

TRADEBEAT

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International Liaison Newsletter

Highlights:

- E-Commerce
- Passenger Flows
- Facilitating the Cross-Border Movement of Vaccines
- Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs
- Business Continuity within the JCA

WCO Roadmap for Sustainable Supply Chain

As the world continues to grapple with the realities of the Coronavirus crisis, disruptions to social and economic life persist, and the adverse effects on international trade and travel become indefinite. With the COVID-19 pandemic lingering longer than most had anticipated, a post-Covid recovery strategy must be contemplated and preparations for a deliberate action plan be made by the foremost

gatekeepers of international border control. Poised for developing such a strategy, the World Customs Organization (WCO), representing 150 Customs administrations worldwide convened for its 137th Session where it's Council delivered a roadmap to ensure the recovery, renewal and resilience of the Customs and trade community for a sustainable supply chain.

WCO Council Session

During the 137th Session of the Council, which is the supreme decision making body of the WCO, Heads of Delegation participated in a virtual meeting held 10-12 December 2020 to discuss the way forward. Chairperson of the Council, Mr. Ahmed Al Khalifa, Vice-Chair for the North of Africa, Near and Middle East Region and President of Customs Affairs in Bahrain, in his opening remarks declared that "Customs worldwide have played a critical role during the pandemic and we need to keep the momentum going and be ready for the recovery phase, especially by continuing to ensure the rapid movement of essential goods, including COVID-19 vaccines, and by increasing support to economic operators."

Determined to leverage lessons learnt from managing the COVID-19 crisis, participants took stock of the WCO's related work and mapped the road ahead, which is aligned with the WCO theme for 2021 "Customs Bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a Sustainable Supply Chain". This theme will be launched on International Customs Day, celebrated annually on January 26. The theme acknowledges the united efforts of Customs to emerge successfully from the Coronavirus crisis and to support people and businesses by strengthening the global supply chain, reinforcing collaboration, harnessing technology and putting "people" at the centre of the transformation process.

Decisions of the WCO Council

E-Commerce

Fuelled by lock downs and social distancing associated with the pandemic, 2020 saw an exponential growth in E-Commerce. The Council endorsed three documents:

- Reference Datasets for Cross-Border E-Commerce,
- Revenue Collection Approaches, and
- E-Commerce Stakeholders: Roles and Responsibilities - aimed at further enriching the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce, adopted in June 2018.



Passenger Flows

As it relates to the facilitation and management of passenger flows, an approval for the establishment of a Passenger Facilitation and Control Working Group (PFCWG) was agreed by the Council to provide a forum for WCO Members to discuss all matters related to passenger processing across all modes of transport, commencing with the maritime mode. The forum should facilitate the sharing of best practices and developing global standards in preparation for the prompt return of cross-border movements of persons to pre-Covid levels.

Facilitating the Cross Border Movement of Vaccines

In light of the challenges associated with the handling of any time and temperature sensitive vaccine which has to be distributed in quantity, the Council adopted a [Resolution on the Role of Customs in Facilitating the Cross-Border Movement of Situationally Critical Medicines and Vaccines](#). This Resolution demonstrates the WCO's commitment to adapting to Members needs arising from the pandemic and its response to the global distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Resolution is designed to ensure the fast and safe clearance of such goods for export, transit and import, and lists 12 specific measures to be taken by WCO Members. The Resolution mandates 4 specific instructions for

the WCO Secretariat within the context of its existing work, calling for continued collaboration and cooperation with other international organizations. Finally, the Resolution tasks the Permanent Technical Committee and the Enforcement Committee to monitor the implementation of the Resolution subsequent to the 2020 Council Session.

Recognizing the significance of trade facilitation during the pandemic, the JCA, as an early measure, implemented duty exemptions for relief supplies, aligned with the latest edition of the [joint WCO/WHO HS Classification List for COVID-19 Medical Supplies](#) and stands ready to facilitate the cross-border movement of vaccines in accordance with the Council's Resolution.

Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs

A unanimous decision was taken by the WCO Council in adopting a [Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs](#), concerning efforts to make Customs administrations more inclusive. The Declaration contains eight action points, the implementation of which will allow Customs administrations to achieve their objectives by maintaining and enhancing collaboration with other development

partners and trade organizations to advance gender equality and diversity in Customs.

Spearheading Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs the JCA's Human Resource Management & Development Division is charged with creating a more inclusive administration through its gender action plan which is aligned with the Council's Declaration.



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*“Blessed is the
season which
engages the whole
world in a
conspiracy of love”*

— Hamilton Wright Mabie



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Business Continuity within the JCA

Amid the Coronavirus pandemic, the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) remains fully operational while adhering to all relevant public health measures implemented. In encouraging business continuity, the JCA has increased communication efforts, leveraging the use of existing electronic platforms and online channels available to serve its stakeholders. The Jamaica Single Window for Trade (JSWIFT) is an electronic platform that allows traders to submit transactional information through a single access point, providing services to support regulatory requirements for cross-border trade in Jamaica.

The JCA has also partnered with the Jamaica Trade and Invest (formerly JAMPRO) to provide client support to registered exporters in preparing commercial export declarations within its Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA World). Collaboration between the Port Authority of Jamaica and the JCA saw the integration of the Port Community System (PCS) and the ASYCUDA World System respectively. This melding of systems creates a streamlined and efficient operating platform for the maritime community through automation of port and logistics processes. Transport and logistics supply chains are thus connected through a single electronic submission which simplifies and accelerates the customs clearance procedure.

Aligned with the WCO Council Decisions on e-commerce and passenger flows, the JCA has become more technology-based in its approach to essential Customs operations such as passenger processing and goods clearance. The Express Cargo Clearance Procedure (ECCP) for the processing and clearance of personal shipment minimizes physical contact during this pandemic and serves to facilitate transactions below an established minimal threshold. JCA's online services are accessible at no data charge and online payment options are encouraged via e-payment, direct bank transfer and prepayment services.

Telecommuting has been implemented which sees a shift to more online services, trainings and meetings being facilitated among staff. Customers can now benefit from online scheduling of appointments through Microsoft bookings which facilitates interactions with Customs in areas such as valuation, post clearance audits and broker ID sessions.

Season's Greetings



*May the good times and treasures
of the present become the golden
memories of tomorrow. Season's
greetings and best wishes for a
successful 2021!*

International Liaison TradeBeat

The International and Industry Liaison Unit is committed to raising the level of awareness on topics relating to International Trade, as well as issues concerning the Caribbean region which may affect both our internal and external stakeholders. Our quarterly newsletter seeks to highlight global trade topics and their importance to Customs Administrations worldwide, specifically how they affect the Jamaica Customs Agency. As we realize our vision of becoming a modern Customs administration delivering excellent service, we recognize the importance of knowledge transfer in delivering our objectives and use this forum as one way of contributing to the vision of the JCA. The International and Industry Liaison Unit is located at the JCA's Head Office, and our officers are available to respond to your trade-related queries.

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