



## **DECLARATION OF THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL<sup>1</sup> ON GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN CUSTOMS**

THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL:

**Noting** that Customs administrations throughout the world perform a number of important tasks on behalf of their governments and contribute to national development objectives on trade facilitation, community protection, revenue collection, and national security;

**Acknowledging** the role of Customs in creating a safe and accessible trading environment for all stakeholders at the border;

**Acknowledging** that gender equality and diversity are consistent with the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948), and are thereby critical for all nations and for all Customs administrations;

**Recognizing** that gender equality and diversity are fundamental prerequisites for achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth;

**Supporting** *Goal number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda* on achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls, and the WTO "*Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment*" (2017) that recognizes the contribution of inclusive trade policies to advancing gender equality, women's economic empowerment and the subsequent positive impact on socio-economic growth;

**Affirming** that gender equality and diversity are key to ensure performance and quality of service within Customs, and thereby need to be considered in decision-making processes at all levels and continuously monitored to evaluate progress;

**Recognizing** the importance for Customs administrations to reflect the society which they serve, and to uphold strong values of good governance, transparency, representation and inclusion of all stakeholders and not tolerate discrimination of any kind;

**Recalling** the efforts already taken by the WCO and its Membership to advance gender equality and diversity in Customs, including the development of the Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT) and the Blended Training Package on Advancing Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs;

**Confirming** the WCO's commitment to promote and advance gender equality and diversity in Customs by maintaining and enhancing its collaboration with other development partners and trade organizations on this topic; and

**Determined** to collaborate to advance gender equality and diversity in Customs;

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<sup>1</sup> Customs Co-operation Council is the official name of the World Customs Organization (WCO).

DECLARES that it:

1. **Calls on** Customs administrations to adopt a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity and/or any other grounds as stated in anti-discrimination laws in Member's respective countries. In this connection, it urges Members to ensure that all Customs staff be treated fairly based on performance and ability, and be awarded equal opportunities with regard to hiring, promotion, salary, benefits, disciplinary measures, termination and layoffs;
2. **Encourages** Customs administrations to share their experiences regarding the implementation of gender equality and diversity in Customs;
3. **Encourages** Customs administrations to share best practices related to monitoring and evaluation methodologies for assessing the progress on gender equality and diversity in Customs, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and to engage in voluntary reporting on the progress of this work;
4. **Advocates** for enhanced cooperation with relevant stakeholders on the topic of gender equality and diversity, including with other government agencies (OGAs), the private sector stakeholders (including associations representing women traders) and border associations, to foster a harmonized and coordinated approach in implementing a gender equal and inclusive Customs environment throughout the whole trade process;
5. **Supports** the promotion of work-life balance for Customs employees, offering flexible work arrangements whenever possible, to promote a healthy work environment for staff;
6. **Underlines** the importance of preventing any type of harassment and/or gender-based violence in all areas of Customs, among staff or committed by staff towards the public and vice versa;
7. **Encourages** Customs administrations to continue promoting leadership development opportunities for women and other under-represented groups through targeted initiatives such as mentor programmes; and
8. **Encourages** the WCO Secretariat, as a representative of the diverse WCO Membership, to commit to and share its policies on gender equality and diversity, as an encouragement to Customs administrations.

The Customs Co-operation Council calls on Customs administrations and the WCO Secretariat to implement comprehensive and sustainable policies, procedures and activities to promote gender equality and diversity in Customs in line with the commitments above. It also calls on Governments, the private sector and members of the international community to support Customs in their efforts to advance gender equality and diversity.

In this regard, the Customs Co-operation Council intends to report on the progress towards the implementation of this Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs on the occasion of WCO Council each year.

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