



Security Project for West and Central Africa (Customs Counter-terrorism Initiative for West and Central Africa)

- *Launch of a new security initiative by the WCO for Customs administrations in West and Central Africa.*
- *The Government of Japan financially supports the initiative with a contribution totalling over three (3) million US dollars.*

A New Initiative

Global terrorism poses a variety of challenges, not only to the security and safety of people, but also to economic development and political stability, making it imperative for Customs administrations to further strengthen their efforts to secure borders and protect the international trade supply chain.

At the G7 Summit held in Ise-Shima, Japan on 26 and 27 May 2016, the Leaders adopted the “G7 Action Plan on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism,” which made specific mention of the WCO Security Programme as a means of enhancing border security and assisting WCO Members to counter the threat posed by terrorists and other criminal organizations. Furthermore, the WCO Security Programme was also mentioned in the “G20 Action Plan on Countering Terrorism”, adopted in July 2017.

Terrorist and violent extremist organizations in West and Central Africa have a long history of using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to inflict harm on its population, infrastructure and economies. The suicide bombings in Nigeria and Cameroon in July 2017 further highlight the fact that attacks using IEDs pose a serious threat in the Sahel area and that there is an imminent need to address the illegal use of explosive precursor chemicals and other IED components in the region.

In line with the G7 and G20 Action Plans, to further expand the reach of the WCO Security Programme, the WCO, with financial support from the Government of Japan, has decided to launch a new initiative for Customs administrations in the WCO’s West and Central Africa region. The initiative will specifically focus on addressing border security related challenges in the region by means of the WCO’s Programme Global Shield (PGS).

PGS is the WCO’s first security related initiative devised to monitor the cross-border movement of dual-use explosive precursor chemicals and IED components, and to eliminate their illegal diversion. The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of UN Security Council encouraged members states to participate in PGS in the context of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1526(2004), 2253(2015) and 2368(2017) on its report issued on 26 January 2018 (S/2018/14). Several items monitored by PGS are listed among the prohibited items in UNSC Resolution 2375, adopted on 11 September 2017. PGS will thus also contribute to the effective and proper implementation of the UNSC Resolution.

WCO Security Programme

The Programme is the WCO's response mechanism to assist its Member Customs administrations with their border security related challenges. It comprises five commodity based/thematic areas:

- Programme Global Shield, aimed at countering IEDs;
- The SALW Project, aimed at countering their misuse;
- Passenger Controls/FTFs, supported by the use of API/PNR;
- Strategic Trade Controls, which combine capacity building and operational activities;
- Terrorist Financing, aimed at combating illicit trade and money laundering, including cash couriers and trade-based money laundering.

Recent Successes of the WCO Security Programme

- **Programme Global Shield**, which targets IEDs, has resulted in the seizure of over 1000 metric tons of chemicals and multiple IED components since its inception in 2010, thus preventing the manufacture of thousands of IEDs and many potential deaths and casualties.
- **Operation Chimera**, which focused on express courier and mail services, targeted the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW), including cash and bearer negotiable instruments (BNIs). Among the key seizures was a record interception of 450 million US dollars made by Customs officers in Toluca, Mexico, while Customs officers in Abu Dhabi foiled two attempts to smuggle nearly 10 million Saudi riyals (approx. 2.5 million US dollars) into the United Arab Emirates.

Key WCO Instruments and Tools

- **Punta Cana Resolution (December 2015)**, addressed the role and contribution of Customs in the context of border security and counter-terrorism.

<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2015/december/wco-issues-the-punta-cana-resolution.aspx>

- **Counter-Terrorism Strategy (July 2016)**, aimed at enhancing the capacity of Customs administrations to manage border security related threats.