



**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES**

Established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council
Créée en 1952 sous le nom de Conseil de coopération douanière

The Secretary General

13.HL-0148E/B.M.

Brussels, 1 July 2013.

Dear Director General,
Dear Colleague and Partner,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to attend the WCO PICARD Conference 2013, which will take place in St Petersburg, Russian Federation, from 18 to 20 September 2013. The Conference will be jointly organized by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the Institute of International Business and Law of the ITMO University, with the participation of the Russian Federal Customs Service.

Since its inception in 2006, the WCO PICARD Programme has aimed to promote the professional standing of Customs and provide a channel for co-operation between Customs, academic partners and other stakeholders undertaking Customs-related capacity building. A range of initiatives have been rolled out in co-operation with our academic partners in the areas of research publication, Customs professional standards, WCO recognition of academic programmes and management development.

The annual PICARD Conference has been in place for seven years now, with previous events being held in Brussels, Shanghai, San José in Costa Rica, Abu Dhabi, Geneva and Marrakesh. This year's PICARD Conference will build on the success of the previous Conferences and will provide participants with an opportunity to interact with government, academic and trade counterparts from around the world. Sessions will include discussions on national and international challenges relating to the impact on Customs of the development, implementation, and administration of regional integration initiatives; the WCO Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP) and enhancing Professionalism in Customs: how to operationalize the PICARD 2020 Strategic Document ?

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Letter addressed to:

WCO Members and Partners

Early registration for the Conference is encouraged (discounts apply). For detailed information about the registration, hotel reservations and visa procedures, please visit the Conference website: <http://picard.spb.ru/en/> or the WCO Events webpage <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/events.aspx> which will soon provide the Conference detailed agenda based on the inputs from the Call for papers.

Should you have any queries on the content or arrangements for the Conference, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Bénédicte Meille (benedicte.meille@wcoomd.org) or Mr. Libing Wei (libing.wei@wcoomd.org) from the WCO Capacity Building Directorate.

I look forward to meeting you in St. Petersburg for the 8th annual PICARD Conference.

Yours sincerely,



Kunio Mikuriya.