



ROCB E-newsletter No.86

Asia/Pacific

World Customs Organization



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Inauguration of 11th WCO RTC Cambodia:
A Regional Hub for Customs Excellence

Foreword

Dear Readers,

Greetings from Bangkok.

Asia Pacific is a diverse Region with many different languages, cultures, geography and industries. That makes the Region very attractive and fuels my want to visit as many countries as possible. As a youngster, I travelled some of the countries in AP Region and enjoyed this diversity but also similarities (compared to western cultures) that really fascinated me. That brought my career to the international field and now working in Thailand. I will report to you, valuable readers, on what I find during my time in this city, and my travels in AP Region in future editions.



This issue of ROCB A/P E-Newsletter features our activities undertaken from July through September 2024. During this period, we received a valuable contribution from Cambodia on the grand opening of its Regional Training Centre (RTC). I had an honour to be invited to this splendid opening on 23 September and was very impressed with the facility and the hospitality of Cambodia Customs. I am very positive about the future of the RTC Cambodia and the RTC network in the Asia Pacific Region, regarding their commitment to contribute to the Region on Capacity Building activities.

There are 11 Regional Training Centres now in the Asia Pacific Region. The only one in the Pacific is in Suva, Fiji, which was established in August 2012. The ROCB A/P just visited the RTC Fiji to conduct a WCO Sub-Regional Workshop on Training Management. Together with 17 participants and 3 facilitators, we had a very good discussion, and information exchange on Training. A sound Customs training system is a fundamental platform to develop the capacity of Customs officials to pursue Strategic Goals in today's international trade environment. Positive feedback from participants really encouraging for all members.

In other news, the ROCB welcomed a new officer, Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu, seconded from Japan Customs. She started her career from Moji Regional Customs and grew her expertise in Capacity Building policy and implementation at Ministry of Finance of Japan, especially on WCO

issues. Her knowledge and experience will surely enhance the work of the ROCB in the years to come.

While thanking your keen interest in our activities and your contribution, I hope you would spare some time to visit our website. The ROCB A/P will be pleased to hear any of your constructive opinions and comments, suggestions and input to our activities, including communication and public relations, so that we may better serve to the Regional Member Customs Administrations. Please rest assured that all ROCB A/P staff remain committed to achieving our collective goals.

Thank you.

Handwritten signature in Japanese characters: 田島 潤 (Tajima Jun).

Jun Tajima

Head of ROCB A/P

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Inauguration of 11th WCO RTC Cambodia

A Regional Hub for Customs Excellence

On 23rd September 2024, Cambodia celebrated the official inauguration ceremony of the 11th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center at the Customs National School, Phnom Penh, under the auspices of **H.E Dr. AUN PORNMONIROTH**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance. The event was attended by over 400 participants, including ambassadors, heads and representatives of international organizations and missions to Cambodia, development partners, the World Customs Organization, Customs Administrations across the Asia Pacific region, and representatives of Cambodia line ministries and the private sector. The inauguration ceremony took place alongside the first RTC Cambodia's capacity building activity, the Joint Australian Border Force/WCO Regional Seminar on Supply Chain Integrity, which runs from 23rd-26th September 2024.



In his welcoming remark, **H.E Dr. AUN PORNONIROTH** highlighted that the establishment of the 11th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center hosted by the Custom National School marks a historic achievement for the Cambodian Customs Administration and the Kingdom of Cambodia. He further added that the WCO RTC Cambodia will significantly contribute to the development agenda of the Royal



Government, as outlined in the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I, a comprehensive socio-economic development plan spearheaded by the Royal Government under the visionary leadership of **Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN MANET**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I encompasses five key priorities: People, Road, Water, Electricity, and Technology, with 'People' being assigned as the top priority. The development of human capital is viewed as an indispensable element for promoting sustainable and resilient economic diversification and growth.



Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, **H.E Dr. Kun Nhem**, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister, Director General of General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia, delivered insights into the background and progress of the Customs National



School has been designated by the WCO as host of the 11th WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Center after the GDCE and the WCO signed the Memorandum of Understanding on “The Establishment of WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Training Center in Phnom Penh, the Kingdom of Cambodia” during the 143rd /144th Sessions of the WCO Council, at WCO headquarter, in Brussels,

Belgium. He informed that the WCO will use the facilities of RTC for the purposes of regional training, technical assistance meetings and Customs-related events. This status will strengthen Cambodia Customs administration’s collaboration across the Asia-Pacific region to enhance capacity of customs officers and stakeholders.



In a congratulatory video message from WCO headquarters in Brussels, Mr. Ricardo Treviño, Deputy Secretary General, offered his heartfelt congratulations on the successful designation of the Customs National School as host of the WCO Regional Training Center. This auspicious day marks not only the inaugural Regional Workshop on Supply Chain Integrity but also the official establishment of the RTC Cambodia. With the RTC Cambodia becoming the 11th WCO RTC, the National Customs School is poised to become an important hub for capacity building initiatives throughout the region. The WCO looks forward to continuing and strengthening the cooperative relationship with Cambodia. “Together we can achieve even greater height in capacity building and customs development”, he added.

The establishment of the WCO Regional Training Center at the Customs National School marks a significant milestone in Cambodia's customs development. This milestone is a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of the Royal Government of Cambodia to strengthening Cambodia's customs administration and fostering regional cooperation in the areas of capacity building, trade facilitation, and global supply chain security. Moreover, WCO RTC Cambodia is committed to equipping customs officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance customs operations, leading to improvements in trade facilitation, revenue collection, and economic development.



Workshops and Meetings

Pillar 1: Support the Implementation of WCO Conventions, Instruments, and Tools

ROCB A/P strengthen its engagement in WCO Operation DEMETER

2nd – 4th July 2024, Shanghai, China



The Pre-operational Workshop of Operation DEMETER X in the Asia and Pacific Region, funded by the Customs Cooperation Fund of China (CCF-China), was organized in Shanghai from July 2-4, 2024. At the invitation of the WCO Secretariat, Ms. Zhengqing YE, a representative of ROCB A/P, attended this workshop.

Operation DEMETER was first launched in 2009 with 64 Customs administrations. The upcoming Operation Demeter X targeting illegal cross-border shipments of hazardous and other waste (regulated under the Basel Convention), and of ozone-depleting substances and hydrofluorocarbons (ODS & HFCs, controlled under the Montreal Protocol) will take place from 15 July to 15 September 2024 with the participation of a record number of 110 Customs administrations. The three-day Workshop enabled participants to gauge targeting capacities and improve capability to identify high-risk consignments. It also highlighted that for a successful

operation, collaboration should not be limited only among Customs administrations, but also nationally with agencies in charge of implementing regulations on the movement of the targeted products.

During the Workshop, ROCB A/P was invited to introduce its efforts to promote the Green Customs Initiative (GCI) in Asia Pacific region. Ms. YE outlined the previous ROCB's active engagement in promoting the GCI including conducting Regional Workshop on Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and CEN Applications, participating in the UNEP and WWF Workshops. She also emphasized the increasingly crucial roles of customs laboratories with specific focus on the identification of solid waste and CITES-listed species. She then underscored that setting up a regional pool of high-level experts in Green Customs is essential to promote the GCI.

Taking the opportunity of this event, ROCB A/P expressed a keen interest and commitment to engage in the WCO Operation DEMETER and further enhance the cooperative relationship with other organizations such as UNEP and UNODC. ROCB A/P will continuously support members in preventing the illegal trade in environmentally sensitive commodities and substances.

ROCB A/P contributed to the 2024 WCO SIEs Scholarship Programme

31st July – 2nd August 2024, Seoul, Republic of Korea



To assist Small Island Economies (SIEs) integration into the global supply chain while strengthening their capacities for effective risk management, trade and trade facilitation, security, and revenue collection, was the focus of the 2024 WCO SIEs Scholarship Programme held at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, Korea. This programme was funded by CCF-Korea.

Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager of the ROCB A/P, participated in this Scholarship Programme as an instructor representing ROCB A/P. His contributions focused on capacity-building activities and delivering WCO initiatives on Customs Valuation and Single Window.

The Scholarship Program supports 10 customs officials from SIEs, including the Pacific Islands, Americas and Caribbean, East and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa regions, who are mid-level managers or above. This programme provided them with a theoretical grounding in international trade and business practices so that they can address Customs matters more systematically, taking into account the measures set out in the WCO initiatives. This Scholarship is a 12-week certificate programme from July to October 2024 aimed at developing hands-on skills, sharing good practices, providing basic data analytics skills, and inspiring the implementation of international standards like WCO instruments.

Mr. Cho delivered several lectures on behalf of ROCB A/P, covering topics such as the overview of WCO and ROCB A/P, WCO Capacity Building Initiatives, WCO Regional Strategic Plan, WCO E-learning Platform, Customs Valuation instruments, and Single Window initiatives.

ROCB A/P renews support to combat Illegal Wildlife Trade

7th - 8th August 2024, Sri Racha, Thailand



The Workshop on the Detecting and Suppression of illegal wildlife trade at Laem Chabang Port was organized by the World Wild Fund by Nature (WWF) in Sri Racha, Thailand, from August 7th-8th, 2024. At the invitation of the WWF, Ms. Zhengqing YE, the representatives of ROCB A/P, attended this workshop.

Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) refers to the illegal trade of wildlife in the form of export, re-export, trans-shipment and import, in contravention of international law and national legislation of the country of origin and importing country. IWT is currently ranked as the 4th most profitable trade after drugs, arms and human trafficking, according to the WWF. Maritime shipping remains the dominant method used for illicit trafficking of wildlife due to cost effectiveness, being able to transport large volumes and heavy weight, and low risk of detection. With the focus on disrupting transport networks and platforms across the sea, discussions were organized into several thematic sessions. These included Global IWT situation in maritime sector, development of IMO Guidelines to combat IWT, Risk Profiling, the importance of collaboration with private sectors and Crime Convergence and Methods of Smuggling.

During the Workshop, ROCB A/P was invited to join the discussion on current challenges and possible solutions related to IWT. Taking this opportunity, Ms. YE introduced WCO's instruments and tools, such as CEN Applications and Frontline Customs Officers' Guide to Key Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). She also emphasized the importance of engaging the private sector to strengthen efforts to dismantle criminal networks involved in wildlife crime. ROCB A/P will continue enhancing the cooperative relationship with other organizations and supporting members in fighting against IWT with WCO instruments and tools.

The WCO Sub-regional Workshop on Training Management for the Pacific Islands

2nd – 6th September 2024, RTC Fiji in Suva



From 2nd – 6th September 2024, the WCO Sub-regional Workshop on Training Management was held at RTC Fiji sponsored by the Customs Cooperation Fund Japan (CCF/Japan). This workshop marked the third workshop of a two-year project, initiated by ROCB A/P in 2023. The workshop brought together participants from 9 Customs Administrations. The primary focus of the workshop was to enhance the training management capability of the Members in the Asia Pacific Region. It provided a valuable platform for participants to discuss common challenges and exchange experience and insight. Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Ms. Aksara Mackhawiman, Assistant Program Manager, attended the workshop as facilitators.

During the workshop, the facilitators introduced WCO Tools related to Human Resource Development (HRD), including an introduction to training processes and training systems. They also shared the challenges gathered from the Members through the ROCB A/P survey in 2022 and the RTC Heads' Meeting in 2023, and highlighted successful practices sharing from Members. Then, the facilitators led the discussions on crucial aspects of training systems. These sessions provided a platform for the participants to actively contribute, sharing valuable insight, good practices in their respective Administrations. This collaborative approach fostered a rich exchange of knowledge, allowing the participants to learn from diverse perspectives and innovative

practices across different Administrations in the region. The discussion included the topic of the Gender Equality and Diversity (GED). This session started with an overview of WCO Tools on GED, followed by a presentation on the initiative program of a member. Participants then engaged in the discussion on the role of the HR in promoting the GED in the workplace.

Participants engaged in two hands-on exercises. The first exercise involved designing a training course allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios. The second exercise focused on crisis management, challenging participants to respond effectively to unexpected challenges. These activities not only consolidated participants' understanding of the contents but also developed the problem-solving and adaptability on real-world situations.

The workshop concluded successfully, with participants gaining valuable knowledge and insights from the fellow Members in the region. This collaborative environment fostered a deep understanding of shared challenges and innovative solutions, enhancing the collective expertise of participants.



Pillar 2: Further Enhance Collaboration with Development Partners

Exploring WCO's key initiatives: Chung-Ang University Visits ROCB A/P in Bangkok

19th July 2024, Bangkok, Thailand



To foster understanding of capacity building activities of WCO, fifteen members, including professors and students from Chung-Ang University's College of Business and Economics, visited ROCB A/P. ROCB A/P welcomed the study visit of the faculty and graduate students majoring in Trade and Logistics. The objective of this program was to introduce the WCO's initiatives to the academic community and provide insights into the necessity and effectiveness of capacity building.

Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of the ROCB A/P, along with Program Managers extended a warm welcome to the faculty and students. Mr. Tajima conveyed his appreciation for the visit and emphasized the significance of strengthening collaboration between the academic community and the WCO.

Throughout the meeting, Mr. Tajima introduced the colleagues of ROCB A/P, providing an overview of the WCO, and highlighted the essential roles of WCO member administrations. The lecture commenced with Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager, delivering insights on international affairs, with a focus on ROCB AP's main roles, key achievements, and WCO's Key initiatives related to international trade including WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and Single Window Environment.

The faculty and students expressed their appreciation to ROCB A/P for preparing the study visit, recognizing it as a valuable opportunity to gain a comprehensive understanding of WCO and to acquire in-depth knowledge about the activities of ROCB A/P, a key international organization in the field of international cooperation.

The ROCB A/P strengthened its tie with the OCO in the 26th OCO Annual Conference

26th - 27th July 2024, Rarotonga, Cook Islands



With the invitation of the Oceania Customs Organization (OCO) Secretariat, Mr. Jun Tajima, the Head of the ROCB A/P, participated in the 26th OCO Annual Conference in Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

The Conference was attended by 20 Heads and Senior Customs Representatives, held under the theme “Strengthening Partnerships for Dynamic Solutions and a Future-ready Blue Pacific.”

The OCO is an important partner to the ROCB A/P. The latest two Members of the WCO are from OCO Members: Solomon Islands (2023) and Palau (2024). There are three RKC contracting parties of OCO Members which are non-WCO Members: Kiribati (2018), Cook Islands (2019) and Tuvalu (2019). This illustrates the successful efforts by the OCO that encourages its Members to align with international standards, which the ROCB A/P pursues.

The Conference was opened by the Prime Minister of Cook Islands, stressing the vital role of Customs to tackle with drugs trafficking by transnational organised criminals; it requires Customs in the pacific to keep up with technology and regional cooperation among law enforcement agencies and partners.

During the Conference, Members discussed current and emerging issues, shared achievements and experiences, and chart the path forward for Customs modernization and regional cooperation. Jun made a presentation, on behalf of the WCO, about the overview of the WCO as well as its benefits to become a Member. He introduced that the majority of the WCO Members' financial contribution to the WCO per day is less than staying a hotel of the Conference venue; with that contribution, Members enjoy opportunities to apply long-term scholarship and many more.

In introduction of the ROCB A/P with its new leadership, Jun explained that the ROCB A/P will have good communication with Members so that WCO Workshops are even more targeted and effective, thus they bring more benefit to Members' modernisation efforts.

The ROCB A/P iterated its intention to support OCO's activities by inviting future WCO Sub-Regional Workshops held in RTC Fiji, based on the MoU between the WCO and the OCO, and it also expressed its gratitude to the host Administration of Cook Islands for its warm hospitality.



ROCB A/P visited UNESCAP office in Thailand

18th September 2024, UNESCAP, Thailand

On 18th September 2024, team of ROCB A/P visited UNESCAP office in Thailand for a courtesy call on Dr. Yann Duval, Chief of Trade Policy and Facilitation, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the United Nations ESCAP and his team.

The ROCB A/P team was consisted of Head of the ROCB A/P, Mr. Jun Tajima, Programme Managers Mr. Jaemin CHO, Ms. Zhengqing Ye, and Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu. Mr. Tajima expressed his appreciations to the long-standing cooperation between UNESCAP and the ROCB A/P, especially the Master Class Workshops that are jointly organized by the WCO, ROCB A/P, and UN ESCAP with financial backing from the Customs Cooperation Fund of Korea (CCF/Korea) and UN fund.

Mr. Tajima, then, explained the outline of the ROCB A/P, aiming at having staff of UNESCAP deepen their understanding of its activities, seek further collaboration and avoid duplication of effort.

During the meeting, UNESCAP stressed its focus is on paperless trade with its activities around the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (CPTA). It also introduced the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation that provides an excellent overview of the trade facilitation measures.

Both offices found this visit a wonderful opportunity to exchange views and agreed to continue to explore future cooperation in Capacity Building areas.

Pillar 3: Improve Needs Analysis, Planning, Delivery, and Management of Regional Capacity Building Activities

22nd Regional Training Centre Heads Meeting

24th-26th September 2024, RTC India at Palasamudram, India



The 22nd Meeting of the Heads of WCO Asia/Pacific Regional Training Centres (RTCs) was held from 24th -26th September 2024 at NACIN Palasamudram, India (RTC India). The event was organized by the Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P), co-chaired by RTC India, bringing together the Heads of RTCs from across the Asia-Pacific region, the WCO Secretariat, the Asia/Pacific Vice-Chair's Office, and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P). The meeting adopted a hybrid format, enabling delegates from RTC China and the WCO Secretariat to participate online.

The meeting commenced with a welcoming address by Mr. Gaigongdin Panmei, Principal Director General of NACIN, followed by opening remarks from senior officials, including Mr. Alok Shukla, Member (Administration) of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), and Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P. Remarks were also delivered by Mr. Ebenezer Gebding Tafili,

Deputy Director of the WCO Capacity Building Directorate, and Mr. Kin-Kei Li, Vice Chair of the WCO Asia-Pacific. The opening remarks highlighted the critical role of RTCs in advancing customs modernization, promoting collaboration, and supporting regional capacity building.

During the meeting, RTC Heads shared updates on recent developments and discussed initiatives aimed at enhancing training effectiveness. Presentations were delivered by RTCs centering around the WCO theme 2024, "Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose," reflecting the strategic focus of the region in leveraging partnerships to address emerging challenges. The meeting also explored topics such as the use of new training methods and evaluation techniques, digital learning platforms, and the integration of advanced technologies, into customs operations.

During the breakout discussions, delegates exchanged views and good practices on their respective training management systems at RTCs, focusing on topics such as innovative training methods, evaluation techniques, and strategies to enhance overall training effectiveness.

The meeting concluded with a wrap-up session led by Ms. Aarti Saxena, Additional Director General of NACIN, who summarized the discussions and highlighted the key takeaways. The next RTC Heads Meeting is tentatively scheduled to be hosted by RTC Indonesia, with further details to be confirmed in the coming months.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Jun Tajima expressed his gratitude to all delegates for their contributions and active participation. He highlighted the enriching discussions on engaging new partners, innovative training methods, and evaluation techniques, noting that the ideas exchanged would contribute to regional training strategies. Mr. Tajima expressed optimism that the insights gained would be implemented across the region, enhancing overall capacity. He thanked RTC India and the organizing team for their support and concluded by encouraging continued collaboration to strengthen the Asia-Pacific customs community.

Pillar 4: Enhance Communication and Information Sharing among Members

Enhanced Cooperation with New Zealand Customs Service

9th July 2024, Bangkok Thailand

Mr. Jun TAJIMA, the Head of ROCB A/P and his team met with Mr. Joe Cannon, the Director of International Relations of New Zealand Customs Service and Mr. David Radovanovich, Customs attaché from New Zealand Embassy in Thailand on July 9th, 2024. This visit aimed at enhancing collaboration between ROCB A/P and New Zealand Customs Service on Customs Capacity Building.



Mr. TAJIMA welcomed the representatives of New Zealand Customs and delivered a brief introduction on ROCB A/P. He highlighted ROCB's role in the Region which is to implement the Regional Strategic Plan and explained its priorities including enhancing Annual Needs Survey and Follow-up Action Survey for more effective WCO workshops. Moreover, Mr. TAJIMA appreciated New Zealand Customs for its continued support for the office and emphasized the importance of the cooperation between ROCB A/P and New Zealand Customs. Ms. Zhengqing YE, ROCB A/P's program manager and the regional manager for the Pacific appreciated New Zealand Customs attachés for the active participation in the WCO capacity building activities and welcomed more knowledge sharing from New Zealand Customs in the WCO workshops.

During this courtesy visit, Mr. Joe Cannon expressed his appreciation for long standing close collaborative relationship between ROCB A/P and New Zealand Customs. Moreover, he pointed out that New Zealand Customs would commit to further engage in the regional capacity building activities. Mr. TAJIMA reaffirmed that ROCB A/P, as the leading Capacity Building office would enhance the cooperation with New Zealand Customs.

Both parties found this visit a wonderful opportunity to exchange views and agreed to continue to explore future cooperation in Capacity Building areas.

Korea Customs Service Visits ROCB A/P in Bangkok to Discuss Capacity Building Activities on Drug Enforcement

11th July 2024, Bangkok, Thailand



To foster understanding on capacity building activities focused on drug enforcement, the four officials from the International Investigation Division of Korea Customs Service paid a visit to the ROCB A/P. During today's meeting, the Korea Customs Service explained their accomplishments and discussed with the ROCB A/P about their plan for organizing a

capacity-building workshop in Korea.

Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of ROCB A/P, and Mr. Jaemin Cho, Program Manager, warmly welcomed the visiting officials, including Mr. Si Tae Kim, Deputy Director and Mr. Ji Young Kim of the Investigation Division. Mr. Tajima expressed his gratitude for the visit and highlighted the importance of Korea Customs Service's support in hosting these crucial capacity building activities.

Throughout the meeting, both parties explored various aspects of holding workshops for Asia-Pacific members and establishing regular capacity building activities in the field of drug enforcement. The KCS officials underscored the significance of this visit as a valuable opportunity to discuss and enhance potential cooperation with ROCB A/P in capacity building on drug enforcement.

Staff Update

Welcome Message from Ms. Asuka Nagamatsu

Dear colleagues,

My name is Asuka Nagamatsu, and I am the new Programme Manager of ROCB A/P. It is a great honor for me to introduce myself.

I have been with Japan Customs for about seven years. For the first several years, I was based in Moji Customs, which is the regional customs located in Fukuoka. In this role, I was in charge of passenger and cargo inspections at the borders and the management of bonded areas. I was then transferred to the Customs and Tariff Bureau in Tokyo, where I was involved in coordinating capacity building activities. These included developing strategies and annual plans, assisting with workshops/ conferences, implementing human resource development initiatives, supporting the WCO HRD programme and conducting Annual Needs Surveys in collaboration with ROCB A/P.

Having long seen firsthand the valuable contributions that ROCB A/P makes to the region, I am grateful to actually be a part of the team and have this opportunity to dedicate myself to furthering the WCO's policies with you.

I am very looking forward to working with you soon!

Asuka NAGAMATSU



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