

BUDAPEST DECLARATION

(18 June 1997)

DECLARATION OF THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ON TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

(Budapest Declaration)

The participants in the 90th Session of the Council of the World Customs Organization held at the invitation of the Hungarian Customs Administration in Budapest, accepted the following **Declaration** :

Considering that transnational organized crime has become one of the overall problems threatening the safety and security of world economies and that the spread of transnational organized crime impacts adversely on public revenues and disrupts legitimate international trade;

Acknowledging that transnational crime nearly always concerns the international transportation of illicit goods and/or the proceeds of crime, or conveyances or people;

Recognizing the legal and operational responsibilities of Customs for protecting national borders and the contribution that Members of the World Customs Organization can make to effectively combat transnational organized crime;

Recognizing also that all Customs administrations have the prime responsibility for detecting contraband and to control the cross-border movement of goods, conveyances and people;

Acknowledging the need for international co-operation against transnational organized crime to ensure the correct functioning of the legal economy and that legitimate economic interests are protected;

Noting that in this regard the areas of particular strategic importance for Customs administrations include :

- The strengthening of co-operation between Customs and with legitimate traders in the repression of Customs, trade and revenue fraud, money laundering and the smuggling of drugs, firearms and other illicit goods;
- The necessity to increase the effectiveness of Customs administrations in the areas of compliance, enforcement and the facilitation of legitimate trade;
- The application of international Customs Conventions and Agreements;
- Increased efficiency and modernization of Customs administrations, control methods and procedures;
- The rapid and smooth exchange of information amongst Members, through the use of WCO bilateral and multilateral agreements and the WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Office network.

The participants in the Council Session **have agreed** that mutual co-operative efforts against violations of Customs laws and regulations should be taken in order to address the problems associated with transnational crime and are convinced that achieving the goals of this Declaration will be accomplished by the widespread support of the WCO Recommendation on transnational organized crime and the WCO's work programme for compliance and enforcement.

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