



## **Message from the World Customs Organization**

### **International Customs Day 2017**

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Data is generated by every economic activity, including the movement of goods and people and circulates extensively along the global value chain. Collecting and analyzing data to enhance the effectiveness of border management is of paramount importance to Customs administrations. This year, in the context of the International Customs Day, the WCO is introducing the theme “Data Analysis for Effective Border Management” to encourage the global Customs community to pursue their efforts and activities in this area.

Last year, by adopting the theme “Digital Customs: Progressive engagement”, the WCO exhorted the Customs community to exploit enabling technologies such as big data, telematics and the cloud to enhance their performance. Customs administrations have shown keen interest in leveraging the potential of Information Technology (IT), implementing and using digital technologies to achieve their objectives and responding to the expectations of traders, transport and logistic operators and governments. This year, as we feel that technology has gained the necessary momentum among our members, we want to consider the power of data to propel Customs to new heights.

While developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT) and its wider use have made the collection of data and access to open data easier, the real challenge is about making sense of a vast amount of information through proper processing and analysis. This will help customs officers to drive priority-setting, decision-making, performance measurement, integrity and compliance strategy, budget planning and forecasting, and operations.

In recent years, we have witnessed the emergence of a whole gamut of new tools that have the potential to help people leverage data in new and powerful ways. Traditional methods for detecting and managing risks have served many administrations well, but there are now new opportunities to use more advanced methods to get the most value from the information available.

More and more Customs administrations have, for example, turned to data mining and analytics, i.e. the pursuit of extracting meaning from raw data using specialized computer systems. Data, used in conjunction with analytics and other emerging technologies, may provide us with new opportunities to advance mission-critical objectives.

To optimize its use, we need to obtain quality data and in a timely manner. Further, there is a need for border agencies to harmonize data being circulated and to develop skills pursuant to

the IT challenges. Customs administrations also need to ensure that privacy and confidentiality laws are respected so as to uphold the confidence of the society.

Senior Customs managers will be encouraged to deepen their understanding of data analysis in recognition of its critical role in modernizing their administrations and officers will be called upon to progressively develop the appropriate skills to exploit the potential of data analysis and IT tools to improve border management. During this process, a proper feedback mechanism will be essential so as to enhance the efficiency of risk management engines.

Part of our work in the months ahead will be to showcase data analysis related projects to inspire others, and to monitor and communicate best practices in this domain and in related topics such as data management and consequently supporting organizational change. The WCO will enhance the promotion of tools such as: the WCO customs Enforcement Network (CEN), the WCO Time Release Study (TRS), mirror analysis by using the HS Code to compare imports and exports to detect anomalies in quantity, weight or value, the WCO Performance Measurement Contracts Guide to improve Customs procedures and integrity and the WCO Data Model which supports data analysis by improving data collection and enabling the sharing of data between government agencies.

Over the course of 2017, I invite all WCO Members to promote and share information on how they are leveraging the potential of data to advance and achieve their objectives and to respond to the expectations of traders, transport and logistic operators, as well as governments.

Wishing you all a very joyful International Customs Day!

**Kunio Mikuriya**  
Secretary General  
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