The World Customs Organization (WCO) is pleased to announce that the 15th annual WCO PICARD Conference will take place as a web conference from 23 to 26 November 2020.

You are invited to submit your research for consideration. A Scientific Board will select the submissions for presentation at the Conference. Submissions should focus on one of the following topics (non-exhaustive list): Lessons learned regarding Customs’ response and role in supply chain continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic; Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet; and Organizational Performance Measurement.

Faced with the global challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that Customs continue to facilitate supply chains to help minimize the overall impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on our economies and societies. Information on WCO instruments and tools, and on measures implemented by the WCO and Member Customs administrations, has been compiled on the WCO website dedicated solely to COVID-19-related matters. When it comes to Customs’ role in disaster relief, several WCO instruments and tools are particularly relevant, such as Chapter 5 of Specific Annex J of the Revised Kyoto Convention, the Istanbul Convention, and the 1970 Recommendation and 2011 Resolution of the Customs Cooperation Council. It is critical for Customs, in cooperation with stakeholders, to ensure the continuity of international supply chains, for example through the application of ICT technologies and paperless trade. In this regard, submissions related to lessons learned regarding Customs’ response and role in supply chain continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic are welcomed.

The WCO’s theme for 2020 is ‘Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet’, acknowledging the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the important roles Customs will play in this regard. Particularly when it comes to environmental sustainability, the control of the transboundary movement of waste is increasingly attracting attention worldwide, especially after the introduction of stepped-up import restrictions in several countries and the amendment of a Multilateral Environmental Agreement (the Basel Convention) in recent years. This topic also embraces other fields related to environmental sustainability and the roles Customs will play in these fields.

Organizational Performance Measurement is imperative for Customs administrations seeking a sound basis for decision-making. It also increases accountability, raises the Customs administration’s profile and supports business cases for investments. In line with the WCO’s strategic mandate, its Conventions, instruments, tools and recommendations are designed with the aim of improving Customs administrations’ performance. The WCO is in the process of developing a comprehensive performance measurement mechanism including key performance indicators (KPIs), both quantitative and qualitative, in all Customs competencies (revenue collection, trade facilitation and economic competitiveness, enforcement, security and protection of society, etc.). In this respect, this topic might cover research on organizational performance measurement methodology, especially at the outcome level; the assessment of trust in global assessments conducted by
international organizations for policy decisions; approaches to evaluating the implementation and outcome of international standards and instruments. It may also cover the measurement of resilience for performance management and business continuity in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and other disruptive scenarios.

The Conference in particular welcomes and encourages attendance by and submissions from Customs professionals as well as researchers from various academic disciplines, such as anthropology, criminology, economics, geography, history, international relations and international trade, law and political science. The WCO Research Unit is particularly interested in developing an interdisciplinary approach with different perspectives, approaches and methodologies regarding contemporary systems of regulation and control at borders, and strongly welcomes papers co-authored by Customs officials and academics.

As in previous years, applicant submissions can include (1) Presentation Summaries of up to 1,000 words; (2) Papers of up to 9,000 words; or (3) Proposals for Panels. Papers will not have any inherent advantage over Presentation Summaries.

Submissions should be submitted in accordance with the following requirements:

- Arial font size 11.
- Submissions should be in English or French.

Ample time will be allowed for discussion, and translation/interpretation will be provided at the Conference in English and French.

Proposals for Panels should consist of two or three speakers presenting research on one cohesive topic. The WCO would like to encourage Customs and academics to engage in comparative and policy-relevant research on Customs issues: Panel Proposals are an ideal format for such discussions to take place.

To respond to this Call for Papers, please submit Presentation Summaries, Papers or Panel Proposals by email to picard2020@wcoomd.org, no later than 7 September 2020, with the following details:

- Name, title, and biography (maximum 250 words) of researcher or researchers.
- Current position, organization, and country of researcher or researchers.
- Contact email and telephone.
- Proposed title of contribution.
- For Papers of more than 1,000 words, an abstract of no more than 300 words is required.

Authors will be notified by 30 September 2020 of the selection or non-selection of their Papers and/or Presentation Summaries for presentation at the Conference.

The WCO is particularly grateful for the support of the PICARD Scientific Board members.

In addition to the authors selected based on this Call for Papers, authors of the papers selected for the World Customs Journal special edition 2020, which will feature the topic of “the WCO and Customs and trade community: past and future”, will also be invited to the web conference.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email picard2020@wcoomd.org.

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