



Permanent Technical Committee

239th/240th Sessions
25 – 27 April 2023
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SUMMARY REPORT

THE PERMANENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

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ITEM I – OPENING OF THE MEETING

• Opening remarks by Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General, WCO

1. After the Chairperson's introduction and welcome to the 239th/240th Sessions of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC), the Secretary General welcomed delegates and drew their attention to the growing number of participants, which demonstrated the relevance of the PTC. He noted that the PTC was one of the few committees to have been set up directly by the Convention establishing the Customs Co-operation Council, which was celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. He also noted that the PTC had produced many instruments, frameworks of standards, guidelines, best practices, and compendiums to ensure connectivity at the borders. He gave a brief introduction of the Agenda items for the PTC Sessions, including the role of Customs in fragile and conflict-affected situations, the Green Customs Action Plan, the proposed Version 4.0.0 of the WCO Data Model (WCO DM), the Single Window, and the digitalization of the Certificate of Origin. He then touched on the WCO's collaboration efforts, such as the partnership with businesses on E-Commerce, the cooperation with the WTO to implement the WTO TFA, the dialogues with the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) and the port authorities, and the ongoing work with the World Bank Group concerning a new Time Release Study Online System. Regarding the WCO theme for 2023, the Secretary General mentioned that the Agenda items were relevant to the future of Customs, nurturing the next generation and promoting knowledge sharing. He concluded his remarks by encouraging the active engagement of delegates in productive deliberations to help the WCO to make continuous progress. The List of Participants was set out in **Annex I** hereto.
2. A Member appreciated the Secretary General's visionary leadership under which the WCO had excelled in many areas supporting the international Customs community.
3. **In conclusion, the PTC:**
 - took note of the opening remarks by Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of the WCO.

ITEM II - ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda item and gave an update on the changes made in version b of the draft Agenda. Prior to the start of the Meeting, two presentations (by Eswatini and Singapore on their national experiences) had been included on the Agenda under 'Item VIII. Cross-Border Regulatory Data Exchange Framework' and two presentations (by India and Expeditors)

had been added under 'Item IX. on Technology and Innovation'. The Chairperson then informed the Meeting that the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) Chair would not be able to join the Meeting as his election process had not yet been confirmed. Additionally, Botswana would not be able to make a presentation at this Meeting, but intended to participate in the next Meeting of the PTC to make a presentation. Finally, he also noted that there would be three linked presentations by Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) members under Agenda item XII to provide a progress update. The PTC was invited to adopt the draft Agenda set out in Doc. PC0712Eb (version b), including these changes.

5. After the Chairperson's introduction of the Agenda, several Members took the floor and made statements regarding the situation in Ukraine. The Chairperson asked delegates who wished to have their statements reflected in the Annex to the Summary Report to submit them in writing to the Secretariat. The statements received by the Secretariat were set out in **Annex II** hereto.

6. In conclusion, the PTC:

- endorsed the draft Agenda (PC0712Eb-Fb).

ITEM III – UPDATE AND REPORTS

(For information only)

- a. **Report from the 87th Session of the Policy Commission, 5-7 December 2022**
- b. **Report from the 30th Meeting of the Revised Kyoto Convention Management Committee (RKCMC), 26-30 September 2022**
- c. **Report from the 19th Meeting of the Administrative Committee for the Customs Convention on Containers, 1972 (CCC), 23 January 2023**
- d. **Report from the 31st Meeting of the Revised Kyoto Convention Management Committee (RKCMC), 6-10 March 2023**

(To take note)

- e. **Report on the 28th Meeting of the SAFE Working Group, 5-7 October 2022**
- f. **Report from the 6th Meeting of the Working Group on Performance Measurement (WGPM), 12-13 October 2022**
- g. **Report from the 9th Meeting of the Technical Experts Group on Non-Intrusive Inspection (TEG-NII), 3-4 November 2022**

- **TEG-NII Work Programme 2022-2025**

(For guidance)

- h. **Oral Report from the 5th Meeting of the Passenger Facilitation and Control Working Group (PFCWG), 13-14 April 2023 and other intersessional developments**
- i. **Oral Report from the 7th Meeting of the Working Group on Performance Measurement (WGPM), 17 – 18 April 2023**

(For decision)

- j. **Report from the 4th Meeting of the Passenger Facilitation and Control Working Group (PFCWG), 10-11 October 2022**
 - **PFCWG Work Programme 2022-2025**
 - **Maritime API/PNR Standard Maintenance Procedure**
 - **Cruise Ship Compendium of Best Practices for Customs Use**
 - **Maritime API/PNR dataset**
- k. **Report from the 19th Meeting of the WCO Counterfeiting and Piracy (CAP) Group (22 October-17 November 2022)**
 - **Terms of Reference (ToR) of the CAP Group**
- l. **Report from the 42nd Meeting of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee, 8-9 November 2022**
 - **Amendment of Terms of Reference (ToR) of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee**
- m. **Report from the 65th Meeting of the Data Model Projects Team (DMPT), 2-3 February 2023**
- n. **Report from the 16th Meeting of the WCO/IATA/ICAO API-PNR Contact Committee, 13-14 October 2022.**

7. The Chairperson introduced this Agenda item, explaining that the update and reports formed a standing PTC Agenda item which grouped together all the “A”-items, namely reports from different WCO working bodies or by the Secretariat. Some of these reports were being submitted to the PTC for information only (sub-items (a), (b), (c) and (d)). In contrast, the reports under sub-items (e) to (g) were being submitted to the PTC to take note of them. If required, delegates could raise issues or launch a relevant discussion.

8. The Chairperson then invited the Secretariat to provide oral reports on two meetings (Agenda sub-items (h) and (i)).

h. Oral report from the 5th Meeting of the Passenger Facilitation and Control Working Group (PFCWG), 13-14 April 2023 and other intersessional developments

9. The Chair of the Passenger Facilitation and Control Working Group (PFCWG) provided an oral report on the 5th Meeting of the PFCWG, which had been held in a hybrid format on 13 and 14 April 2023. The 5th Meeting of the PFCWG had brought together 17 in-person participants and 135 online participants from around the world, including observers from the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) and International Maritime Organization (IMO).
10. The PFCWG Chair gave an update on key areas of focus and importance:
 - The current situation around the re-opening of the international cruising business as shared by industry representatives;
 - The Cruise Ship Compendium of Best Practices for Customs Use, for which Members were encouraged to provide information during the intersession for inclusion in the Compendium;
 - The Maritime API and BRI/PNR datasets submitted to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Expert Group on Data Harmonization (EGDH), which would be presented to the IMO Facilitation Committee for endorsement, and the work of the WCO Data Model Projects Team (DMPT) in developing technical data exchange standards based on the dataset produced by the PFCWG;
 - The Maritime API and BRI/PNR Standards and the roles of the WCO and other international organizations in establishing and maintaining the global standards on Maritime API and BRI/PNR, and the role of WCO in the maintenance of the API and BRI/PNR Standard Maintenance Procedure;
 - The draft API and BRI/PNR Guidelines that had been created by the WCO, for which the PFCWG had agreed to the new term “Booking Reservation Information (BRI)” to provide consistency in language on dataset known as Passenger Name Record (PNR) data in aviation;
 - The discussion on the Work Plan of the PFCWG which was to be updated in order to:
 - make a submission to the IMO proposing the inclusion of API and BRI/PNR data in the IMO FAL Convention; and
 - develop and implement data standards for international travel by ferry, rail and road, and for non-commercial modes of transport;
 - Discussion of the options presented by the Secretariat for the future of the PFCWG and their potential implications. The general consensus was that the work of the PFCWG should continue past December 2023, as a lot of work was still needed to advance on the maritime standards, but also to consider the standards for other modes of travel. The PFCWG agreed to conduct the PFCWG and the API/PNR Contact

Committee (CC) under one Agenda at their next Meetings in October 2023, and to look at synergies between the two groups in order to propose a recommendation on the PFCWG and API/PNR CC to the PTC, and subsequently the Policy Commission, for endorsement.

- The PFCWG discussed conducting the BRI/PNR pilot project and agreed on the pilot objectives.

11. The PFCWG had highlighted a need for Customs administrations and industry partners to continue to meet regularly to address all passenger-related work, global data standards and operations within a multimodal context. The PFCWG delegates acknowledged the ongoing collaboration between the WCO, the IMO and their respective committees and working groups to integrate the Maritime API and BRI/PNR standards into the IMO's instruments and tools. By working closely with both CLIA and the IMO, the WCO aimed to streamline data provision for the cruise industry worldwide, ultimately benefiting Customs administrations by ensuring they receive higher quality information.

i. Oral report from the 7th Meeting of the Working Group on Performance Measurement (WGPM), 17-18 April 2023

12. Following the introduction of the Agenda item by the Chairperson, the Secretariat provided an oral report on the 7th Meeting of the WGPM held on 17 April 2023, presenting the first version of the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism (PMM V.1) package including the four common dimensions of Customs performance (Trade Facilitation and Economic Competitiveness; Revenue Collection; Enforcement, Security and Protection of Society; and Organizational Development) and the associated list of related expected outcomes; KPI selection criteria; the template for submitting proposals on KPIs; the main WCO tools having a major impact on each expected outcome under the PMM and whose application by Customs administrations would be assessed under the WCO PMM; the mapping of the PMM dimensions and their relevant expected outcomes in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the list of the KPIs for the PMM V.1; and the Guidance for the Voluntary Self-assessment and Peer Review Phases. Reference was also made to another achievement of the WGPM, namely the development of the WCO Handbook on Performance Measurement as a tool to strengthen Members' capacity in support of the national administration's performance measurement (PM) systems, and a complement to the PMM.
13. Bearing in mind the living and evolutionary nature of the PMM, the PTC was updated about the activities envisaged for the maintenance and implementation of the PMM. Concerning the governance arrangements to ensure implementation and maintenance of the PMM, the PTC was updated about the outcomes of the discussions at the 237th/238th Sessions of the Permanent Technical Committee, as well as the 14th Session of the Capacity Building Committee (CBC), all supporting the establishment of a specialized new body,

such as the proposed Performance Measurement Mechanism Project Team (PMMPT), reporting to the CBC for guidance. With respect to the resource implications, it was further clarified that no additional human resources would be needed by the WCO Secretariat.

14. The PTC welcomed and appreciated the progress made to date on the release of the first version of the PMM. While supporting the establishment of a PMMPT, a delegate stressed the importance of ensuring a balanced representation of the WCO regions in the work of the PMMPT. He also called on the Secretariat to proceed with an appropriate awareness-raising campaign to facilitate Members' participation in the PMM and ensure data submission, taking into account the voluntary nature of the PMM.
15. A PTC observer stressed the importance of developing a performance measurement culture at the national level while ensuring the inclusivity of the PSCG in further developments and the public disclosure of the PMM information. In this regard, the Secretariat informed the PTC that the results of a majority of KPIs would be disclosed to the public, clarifying that, according to the draft Terms of Reference (ToR), the PMMPT could invite representatives from the Private Sector Consultative Group, partner international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and other external stakeholders and representatives of academia, to attend the meetings as necessary.
16. Some of the reports (sub-items (j), (k), (l), (m) and (n)) required endorsement by the PTC. The Chairperson introduced these Agenda sub-items.

k. Report from the 19th Meeting of the WCO Counterfeiting and Piracy (CAP) Group (22 October-17 November 2022)

- Terms of Reference (ToR) of the CAP Group

17. The PTC delegates appreciated the recent positive developments in the WCO Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Health and Safety programme, which gave the WCO high visibility, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic with Operation STOP. The new tools developed for Members, such as the IPR Handbook, the Self-Assessment Tool, the IPR CENcomm, and the CLiKc! e-learning module on combating illicit medicines and counterfeit or substandard medical supplies related to COVID-19 and other pandemics, were also welcomed.
18. Finally, a Member announced its support for the Secretariat's awareness-raising campaigns against counterfeiting and piracy.

l. Report from the 42nd Meeting of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee, 8-9 November 2022

- Amendment of Terms of Reference (ToR) of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee
 19. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda item by explaining that the draft amendment of the ToR was based on the agreement by the 235th/236th Sessions of the PTC to remove the limit to the number of observers for the Contact Committee, along with the additional necessary updates. The PTC was invited to endorse the 42nd WCO/UPU Contact Committee Report, including the proposed revision of the ToR.
 20. Several delegates took the floor and expressed their support for the amendment of the ToR, underscoring the importance of quality Electronic Advance Data (EAD) for the necessary risk management of postal items captured and exchanged through cooperation between Customs and designated operators. In this regard, a Member also called attention to the fact that the amount of e-commerce by post was growing, although an accurate estimation of the extent of this was not possible due to the difficulties in identifying it on the basis of the Customs declaration and EAD, which posed a challenge to Customs administrations. The delegate showed a willingness to join the intersessional technical expert group discussion to improve the CN23 form and the corresponding data.
 21. An observer expressed concern about one of the parts added that restricted each organization's ability to invite additional observers. The representative explained that it had a negative impact, particularly for those from the private sector, on their access to the discussions in the Contact Committee. The Secretariat responded that the WCO had to take the UPU's thoughts into consideration since both organizations worked together in the Contact Committee as equal partners, but also expressed hope that there would be opportunities for all interested stakeholders to participate as moving towards the future.

22. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the reports from the relevant meetings;
- welcomed the deliberations of the Working Group on Performance Measurement (WGPM);
- endorsed the Report from the 4th Meeting of the Passenger Facilitation and Control Working Group (PFCWG) of 10-11 October 2022, including the PFCWG Work Programme 2022-2025, the Maritime API and BRI/PNR Standard Maintenance Procedure (**Annex III**), the Cruise Ship Compendium of Best Practices for Customs Use (**Annex IV**) and the Maritime API and BRI/PNR dataset;
- endorsed the Report from the 19th Meeting of the WCO Counterfeiting and Piracy (CAP) Group (22 October-17 November 2022), including the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) of the CAP Group;
- endorsed the Report from the 42nd Meeting of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee of 8-9 November 2022, including the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) of the WCO/UPU Contact Committee;

- endorsed the Report from the 65th Meeting of the Data Model Projects Team (DMPT) of 2-3 February 2023; and
- endorsed the Report from the 16th Meeting of the WCO/IATA/ICAO API-PNR Contact Committee of 13-14 October 2022.

ITEM IV – ROLE OF CUSTOMS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED SITUATIONS (FCS)

- **Report on the outcomes of the Global Conference on Enabling Customs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations and WCO Action Plan on Fragile Borders, Doc. PC0714Ea**

23. Following the decision at the 139th/140th Council Sessions in June 2022, the WCO, in cooperation with the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), organized a security-focused Global Conference entitled “Enabling Customs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations” which took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 31 January 2023 to 2 February 2023. The Conference was used to consult with Members and discuss the draft Action Plan on Enabling Customs in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (FCS). Following the comments received during the Conference, the Action Plan had been amended and presented to the 43rd Session of the Enforcement Committee on 29 March 2023 for endorsement. The most recent version of the Action Plan was attached as an Annex to document PC0714Ea.
24. The Action Plan was endorsed by the 43rd Session of the Enforcement Committee with the recommendation that a glossary be added before its presentation to the upcoming Policy Commission.
25. It was now being presented to the PTC for information, welcoming any comments ahead of its submission to the Policy Commission and Council in June 2023.
26. A number of delegates asked the WCO Secretariat to clarify that a glossary would be included in the document that was subsequently submitted to the Policy Commission. There was a debate about the definition of “fragile and conflict-affected situations”, as the Secretariat confirmed that this would be specified in the documents. This addressed some wider concerns, with one delegation putting forward the view that no changes should be made to the Action Plan and others concerned that some of the terms used in the Action Plan could be interpreted in different ways. The Secretariat also clarified that the definition was focused on those areas directly impacted by fragile and conflict-affected situations and not those indirectly affected by trade dislocation. Other interventions offered thanks to Nigeria for hosting the Global Conference and the WCO Secretariat for producing the Action Plan.

27. In conclusion, the PTC:

- Thanked the Nigeria Customs Service for hosting the Global Conference in Abuja, Nigeria; and
- took note of the outcomes of the Global Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, and the endorsement by the 43rd Session of the Enforcement Committee of the WCO Action Plan on Fragile Borders, including an additional glossary, and its agreement to submit the Action Plan to the Policy Commission and Council in June 2023.

ITEM V – ROLE OF CUSTOMS IN DISASTER RELIEF

a. Update on the work progress achieved by the COVID-19 Project, Doc. PC0715Ea

28. The Secretariat took the floor to inform those present that document PC0715Ea provided an update on the progress achieved by the COVID-19 Project. Since the last PTC in October 2022, the Project team had organized eight capacity building workshops. In addition, the COVID-19 Project had provided the Mobile App for passenger Customs declarations and related IT equipment to Nigeria Customs, and was in the process of developing a Mobile App for Egypt Customs.
29. The Secretariat concluded by announcing that to mark the end of the Project on 30 June 2023, it would be organizing a global webinar in a hybrid format to bring together the Project's beneficiaries and WCO Members. This would be an opportunity to highlight the results achieved and discuss the lessons learnt stemming from the work carried out since the start of the Project. All Members were invited to attend this wrap-up event.
30. A number of delegates expressed appreciation to the WCO and the Government of Japan for the technical assistance provided. They also appreciated the efforts undertaken by the WCO in relation to the COVID-19 Action Plan and other initiatives to tackle the pandemic and future disasters and foster a coordinated response. Delegates expressed their interest in discussing the lessons learnt during the global webinar.
31. The Secretariat took the floor again to thank delegates for their positive comments and the donor for its ongoing support.

b. Presentation by a Member on the role of Customs in disaster relief (Türkiye)

32. The Delegate of Türkiye delivered a presentation on the measures implemented by the Government and Customs Administration of Türkiye in response to the recent earthquakes that had had an enormous impact in terms of the affected area and population. The presenter highlighted the acknowledgement of the role of Customs in the national response plan that had been developed and implemented under the coordination of the Disaster and Emergency

Management Authority, known as AFAD. The measures pertaining to the preparedness, response and recovery phases of the disaster management cycle were also explained in the presentation. The clearance of relief consignments in response to the recent natural disaster had been centred around cooperation, coordination and communication.

33. The measures aimed at facilitating the cross-border movement of relief consignments had included pre-arrival notifications from AFAD, prioritization, as well as the acceptance of oral declarations based on the submission of a packing list and a bill of lading, if available. Measures had also been implemented to facilitate the temporary admission of specialized equipment and rescue animals, and the cross-border movement of relief personnel and their possessions. These facilitation measures had been implemented based on proper risk assessment and without compromising appropriate standards of Customs control.
34. The speaker went on to present some of the challenges encountered, specifically with the importation of highly regulated goods, such as medicines and food items, whereas the solutions implemented by Türkiye involved the establishment of offices of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture at borders, ports and airports. The role of Türkiye as a transit country for the importation of relief consignments into Syria was also recognized in the presentation, with a brief explanation of the facilitative measures implemented in that regard.
35. Following the presentation, an observer thanked the Customs Administration of Türkiye for the efforts to facilitate the cross-border movement of relief consignments, relief personnel and their possessions, and the presenter thanked the international community for the sympathy, solidarity and support extended to Türkiye.

36. In conclusion, the PTC

- took note of the information provided in the document about the progress made by the COVID-19 Project since the October 2022 PTC sessions;
- provided guidance on the way forward; and
- took note with thanks of the presentation by Türkiye.

ITEM VI – GREEN CUSTOMS

a. The transition to a circular economy and implications for Customs administrations

37. Further to a request by WCO Members to study the relationship between the circular economy, international trade and Customs operations, the Research and Policy Unit (RPU) started to work on a Study Report on the to gain a better understanding of the circular economy and the operations of Custom

administrations, and to identify the challenges and opportunities in the transition to a circular economy.

38. To this end, the Secretariat had conducted a study through a literature review, trade analysis based on HS codes, interviews with private companies, industrial associations, and Customs administrations, as well as a field visit.
39. The Study was organized into five chapters: the first chapter provided an overview of the concept of the circular economy, both in theory and in practice, to identify what Customs officers should know, but also to clarify a series of implications for Customs. The second chapter presented the links between international legislation (regional trade agreements) in relation to the circular economy. The Study highlighted three main challenges in this transition: the data of the circular economy (chapter 3), the facilitation of its trade and the enforcement of laws (chapter 4) seeking to highlight the potential role of Customs. Finally, a series of case studies was presented to synthesize the experience of the Customs field in relation to the circular economy.
40. The Study Report was to be published in June 2023.
41. A Member thanked the Secretariat for the work done. Italy further highlighted that the circular economy did not encompass all the activities of Customs relating to the protection of the environment, and provided the example of recycling, as not all waste could be easily recyclable. As such, the consideration of waste could be addressed in a broader context of Green Customs. A delegate welcomed the progress made on the Study Report and emphasized the importance of the circular economy transition for Customs administrations. Another Member thanked the Secretariat for the progress made on the Study Report and took note of the possible implications for Customs administrations. The delegate also noted that Members would have to consider and discuss the next steps to identify key focus areas (one example could be Customs valuation, for instance) involved in the transition to a circular economy. Another delegate thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in providing updates on the Study Report on the transition to a circular economy and implications for Customs administrations. She also supported the comments made by Italy and emphasized that the circular economy should be considered as a part of Green Customs. The delegate supported the importance of Members' discussions on the ways of moving the circular economy transition forward.
42. A delegate thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in pointing out the implications for Customs administrations, including from the perspective of the developing economies, while another delegate also highlighted the critical importance of the national transition to a circular economy. A Member thanked the Secretariat for the progress made on the Study Report, and highlighted the way to move forward in the context of a circular economy. An observer thanked the Secretariat for providing insights into the transition to a circular economy and pointed out potential issues of classification and definition for circular economy goods, such as for example under the scope of the Basel Convention. In

addition, Maersk emphasized the need for consideration of the obsolescence issues for end-of-life products such as electric batteries, that might raise further challenges in terms of a successful transition to a circular economy.

43. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the updates on the Circular Economy Study Report.

b. Presentation by the EU

44. The EU gave a presentation on the experience related to the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), as a voluntary premium management instrument developed by the European Commission for companies and other organizations to evaluate, report, and improve their environmental performance.
45. She further illustrated the key EMAS requirements, i.e. legal compliance with environmental legislation, continuous improvement of environmental performance, verification of the performance by a specifically trained verifier, and publication of key environmental data in an annual report. She went on to point out that, through the use of core indicators, EMAS provided enhanced credibility, transparency, reputation, environmental risks management, environmental and financial performance, as well as enhanced employee empowerment and motivation.
46. Taking into account the difficulties in measuring the net benefits of other programmes, such as the AEO programme, a number of Members and an observer expressed an interest in having more information on the costs of adopting the EMAS scheme, especially for SMEs, as well as the measurement system in place to demonstrate the benefits of adopting the EMAS and the level of use of the scheme.
47. The EU representative clarified that, being similar to ISO 14 001, the EMAS scheme was widely used across a variety of sectors. She further clarified that the scheme was based on a broad set of KPIs on energy efficiency, material efficiency, water, waste, land use and emissions, and could be used as a source of inspiration to build Members' capacity in greening their Customs administrations' operations, taking into account Customs specificities and practices, with special reference to the use of Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) and other equipment and resources having an impact on the environment.

48. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the presentation by European Union.

c. Green Customs Action Plan, Doc. PC0716Eb

49. The Deputy Secretary General introduced the item, stating that the PTC was expected to provide further guidance on the current draft Green Customs Action

Plan (GCAP) with a view to its presentation and potential endorsement by the June 2023 Policy Commission and Council. It was noted that the GCAP originally emanated from the outcomes of the December 2022 Policy Commission, which considered that Green Customs, as one of the focus areas of the Strategic Plan, needed a dedicated roadmap to establish a clear path forward and to highlight concrete goals for the WCO and Customs in these matters. The draft presented to the PTC had to be considered as a living document and was the result of a consultation involving the teams of the WCO Secretariat as well as some interested Members through an informal group of Brussels-based attachés, thanks to the leadership of the European Union. It had mostly been populated with the contents of the work programmes of working bodies related to Green Customs, but also with the ideas suggested during the series of symposia for a greener Harmonized System and the first Global Green Customs Conference. Specific actions proposed by the Brussels-based attachés had then been included in version “b” of the document and could constitute relevant additions to be considered pending the availability of resources. This first draft of the GCAP showed that the WCO had already planned initiatives in Green Customs, covering the strategic objectives and processes of the Strategic Plan. In addition to the deliverables, the draft GCAP proposed a long-term vision for the WCO in the area of Green Customs, as well as building blocks constituting the structure of the approach. The Deputy Secretary General concluded that this work was still in progress and the final proposal should clearly state the vision of the Organization, the scope of its action and the impacts expected. Complementing the Deputy Secretary General’s introduction, the EU took the floor to reiterate their commitment to the Green Customs objectives, presenting the outcomes of the informal consultation they had been leading with interested Brussels-based attachés, including the vision, definition, building blocks and actions for Green Customs.

50. PTC delegates expressed their overall appreciation of the Brussels-based attachés’ consultation and support to the GCAP, applauding its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the alignment with the Strategic Plan. They provided further suggestions for the refinement of the document before its presentation to the June 2023 Policy Commission and Council:

- To include more granularity in the actions related to “Continuing efforts to green WCO instruments” and make reference to the possible HS adaptation to help better identification of environmental goods through engagement with the WTO on the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA) and with the UNECE on the certification schemes on supply chain visibility. In this respect, mention was given to the development of specific HS codes for products with positive or negative effects on the environment to better evaluate facilitation or enforcement, including plastic waste management and products covered by relevant international conventions, MEAs or other trade agreements with environmental policy goals.

- To make a clearer link to AEOs with respect to the action related to environmental compliance and the SAFE Framework of Standards (SAFE FoS). In this regard, the delegate suggested that the SAFE Working Group consider the review of the Pillar 3 of the SAFE FoS, 'Customs-to-other Government and inter-Government agencies', to foster environmental compliance, recalling also the Policy Commission discussion about the opportunity to leverage on the AEO programme to this end.
- To possibly include actions dedicated to exploring the experiences of Customs in implementing measures to reduce carbon leakages and emissions from imported goods, to leverage on the COP28 to engage with partners to further galvanize climate mitigation actions by the trade community, to conduct dedicated research on topics such as incentives to trade to implement green transport, the impact of climate change on Customs assets, services and operations, valuation methods, rules of origin, the role of Customs in the future, the HS, as well as to develop guidance on control methods.
- To add a capacity building action in the field of IPR, health and safety.
- To consider upgrading as a priority the Enforcement Handbook to enable Members to tackle environment issues and contribute to the goals of the circular economy.
- To consider the use of KPIs to assess the effectiveness of the activities.
- To include reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 7 "Affordable and Clean Energy", 13 "Climate Action", and 14 "Life below Water", considering the role of Customs in facilitating legal trade in clean energy, seafood and sustainable fishing, and the protection of marine species.
- To focus on Customs core functions where Customs expertise can be fully utilized, such as Customs valuation and rules of origin in the context of the circular economy and better avoid putting much resources to the area not specific to Customs like government procurement.
- To revise the format of the GCAP to highlight the linkages among the different actions to produce certain results pertaining to the different building blocks.

51. Concerning the HS, PTC delegates expressed concerns about the risk of increasing the complexity of the Harmonized System (HS), contrary to the nature of the HS that pivoted around the nature of the goods and not their use or production mode, suggesting that the focus be on specific goods directly affecting the environment. In this respect, the Deputy Director of Tariffs and Trade Affairs appreciated the content of the discussion held at the PTC and committed to sharing the comments with the Harmonized System Committee (HSC) and the Review Sub-Committee (RSC), she recognized that the interaction between the HSC and PTC could be improved so that information was shared and clear visibility established on the developments occurring within each of them. A report on the series of symposia on visualizing a greener HS was currently being drafted and contained several elements of interest for the

PTC, replying to many of the issues presented by delegates. The HSC and RSC were addressing many topics, including green (or environmentally-friendly) goods. In this context, she stated that environmental policies were focused on the product life-cycle while the HS was focused on the products as such. This disparity created some complexity in moving towards the greening of the HS. In addition, the WCO had no competency to define what constituted an environmentally-friendly product. In order to address this, there was a need for the WCO to work closely with governments and NGOs specialized in these matters, to use adequate definitions and criteria, and to make the HS stronger in that sense. She added that, regarding origin-related matters, the third Global Origin Conference would contain a dedicated panel to discuss the role of rules of origin in greening trade. Finally, regarding valuation, she specified that the ownership of the WTO on the Valuation Agreement provided little flexibility for the WCO to come up with proposals on valuation methods including environmental considerations.

52. PTC delegates recognized the key role of strengthening the cooperation with environmental authorities and the private sector, and among Customs at the national and international levels, and calling for Member commitments to ensure that adequate resources were allocated to implement the GCAP. In this respect, an observer noted the commitment of carriers to green objectives and highlighted the successful cooperation with industry through Operation TIN CAN, suggesting that the same cooperative approach be applied with the private sector to Customs operations targeted at wildlife.
53. PTC delegates shared their national experiences in Green Customs:
- The Delegate of Thailand shared the national experience in establishing environmental policy and regulations, including tax incentives, for green trade.
 - The Delegate of Korea informed the PTC of the use of digital infrastructure and simplification to promote Green Customs, including a mobile reporting and payment system for travellers, and a certification system and simplified procedures for Rules of Origin for recycled goods.
 - The Delegate of India informed the PTC that a special fund had been established to implement Green Customs measures at the local level, and that technology had been leveraged to implement paperless trade measures in interactions with trade and partner agencies.
54. While recognizing the role of Customs to facilitate legitimate trade in environmental sensitive commodities, delegates called for greater attention to be paid to the potential unintended effects of measures that might become non-tariff barriers to trade. In this respect, an observer noted the contribution of trade facilitation and digitalization and modernization of Customs procedures in reducing the environmental impact of cross-border trade. He also pointed out the risk of including additional requirements for AEOs to ensure environmental compliance, sharing the opinion that attention should instead be directed towards non-compliant trade.

55. Concerning governance, some delegates suggested that the actions in the GCAP should be approved by the relevant working bodies, while others suggested that the PTC should oversee the implementation of the GCAP.
56. Another delegate stressed the importance of providing capacity building to sustain all of the three building blocks of Green Customs (being, doing, innovating).
57. The Deputy Secretary General thanked delegates for their inputs and said that he generally agreed with most of them. Regarding the specific comments on the potential non-tariff barriers, he agreed that any initiative related to greener Customs and supply chains should not lead to the creation of trade barriers and that this should be addressed through awareness-raising. The same consideration would be applied in other areas, such as the Harmonized System and the AEO programmes mentioned by delegates, for which the efforts relating to Green Customs should not lead to additional burden or complexity. When it came to the coordination between working bodies in Green Customs matters, he considered that the GCAP was a shared responsibility for the WCO as a whole and that each working body would be expected to contribute to it. The overview provided by the GCAP and the reporting to the PTC, Policy Commission and Council would ensure that overlaps were avoided and the approach remained consistent. Regarding the format of the GCAP, he took note of the comments calling for further reflection on the three building blocks in the architecture of the plan, but recalled that Members had requested an alignment with the structure of the Strategic Plan as well. The Deputy Secretary General acknowledged the comments requiring additional activities, topics of coverage and capacity building support, but underlined that it was important to remain realistic, especially taking into consideration the resource implications they would entail, and to stick to those elements directly related to Customs expertise. He nonetheless recognized that the greening of societies implied the need for Customs and the WCO to be visible on the international stage and announced that the WCO would engage in COP28 and actively participate in the discussions to be held on this occasion. Finally, he thanked delegates who shared national practices and experiences, appreciating the fact that Green Customs matters were already being considered in the everyday work of Customs.

58. In conclusion, the PTC:

- provided guidance on the draft Green Customs Action Plan, and
- encouraged Members to provide ideas in writing to the Secretariat and ask that the Secretariat take account of these interventions when drafting the text ahead of the Policy Commission.

ITEM VII – WCO DATA MODEL

• WCO DM Version 4.0.0., Doc. PC0717Ea

59. In October 2021 the PTC had examined and supported the business case and the scope of Version 4.0.0 of the WCO Data Model (WCO DM) which contained a set of work packages. Following the PTC endorsement of the business case and the scope of Version 4.0.0, the Data Model Projects Team (DMPT) had commenced its work in preparing Version 4.0.0 of the WCO DM, aiming at having the new version published by June 2023. The DMPT had completed its work at its Meeting in February 2023 and agreed to submit the deliverables of the work packages for PTC endorsement.
60. Several delegates expressed their support for the endorsement of version 4 of the WCO DM and thanked the DMPT, its Mini Group and other volunteers for working on the deliverables. A delegate suggested the potential development of guiding material for migrating from earlier versions of the WCO DM to Version 4.0.0. The Secretariat responded that the Version 4.0.0 package included a list that indicated the differences between Version 4.0.0 and 3.11.0. The Secretariat recommended that Members develop a My Information Package (MyIP) to identify national datasets impacted by the changes.
61. Other delegates recommended that the Secretariat conduct capacity building and training activities to help Members and promote the implementation of Version 4.0.0 of the WCO DM. Another delegate appreciated the inclusion of support for implementing the WCO DM with modern exchange protocols and message formats (i.e., OpenAPI and JSON). The use of modern exchange protocols would help increase the efficiency in implementing the WCO DM as there were more solution providers with the necessary expertise available in the market. A delegate supported linking the WCO DM adoption with the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism (WCO PMM) in order to accelerate digitalization and global interoperability.
62. A private sector representative recommended enhancing the engagement with private sector stakeholders in the further development, maintenance process and promotion of the WCO DM by advocating its implementation by Member administrations. The Secretariat confirmed the important roles of private sector stakeholders, and noted that the DMPT was open for participation by private sector stakeholders, and invited the representative to attend the Meeting. Another private sector representative noted that the WCO had made the WCO DM openly available free of charge for the private sector, and expressed their appreciation for this. The representative added that making the WCO DM available for free was a major breakthrough.

63. In conclusion, the PTC:

- examined and endorsed Version 4.0.0 of the WCO Data Model.

ITEM VIII – CROSS-BORDER REGULATORY DATA EXCHANGE FRAMEWORK

a. Experience sharing on Members' practices in, and other ongoing work related to, Cross-border Regulatory Data Exchange, Doc. PC0718Eb

64. Following the introduction of the Agenda item by the Chairperson, the WCO Secretariat emphasized the importance of Customs-to-Customs cooperation in enhancing the efficiency of Customs administrations. The Secretariat further stated that data exchange was a core feature of this cooperation, and leveraging information technology could create a seamless, automated cross-border interconnectivity ecosystem. The Globally Networked Customs (GNC) concept and the UNECE's Recommendation 36 on Single Window Interoperability were key frameworks for establishing global or bilateral interconnectivity. However, the WCO Secretariat identified hurdles in bilateral negotiations on data exchange, and invited the PTC to consider the development of hypothetical GNC Utility Blocks to facilitate implementation. Delegates were encouraged to share their experiences in order to identify challenges, lessons, and success factors in implementing cross-border interconnectivity. Additionally, the Secretariat updated the PTC delegates on three ongoing activities by the WCO in promoting cross-border data exchange based on the GNC concept.
65. Eswatini Customs shared in a presentation their experience in cross-border data exchange between Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS) and the South African Revenue Service (SARS). The GNC regional Utility Block had been developed at a regional level among Southern African Customs Union (SACU) members to serve as a blueprint on regional data exchange, and addressed several aspects (legal issues, business processes, communication, integration and interface). Eswatini had been nominated as the ICT champion of this project and was therefore the first SACU member exchanging data with SARS. The presentation went on to describe the technical implementation process, based on the ASYCUDA World SOAP web services, using software that converted SOAP requests to RESTful web service requests and vice versa, with a unique reference number (Unique Consignment Reference (UCR)) to link and identify declarations. Eswatini would provide lessons learnt with other SACU Members to help further implementation in the region, and planned to include trader connectivity through continued support of the SIDA-WCO Trade Facilitation and Customs Modernization Programme for Sustainable Development.
66. In a pre-recorded presentation, Singapore Customs shared their experience in exchanging Preferential Certificates of Origin (PCO) electronically with China via the Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES). The EODES, established as part of the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement Upgrade Protocol, streamlined the process for claiming preferential tariff treatment, reduced human errors, and boosted confidence in the authenticity of PCOs. The implementation of EODES brought significant benefits to both traders and Customs authorities in China and Singapore, including shorter lead times, faster

Customs clearance, and improved environmental sustainability, by reducing paper consumption and the carbon footprint. The EODES also proved valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it enabled uninterrupted transmission of PCOs and continued preferential tariff treatment despite logistics disruptions.

67. In the discussion, several Members and observers shared their experiences of, and insights on, cross-border data exchange and digitalization, in particular the experience of implementing data exchange on the Certificate of Origin (CO). Several delegates shared their national practices and the benefits for compliance and trade facilitation from the CO data exchange programme. One delegate expressed great support for ongoing work related to data exchange on the CO, while considering that Members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) faced some challenges with this in terms of mutual agreement between the parties and the legal framework for the data exchange format. A delegate expressed interest in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) project, requested a report on its completion, and asked the Secretariat to align the GNC workstreams with the Data and Statistics Work Group (DSWG). Another delegate called for an update on the WCO tools and guidelines on coordinated border management and interoperability. Moreover, a representative from UNCTAD raised a technical question about the format of files exchanged between Eswatini and SARS. Furthermore, a representative of the Global Express Association (GEA) asked questions regarding challenges relating to export and import declaration discrepancies on the data related to the Certificate of Origin, and the possible amendments to data flows to allow smooth importation. A delegate, while pointing out limitation of Government to Government data exchange, suggested to explore the idea of connecting all stakeholders throughout the supply chain, including Business to Business data flows, by a secured network of information flows to obtain accurate information from the right person who is accountable for it. A representative of Expeditors also stressed importance of interoperability with private business stakeholders.
68. With regard to the question raised by the UNCTAD representative, the presenter responded that they were currently using an older version of ASYCUDA World, which did not support RESTful web services. In the process of modernizing their systems it would be updated soon to a more recent version. In response to the question from the GEA representative, the delegate mentioned that their data exchange process was not entirely devoid of human intervention. In some cases, brokers could access the system to modify or add information required for a fully compliant declaration, but pilot projects were in place to test an API with taxpayers to allow the direct submission of information.
69. In response to the comments and questions from the delegates, the Secretariat expressed gratitude for the support as well as sharing of experiences on data exchange. The Secretariat mentioned that the SADC GNC Utility Block would be submitted to the PTC once it had been developed. Furthermore, the Secretariat shared the ongoing work of the DSWG which explored new privacy-preserving technologies for data analytics, and these specifications could eventually be

published as a GNC Utility Block. Regarding the update of the WCO tools and guidelines on coordinated border management and interoperability, the Secretariat responded that it was intended to update the GNC handbook based on the recent experience in developing and implementing GNC Utility Blocks; furthermore, the Secretariat pointed out that the WCO Data Model's new major Version 4 was on the Agenda for endorsement by the PTC, which would support modern message standards and simplify implementation. With regard to the futuristic idea of connecting all stakeholders throughout the supply chain in terms of data flows, the Secretariat supported the idea that it be explored in the future and noted that this was in line with the current work of the DMPT in working with other organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce as part of their Digital Standards Initiative to reuse information which was already available in the supply chain for Customs purposes.

b. Study on the Digitalization of the Certificate of Origin

70. The Secretariat presented the Study on the Digitalization of the Certificate of Origin. The Secretariat noted that the Study had been commissioned by the WCO Implementation Plan 2022/2023. Following the survey conducted in September 2022 through a questionnaire sent to Members, a total of 84 responses had been collected, analysed, and consolidated into the Study. The Study presented the state of play of Members' practices relating to origin certification, and particularly to the digitalization of the Certificate of Origin (CO). It further identified the challenges and difficulties faced by Members and highlighted the success factors mentioned by them.
71. Several delegates expressed their great thanks to the Secretariat's and appreciation for its efforts on conducting the Study, and their support for the endorsement of the study, which encouraged Members to maximize the benefits of technology and Customs cooperation, especially on the electronic Certificate of Origin (e-CO). One delegate was of the view that the study provided a broad picture of on the current state of play regarding the digitalization of the CO, including the issuing procedure and cross-border data exchange, and supported the move by the global Customs Community to greater facilitation of and efficiency in origin procedures. In addition, the delegate further raised concerns about the common dataset and common Business Process Model (BPM) in the data exchange programme, and suggested that the Secretariat take measures to prevent the "Spaghetti Bowl" effect of data exchange and develop tools in this area. A number of delegates stressed that it was a great moment for the Members to move ahead on the digitalization of the CO, and that the Study could be a good starting point on how to further study and better standardize this area. A delegate, while appreciating the study to capture the current state of play, pointed out that a careful approach should be taken for the discussion on standardization as the issuing authority of COs is not always Customs.

72. One delegate expressed support for the endorsement of the factual part of the Survey results and expressed the view that Section 6, “Key Findings”, as an assessment of the study, should be further discussed at the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin (TCRO). Another delegate recommended that the Study should focus more on providing guidelines or tools on digitalization of the CO rather than only reflecting the state of play of Members’ practices.
73. The Secretariat expressed its gratitude for the support given to the endorsement of the study and took note of delegates’ suggestions on the Study as well as on developing instruments and tools on the digitalization of the CO. In response to the concerns about the key findings of the Study, the Secretariat took note that these would be further discussed at the upcoming TCRO; it welcomed Members’ further comments to this end.

74. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of Members’ experiences with cross-border data exchange, and asked to be kept informed of the outcomes of the SADC Project on interconnectivity between Customs systems;
- took note of available cross-border data exchange frameworks;
- took note of the WCO’s ongoing activities relating to cross-border data exchange;
- examined the “Study on the Digitalization of the Certificate of Origin” and endorsed the document up to and including Section 5 as set out in **Annex V**; and
- took note that Section 6 of the “Study on the Digitalization of the Certificate of Origin” would be returned for further discussion to the TCRO as a separate commentary document.

ITEM IX – TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

• Experience sharing on technology and data innovation

75. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda item by providing background on the focus areas of the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025: “Technology and Innovation”, and noted that the PTC, at its 237th/238th Sessions, had asked the Secretariat to include this item on the Agenda of the current PTC Meeting. The Chairperson then invited Members and the private sector to share their national experiences in this area.
76. India Customs shared a presentation on their efforts in creating a seamless and user-friendly trading environment for Customs operations by implementing technology-driven solutions to streamline Customs procedures such as their Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade (SWIFT) to ensure ease of doing business, the Advance Analytics in Indirect Taxation (ADVAIT) for tax compliance and to detect tax evasion, the Anonymized Escalation Mechanism (AEM) for submitting grievances pertaining to delays in the Bill of Entry clearance, the E-Cash Ledger for online payment of Customs duties, the Pilot

Project on Pre-Arrival Customs Data Exchange between India and the Maldives, the Blockchain-Based Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS), Body Worn Cameras (BWC) for improving transparency, and QR code-based sampling solutions to avoid bottlenecks in the sampling procedures. Some questions and comments were raised from Members after the session, highlighting the importance of Members' collaboration in technology and innovation, emphasizing the need for intelligent cooperation, sharing best practices, and applying new technologies to provide enhanced services.

77. After this Expeditors, as part of the PSCG, made a presentation on their efforts in digitizing the supply chain and their emphasis on resilience and cybersecurity, they highlighted the importance of the availability of information at the required time for achieving compliant and timely submissions of declarations. In their closing remarks they pointed to the importance of working closely with the private sector to plan, prepare and practice business continuity during disruptions. After the presentation the comments raised by Members underscored the importance of data quality, the harmonization of processes, collaboration between government and private sectors, and the recognition of the significance of leveraging technology and innovation to enhance Customs operations and ensure a secure and efficient international trade environment. One delegate pointed out that the subject 'technology and innovation' had made them think about data strategy and how the WCO needed to become a data-driven organization. Another delegate encouraged Members' efforts to strengthen their systems and to further discuss best practices for security in incidents.

78. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the presentations by India and Expeditors.

ITEM X – E-COMMERCE

a. E-Commerce Package Progress Report, Doc. PC0719Ea

79. After a brief introduction by the Chairperson, the Secretariat introduced Doc. PC0719Ea by outlining the progress in three streams of work: i) the delivery of capacity-building and awareness-raising activities in the area of cross-border e-commerce since the October 2022 PTC Sessions; ii) the compiling of the draft 4th edition of the Compendium of Case Studies on E-Commerce that contained three new case studies and updates to existing case studies submitted by Members; and iii) the intersessional work on the 2022/2023 annual review of two annexes to the Technical Specifications (TS) to the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce (E-Commerce FoS), namely Annex I *E-Commerce Business Models* and Annex VI *E-Commerce Stakeholders: Roles and Responsibilities*. With regard to the third stream of work, the Secretariat explained that the intersessional work had resulted in a total number of 27

proposed amendments to the two annexes and specifically noted the proposed inclusion of a new section in the E-Commerce Business Models Annex describing the e-commerce fulfilment process due to its specific implications for Customs.

80. The Secretariat went on to present some of the issues discussed during the annual review, which could not be addressed through the review of the two annexes and would need to be considered again during the periodic review of the entire E-Commerce Package. These issues concerned the submission of data to Customs by e-commerce stakeholders, and the potential need to update and enhance the flowcharts that were now available in Annex III to the TS, among others. With regard to the 2022-2026 periodic review of the entire E-Commerce Package that would be conducted as per the revised mechanism for the update and maintenance of the Package, the Secretariat was planning to invite Members from different WCO regions to present their real-life experiences in implementing the E-Commerce FoS in the forthcoming PTC sessions, to send letters for submission of proposals and to facilitate the process of discussion of proposals and preparing proposed amendments to the Package.
81. The moderator of the intersessional informal meetings expressed his appreciation to Members and observers for their valuable contributions to the annual review process, and thanked the Secretariat for facilitating the intersessional work. The proposed amendments to the two annexes aimed to reflect the dynamically evolving nature of e-commerce and provide more clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the various e-commerce stakeholders.
82. In the ensuing discussion a number of delegates supported the endorsement of the 4th edition of the Compendium of Case Studies on E-commerce, and invited Members to continue submitting case studies, best practices and initiatives for inclusion in future editions of the Compendium. Delegates also supported the endorsement of the revised versions of Annexes I and VI to the TS to the E-Commerce FoS resulting from the 2022-2023 annual review process. In their respective interventions delegates outlined topics for discussion during the 2022-2026 periodic review of the E-Commerce Package, such as the submission of data to Customs by various e-commerce stakeholders; the cooperation with e-commerce platforms/marketplaces; and the role of Single Window facilities in cross-border e-commerce. Two observers and a Member proposed considering the re-establishment of the WCO Working Group on E-Commerce (WGEC) with a view to having a robust mechanism, involving all relevant stakeholders, for the exchange of information in the fast-evolving area of cross-border e-commerce. A Member suggested having a discussion forum with private sector partners in a formal and/or informal manner to explore solutions by gathering all the information, expertise and experience of relevant stakeholders.
83. The Secretariat thanked delegates for their support and explained that the WGEC had been established in July 2016 with the objective of developing the

E-Commerce FoS and the tools supporting its implementation. After the completion of this task, the Policy Commission had taken the decision to sunset the WGEC and had recognized the need to place the topic of e-commerce on future PTC and Enforcement Committee (EC) agendas. As a possible way forward, the Secretariat suggested planning for extended sessions during the forthcoming PTC meetings, and inviting relevant e-commerce stakeholders to those sessions with a view to providing a platform for robust discussions on various matters related to cross-border e-commerce.

84. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the progress made in the area of cross-border e-commerce;
- examined the draft 4th edition of the Compendium of Case Studies on E-Commerce and endorsed it for submission to the next Policy Commission and Council for their endorsement and approval as a living document, with a view to its subsequent inclusion in the WCO E-Commerce Package;
- encouraged Members to update their case studies and to share further case studies, best practices and initiatives for inclusion in the future editions of the Compendium of Case Studies on E-Commerce;
- discussed and endorsed, as living documents, the revised versions of Annexes I and VI to the TS to the E-Commerce FoS, resulting from the 2022-2023 annual review process for submission to the next Policy Commission and Council for their endorsement and approval; and
- provided guidance on the way forward, including on the proposed planning and considerations for the 2022-2026 periodic review of the E-Commerce Package.

b. Outcomes of the Symposium on E-Commerce and Customs Valuation, Doc. PC0723Ea

85. The Secretariat presented the outcomes of the Symposium on E-Commerce and Customs Valuation held in February 2023, reporting that it had generated a high level of interest.
86. At the event, Members and the private sector had aired some of the challenges facing e-commerce. The Secretariat outlined two issues that had been raised, in particular. Firstly, the matter of a movement of goods across borders without a sale transaction having taken place, resulting in more complex and time-consuming valuation procedures being used; and secondly, the use of the Delivered Duty Paid (DDP) terms, giving rise to calculations on transport and duties at the outset that did not reflect those actually incurred.
87. After the Secretariat's feedback on the symposium, two Members provided interventions to highlight their own experiences in the dealing with Customs valuation in the context of e-commerce. Another delegate underlined the role of the Technical Committee on Customs Valuation for dealing with specific questions concerning the GATT Customs valuation agreement.

88. The Secretariat canvassed views on the benefit of staging a follow up symposium, on which there was a consensus amongst Members being in favour, including in respect to the discussion of the above topics. Taking into account the Members' interventions, the Secretariat reaffirmed that there would be a cross-directorate approach in recognition of the impact on revenue, facilitation and compliance and in view of developing guidelines in this area. Furthermore, the work with the Technical Committee on Customs Valuation and the WCO Working Group on Revenue Compliance and Fraud would be central to this initiative. In addition, it was suggested that exploring the feasibility of developing model procedures for certain aspects, such as in relation to fulfilment centres used to hold goods imported without a sale transaction having taken place, could be beneficial for both facilitation and compliance.

89. In conclusion, the PTC:

- discussed the outcomes of the symposium;
- took note that this would be further discussed within the WCO Technical Committee on Customs Valuation and the WCO Working Group on Revenue Compliance and Fraud;
- took note that the Secretariat would continue reach out to the private sector and Members on the current situation with a view to providing guidance in this area; and
- provided guidance on the way forward including supporting the idea of holding a further symposium this year.

c. Presentation by a Member in implementing the E-Commerce Framework of Standards (China)

90. Through a pre-recorded video, China Customs presented their experience in implementing the E-Commerce FoS, elaborating on implementation measures under each of the eight key principles of the Framework. One of the measures concerned the establishment of an Advance Electronic Data Collection Mechanism, through which order, payment and logistics data was transmitted to China Customs via standardized messaging through a Single Window interface. Another important action was the optimization of the handling by Customs of return shipments for both import and export. In terms of revenue collection, the presenter explained that China applied the intermediary-based collection approach. Customs duties, value-added tax (VAT), and consumption tax had been reconsidered for cross-border e-commerce goods, whereas discounted rates were applied below certain transaction values. The *de minimis* threshold for VAT and consumption tax had been removed in view of preventing the risk of revenue loss and of ensuring a level playing field for all stakeholders (foreign and domestic). The use of advanced technologies for risk analysis and for implementing safety and security measures was also touched upon in the presentation.

91. In the ensuing discussion a delegate requested more details on the measures implemented by China Customs to combat infringements of intellectual property rights (IPR) in relation to consignments being exported from China. Another delegate shared his administration's experience in implementing the E-Commerce FoS, which included revising the Customs Act in 2022, with a view to establishing a legal basis for the clearance of e-commerce shipments in a swift and safe manner, based on appropriate risk management.
92. The Delegate of China explained that China Customs had established a specific mechanism for supervising export goods and committed to provide additional details after the PTC meeting.

93. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note, with thanks, of the presentation by China.

ITEM XI - WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT (TFA)

a. Update from the WTO

94. The WTO Secretariat made a presentation about the state of play regarding the TFA implementation. The presenter focused on two areas in her presentation: first, the status of TFA implementation commitments, and second, the technical assistance and capacity building support from development partners to Members implementing the TFA. The delegates were informed of the overview of the TFA implementation notifications under Section II. Based on those notifications and commitments, the overall global status of the TFA implementation was 76.2% as of today. One of the flexibilities under the TFA used by the Members was to request an extension of implementation dates. So far 25 Members had made such extension requests and they had been approved. These requests cover a total of 101 provisions in TFA. From 2020 there had been an increase in these requests, and this covered the pandemic period. The other flexibility that was used by Members was to shift between categories B and C. It could be seen that globally there had been a similar number shifting each way. The WTO Secretariat further presented information on the recent and upcoming implementation dates for 2023-2024.
95. Regarding technical assistance, 26 Members had notified their current arrangements to the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) with regard to receiving technical assistance and the progress that had been made. The WTO Secretariat also provided information on the development partners that support these 26 Members based on the information extracted from these notifications. The speaker highlighted the following TFA measures as those that had been notified as requiring the highest level of technical assistance; Articles 10.4 (Single Window), 7.4 (Risk Management), 8 (Border Agency Cooperation), 7.6

(Average Release Time), 7.7 (Authorized Economic Operators) and 7.5 (Post Clearance Audit).

96. The delegates thanked the WTO for informing the PTC about the latest developments on the TFA.

97. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the presentation from the WTO Secretariat about the state of play regarding TFA implementation.

b. Mercator Programme progress report, PC0720Ea

98. The Chairperson introduced jointly the sub-items (b) and (c) and invited the Secretariat to introduce document PC0720Ea.

99. The Secretariat provided a brief update on the recent achievements in the area of TFA implementation through the Mercator Programme. Under the Overall Track of the Mercator Programme, a number of instruments and tools including Compendiums and Guidelines had been finalized by the WCO working bodies and then approved by the Council in June 2022. The outcomes of the ongoing work on other instruments and tools were presented to the PTC at this meeting for endorsement and would then be submitted to the Policy Commission and Council for approval in June 2023. In terms of global, regional and sub-regional events; a new round of WTO TFA regional workshops started in 2021 and during the reporting period the third regional workshop had been held in the Americas and the Caribbean Region in June 2022, followed by the fourth regional workshop in the MENA Region in January 2023. In terms of cooperation with international organizations and other stakeholders in the context of border agency cooperation, the Secretariat continued their close collaboration with the WTO and the other Annex-Ds. The WCO took part and contributed to the WTO 12th Ministerial Conference and the TFA 5 Year Anniversary Event in June 2022, the Public Forum in September 2022, and Trade Facilitation Committee meetings in November 2022 and in March 2023. Furthermore, in October 2022, the WCO and UNCTAD had signed an MoU to update the existing MOU between the two Organizations which dated back to 2013, the aim being to strengthen cooperation and enhance digitalization, trade facilitation and Customs control.

100. Under the Tailor-Made Track, a growing amount of support was now being delivered under the multiyear MY Mercator partnerships bringing the total number of administrations benefiting from this medium to long-term WCO engagement to 59. A total of more than 190 on-site, online or blended activities had been delivered; of these, around 140 were MY Mercator activities focused on both organizational development areas and on technical measures closely associated to specific Articles of the TFA.

c. Update of the Implementation Guidance for Section I of the WTO TFA

101. The Secretariat provided an oral report on the work related to the update of the online tool of the Implementation Guidance for Section I of the WTO TFA from August 2022 – April 2023. The Secretariat briefed the PTC about the main updates done that related to the relevant WCO instruments and tools, Members' practices and the KPIs. The Secretariat informed the delegates that 35 Members had participated in this work, providing in total 100 new case studies for all 12 Articles and 36 measures of the WTO TFA. In addition, editorial changes had been made to the text of the WTO TFA and the RKC, and the previous KPIs had been removed to avoid inconsistencies with the WCO Performance measurement mechanism, as discussed under Agenda item III, which included KPIs covering the four common dimensions of Customs performance. The Secretariat went on to note that the Implementation Guidance for Section I had been updated in English and French, and that the updated Spanish version would also be available in the near future. The Secretariat also emphasized that the Guidance was a living document and would continue to be updated to include new case studies provided by Members.
102. The updated Implementation Guidance on Section I was available under the "WCO implementing the WTO TFA" section on the WCO website at <https://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/wco-implementing-the-wto-atf/atf.aspx>.
103. The Secretariat also asked for the PTC's guidance in relation to old case studies by Members dated 2016 or before on which the Secretariat had not received any feedback from the relevant Members or updates had not been provided.
104. Following the Secretariat's introduction to sub items (b) and (c), the delegates took the floor and expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for the work done in relation to the update of the Implementation Guidance. They also highlighted the importance of experience sharing, both by Members who had already implemented all the provisions of the TFA as well as by those that were still in the process of doing this. Learning from each other's experiences, both challenging and successful ones, was essential for the best TFA implementation, as noted by one of the delegates. The importance of regional initiatives, including those of African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), on implementation of the TFA, was highlighted by one of the delegates. One delegate shared their ongoing measures on improving the quality of implementation of the TFA by optimizing port facilities, developing a comprehensive service platform of Single Window, promotion of external and internal connectivity between the ports, development of the rail infrastructure, supporting further development of multimodal transport, and provision of green channels for perishable goods.
105. One delegate welcoming the Mercator Programme progress report highlighted their contribution to the work on the update of the Implementation Guidance for Section I and submission of presentations on Transit and the

Single Window, and encouraged other Members to share their practices, and also informed the PTC about their funded projects that had been implemented under the Mercator Programme. A number of delegates appreciated the work of the WCO and its dedication to supporting its Members with the implementation of the TFA through the Mercator Programme.

106. The Secretariat thanked delegates for their comments as well as for the support for the Updated Implementation Guidance for Section I. To answer a comment made by a delegate, the Secretariat explained that the RECs had been invited to make presentations on their regional experiences to the regional TFA workshops recently organized by the WCO.

107. In relation to the case studies dated 2016 or earlier, the delegates expressed their interest in keeping them and asked the Secretariat to approach the relevant Members again for the necessary updates. The Secretariat confirmed that it would again approach the Members whose practices required revision and would add the relevant date markers to all of the case studies to help the Members to navigate through them.

108. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the progress made under the WCO Mercator Programme; and
- endorsed the updated WCO Implementation Guidance for Section I of the WTO TFA, advising that the old case studies should remain and Members should be invited to update them where appropriate.

e. Presentation by the Global Express Association (GEA) on the Customs Capability Database

109. The Observer from the Global Express Association (GEA) delivered a presentation on the Customs Capability database. The presenter started by highlighting that notifying a level of implementation and assessing the level of implementation were two separate and important aspects of trade facilitation. The presenter stated that measuring the implementation of trade facilitation instruments such as the RKC and TFA was critically important, especially for the global express industry, whose customers demand a global logistics solution that assured delivery of time-critical consignments in a transparent and secure environment and was the basis upon which the Association developed its own tool to measure implementation of those measures that were of particular importance to the express delivery supply chain.

110. In terms of coverage, the database covered 119 countries/territories and 18 regions/groups and dated back to 2022 when information-gathering was initiated. The information received by one carrier was peer-reviewed by the other two carriers while the country in questions was invited to share feedback on the information. Further, the presenter stated that information on the database could be searched for using different parameters such as by country,

or by measure such as transparency and predictability, Customs efficiency, de minimis thresholds per country, contracting parties to the RKC and countries that had acceded to the TFA. With a variety of questions under each parameter, it was possible to select up to a maximum of three questions and generate related data for review, analysis or printing.

111. In conclusion, the presenter cautioned that the information on the database had been collected from its members, and therefore reflected GEA members' experiences of local practices in the countries or territories surveyed. The presenter invited delegates to make use of the database and share any information to improve or expand it.

112. Responding to a number of questions, the presenter clarified that work on collecting information for the database started in 2022; that the database was updated with information as soon as it was received; that the information collected could differ from that held by Customs because the Customs regulations and the reality on ground could differ; that the WCO was not officially involved in the creation of the database and sourcing of information; and that in the next review cycle, it would be including a consideration from an AEO perspective.

113. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the presentation by the GEA.

ITEM XII - DIALOGUE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- **Progress update from the PSCG: scope of their work and new developments**

114. The Chairperson of the WCO Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) presented a summary of PSCG activities from 2018 to 2023. The PSCG Chairperson highlighted the importance of co-chairing the SAFE Working Group (WG), which had been the primary role for the PSCG since 2006, in addition to the papers and recommendations that they had provided on various topics, either at the Secretariat's request or on their own initiative. The Chairperson also listed the number of working groups, projects, and conferences in which the PSCG was involved. They discussed how the PSCG members had been working remotely with the WCO since the onset of the pandemic. Initially, they provided recommendations on how Customs and the private sector could respond, and subsequently, they met frequently to provide timely updates of critical supply chain data. It was noted that in 2023, the PSCG had had three informal ad hoc meetings, and three hybrid formal meetings had been scheduled for the year. Informal subgroup meetings would be held as needed.

115. The representative of the PSCG then presented their paper on ensuring business continuity in the face of trade disruptions. The presentation identified

that disruptions were always possible and could take various forms, including cyber-attacks, natural disasters, pandemics, infrastructure challenges, strikes, and conflicts/war. It was also emphasized that the impact of disruptions across supply chains could be lessened through streamlining Customs and security procedures. Essential elements of private-public sector activity included planning for disruption, practicing responses, and engaging partner government agencies. To move forward, the PSCG representative recommended building and maintaining operational resiliency through continuous process improvements. It was suggested that stakeholders should prepare for different scenarios through a crisis management and preparedness framework. The importance of improving partnerships and building trust between public and private stakeholders was also emphasized.

116. Another representative of the PSCG presented the paper “What trade facilitation means to the WCO Private Sector Consultative Group” that was planned to be finalized shortly. The paper aimed to provide harmonized and coherent recommendations on tangible trade facilitation actions that would have the greatest impact on cross-border goods flow. The presentation provided practical recommendations based on industry experience, including publicly available regulations and Customs procedures, electronic exchange of information, national trade facilitation committees, effective implementation of AEO programmes, effective cross-border communication and cooperation between Customs authorities, predictability and transparency in the rules and their application. The PSCG representative shared a case study from Zambia to emphasize the significant improvements at Kasumbalesa, including increased hours of operation, enhanced driver facilities, and planned increased parking areas with the help of the private sector. The PSCG reaffirmed their commitment to remain as a key partner to assist Customs authorities in developing and optimizing tangible trade facilitation measures.
117. Several delegates expressed their support for the presentations provided by the PSCG and expressed their readiness to continue cooperating with the private sector.
118. Another Delegate encouraged other Members to prioritize understanding the needs of the private sector while also ensuring security and facilitating trade.
119. The Delegate of Zambia confirmed the positive outcomes presented by the PSCG within their case study. They also shared that the private sector representative was a Vice-Chair of the Zambian Technical Working Group for coordinated border management. The Delegate emphasized that the implementation of coordinated border management required the critical inclusion of the private sector in the single window system.
120. The Secretariat expressed their gratitude to the PSCG for dedicating their time and efforts to produce valuable papers and for participating in the PTC Meeting. They also recognized the important role played by the PSCG in coordinating with the WCO during the pandemic in 2020, including their

contribution to Operation “Stop” to prevent the cross-border movement of counterfeit medicines and illicit vaccines.

121. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note, with thanks, of the presentations by the WCO Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG).

ITEM XIII - CUSTOMS - PORT COOPERATION

• Guidelines on Cooperation Between Customs and Port Authorities

122. In October 2021, the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) discussed, and supported a proposal made by the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) to jointly develop a set of Guidelines on Cooperation Between Customs and Port Authorities to Strengthen Trade Facilitation and Supply Chain Security. Following the PTC, interested members of the IAPH and the WCO convened in a Mini Group to discuss the topic and develop the planned Guidelines. Subsequently, in October 2022, the PTC was updated on the progress of the development of the Guidelines and provided guidance and case studies.
123. Several delegates thanked both the Secretariat (i.e., the WCO and the IAPH) and the Mini Group members for their work, expressed their support for endorsing the Guidelines and noted the potential benefit of the Guidelines in helping enhance cooperation and building trust between Customs and port authorities in facilitating trade and ensuring supply chain security and compliance. A delegate added that collaboration approaches between Customs and port were critical to tackle illegal threats and boost growth globally, reduce bureaucracy, and save time and resources in border crossing procedures, specifically when critical infrastructure such as ports were involved.
124. A delegate suggested amending the text of the Guidelines to clarify the relationship between economic operators’ IT systems and the planned Single Window. The Secretariat noted the suggestions and would incorporate them into the text accordingly.
125. A private sector stakeholder said that there was a need to involve the shipping industry to provide their integrated perspective to build a cohesive relation between related maritime parties, namely ports, Customs and the port users (i.e. shipping lines). The representatives requested the opportunity to help enrich the Guidelines to ensure the balanced perspective of the shipping industry. The representative added that there was a need to have a closer look at the relationship between port community systems and the national single window, and added that traders and transport operators should have the possibility to deliver information directly to the government (i.e. the national single window) without intermediaries when necessary. In addition, the alignment between the Maritime ISPS code and the AEO programme was a topic to which the shipping industry would like to contribute more.

126. In conclusion, the PTC:

- examined and endorsed the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities in their current format including the input from Germany and other delegates, attached as **Annex VI** to this Summary Report; and
- asked that the Secretariat have dialogue and work with the World Shipping Council and other interested stakeholders to incorporate their perspective and input into the Guidelines for the PTC's consideration at its next meeting.

ITEM XIV - DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TIME RELEASE STUDY (TRS) ONLINE SYSTEM

- **Status update on the WCO-WBG joint project to develop the new TRS Online System**

127. The Secretariat provided a brief update as follows on the progress made since the last PTC held in October 2022 on the WCO and the World Bank Group (WBG) joint project to develop the new Time Release Study (TRS) Online System:

- The joint documentation work had been carried out between the WCO and the WBG project team in preparation for advertising the Expression of Interest (Eoi);
- The Eoi for the proposed TRS project had been advertised on the WBG e-Procure website ([link to the advertisement](#)) with a deadline of 10 May 2023;
- Preparation work was being carried out to have a joint Project Initiation Document (PID) that would ensure proper management and coordination of the project as a whole; and
- A formal letter had been drafted to be jointly signed between the WCO and the WBG on the project.

128. The Secretariat conveyed, on behalf of the WBG, their highest assurance and commitment to this important collaboration and to successfully delivering the joint project.

129. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the progress made on the TRS Project.

ITEM XV – PTC WORK PROGRAMME

- **Revised PTC Work Programme, Doc. PC0722Ea**

130. The PTC, at its October 2022 meeting, had endorsed the Revised PTC Work Programme 2022-2025, which was in line with the three-year WCO Strategic Plan and the Implementation Plan for the current financial year, as well as the revised template for the work programmes of WCO working bodies. The

Secretariat introduced Doc. PC0722Ea by highlighting the two parts of the Work Programme. The first part included the activities undertaken within a specific timeframe; and Part II was about the activities undertaken continuously. The Work Programme included 81 activities – 29 activities in Part I and 52 in Part II.

131. The “Progress” column in the Work Programme contained information about the progress achieved with the various activities since the cut-off date for the progress report submitted to the PTC in October 2022. Moreover, the “Completion status” column in Part I of the Work Programme aimed to reflect the state of play of each activity at the time of reporting, using a colour code (green for ‘completed’, blue for ‘in progress’ and red for ‘postponed or not started’). Out of the 29 activities in Part I of the Work Programme, 25 were in progress and four had not yet been started. The progress achieved with the implementation of the activities being undertaken continuously was reported in the last column in Part II of the Work Programme.

132. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of progress with the implementation of the Revised PTC Work Programme 2022-2025.

ITEM XVI - ELECTIONS

• **Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the PTC for the financial year 2023/2024**

133. The Deputy Director for Procedures and Facilitation explained that the PTC was required to elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson each year; after being elected for a period of one year, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson were eligible for re-election. The PTC was then invited to elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from amongst its delegates for financial year 2023/2024.

134. The Delegate of Japan nominated David Saville (United Kingdom) to serve as the PTC Chairperson for a second one-year term. The nomination was supported by a large number of delegates.

135. The Delegate of Australia nominated Ririn Septiani (Indonesia) to continue serving as the PTC Vice-Chairperson in financial year 2023/2024. A number of delegates supported the nomination.

136. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson thanked the PTC for its trust and support and confirmed their willingness to continue performing these roles during the following financial year.

137. In conclusion, the PTC:

- Re-elected David Saville (United Kingdom) as Chairperson of the PTC and Ririn Septiani (Indonesia) as Vice-Chairperson of the PTC for financial year 2023/2024.

ITEM XVII – TOPICS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

138. The Chairperson introduced the item by explaining that delegates would be invited to suggest Agenda items for the next PTC meeting(s).
139. A number of topics were suggested by Members, such as incorporating the theme of gender equality and diversity in the work of the PTC, in coordination with other relevant WCO working bodies, such as the Capacity Building Committee (CBC); the inclusion in the PTC Agenda of a report on the work of the WCO Data Board; and a discussion on a possible upgrade of the tools supporting the implementation of the Globally Networked Customs (GNC) concept, such as the GNC Handbook. Moreover, a delegate suggested discussing the challenges and possible solutions with regard to Customs tasks, such as revenue collection, the handling of dangerous goods and of retained and seized items, and the associated costs. A delegate suggested continuing the exchange of information and sharing of experience in the area of technology and innovation, which could offer an opportunity for the development of guidelines or other relevant tools in this area, while another delegate proposed discussing how the use of technology could support addressing the challenges stemming from fragile borders.
140. One of the proposals put forward by observers concerned the possibility to have an extended session on e-commerce, exploring specific topics, such as, for example, the progress and developments under the US e-commerce data pilots. Another topic suggested by an observer included the cooperation between Customs and airports, which could be addressed in a manner similar to the Customs-ports cooperation topic. An observer suggested that the PTC continued the exchanges with the private sector specifically in the area of trade facilitation, and explore further the recommendations made in the respective PSCG presentation under Agenda item XII, while another observer expressed the PSCG's readiness to join future sessions of the PTC upon receiving an invitation from the WCO.
141. The Secretariat would work with the proponents of the respective proposals in developing the Agenda for the next PTC meeting, as well as in exploring ways for progressing the work further in the respective areas.
- 142. In conclusion, the PTC:**
- Took note of the topics suggested to be addressed in the next meetings.

ITEM XVIII – UPCOMING EVENTS

143. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda item aimed at providing an update on the WCO's upcoming events and meetings which were of relevance to the PTC and invited the Secretariat to provide an update.

144. Delegates were encouraged to share any information they had on upcoming workshops, seminars, conferences, or other relevant meetings of interest.
145. The Deputy Director in charge of Procedures and Facilitation, Brendan O’Hearn, provided an update on WCO events and meetings through a PowerPoint Presentation. He informed the PTC of the relevant upcoming meetings and events and, in particular, invited delegates to take part in the WCO-UPU Global Conference in Japan (6-8 June 2023), the Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade (26-28 June 2023), and the WCO Technology Conference and the Exhibition in Vietnam (10-12 October 2023).
146. Following this, the Secretariat played a short video recording of Vietnam as it prepared to play host to the WCO Technology Conference.
147. With regards to the upcoming events, delegates of Japan and Vietnam took the floor and stated that they were looking forward to welcoming the delegates for WCO-UPU Global Conference and WCO Technology Conference and the Exhibition respectively.

148. In conclusion, the PTC:

- took note of the update on WCO events and meetings.

ITEM XIX – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

149. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda item and delegates were asked if there was anything to be discussed under this item. There were no requests from delegates.

ITEM XX - CLOSING

150. The Director of Compliance and Facilitation, Pranab Kumar Das, expressed his sincere gratitude to the delegates for their participation. He mentioned that the participants had exchanged various views, challenges, experiences, and solutions through the PTC and had undertaken careful examination and active discussions to try to meet one of the four strategic objectives of the WCO that represented the main areas of Customs’ activities, namely “trade facilitation”. He also summarized the outcomes of a range of Agenda items dealt with through the meeting. He then congratulated the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson on their re-election for the next financial year and assured them of the Secretariat’s continued support. He congratulated and thanked delegates who shared their experiences through their presentations and discussions. He also appreciated the work of the Secretariat staff in preparing meeting documents and managing the execution of the PTC sessions.
151. In his closing remarks, the Chairperson thanked all the Committee members for their participation over the past three days. He mentioned that it was impressive for the PTC to discuss and move forward a number of key areas

including the WCO Data Model, the TFA and E-Commerce. He said that it was an honour to chair the 2023-2024 PTC and asked for even greater cooperation between colleagues. He thanked the Vice-Chairperson and congratulated her on her re-election. He appreciated all the staff of the Secretariat for their presentations and contributions. Regarding the PTC meeting currently scheduled in the week of 23 October 2023, he noted that he and the Secretariat would be evaluating the Agenda and taking a decision on its format and length.

152. The Chairperson then closed the meeting.

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