

Joint WCO/World Bank mission to Douala
10 - 15 May 2010



Ms. Minette Libom Li Likeng, Director General of Cameroon Customs during the awards ceremony.

In 2007, Cameroon Customs embarked on a major reform programme including the introduction of ASYCUDA ++ as a means of improving procedures and reducing interaction between Customs staff and clients. Building on that reform, in 2010 the Director General of Cameroon Customs decided to take another step on the path to enhancing the efficiency of her staff and curbing bad practices among Customs inspectors by introducing individual performance contracts. This initiative falls within the scope of a World Bank project involving the WCO, whereby 17 Customs inspectors signed individual performance contracts with the Director General. Those contracts are built around eight performance indicators and are aimed at increasing individual accountability. Inspectors having performed beyond expectations will receive a non-financial reward and a written commendation in their personal file. Those who do not fulfill at least 100 % of the performance objectives set must meet with the Director General to uncover the reasons for their unsatisfactory performance. Disciplinary measures will be taken if the said inspectors' performance does not improve.

The objective of the joint WCO/World Bank mission in May was to assess progress after a three month trial period. A series of meetings were held with the Heads of the Customs sectors and inspectors to discuss the initial findings of the pilot project, which proved extremely satisfactory. The majority of inspectors performed above expectation, to the delight not only of the Director General but also of Customs clients who have already noticed an upsurge of professionalism and ethical behaviour. Revenue collection has improved, work output has increased and the inspectors who took part in the experiment have expressed pride at what they managed to achieve. A further assessment will be made in autumn 2010. This experiment shows how integrity in Customs can be boosted by adopting a practical approach that can be measured on the basis of tangible results.