



FINAL REPORT
OF THE FIRST DONORS CONFERENCE OF
THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

Hilton Hotel - Yaounde, Cameroon

8-9 July 2015

CONTEXT:

1. The First Donors Conference of the World Customs Organization West and Central Africa Region (WCO-WCA), held at the Yaounde Hilton Hotel from 8 to 9 July 2015, under the theme "**Customs modernization policies within the context of facilitating and securing trade - Funding constraints and opportunities**". The conference was preceded by a regional preparatory meeting from 6 to 7 July 2015.
2. This conference, which falls within the programme of activities of the WCO-WCA Region, aimed particularly at :
 - Setting up a network of donors working in synergy and fostering an integrated approach to customs reform and modernization in the Region;
 - Enhancing mutual understanding between donors and customs of the Region;
 - Generating more interest among political leaders and donors for customs reform in the Region;
 - Ensuring visibility for existing projects funded by donors in the Region;
 - Presenting the regional strategic plan and some priority projects for funding and support by donors.
3. The meeting was attended by twenty-one (21) out of the twenty-three (23) member Customs administrations of the Region, the Vice-Chair, the WCO Secretariat, the Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB), the Regional Training Centres (RTC) of Ouagadougou, Brazzaville and Abuja, the Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices in West and Central Africa (RILO-WA and RILO-CA), Cameroon's Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union, Japan Customs, the European Union (EEAS-EU), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the African Union Commission, the CEMAC Commission, UNCTAD and SAANA CONSULTING Firm.

The list of participants is hereto appended.

I. OPENING CEREMONY

4. The opening ceremony chaired by Mr. **Alamine Ousmane MEY**, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Cameroon, was marked by four (04) speeches.
5. Firstly, Madame **Minette LIBOM LI LIKENG**, Vice-Chair of the WCO-WCA Region, Director General of Cameroon Customs, welcomed the various delegations and expressed her gratitude, respectively, to the Government for its continued support of reforms, to her peers of the Region for choosing Cameroon to host the Conference, to the WCO Secretariat and all delegations for their presence, which is a reflection of their constant will and commitment to contribute to the development of the region.

6. She also thanked the Japanese Government, through the Customs Cooperation Fund, which contributed significantly to the coverage of costs related to the organization of the Conference, and many other regional and national events organized by the WCO in the Region.
7. She recalled the context of the meeting characterised by the modernization of Customs administrations in the region, in a constantly changing international trade environment. She therefore called for additional support from donors and other development partners in achieving capacity-building objectives in the face of challenges to optimum contribution to economic development and population protection. She advocated for consultation and coordination of stakeholders in order to include partnership (technical or financial) in a new era marked by trust.
8. To ensure that the goals of this Conference are achieved, she exhorted participants to pool their expertise to develop common strategies for the Region and pursue communication and sensitization efforts towards policy makers and technical and financial development partners, to ultimately and in line with the policy of the WCO and the provisions of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, enable all customs administrations to take ownership of customs functions outsourced by governments to private sector inspection companies.
9. Mr. **Yoshihiro KOSAKA**, Representative of Japan Customs, congratulated the organization of the first Donors' Conference of WCO-WCA Region. He then reiterated the commitment of his Administration to continue to support customs modernization efforts, in a world full of new challenges.
10. Mr. **Kunio MIKURIYA**, WCO Secretary General, hailed the organization of the first edition of the Donors Conference of the WCO-WCA Region, vector of integrating projects in a context of increased customs modernization in the region.
11. He recalled the role of customs in the global economy and exhorted governments and donors to support customs reform and capacity-building efforts that should be backed by a strong political will, solid human resource development and management and development of partnerships with the private sector, other administrations and agencies present at the borders, customs administrations among themselves and development partners, so as to coordinate border management and ensure trade facilitation and supply chain security.
12. Mr. **Alamine Ousmane MEY**, Minister of Finance, also welcomed all the participants and particularly hailed the presence of the WCO Secretary General, which honours Cameroon.
13. He expressed his satisfaction with the choice of his country to host the meeting and recalled the major role of customs administrations in the mobilization of public resources, the support to economic competitiveness and protection of the society, which not only requires public support but also in this case, additional support from donors and other development partners. Finally, while wishing full success to the deliberations, the Chairperson declared open the first Donors Conference of the WCA Region.

II: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

14. After the opening ceremony, discussions were conducted by the Regional Vice-Chair, centred on the following items:

- Introductory statement ;
- Keynote address by WCO Secretary General ;
- Overview of customs modernization strategies and contribution of development partners ;
 - ✓ Presentation of the missions of customs of the 21st century and WCO capacity-building tools ;
 - ✓ Presentation of the WCO-WCA Region and its regional strategic plan ;
 - ✓ Interventions, priorities and requirements of development partners in the Region.
- Funding customs modernization projects in the WCO-WCA Region: Challenges and perspectives.
 - ✓ Presentation of priority regional projects by the WCO-WCA Vice-Chair ;
 - ✓ Presentation of some national priority projects by the administrations concerned ;
 - ✓ Discussions and recommendations on the improvement of the partnership between customs and development partners.

III: DELIBERATIONS:

15. At the start of discussions and in her introductory statement, Madam the Regional Vice-Chair recalled the decisions taken during the preparatory Workshop and the objective of the meeting, notably to present regional and national initiatives seeking funding from donors. She specified that the current approaches towards donors do not preclude ongoing bilateral actions with countries of the Region.

16. **Mr. Kunio MIKURIYA** recalled the existence of a global WCO strategy of resource mobilization and the existence of a regional strategy hinging on the global strategy. He went on to present some of the priorities set by donors for the Region, namely :

- Support the African Union in the implementation of the Continental Free Trade Area;
- Connectivity and interconnection of customs information systems ;
- Development of transit ;
- Coordinated management of borders;
- Reduction of release times of goods at the border.

17. He pointed out that the organization of the donors conference is already a common practice in other regions and stressed that it is essential for each region to take ownership of reforms and draft reliable projects that enable customs to fully accomplish their missions.

18. It emerged from the discussions that other regions hold annual donors meetings, during which the needs of customs authorities with a regional or national impact are discussed.

III.1. OVERVIEW OF CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION STRATEGIES AND CONTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

19. This item dwelt, on the one hand, on the presentation of the missions of modern Customs in the 21st century and WCO capacity-building tools and, on the other hand, the WCO-WCA regional strategic plan.

III.1.1. Presentation of the missions of modern Customs in the 21st century and WCO capacity-building tools

20. This presentation was made by **Mr. Bernard ZBINDEN**, WCA regional development manager at the WCO Secretariat. His presentation revealed that the WCO website (www.wcoomd.org) contains the WCO strategic plan and the strategic document 'the customs of the 21st century'. These documents explain the vision and the strategy of the WCO that hinges on four pillars: Securing and facilitating Trade, fair and effective revenue collection, protection of the society and institutional and human resource development. For each of the pillars the WCO has developed a large number of standards and tools which are also available on the WCO website.

21. He then highlighted the progress stemming from the implementation of WCO standards, the Columbus programmes in its various phases, the Leadership and Management Development Programme (LMD) developed with the support of the World Bank and other partners and the WACAM Project funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). In conclusion, he said that the approach to support customs reforms is backed by the existence of numerous partnerships and a strong network of donors and academia.

III.1.2. Presentation of the WCO-WCA regional strategic plan

22. **Mr. Souleymane SANGARE**, Director of ROCB presented the WCA regional strategic plan 2013-2017 that is aligned with the four pillars of the Customs of the 21st century and aims at enhancing the capacities of administrations in the region. The six priority areas of the current WCA strategic plan are: Leadership development, strategic management, human resource management, partnerships and customs procedures. He also presented the tools that were developed at regional level to enable them to monitor and self-evaluate reform progress.

23. The 2013-2017 strategic plan, on its part, provides road-maps on actions to be carried out yearly by administrations. In 2013, administrations were given the same roadmap, and later, due to the existence of discrepancies between administrations, road-maps became specific to each administration in 2014, depending on the level of implementation of earmarked actions. Each year, and with the active assistance of the ROCB, WCA customs administrations carry out a self-assessment exercise.

24. With regard to capacity-building, the Director of the ROCB noted that to date:

- Sharing of experiences and best practices increased due to the regional coaching programme that is managed by the ROCB and which brings together customs administrations that require assistance and partner administrations that are willing to provide the required expertise ;
- Capacity of customs administrations to plan reform significantly increased but that their capacity to actually implement change was still limited.
- Capacity to monitor and evaluate reform progress gradually improved;
- Mainstreaming of the culture of annual self-assessment by the administrations.

25. Addressing donors, he noted the need for the funding of regional activities in the following areas:

- Leadership ;
- Internal capacity-building for administrations ;
- Improvement of relationships with stakeholders;
- Taking ownership of WCO tools ;
- Human resource management ;
- Partnership;
- Customs procedures.

III.1.3. Interventions, priorities and requirements of development partners in the Region

26. The item was the topic of presentations made by Japan Customs, the African Union Commission, SAANA Consulting, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Actions (OCHA) and the European Union (EEAS).

27. Mr. **Yoshihiro KOSAKA**, representative of Japan Customs noted that his Administration provides financial support for capacity-building activities organised by WCO through Customs Cooperation Fund. These activities involve training sessions in Japan and short-term courses offered by Japanese experts in member countries of the WCA Region as well as the WCO Human Resource Development Programmes, such as the WCO Scholarship program and Career Development Programme. He also introduced the other assistance offered to the WCA region on a bilateral basis.

28. The presentation of the African Union Commission was made by Mr. **Chiza Charles CHIUMYA**. He presented the 2063 vision of the African Union and stressed that the Union, within the framework of the implementation of the Minimum Integration Programme in Africa, promotes all actions aimed at enhancing intra-African trade. According to him, trade facilitation, infrastructure construction, the free movement of people and goods and the elimination of tariff barriers were key factors for the emergence of a continental free trade zone. To that end, Customs administrations are called upon to harmonize procedures, rules of origin and classification of goods. Considering the challenges, their capacity-building is highly desired by the African Union which is involved in certain initiatives relating thereto.

29. **SAANA** Consulting firm represented by Amanda Archibong underscored the fact that with DFID funds, it backs the African Union in the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation and the development of an e-platform that will consist of a Trade Facilitation experts' network and private sector engagement platform. The e-portal would also monitor the implementation of the TFA across the continent.. The Firm is also working on a second project, the Accelerating Trade in West Africa (ATWA) project with funding from DANIDA to develop a permanent donor vehicle for support to Trade Facilitation in West Africa. Understanding the priorities of Customs Administrations in the region would form useful input to the project design.

30. **Mrs. Virginie Bohl** from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Actions (OCHA), on her part, presented the Office's missions and procedures for the coordination of disaster relief, and pleaded for a greater dialogue between Customs and humanitarian organizations through regional and national seminars. The Office informed participants on a project for the creation of a module of the ASYCUDA system to facilitate clearance of humanitarian operations shipments. As the said project is still in its pilot phase, the Office is calling on interested administrations to manifest themselves as likely pilot countries for implementation.

31. **Guinea** requested the support of donor agencies in the implementation of its post-Ebola reform and modernization project. **Senegal** on its part, called on member administrations to be proactive considering the importance of the topic examined, by putting in place simplified procedures for the delivery of humanitarian shipments. **Sierra Leone** meanwhile, advocated the drafting of collaboration policies and legal frameworks with humanitarian agencies. **Liberia** regretted the absence of most donors and development partners during the Ebola crisis, underlined the negative impact this behaviour had on Liberia's economy and stressed the need for assistance to enable the country to recover from the crisis.

32. **The European Union (EU)** explained its project funding procedure. It emerged that countries seeking financing for their projects by the EU must send their request to the Regional (Chair of Regional Community Commissions) or the National (ministry in charge of negotiating the funding) Authorising Officer. The request is presented in the form of a project document that states the needs, priorities and how the project will be carried out. The project document needs to be in line with the priorities of the national/regional programming documents (NIP/RIP). If the project is deemed pertinent and mature, the country/the region opens negotiations with the EU to see whether it can mobilize resources to finance it. The EU stressed that capacity-building projects are needed and indicated that resources from the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP 11th FED) signed in June 2015 are available. It also exhorted administrations to submit projects on the enhancement of partnership with the private sector.

33. The EU ended its statement by calling administrations of the region to be proactive, take ownership of the project and its integration capacity. He added that

administrations should focus on mature and useful projects that could improve their efficiency.

III.2. FUNDING CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION PROJECTS IN THE WCO-WCA REGION: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

34. This item revolved around the presentation of priority regional and national projects as well as discussions and recommendations on improving the partnership between customs and development partners, jointly moderated by the Vice Chair and the representative of Japan Customs.

III.2.1. Presentation of priority regional projects

35. This presentation was made by **Mr. Gasper KONNEH** from Office of the Vice-Chair. He started by reviewing the principles that led to the selection of regional projects, which were the following :

- ✓ Projects that facilitate and speed up trade through a standardized application of customs procedures in several neighbouring countries;
- ✓ Projects that facilitate the functioning of customs unions and foster regional integration;
- ✓ Projects that minimize duplication;
- ✓ Projects that optimize the results of a development programme involving many countries in the Region;
- ✓ Projects that empower regional structures in order to entrust them with a greater role in the cooperation process with donors.

36. He then presented the various regional projects selected for submission to the Donors Conference as follows :

37. **Extension of the West Africa Customs Administration Modernization (WACAM) project to Central Africa that aims at :**

- ✓ Resource mobilization ;
- ✓ Engagement of stakeholders;
- ✓ Human resource development.

The current WACAM initiative managed by the WCO Secretariat and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has been extended and will last until 2018. For now, the project is limited to the customs administrations of ECOWAS Member States, which have recorded encouraging results.

The objective is to extend the WACAM project to Central Africa and make the full programme available to the seven customs administrations of that sub-region.

38. **Strengthening Intelligence through the increased use of CEN and nCEN :**

- ✓ CEN and nCEN are tools developed by WCO to fight against fraud ;

- ✓ nCEN is a database that helps a customs administration to collect data on customs offences at the national level, including personal data on counterfeiters ;
- ✓ CEN enables the exchange of data on customs offences between several customs administrations, excluding personal data ;
- ✓ Intelligence sharing on the CEN network facilitates the fight against fraud, large-scale trafficking and cross-border crime.
- ✓ The project aims at enhancing intelligence sharing between administrations on the CEN platform, through technical and financial assistance on the setting up of nCEN national systems ;
- ✓ About 30.000 Euros is required per administration.

39. Regional Authorized Economic Operators Programme (AEO):

- ✓ The AEO concept is defined in the SAFE Framework of Standards;
- ✓ An AEO is a stakeholder in the international movement of goods which has been recognized by a Customs administration as complying with international standards, particularly in terms of supply chain security;
- ✓ In return, the administrations grant privileges to AEOs, notably by easing clearance procedures;
- ✓ The benefits of the implementation of AEO programmes are enjoyed, particularly by companies, States and Regional Economic Communities ;
- ✓ The objective of the programme is to increase intra-regional trade and an increased integration of the WCA Region within the international trade system through the putting in place of an AEO Regional Programme ;
- ✓ The expected results include:
 - ❖ The setting up of a regional AEO and mutual recognition framework ;
 - ❖ Capacity-building of customs administrations and stakeholders on implementation of AEO programmes.

40. Regional programme for mutual administrative collaboration or regional coaching programme :

- ✓ The Regional Coaching Programme is a collaborative initiative of South-South cooperation, based on practical, convenient and low cost local expertise ;
- ✓ In line with the principles adopted by the Region, all expenses inherent in the Regional Coaching Programme are borne by the requesting country ;
- ✓ But very often, Administrations seeking expertise or technical assistance (requesting countries) from another Administration are not able to bear the charges inherent thereto ;
- ✓ Several coaching initiatives have thus remained at the application stage or the first mission, for lack of funding ;

- ✓ The performance assessment, information technology, leadership, management of petroleum products, strategic management, human resource management, partnership and procedures are the areas mutual administrative collaboration to date.

41. Regional workshop for the accreditation of customs modernization advisers:

- ✓ The unavailability of external experts to immediately respond to the needs of WCA customs administrations remains a major problem.
- ✓ Seminars for the Accreditation of advisers on customs modernization initiated by the World Customs Organization in the WCA Region have helped to train resource persons, far below the needs of the Region.
- ✓ Faced with the multiple requests from customs administrations to ROCB-WCA and the limited number of accredited regional experts available, it seems necessary to increase the regional pool of Customs modernization advisers at the regional level.

42. Training workshop for the training of trainers and human resources managers:

- ✓ Human resource management is still one of the major challenges of the customs administrations in the WCA Region;
- ✓ Training and Human Resource Management do not constitute a subject in customs training curriculum per se.
- ✓ Customs officials used as trainers are not professionals in the training field;
- ✓ National training structures do not have internal skills in training engineering;
- ✓ Continuing training is almost non-existent or ill-adapted to the modernization process.
- ✓ Organize training workshops for resource manager and training based on developed modules.

43. Monitoring-evaluation programme of the implementation of the regional strategic plan for West and Central Africa :

- ✓ Since 2009, the Region has undertaken strategic planning...
- ✓ The first regional cycle ended in 2013 with mitigated results;
- ✓ The second cycle 2013-2017 is ongoing and trends from self-assessment exercises are very encouraging ;
- ✓ All administrations now participate in this exercise but the quality of the results remain a challenge for ROCB-WCA ;
- ✓ It is necessary for Regional experts to undertake technical assistance missions in order to support administrations in their modernization process ;
- ✓ The average number of days for this mission is 05 working days and the number of participants is 2 technical attachés from ROCB.

44. The project for the continuation and extension of river and maritime intelligence sharing:

- ✓ The river and maritime intelligence sharing project was initiated in 2012 by the Senegalese Customs with the support of French Cooperation ;
- ✓ It was launched after realizing that in most of our countries, the monitoring of sea crafts by Customs Administrations, is not optimal;
- ✓ Thus, sea boats in our countries have become a choice vector of several illicit trafficking (Drug, CITES, Weapons etc.) and criminal acts (terrorism etc.);
- ✓ The objective of the project is to set up the legal framework and a common database on sea trades, boats, their movements, owners, crews, passengers ;
- ✓ The target beneficiaries include Customs Administrations of the WCO region for West and Central Africa.
- ✓ The estimated budget stands at 155 818 Euros.

45. Project for the interconnection of customs information systems of Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal :

In 2014 and 2015, the Customs Administrations of the four countries have developed together business scenarios, functional (procedural) specifications and system specifications to support automated transit between these countries. The project was funded by the EU (PACIR-Proramme d'Appui au Commerce et à l'Intergation Régionale) and expertise was provided by the WCO and UNCTAD. A schedule and a work programme for the development and implementation of the solution have been elaborated and require funding. The ECOWAS Commission has committed to support the project but it is assumed that additional support will be required. It is the intention to elaborate a solution that will serve as a model for the entire ECOWAS region and eventually also for the CEMAC/ECCAS region.

The main objectives of this project include among others:

- ✓ facilitating and securing international trade through the implementation of best business practices in accordance with WCO standards;
- ✓ improving the efficiency and effectiveness of transit procedures ;
- ✓ enhancing the prevention and detection of fraud;
- ✓ simplifying and securing transit operations;
- ✓ enabling electronic exchange of transit data ;
- ✓ establishing a regional database on transit ;
- ✓ extending the project to other members of the WCA Region.

It is worth noting that this project was initiated within the framework of the PACIR Programme (Support and assistance programme for trade and regional integration) of the European Union, which ended before the complete implementation of the project. As of date, the studies phase has been completed and we are now in the implementation stage, with a draft budget of 7.772.105 dollars for the four countries involved.

III.2.2. Presentation of priority national projects

46. National projects were selected for presentation at the conference on the basis of the following principles :

- Projects that take into account the specific national concerns of Customs administrations in their reform process ;
- A project which is an immediate response to a specific conflict situation to ensure the rapid restructuring and smooth functioning of a destabilized Customs administration ;
- A project that promotes the implementation of a pilot phase and a testing phase for subsequent deployment in other countries ;
- Projects that help to bridge gaps in the capacities of Customs administrations - particularly in areas where there is a discrepancy in development levels.

47. These projects are presented by administrations one after the other as follows :

- **Senegal:** The project to build a regional dog training centre in Senegal, with the aim of offering training in various dog-handler and instructor domains for gendarmes, policemen and customs officers in the Region. It is the intention of Senegal to integrate the dog training centre in the national customs training centre that is about to be built in Dakar.

Discussions that followed revealed that the sniffer-dog activity is not common in the region and is of major interest to customs administrations. In this regard, the administrations agreed on the relevance of the initiative and called for the support of donors.

- **Gabon:** Project to support the development of a website and Intranet for Gabon Customs, in view of improving internal and external communication.

After the presentation, exchanges highlighted that the basic telecommunication infrastructure is there and the need to support the country to permit its alignment with similar standards and tools that already exist in other countries of the region.

- **Gambia:** Project for the institutional capacity-building of Gambian Customs, with the aim of improving human resource management, automation of procedures, the development of a database on customs valuation and improving electricity supply at border posts. These projects, which are part of the new Corporate Strategic Plan 2015 -2019, are 80% self-financed. The proposed projects are among the 20% funding gap in the Plan that needed donor support.

Senegal lauded the relevance of the project and advocated for its support.

- **Benin:** Project to construct and equip a national Customs training centre providing also regional training opportunities, with the objective to provide

Benin and the region with an adequate training institution. The estimated cost of the project is CFA F10 billion.

Following the presentation of this project, the EU encouraged the initiative and called on Benin to draft a complete and mature project, supported by its own contribution to the funding.

WCO Secretariat responded by hailing the appeal of the project, the capacity-building and training of customs administrations being at the heart of the WCO strategy. It called on donors to support it and suggested that they should come together in funding infrastructure and the development of the training system and concept and highlighted the need for Benin's authorities to provide resources for sustainable operation of the School.

On the issue, Cameroon shared its experience drawn from the implementation of the Transport and Transit Facilitation project within CEMAC (FASTRAC). It noted that the Project could be of interest to donors if it had a strong regional coverage.

- **Cape-Verde** : Modernization Project of customs in Cape Verde, respectively by implementing the strategic communication plan (to improve its image) and by providing the staff with good quality uniform.

WCO Secretariat then noticed that the initiative may seem insignificant to some countries, but it is crucial to remember that the Cape Verde project remains important for a small country considering its means.

- **Guinea-Bissau**: Technical and Financial Assistance Project for the Customs modernization process, as part of the fight against fraud, risk management, human resources and AEO.

48. After all the presentations were made, the EU took note of the projects and committed to inform local representations about these initiatives.

49. The participating customs administrations and the WCO Secretariat agreed that the various projects do not yet include all the details and that there is a need to further develop the business cases for them to be better presented to donors and other funding agencies.

50. The World Bank laid emphasis on the link that should exist between projects and the improvement of the efficiency of administrations. It stressed the need for proposed projects to be linked to the overall objectives of development and of the development partners. It also informed the audience that it was about to set up a regional office in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and that this new structure would be available for WCO structures and members to deal with business case and project proposal development. In this vein, it called for the finalization of the setting up of projects so that they can meet the Bank's priorities.

51. Cameroon's Ambassador to Belgium and the EU finally dwelt on the state of current negotiations with the EU on EPAs and suggested to the region that the schedule and challenges related to the implementation of these partnership agreements should be included in the modernization plans of administrations.

III.2.3. Decisions and follow-up activities of the Conference

52. The general decisions, the follow-up actions and the decisions with regard to lead countries/organs for regional projects are **documented in the Appendix of this report**.

53. As concerns the standardisation of business case format, the Vice-Chair suggested prior consultation with the administrations concerned.

54. In addition, WCO Secretariat suggested that for monitoring, documents relating to regional and national projects be finalized, for them to be discussed at the forthcoming meetings of WCA Contact Points and Experts Committee.

55. At the end of the discussion, the Vice-Chair asked administrations present to act as relay with regard to their hierarchy for the dissemination of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference.

IV: CLOSING CEREMONY

56. The closing ceremony of the first Donors Conference of WCO-WCA Region was marked by three highlights that revolved around the speeches by the Vice-Chair of the Region, the WCO Secretary General, and the closing speech by the Minister of Finance.

57. After presenting the decisions and recommendations of the Conference, **Madame LIBOM LI LIKENG**, Vice-Chair of the Region and Director General of Cameroon Customs, in her speech, presented an analytical report of the Conference, discussions as well as the decisions and recommendations made. She also thanked the various delegations for the quality of the debates, the interpreters for their assiduity and stressed that the closing of the first donors conference is just the beginning of a new stage. She ended her speech by pointing out that the strengthening of Customs/Donors cooperation will help to maximize the contribution of customs to development.

58. **Monsieur Kunio MIKURIYA**, WCO Secretary General, echoed the previous developments and expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the Conference. He said he was honoured by the audiences granted him by the Cameroon Government and hailed its political will to support customs administration reform. Concluding his remarks, he said that the holding of the First Donors Conference aims at creating a dialogue of trust between the Customs of the region and donors.

59. Last to take the floor, **Mr Alamine Ousmane MEY, Minister of Finance**, in his closing remarks, praised the quality of the preparation of the Conference and expressed gratitude of the Cameroon Government to WCO for its unwavering support to the capacity-building of Customs administrations of developing

countries. He also thanked the Japan Customs for their contribution. He then welcomed the decisions and recommendations of the Conference which constitute a solution to the multiplication and diversification of partnerships.

60. In declaring closed the deliberations of the Conference, the Minister reaffirmed the will of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to pursue its ongoing support to the customs reform process.

Done in Yaounde, 9 July 2015
The first Donors Conference of WCO-WCA Region

APPENDIX

DECISIONS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES OF THE FIRST DONORS CONFERENCE OF THE WCO-WCA REGION, AS WELL AS LEAD COUNTIES/ORGANS.

A- General decisions of the Conference:

- 1- Extension of the WACAM project to Central Africa (**WCO Secretariat**);
- 2- Establishing within each Customs Administration of a body in charge of the coordination of projects and relations with donors and funding agencies (**all WCA Customs administrations**);
- 3- Setting up an Expert Group in charge of assisting the Region and administrations in development of projects, the drafting of business cases and project proposals, in accordance with WCO or donors standards (**The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Sierra Leone**);
- 4- Drafting of project proposals based on the management and financial rules of WCO (**Regional Projects Managers with the supporting countries and the WCA Expert Group in charge of assisting the Region and administrations in development of projects, the drafting of business cases and project proposals**);
- 5- Developing a donor map of the Region (**Vice-Chair with the support of the WCO Secretariat, the ROCB**);
- 6- Designation of WCO Secretariat as the signatory of funding contracts with donors for regional projects.

B- Follow-up actions

- Send the Report of the Conference to participants and donors (**Vice-Chair**);
- Publish the report of the Conference, the various presentations and project proposals on the regional website (**ROCB**);
- Define the type of format to be adopted for drafting business cases (**Vice-Chair**);
- Appoint a project manager for each priority regional initiative (**consultation with relevant donors**);
- Request more information from donors (**Vice-Chair**);
- Collaborate with UNCTAD on its mission and vision on ASYCUDA migrations (**WCO Secretariat**);
- Agree with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Actions (OCHA) on the schedule and funding of regional seminars (**WCO Secretariat**);
- Call on Ebola affected countries to come together as concerns initiatives on what can be done in their favour (**WCO Secretariat with support of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone**);
- Support the CEMAC Commission in its capacity-building strategy, in collaboration with the States concerned (**WCO Secretariat and CEMAC Commission**);

C- Designation of lead counties/organs for the regional priority projects

- On the extension of the WACAM project, **WCO Secretariat in collaboration with Sierra Leone and Mali** ;
- Strengthening Intelligence in the region through the increased used of CEN and nCEN, **Cameroon and RILOs** ;
- AEO regional programme, **Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana** ;
- Programme for mutual administrative cooperation (regional coaching programme), **ROCB** ;
- Regional accreditation workshop of customs modernization counsellors, **WCO Secretariat and ROCB**
- Workshop on the training of trainers and human resource managers, **WCO Secretariat and ROCB** ;
- Monitoring-evaluation programme for the implementation of the regional strategic plan for West and Central Africa, **ROCB** ;
- The project for the continuation and extension of river and maritime intelligence sharing, with the objective of setting up a framework of regional intelligence in the maritime and river area, **Senegal and RILO-WA**;
- Project for the interconnection of the customs information systems of Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal, **Côte d'Ivoire, in collaboration with Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal**.

Done in Yaounde, 9 July 2015

The first Donors Conference of the WCO-WCA Region.