

**COMMUNIQUE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS COMMUNITY REGARDING
THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT (TFA)**

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force on 22 February 2017. Simplification, modernization and harmonization of export, import and transit processes are an important issue for the world trading system.

The World Customs Organization (WCO) congratulates the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the entry into force of the TFA which contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between Customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and Customs compliance issues. It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

Full implementation of the TFA is expected to contribute to economic growth and recovery, improved revenue collection and alleviation of poverty.

The WCO launched the Mercator Programme to assist its Members in implementing the TFA. The Programme brings together all relevant WCO standards, instruments and tools, including the Revised Kyoto Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (RKC). Assistance is provided by WCO Experts who are well trained in all aspects of trade facilitation.

The WCO is the sole inter-governmental organization with competence in Customs matters and is the voice of the international Customs community. It brings together 182 Members covering more than 98 % of world trade. Over the past three years, the international Customs community has taken significant steps and invested particular efforts to ensure a smooth, effective and efficient implementation of the TFA.

On the occasion of the entry into force of the TFA, the WCO:

- **Reaffirms** that it is committed to the smooth, effective and efficient implementation of the TFA and that it has the capacity to provide tailor-made assistance to meet Members' identified and specific needs.
- **Appreciates** the excellent cooperation and coordination existing between the WCO, the WTO and other relevant organizations.
- **Emphasizes** the importance of National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) for cooperation and coordination between relevant border agencies, Trade Ministries and the private sector. As the key implementing agency, Customs needs to have a vital and proactive role in the NCTFs.

- **Recommends** that WCO Member administrations take steps at the national level, through contacts with their Trade Ministries and Missions to the WTO, to encourage their Governments to support WCO involvement in the work of the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation.

- **Requests** Customs administrations to urge all other border agencies to inform the NCTFs about their level of readiness to implement the TFA.

- **Emphasizes** the importance of coordinating capacity building needs in the NCTFs and to articulate these needs for TFA implementation as soon as possible in order to provide transparency.

- **Encourages** Members that are either not yet WTO Members, or are WTO Members but have not yet ratified the TFA, to accede to and apply the provisions of the Revised Kyoto Convention.
