



Message from the World Customs Organization

International Customs Day 2013

Innovation is a key driver for sustainable Customs reform and modernization, not only ensuring that Customs remains on top of its game but also ensuring that Customs is in a strong position to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the 21st century border and trade environment.

With the importance of innovation now acknowledged universally and its positive impact recognized by key leaders around the world, I thought it fitting that on the occasion of International Customs Day, marked each year on 26 January, the global Customs community celebrates 2013 as the Year of Innovation under the slogan "Innovation for Customs Progress".

Indeed, innovation is not just about designing or implementing something new, whether it is a new policy or new technology or a new way of doing business, it is also about continuing investment in all aspects of Customs' work, including its human capital which is critical to ensure sustained progress and success.

Innovation itself can be spurred on by many things, including evidence-based research, thought-provoking dialogue, knowledge-sharing, solution-driven development, modern management practices, the use of new technologies, dynamic partnerships among all stakeholders, excellent customer relations, and the desire to do better through creative thinking.

In fact, I am encouraged, on a daily basis, to see the many ways in which the WCO's 179 Member Customs administrations and the global Customs community's national, regional and international partners demonstrate their strong commitment towards innovation and creativity in their work and in the way they work.

I am confident that our collective efforts to innovate even further during 2013 will lead to stronger economic competitiveness and generate more global growth which is supported by enhanced trade facilitation, a balanced risk-based approach to supply chain security, and a deepening commitment towards global compliance and good governance.

Of course, underpinning the laudable innovation efforts of Customs and its partners are key elements, such as a strong commitment to ensuring integrity at all times as well as sustainable capacity building and strategic development programmes aimed at supporting Customs reform and modernization.

Indeed, it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that we take the innovation theme forward throughout 2013, investing in it and highlighting its benefits. By doing so, we not only strengthen WCO Members but also others who engage with Customs and the WCO at a national, regional and international level.

Wishing you all a joyful International Customs Day!

Kunio Mikuriya
Secretary General
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