



## World Customs Organization

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### Message of the WCO Secretary General on the Coronavirus

Greetings from Headquarters of the World Customs Organization in Brussels.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are faced with one of the most challenging situation, the outbreak of the Coronavirus COVID-19. This has affected negatively borders and, thereby, trade, travel and transport. From Customs point of view, we want to prevent and fight the spread of COVID-19 on the one hand, but, on the other, we want to safeguard supply chain continuity.

This is why we asked Heads of Custom Administration of 183 Members to seek their experience, challenges, and measures/advice: Especially for measures, firstly, how they are facilitating the movements of goods while applying appropriate risk management; secondly, how they are enhancing communication, collaboration and cooperation with their partners, the government agencies and the private sector; and thirdly, what measures were taken to protect their Customs officers.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to Heads of Customs who already responded to our enquiry. We are also contacting our Business partners that is the Private Sector Consultative Group and Trade Associations to seek similar experience and advice.

Also we have created [a special Web Page dedicated to Coronavirus](#) on our WCO Website and there we try to share information that is our advice, our tools and best practices not only to Customs but also to the public.

For the immediate term, what we need is to facilitate the movements of relief goods, therefore, first, we identified [medical supplies in our HS Harmonized System Classification Code](#) and then we recommended our Members to apply our standards and guidelines in case of Natural Disasters - which is a similar situation -. All this information can be found on our Website so I hope you can stay tuned with our Website.

I would like to talk now about Customs officers on the ground, because they are on the ground to protect citizens from health, safety and security threats, and therefore exposed to Coronavirus, but, at the same time, they are facilitating global supply chain. I would like to commend Customs officers, men and women on the ground, and also urge Customs administrations to take the necessary measures to protect them.

Finally, rest assured that the WCO is taking contact with our partners, International Organizations, International Trade Associations to make sure that we get our forces together to counter this problem.

Together, we can win this fight.