



Report

**2nd Donors' Conference of the West and
Central Africa Region (WCA) of the
WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
(WCO)**

Radisson Blu Hotel 2 February - Lomé — Republic of Togo, from 1 to 2 June 2017

BACKGROUND:

1. From 1 to 2 June 2017, the 2nd annual donors' conference of the West and Central Africa Region (WCA) of the World Customs Organization (WCO) was held at Radisson Blu Hotel in Lomé, Togo, On the theme: « Facilitating trade and Securing the logistics chains for WCA customs and development partners ».
2. The Conference was attended by 18 Customs administrations out of the 23 in the region, the Regional Capacity Building Office (ROCB), the Regional Liaison and Intelligence Offices (BRLR-CA and BRLR-WA), Regional Training Centers (RTCs), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations (OCHA) and the International Trade Center (ITC).

The full list of participants is attached.

I. Opening Ceremony

3. Chaired by the Togolese Minister of Economy and Finance, the opening ceremony was punctuated by five speeches:
4. In his address, **Mr. Kodjo ADEDZE**, Commissioner General of the Togolese Revenue Office (OTR), welcomed all the delegations present before expressing his gratitude to the Chinese Customs, sponsor of the meeting and to the partners in who positively responded to the invitation of the Region. This 2nd Donor Conference, he said, is a source of real hope as it provides a platform for facilitating mobilization of resources needed to finance the projects of modernization of customs administrations. He continued by calling on governments and donors to increase their commitment to funding projects aimed at socio-economic development of States;
5. The Vice-Chair of WCO-WCA Region, **Colonel Major Pierre Alphonse DA**, expressed his gratitude to the high authorities of the Togolese Republic, on the one hand and welcomed the presence of development partners, on the other hand. He said that this meeting is about presenting the arguments of the

priority projects of the Region. Solicited for the funding of these projects, donors are expected to take concrete actions. The Vice-chair expressed optimism that development partners would be quick and effective because their invaluable support would result in an environment conducive to the smooth running of their activities;

6. Speaking, **Mr. XIANG Yang Sun**, Representative of the Chinese Customs, said he was honoured by his presence at this second Donors' Conference. He took the opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of his Government to continue its support for the modernization efforts of Customs administrations in the Region in order to meet the challenges of the future;
7. In his address, WCO Secretary General **Kunio MIKURIYA** congratulated the authorities of the Republic of Togo for organizing this second Conference before recalling that beyond its mission of collecting revenues and protection of the economy, Customs are a vector of integration. Therefore, they need to be more supported by governments and donors to enable them to fully play their role in facilitating trade and securing the logistics chain;
8. In his opening remarks, **Mr. Sani YAYA**, Minister of Economy and Finance, recalled the challenges of modernization, trade facilitation and protection of populations that fall under customs administrations' responsibility. Faced with this situation, support from public authorities and donors is essential. He also calls for a pooling of resources in order to create the required synergy for implementation of projects common to the Region which impact on the development of States is unequivocal. Domestic resources mobilized by Customs will be able to significantly mitigate the decrease in development assistance. Upon these words of hope, the Minister declared open the deliberations of the Second Donors' Conference.

II. CONSTITUTION OF THE BUREAU

9. The bureau of the meeting is the following:

- Chairmanship: Mister Vice-Chair of WCO-WCA Region supported by Mister Secretary General of WCO, Mister Commissioner General of OTR and the Representative of Chinese customs;
- Rapporteurs: Burkina Faso, Cameroon with the support of the Office of the Vice-chair of the Region (Côte d'Ivoire) and the host country (Togo).

III. AGENDA

10. The agenda adopted after amendment is as follows:

- Item 1: Concept, objectives and participants;
- Item 2: Presentation of donors present and their programs;
- Item 3: Presentation of organizations and programs of donors present;
- Item 4: Presentation of arguments for regional projects identified at the 1st donors' conference;
- Item 5: Presentation of arguments for regional projects
- Item 6: New regional project;
- Item 7: Presentation of arguments for national projects;
- Item 8: Conclusions of the 2nd conference and way forward;
- Item 9: Closing of the 2nd Conference.

IV. PROCEEDINGS

11. The conference participants benefited from several presentations on the following topics:

IV.1. Concept, goals and participants

IV.1.1. Reminder of decisions, recommendations and outcomes of the 1st donors' conference

12. Mr. **DEZAI B Ferdinand**, from the Office of the Vice-Chair, recalled the decisions and recommendations of the 1st donors' conference held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in July 2015 before presenting a general assessment of this meeting. Out of nine (9) regional projects and six (6) national projects presented in Yaoundé, only the project for accreditation of modernization counsellors under the MERCATOR Program, funded by the African Union with the technical support of WCO, has been completed. He added that this meeting allowed WCA region to share its vision with donors through its Regional Strategic Plan, but also to understand donors' procedures and mechanisms.

13. Following the presentation, the outcomes of this conference were mentioned during the discussions:

- WCO Regional Coordinator recalled the contacts made with AfDB and the European Union, which should lead to the signing of partnership contracts;

- Guinea Conakry presented the contribution made by its country, Liberia and Sierra Leone, affected by the EBOLA fever through the C-RED project, which aims at preparing States to respond to humanitarian disasters. From project to pilot phase envisaged therefore its regional extension;

14. The OTR Commissioner General pointed out the absence of many donors and funding institutions present at the first conference. Noting the low level of funding of the projects presented at the first conference, he suggested the idea of possible funding for regional projects by sub regional institutions or by involving the private sector, which on many occasions has made their availability known.

15. It has been suggested that serious consideration be given to the reasons for this absence in order to provide appropriate solutions;

16. The Secretary General of WCO closed the discussion on this item by stating that the donors' conference has a non-negligible pedagogical aspect. It is a platform for exchanges that helps in the design and maturation of projects and also enabling the States of WCO-WCA Region to reach a full understanding of donors' and funding institutions' operating procedures.

IV.1.2. The goals and outcomes of the 2nd conference

17. The goals have been presented and can be summarized as follows:

- creation of a donor network working in synergy and working toward an integrated approach to customs reform and modernization in the Region;
- strengthening mutual understanding between donors and customs in the Region;
- raising political and donor interest in customs reforms within the Region;
- ensuring visibility for existing donor-funded projects in the Region;
- Presentation of regional and national project for donors' support and funding.

18. The expected outcomes were closely linked to the goals.

IV.2. Presentation of donors present and their programs

19. This item raised comments from the representatives of Chinese and Japan Customs, JICA, WCO, OCHA and ITC

20. The presentation of the Chinese Customs Representative focused on the € 3 million partnership with WCO to finance trade facilitation activities, customs Administrations modernization and capacity building.

21. Mr. **TONI MTSUDAIRA**, representative of the Japanese Customs, said that his structure was in the framework of the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference for African Development) and in partnership with WCO through the Japan Cooperation Fund on capacity building activities organized by WCO. The overall portfolio of Japanese investment through TICAD is estimated at about \$ 30 billion for the period 2016-2018.

22. **JICA speakers** highlighted the role of Japan International Cooperation Agency in providing technical assistance and funding for projects such as the interconnection project and the CINKANSSE JCP construction. They reaffirmed the availability of JICA to support WCO-WCA Region regarding Trade Facilitation Projects and the draft Transit Guideline.

23. At the end of these presentations, the questions which followed stressed on the procedures for obtaining assistance within those institutions. Specifically addressed to JICA, on the need to conduct a reflection in order to optimize funding in the light of the situations experienced at CINKASSE JCP and the interconnection project.

24. A recommendation has been made to ECOWAS for the operationalization of JCP.

25. **Bernard Zbinden of WCO** presented the partnership between WCO and OCHA in the framework of the C-RED project. The goal of this project is to prepare Customs Administrations to deal with humanitarian disasters. Currently the project is in its pilot phase in six States of WCO-WCA Region with a perspective of its extension to other Countries;

26. **Mrs. Virginie Bohl** of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations (OCHA) presented the ASYREC project, which consists in creating a simplified humanitarian shipment clearance operation module in the SYDONIA WORD system. OCHA invited interested administrations to make themselves known a pilot country during the implementation phase.

27. Furthermore, it emerged from the discussions that the cost of the module is appreciable and that there are no technical challenges in installing it on the Sydonia World system.

28. With regard to the issue of security or control of humanitarian shipments, it was recommended that countries use the bona fide certificate in accordance with Annex J5 of RKC, on the one hand and Control of humanitarian shipments by targeted International Organizations, on the other hand.

29. The representative of the International Trade Center (ITC), following Mrs. Virginie BOHL, stressed in her presentation on the contributions of her structure to WCA countries, specifically with respect to assistance to the private sector, the introduction of the Certificate of Origin, the proposed creation of the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee and WAEMU Commercial Monitoring Mechanism.

30. The discussions focused on the need to establish a legal framework at WAEMU level and practical arrangements, initially and the need for a legal framework, harmonization of national legislation on the legal value of the electronic signature in a second stage.

IV.3 Presentation of arguments for regional projects

IV.3.1 The project of interconnection with regard to the customs IT systems of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Togo.

31. This project was presented by Mrs. NIAMBE Yvonne of Côte d'Ivoire who recalled that the study phase of the project was entirely carried out within the framework of PACIR (Program of support for Trade and Regional Integration) which Côte d'Ivoire benefited from.

32. She then declined the main activities necessary for the finalization of the interconnection project which is meant to:

- ✓ facilitate and secure international trade through implementation of best commercial practices in accordance with WCO SAFE Framework of Standards;
- ✓ improve efficiency and effectiveness of transit procedures;
- ✓ improve prevention and detection of fraud;
- ✓ simplify and secure transit operations;
- ✓ allow electronic exchange of transit data;
- ✓ set up a regional transit database;
- ✓ extend the project to other members of WCA Region

33. The cost of finalizing the project is estimated at CFA francs 6,572,466,479.

34. Following the delegate of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. **Felix KWAKYE** of ECOWAS Commission presented the project for the automation of Transit based on the interconnection of national customs systems within ECOWAS for the purpose of simplifying and modernizing procedures and collecting data in accordance with standard norms. This is about considering the extension of the PACIR Project to all ECOWAS States.

35. At the end of these two presentations, the discussions focused on the challenges related to:

- effective interconnection of the various computer systems;
- bilateral interconnection projects that are part of implementation of the major interconnection project;
- advocacy for PACIR project;
- interfacing of computer systems: the solution is the creation of a platform that will allow exchange of information;
- funding: only JICA, which has declared its availability subject to certain conditions.

36. WCO Secretary reiterated the importance of the project in facilitating transit and invited ECOWAS and the countries involved in the interconnection project to submit the project to the global Conference on Transit for the purpose of seeking funding.

IV.3.2 Leadership and Management Development Project

37. Mr. Bernard ZBINDEN's presentation focused on the need for funding for the continuation of the Leadership and Management Development project. Active since 2011, the goal of the program is to equip managers to better manage their organizations. It emerged that due to the importance of the request, the need for a partner proves to be essential for the implementation of project-related activities, such as capacity building, translation of working documents, accreditation of experts in the field and creation of a dedicated position at WCO headquarters.

IV.3.3 Intelligence Strengthening Project through increased use of CEN and nCEN

38. This project was presented by Mr. KAVALA Bertrand of Cameroon. The overall goal of this project was to contribute to regional and international security by combating terrorism, fraud, illicit trafficking and organized cross-border crime. Specifically, the project will enable Customs Administrations in WCO-WCA Region to strengthen their capacities in the fight against these plagues, put in place national regulatory frameworks on intelligence. In addition, the capacities of Customs administrations to

collect, analyse and share intelligence will be strengthened and Customs Administrations in WCO-WCA Region will be able to implement WCO nCEN application. The cost of the project is estimated at 783,600 Euros for the 21 Administrations of WCO-WCA Region.

IV.3.4 The project of continuing the extension of mutualisation of river-sea intelligence

39. This project was presented by Mr. SAMBA Thiam, Director of BRLR-WA. He said that mutualisation of river-sea intelligence was initiated in 2012 by the Senegalese Customs with the support of French Cooperation. The project aiming at pursuing this initiative is to establish a legal framework and a common database on sea and boat professions, their movements, owners, crews and passengers.

40. The estimated budget is EUR 340,300.

IV.3.5 The project for the development and implementation of a Regional Program of Authorized Economic Operator

41. The project for the development and implementation of a Regional Program of Authorized Economic Operator (OEA) was presented by Mr. DEZAI B. Ferdinand of Côte d'Ivoire. Its goal is to contribute to the increase of intra-regional trade and the securing of the logistics chain at regional level.

42. The expected outcomes include the establishment of an AEO regional framework and mutual recognition, capacity building of customs administrations and stakeholders in program implementation.

43. The total cost is estimated at 3,336,850 Euros.

IV.3.6 Security through Collaboration Project (SPC ++)

44. **Mr. ADENIYI Adewale** of NIGERIA presented the Security through Collaboration Project (SPC++) as a Regional Project for Securing Borders in the Lake Chad Basin.

45. This is an initiative of a group of five countries: Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic, which decided to launch the SECURITY THROUGH COLLABORATION project (SPC++) to address security challenges, strengthen the role of customs administrations at

fragile borders and regional integration in security.

46. It is based on the findings concerning the upsurge of terrorism and other border security crises in the Lake Chad basin over the past few years and the finding that Customs Administrations are not always able to properly play their leading role in securing borders, that the said project was initiated by Nigeria.

47. Discussions went in favour of an advocacy; therefore, NIGERIA was invited to finalize the project by elaborating an argument like other regional projects with cost estimates.

IV.4. Presentation of arguments for national projects

IV.4.1 The Gambia Institutional Capacity Building Project

48. The project presented by the GAMBIA comprises three sub-components and aims at modernizing customs administration. These components are:

- Infrastructure development
- Migrating to SYDONIA WORD
- Alternative Energy supply and facilities

49.1. These sub-components are part of the Strategic Plan of the Administration, which is 80% self-funded. Donor support is required for the remaining 20% that is around USD 1,558,581.

IV.4.2 The project for the computerization of Central African Customs

50. This project, presented by the Central African Republic, aims at upgrading the Central African customs information systems mainly through the purchase of computer equipment, the installation of a Data Center and the capacity building of customs officers and other users. Its overall cost is estimated at 2,151,012 Euros.

51. The project of extending NEXUS system in the hinterland is also one of the goals of this project.

IV.4.3 Initial and Continuous Training Project of the Guinea-Bissau Customs Officers

55. Guinea-Bissau presented the Initial and Continuous Training Project of Customs officers at the higher and intermediate levels and more specifically with regard to the fight against fraud, risk management, human resources capacity

building.

56. The project was widely supported by Burkina Faso (which is heavily involved), Senegal, Nigeria and Congo.
57. The total funding amounts to CFAF 535,800,000, of which CFAF 315,000,000 is expected from the donors.
58. At the end of the presentation of the arguments, the Secretary General welcomed the maturity of the projects presented and commended the significant progress made by countries and structures with projects compared to the first conference.
59. Regional projects related to the interconnection, AEO regional program and security in the SPC +++ region were supported by the donors present, including JICA.
60. With regard to national projects, a strong commitment was made by the region towards the projects presented by GUINEA BISSAU, the GAMBIA and CENTRAL AFRICA.

IV.5 Adoption of recommendations

61. The recommendations were unanimously adopted after amendment by all participants.

V. Closing Ceremony

62. Three speeches punctuated the closing ceremony, namely:
 - address by the Vice-Chair of WCA region;
 - address by the Secretary General of WCO;
 - Closing speech delivered by the Commissioner General of the OTR, Representing Mr. Minister of Economy and Finance of Togo.

Done in Lomé, this 2nd Day of June 2017

The participants

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND DONORS' CONFERENCE OF WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION (WCA) OF THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION (WCO)

1. To the Office of the Vice-Chair

- Proceed with completion of the regional WEB site by including all projects to be submitted to donors;
- Organize a meeting to evaluate the recommendations of previous donors' conferences prior to the organization of the next one.

2. To the Customs administrations of WCA Region

- Establish a training mechanism for Director Generals in Leadership and Management without resorting to donors;
- encourage the use of domestic funding to carry out projects in the region;
- support customs administrations of post-conflict States to the extent possible, in the quest of upgrading of their administration;
- make an exhaustive inventory of the application of the TRIE convention and set up a single guarantee mechanism to cover transit operations.
- carry out the reform Projects in a coordinated and harmonized manner among sub-regional institutions (ECOWAS, WAEMU).

3. To Sub regional institutions

- Take necessary measures to make the JCP operational

To Donors, Funding Institutions and Partners

- Commit to providing the necessary support for the funding of regional projects.

Done in Lomé, this 2nd Day of June 2017

The participants

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