

WCO Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Treviño's speech at A-CIP Opening Ceremony Brussels, 11 April 2019

It was more than 25 years ago when WCO Members came together in Arusha, Tanzania and declared their commitment to combating corruption and building integrity in Customs.

Since then, the WCO has acted as a steward of lessons learned from our Members' integrity initiatives, and as evidenced in our compilations of best practices.

As part of its capacity building remit, the WCO has also sought to help its members move from declarations on integrity to putting this commitment into action. Often this divide between policy and practice is the hardest to bridge - in any aspect of Customs but even more so when it comes to the complex and sensitive topic of integrity.

The Arusha Declaration was revised in 2003 in an effort to provide a more practical approach to customs integrity and ten years later the WCO produced the Integrity Development Guide under the Organizational Development Package to guide capacity building efforts in this direction.

Needless to say, the process of implementing customs integrity has been much slower to evolve than other developments in the customs arena. This is largely reflective of the particular challenges that relate to integrity. It does not happen in a vacuum: the WCO is by nature of our competence clearly focused on customs, but corruption is most often a much larger societal issue with multiple actors from many sides involved in its promulgation.

For any integrity initiative to have a chance of success, it needs to be focused and sustained. The WCO has already provided support to its members in the area of integrity on a number of topics including diagnostics and assessments, awareness raising and training, and corruption risk mapping.

To date most of this support is delivered on an ad hoc basis, as needs and opportunities intersected on the WCO's annual capacity building agenda.

In cooperation with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, or Norad, the WCO sought to respond to recognised limitation of the ad hoc model the new Anti-Corruption and Integrity Promotion Programme provides a 5 year commitment that is necessary to beat corruption.

This commitment is mutual: A-CIP embodies not only the financial commitment from the government and people of Norway, or the technical commitment from the WCO Secretariat, but also and most importantly the commitment from you, the first A-CIP Partner Administrations.

Each of your administrations, by responding to the A-CIP letter of intent, has taken a concrete step towards putting dialogue into action. This commitment continues to be borne out in the preparations you are already making with the WCO A-CIP team to develop specific project plans for each of your countries.

We recognise the necessary changes will not happening overnight but the framework that the A-CIP Programme provides will help ensure objectives are clear and all our efforts are targeted to maximise opportunity to achieving them.



I commend your administration's commitment to leading actions to fight corruption and am grateful to the support from Norad that allows us to embark on this new A-CIP Programme together.

Working in partnership, we can create customs integrity as was foreseen so many years ago in the Arusha Declaration.

Thank you.