

Statement of the WCO Asia Pacific Plastic Waste Conference (APPW Statement) 24-25 February 2022

The Customs Administrations and Stakeholders participating in the WCO Asia Pacific Waste Conference:

Recognizing the serious threat posed by the illegal trafficking of plastic waste, especially in the context of the Asia Pacific region as one of the main destinations for plastic waste;

Reiterating the role and importance of the Green Customs Initiative (GCI) as a partnership of international entities cooperating to enhance the capacity of Customs to monitor and facilitate the legal trade and to detect and prevent illegal trade in environmentally sensitive commodities covered by relevant trade-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and international conventions;

Recognizing that, in line with the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” shared at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, plastic waste management has become a new global challenge;

Acknowledging the support provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to the APPW Project and other interventions in the field;

Reaffirming the need to address the illegal plastic waste trade, which endangers human health, the marine and land environment, and food security, while understanding the economic opportunities and the need to facilitate the legal trade in plastic waste;

Emphasizing the Basel Convention principles and provisions on this matter, including the environmentally sound management of waste and the regulation of the transboundary movement of plastic waste;

Recalling the amendments to the Basel Convention on plastic waste aimed at increasing transparency, traceability and sharing of information concerning the transboundary movement and management of plastic waste;

Recalling the ASEAN Joint Declaration on Hazardous Chemicals and Wastes Management;

Considering the experiences shared by the Members who participated in the APPW Project in the field of plastic waste trade control;

Considering the role of Customs in the prevention and countering of illegal activities and the facilitation of legal trade, through the implementation of coordinated controls on the cross-border movement of goods, means of transport and operators involved and the support provided by WCO

tools such as the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN), the Cargo Targeting System (CTS), ENVIRONET and the Coordinated Border Management (CBM) Compendium;

Recognizing that international trade and trade policy can and must support environmental and climate goals and promote more sustainable production and consumption, while taking into account the importance of a just transition and making progress towards a circular economy;

Highlighting the need to implement and enforce existing provisions concerning the transboundary movement and environmentally sound management of plastic waste more effectively through better governance, systematic data collection and analysis, enhanced cooperation, capacity building and the exchange of information;

Emphasizing the desire to develop a regional approach towards the plastic waste trade and to strengthen international cooperation so as to ensure the protection of the environment from the effects of the improper management of plastic waste.

Hereby:

Support the principles of coordinated border management between Customs and other regulatory and enforcement agencies in relation to information exchange and mutual support with a view to preventing and combating the illegal trafficking of plastic waste;

Advocate deeper engagement and coordination with other partner international organizations, using all relevant bilateral and multilateral platforms and channels of communication and cooperation, in order to maximize the impact of planned interventions in this field;

Invite Customs authorities to continue their dialogue and enhance their cooperation with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the sphere of combating plastic waste trafficking;

Encourage Customs authorities to forge ahead in the implementation of digital solutions to provide an efficient cooperation platform, such as a Single Window Environment (SWE), and enable integrated risk management and targeting, such as the CTS, in order to minimize the risk of the illegal transboundary movement of waste, while facilitating the legal flows of plastic materials destined for recycling so as to achieve a more resource-efficient and circular economy;

Support regional cooperation efforts within and among the WCO's Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs), Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs), and other regional entities such as Regional Training Centres (RTCs) and Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRCs);

Underline the importance of the WCO and Basel Convention instruments, tools and channels of communication that would support Members in better controlling illicit trade while facilitating the legal recycling of plastic materials;

Encourage Customs authorities to make use of the training and reference material available, and implement sustainable capacity development and training programmes for Customs officers on plastic waste, including the tools and instruments developed or updated through the APPW Project

such as the Training Framework for Customs Administrations on plastic waste, the CBM Compendium and the Self-Assessment Tool for plastic waste;

Request Customs authorities to participate actively in regional and global enforcement operations, such as the various WCO DEMETER operations aimed at combating waste trafficking, and make use of available WCO tools, such as the CENcomm application, to report relevant data in a timely manner;

Urge Customs authorities to use the full range of detection and investigative techniques, including risk profiling, intelligence sharing, controlled deliveries, forensic techniques and other non-intrusive equipment; furthermore, to use the full extent of the law to secure an appropriate level of punishment that would act as an effective deterrent;

Encourage Customs authorities to develop, pilot and implement trader compliance programmes in the area of plastic waste trade, for example Customs compliance and AEO (Authorized Economic Operator) programmes;

Invite Customs authorities to enhance their data analytics capabilities and undertake regular assessments of data and risks concerning the waste trade, in order to develop evidence-based policies, strategies and plans based on those assessments;

Encourage Customs administrations to leverage an existing coordination mechanism such as the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) in order to develop a coordinated approach to the control of the plastic waste trade;

Call on Customs authorities to continue to raise awareness, through specialized events and public campaigns, of the problem of plastic waste trafficking and its impact on the economy, security and sustainability;

Invite Customs Administrations in the Asia Pacific region to participate actively in the extension phase of the APPW Project commencing 1 April 2022, funded by the Government of Japan.