engagement Conference, which his administration arranged preceding to the Regional Heads of Customs Administration Conference in May 2018 in Fiji (refer to <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/406/>), and stressed the need for steady step forward towards the implementation of the newly adopted FoS.

Participants to the High-Level Seminar heard the overview and objectives of the FoS and relevant technical specification, as well as the Members' experiences and pertinent challenges, such as the use of advance electronic data and its accuracy, as well as organizational set-ups to cope with influx of small and low-value consignments. In the course of the Seminar, Mr. Sroythong of the ROCB A/P made a presentation on the regional capacity building approach and effort for optimizing the effects thereof. In addition, Mr. Igarashi reminded the participants of the required actions in accordance with the WCO Resolution on the FoS on Cross-Border E-Commerce, which was adopted at the recent WCO Council Session along with the FoS itself, especially the notification of the respective Member administrations' intention to implement the FoS and indicative timetable for implementation. The need for identifying the required sustainable capacity building measures was also reminded.

WCO supports Mercator Program Gap Analysis and Strategic Planning for Cambodia Customs



6-15 August 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The WCO Mercator Program Gap Analysis and Strategic Planning Support Mission for General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia (GDCE) was held on 6-15 August 2018 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia under the sponsorship of Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). Ms. Saori Nojima, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, took part in the Mission as a Mercator Program Advisor (MPA) along with other experts.

The Mission aimed to conduct gap analysis regarding implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and to support developing GDCE's strategy namely Strategy and Work Program on Reform and Modernization (SWRM) for the period of 2019-2023.

Through a series of discussions and consultations with GDCE officers and representatives from the private sector, the WCO team identified recommended actions to be taken for GDCE's effective implementation of the TFA. The WCO team also led discussions to support the GDCE to review the SWRM's structure and key elements to be incorporated in their future strategy in a logical and holistic manner.

The Mercator Program was launched in 2014 to support the WCO Members to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the MPAs are Members' experts with the capacity to support administrations with an organizational gap analysis, planning and implementation of the TFA, typically at a strategic level.

ROCB A/P introduces the WCO instruments and AEO Program at the UNESCAP Regional Workshop on Trade Facilitation for Sustainable Development



7-10 August 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

At the invitation of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), in cooperation with the International Trade Development Institute (ITD), Mr. Hong-Young Jo of the ROCB A/P attended the ESCAP-ARTNeT/ITD Regional Workshop on Trade Facilitation for Sustainable Development held from 7 to 10 August 2018 at the UN Convention Center in Bangkok, Thailand. Approximately 40 representatives from private and public sectors, relevant international and government agencies participated in the Workshop. The Workshop focused on developing tools to implement trade facilitation measures and paperless trade initiatives, and resource persons provided the participants with their expertise in trade facilitation experiences, thus this workshop contributed to more

effectively support or participate in the work of National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) or related inter-agency bodies.

Mr. Jo made a presentation on the AEO Program and pertinent WCO instruments and tools, as well as the ROCB A/P's activities for facilitating the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). He emphasized proactive application of the WCO instruments and tools such as Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and SAFE Framework of Standards (SAFE FoS) for enhancing the supply chain security while assuring the implementation of the WTO TFA.

This event provided the participants with a good knowledge-building opportunity on an update on the state of implementation of key trade facilitation and paperless trade measures in the region. A series of key measures and instruments on trade facilitation were introduced, including the WTO TFA and the new Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. Participants learned how to conduct a Business Process Analysis (BPA) project to simplify trade procedures. The Workshop also dealt with emerging topics on trade facilitation in the context of logistics management, gender specific dimensions of trade facilitation and e-commerce technical issues and discussed the possible way to overcome perceived challenges in these emerging topics. Participants including Mr. Jo were actively participated group exercise on establishing NCTF and conducting BPA as well as study visit to Thai National Single Window (NSW).

ROCB A/P emphasizes the role of Customs in combating illicit wildlife trade



28-29 August 2018, Changwat Pathum Thani, Thailand

At the request of the WCO Secretariat, Dr. Tong hua, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, represented the WCO to the Conference on 'Science, Technology, and Innovation for Addressing Wildlife and Forest Crimes and Attaining SDGs' held from 28 to 29 August 2018 at the AIT Conference Center, Thailand, as a guest speaker. Approximately 80 representatives from academia, private and public sectors, relevant international and government agencies participated in this Conference, which was convened by the Asian Institute of Technology of Thailand. The conference was opened by the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Thailand Natural Resources and Environment, Dr. Wijarn Simachaya. A video message from the President of the Republic of Nepal, Honorable Madam Bidya Devi Bhandar was also projected.



At the Conference, Dr. Tong made a presentation on the wild life protection and the role of Customs, as well as the WCO's priorities of tactical operational plan for 2018/2019 on combating wildlife crime, the progress of the WCO-INAMA Project which focus on strengthening the enforcement capacity of targeted Customs administrations in Sub-Saharan Africa, the WCO tools and instruments like IRIS Platform and the WCO Environment Programme. He re-affirmed the commitment of Customs administrations across the globe to protecting the environment and introduced the none-intrusive inspection and human face recognizing technology applied in Customs administration's enforcement operation.

The conference provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness about applying cutting-edged technologies. The conference shared the success stories in science and technology where its applications are being used by the governments and other stakeholders in addressing wildlife and forest crimes in real case scenarios.

ROCB A/P delivers lectures to a WCO accredited Russian University



30 August-7 September 2018, Saint Petersburg, Russia

At the invitation from the North-West Institute of Management of Russian Presidential Academy (RANEPA Branch), Dr. Tong Hua, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, attended an Academic Seminar on Customs Modernization, which was held on 30 August-7 September 2018 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The purpose of the seminar was to create and develop young specialists' professional competencies who are ready to master and apply the best practices of customs administrations in their future professional activity. Around 40 professors and students from faculty of Customs Management and Security of RANEPA, the Azerbaijan State Economic University, the Armenia Customs Academy and the Shanghai Customs College attended the seminar.

During his mission, Dr. Tong gave several lectures on the WCO Secretariat and regional entities' missions, strategy, working bodies and functions. He emphasized the particular importance for future customs officers to be aware of the instruments and tools developed by the WCO. Dr. Tong also attended a roundtable discussion with the faculty staff and



internationals students. He shared his views on how to implement the WCO PICARD standards closer with the course syllabus, and further pointed out the way of making full use of the WCO E-Learning platform and research series papers to cultivate future customs leaders.

On 1 September 2018, Dr. Tong was invited to join a special ceremony of initiating students of the North-West Institute of Management. He witnessed the sound gun salute performance and celebrate the opening of new semester together with the Rector of RANEP, 1st Class Actual State Councilor of Russian Federation, Professor Vladimir Shamakhov.

The North-West Institute of Management provides one of the best programs on Customs education in Russia, and the Institute was recognized by the WCO as satisfying the professional PICARD standards. The Faculty of Customs Management and Security offers courses to more than 1200 undergraduate, postgraduate students and customs officers. Their delegation visited the ROCB A/P and Thai Customs Academy in April 2018.

ROCB A/P Attends the 30th Administrative Meeting for NCP of RILO A/P



4-6 September 2018, Solo/Surakarta, Indonesia

At the invitation from the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P), Ms. Saori Nojima, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, attended the 30th Administrative Meeting for National Contact Points (NCP) of RILO A/P, which was held on 4-6 September 2018 in Solo/Surakarta, Indonesia. More than 50 delegates and observers attended the meeting, which included representatives from 18 Member administrations, international organizations (WCO, INTERPOL, INCB, UNODC) and regional entities (ROCB A/P, RILO ECE and RILO WE), and Customs Attachés stationed in the Asia region. Trends and Members' experiences in various Customs enforcement areas such as illicit trafficking in drug, environmental goods, security-related items and IPR-infringing goods, as well as duty/tax evasion and commercial fraud were shared in the Meeting. Ms. Saori Nojima made a presentation to give the delegates an update on WCO capacity building activities in the A/P Region and highlighted the importance of enhancing synergy effects between the capacity building activities and daily/special enforcement activities.

ROCB A/P introduces the WCO trade facilitation instruments and AEO Program at the Trade Facilitation International Conference



11 September 2018, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

At the requests from the Customs General Administration of Mongolia (CGAM) and the Korea Customs Service (KCS), Mr. Hong-Young Jo of the ROCB A/P attended the Trade Facilitation International Conference held on 11 September 2018 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, under the support of the World Bank Group International Finance Corporation. Over 200 representatives from Customs administrations and specialized inspection agencies of Mongolia and its neighboring countries as well as related international organizations participated in the Conference.

The Conference focused on compiling some recommendations on collaborative activities of the Customs and Inspection Agencies towards the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in Mongolia. In the plenary session, the participants shared their WTO TFA implementation practices and examined good practices on risk-based inspection and control. Following the related sub-sessions, the participants discussed the roles of the Customs and the General Agencies for Specialized Inspection (GASI) to implement the WTO TFA in an efficient manner.

Mr. Jo made a presentation on the WCO Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Program and relevant instruments and tools for facilitating the implementation of the WTO TFA in the Customs sub-session. He highlighted the importance of application not only the AEO Program but also Risk Management (RM) Technique, Time Release Study (TRS) and information technology (IT) system in Customs administration for facilitating the flow of legitimate goods while enforcing high risk cargoes. In response to the questions asked at the panel discussion session of the Conference, Mr. Jo suggested establishing a dedicated AEO validation team and electronic AEO System as part of the prominent recommendations to the CGAM for the implementation of the AEO Program successfully, to which the CGAM fully agreed.

This conference provided the participants with a platform to deepen their understanding on customs trade facilitation issues and inspection agencies' role at the border and inland for trade and business. Participants examined the key challenges for the GCAM and GACI on the implementation of the WTO TFA and discussed the possible way to cope with these perceived challenges in Mongolia with close collaboration among relevant authorities and stakeholders.

WCO Regional Workshop on Frontline Border Capability against Terrorist Threats



17-21 September 2018, Sydney, Australia

The WCI, in cooperation with the ROCB A/P and the Australian Border Force (ABF), organized the WCO A/P WCO Regional Workshop on Frontline Border Capability against Terrorist Threats on 17-21 September 2018 in Sydney, Australia, under the financial sponsorship of the Japan Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF/Japan). 33 participants from 24 WCO A/P regional Member administrations and 3 resources from the WCO, the RILO A/P and the ROCB A/P, as well as several colleagues from the host administrations, namely Australia, took part in this important regional event. Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P participated in this Workshop as one of the resource persons.

The Workshop was initiated by an opening address by Mrs. Clare Reeds, Regional Commander ACT/HQ of the ABF, in which she stressed that the threat of terrorism is of global implication and the A/P region is not immune from it and she called for joint work to contend with all kinds of cross-border terrorist threats. In this context, she also described a set of counter measures taken by the ABF and wished a fruitful discussion and exchange among the participants and with the resource persons. Workshop participants heard a series of presentations on the regional threat environment, the WCO's initiatives on counter-

terrorism, including its Security Program, the illicit financial flow, gist of the ABF's Operation SILVES, and Customs cooperation with the Police authorities and the financial intelligence units, which served a good foundation for the discussion of the regional border security cooperation framework document. Among these scene-setting presentation sessions, Mr. Igarashi made a presentation on the ROCB A/P's capacity building assistance approaches and underlined that there is no one-size-fits-all training on counter-terrorism and encouraged the participants to make best use of the varied lessons learned from the past and future regional and national workshops. In this regard, he briefly touched upon the regional workshop follow-up survey and some of the tangible results accomplished by the regional Member administrations. Participants also had an opportunity of site visit to the Sydney Airport and had an on-site briefing on the ABF Counter Terrorism Units and their activities. The latter part of the Workshop was dedicated to an intensive discussion on the draft Cooperation Framework and its Work Plan under the excellent facilitation of Commander Rees. The outcomes of this Workshop will be further discussed among the regional working group members and then presented to the subsequent regional conferences, namely the Regional Contact Points Conference and the Regional Heads of Customs Administration Conference for adoption.

ROCB A/P has policy dialogue with Solomon Islands government officials and its stakeholders towards WCO Membership



24-25 September 2018, Honiara, Solomon Islands

At the invitation of Ms. Sarah Wickham, Acting Controller of the Solomon Islands Customs, Mr. Kazunari Igarashi, Head of the ROCB A/P as a WCO representative, visited the Solomon Islands to have political dialogues with senior government officials to pave the way for joining the WCO. These dialogues were initiated on the occasion of the recent Oceania Customs Organization's Annual Conference held in Melbourne, Australia, when the WCO delegation headed by Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, WCO Secretary General, had an informal talk with the Solomon Islands Customs delegation (refer to <http://www.rocb-ap.org/article-detail/415/?crmid=0hc7i7rudpthp29k9g4vjaemh6>).



Because the Solomon Islands Customs belongs to the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Mr. Igarashi met Mr. Mackeney Dentana, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and handed him Secretary General's personal letter addressed to the Finance Minister and explained the benefits of the Membership from the perspectives of both technical assistance programs and socio-economic benefits which the Solomon Islands government may enjoy by engaging to the Customs reform and modernization with the WCO's comprehensive packages, in particular through the enhancement of revenue collection functions along with modernizing Customs clearance regime and human resource development, which was well received. In response to the questions asked by Acting Permanent Secretary, Mr. Igarashi explained briefly the process of acceding to the CCC Convention and the payment of annual subscription or membership fee. Acting Permanent

Secretary kindly promised to convey the WCO's warm message to the Finance Minister at the earliest opportunity. Mr. Igarashi also met Mr. William Soaki, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade and echoed keen interests of the Solomon Customs to become a WCO Member and gave some explanations on the accession process to the CCC Convention and the payment of the annual membership fee. He also spoke to the Deputy Secretary about the benefits of Customs modernization in a broader context. The Deputy Secretary promised to expedite the accession process, i.e. cabinet approval, as soon as the Finance Minister give them the instruction to move forward.

In the margins of the above meetings, Mr. Igarashi had a friendly talk with Customs executives and middle-class managers at the Customhouse and he told them the need for ownership and change of mid-set towards reform and modernization as well as professional integrity. Mr. Igarashi also met representatives of Chamber of Commerce, Port Authority, JICA, Bio Security agency, Customs Brokers Association, and explained the need for concerted efforts for modernizing import and export process, including improving port logistics and other agencies business process, so that the costs of cross-border transactions may be reduced and business may enjoy the benefit of economic gains. They are all supportive for the Solomon Islands Customs' commitment for changes, along with the Customs' determination to become the WCO Member. They also asked the WCO to provide them with chances to hear about international good practices and consultation dialogues for improving their business models.

WCO A/P CB/TA Programs and Meetings Schedule

October 2018 and onwards (Indicative)

(NB) Official invitation will be circulated in due course

Event	Dates	Venue
◆ 16 th Meeting of Heads of the WCO A/P Regional Training Centers	24-25 Oct. 2018	Shanghai, China
◆ WCO National Workshop on Leadership Management Development	29 Oct – 9 Nov. 2018	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
◆ ADB Trade Facilitation Agreement Workshop	30-31 Oct. 2018	Bangkok, Thailand
◆ WCO-UNESCAP Regional Workshop on ICT Mater Class	5-14 Nov. 2018	Cheonan, Korea
◆ WCO National Workshop on IPR for Laos	12-16 Nov. 2018	Vientiane, Laos
◆ WCO A/P Regional Contact Point Meeting	14-16 Nov. 2018	Jaipur, India
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Environment Program	19-23 Nov. 2018	Shanghai, China
◆ WCO National Workshop on IPR for Myanmar	26-30 Nov. 2018	Yangon, Myanmar
◆ WCO National Workshop on Customs valuation and Transfer Pricing for Thailand	26-30 Nov. 2018	Bangkok, Thailand
◆ WCO Sub-regional Workshop on Revenue Package for the Pacific	3-7 Dec. 2018	Suva, Fiji
◆ WCO National Workshop on Rules of Origin for Laos	3-7 Dec. 2018	Vientiane, Laos
◆ WCO National Workshop on IPR for Cambodia	4-7 Dec. 2018	Phnom Penh, Cambodia
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Transit	7-11 Jan. 2019	Faridabad, India
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Money Laundering	21-25 Jan. 2019	Kashiwa, Japan
◆ WCO National Workshop on Risk Management for the Philippines	18-22 Feb. 2019 (tbc)	Manila, Philippines
◆ WCO Regional Workshop on Training Management	4-8 Mar. 2019	Kashiwa, Japan
◆ WCO Sub-regional Workshop on Risk Management for the Pacific	18-22 Mar. 2019	Suva, Fiji
◆ Meeting of Heads of the ROCBs, RTCs and Vice Chair's Offices	4-5 Apr. 2019	Brussels, Belgium

◆ WCO Capacity Building Committee	8-10 Apr. 2019	Brussels, Belgium
◆ WCO Integrity Sub-Committee	11-12 Apr. 2019	Brussels, Belgium
◆ WCO Council Sessions	27-29 Jun. 2019	Brussels, Belgium

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