



World Customs
Organization

WCO Annual Report

2024-2025





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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Council Chairperson and the leadership of the following six Vice-Chairs, the WCO was able to successfully pursue its endeavours in cooperation with Members:

- **Ahmad Mohammad Al Akaleek** from Jordan for the WCO North of Africa, Near and Middle East (MENA) region;
- **Amadou Konaté** from Mali for the WCO West and Central Africa region;
- **Sudhamo Lal** from Mauritius for the WCO East and Southern Africa region;
- **Jyns José Francisco Ordóñez Torres** (until April 2025) and (from April 2025 onwards) **Manuel Emilio Sánchez Peralta** from Peru for the WCO South America, North America, Central America and the Caribbean (Americas and the Caribbean – AMS) region;
- **Øystein Børner** from Norway for the WCO Europe region; and
- **Tsz-tat Chan** from Hong Kong, China, for the WCO Far East, South and South East Asia, Australasia and the Pacific Islands (Asia/Pacific – A/P) region.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

TRANSFORMING THE GLOBAL TRADE ECOSYSTEM

As we present the World Customs Organization's Annual Report 2024-2025, we do so against the backdrop of another year marked by rapid disruption, profound complexity and unprecedented transformation. The world in which we operate is changing rapidly. Digitalization, artificial intelligence, shifting geopolitics, policy uncertainty, climate instability and economic pressure are no longer emerging concerns; they are the defining realities of our time. These forces continue to reshape the global trade ecosystem, requiring Customs administrations not only to adapt but also to lead the way. To prepare for the ongoing evolution in trade facilitation and border security, we must invest in digital transformation, capacity building, inter-agency cooperation and public-private partnerships. Adopting agile regulatory frameworks that support innovation is crucial. Our imperative to facilitate global trade while safeguarding national interests remains paramount in this ever-evolving global landscape. Trade is the lifeblood of our economies. The WCO must continue to transform the global trade eco-system as a fundamental enabler of trade facilitation, revenue collection and the protection of society – serving as the global standard-setting body for Customs practices worldwide.

INSPIRING, ENCOURAGING, TRANSFORMATIONAL PROGRESS

In 2024, we reaffirmed the imperative to transform the WCO into a modern, data-driven institution – one capable of navigating global complexity

with agility, purpose and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our Members. Over the past year, we made encouraging strides. The WCO advanced the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2022-2025, with tangible progress across its three strategic focus areas: technology and innovation, Green Customs, and governance and accountability. We strengthened cooperation among Members, expanded digital capacity-building initiatives and further empowered a more agile, service-oriented Secretariat that is better positioned to support our diverse global community. A significant milestone was the adoption and initial implementation of the WCO Modernization Plan and Governance Arrangements – a critical step in shaping a more effective, future-ready Organization committed to institutional renewal.

Over the past two years, it has been both imperative and necessary to work actively and closely with the Secretary General, the Secretariat and the Vice-Chairpersons representing the WCO regions to advance a unifying vision for the Organization – one that is inclusive, transparent, accountable and strategically aligned with the aspirations of our Members. The progress we have made is a testament to the power of collective action. Through close collaboration – among Members, with the Vice-Chairpersons and with the Secretariat – we have achieved tangible results in advancing the WCO's strategic priorities. This enduring spirit of “Ubuntu” – shared responsibility and mutual support – continues to strengthen our cohesion and enhance the Organization's relevance and impact in an increasingly complex global environment.

Reflecting on the commitments I made during my tenure as Chairperson, I am encouraged by the meaningful progress we have made. These commitments included actively listening to Members so as to ensure that the WCO's strategic intent finds practical and visible expression; advocating for greater inclusivity, with a strong focus on women and persons with disabilities; strengthening resilient and effective partnerships with all stakeholders; elevating the profile of Customs as a vital public service that safeguards and enhances societal well-being; and providing strategic leadership and support to drive these priorities forward.

I am proud to see this vision taking root. Across our global membership, there is growing momentum towards building a smart, modern WCO – one that is equipped with the tools, talent and technologies necessary to promote voluntary compliance, secure resilient supply chains and advance inclusive and sustainable growth.



Edward CHR Kieswetter
Council Chairperson
World Customs Organization





A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

**Dear colleagues, partners
and friends of the WCO,**

It is with a deep sense of purpose and gratitude that I present to you the WCO Annual Report 2024-2025. This publication comes at a time when Customs administrations around the world are navigating a period of increased complexity, but also one of great opportunity. This year's theme, "Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity", is not merely aspirational; it is a reflection of the work being carried out every day by dedicated Customs officers and partners across borders, regions and disciplines. The theme reminds us that, while our mandate may sound technical, its impact is profoundly human. From ensuring

the safety of our communities to facilitating global trade and protecting the environment, Customs is delivering where it matters most. This message opens our WCO Annual Report 2025, which captures the scope, spirit and ambition of our shared progress as the only international organization that focuses exclusively on Customs matters. It is a story of action, collaboration and progress – a story that belongs to us all.

One of the most significant milestones of the year has been the development of the WCO Strategic Plan 2025-2028. This plan will guide the Organization through the next cycle of its evolution. Shaped through extensive consultation with our Members and enriched by the input of internal teams, the plan reflects a collective commitment to leadership, responsiveness and

impact. It is grounded in three core principles: leading through excellence, focusing on what matters most and amplifying our impact and visibility. Leading through excellence means ensuring that the WCO remains a source of high-quality, forward-thinking support and leadership for its Members. It also means embracing innovation and continuously adapting to the dynamics of global trade and border management. It is because of this aspiration that the WCO has determined technology and innovation, e-commerce and Green Customs as its three focus areas for the next three years. Focusing on what matters most reminds us to align our efforts and resources where they can generate the greatest benefit – supporting the operational priorities of our Members and reinforcing the resilience, adaptability and efficiency of Customs administrations. Impact and visibility highlight the need to share our successes as a global Customs community, raise awareness of Customs' essential contributions and tell our story more effectively to stakeholders, governments and the public.

The WCO has already begun translating this vision into action, turning aspirations into tangible achievements across key areas of Customs work since our last report in June 2024. Border security remains at the heart of our efforts. This year, we released the study report “Unlocking the Value of Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) in Customs Enforcement”, which builds on the Fragile Borders Action Plan endorsed by Members in 2023. This important research highlights the use of OSINT in fragile and conflict-affected areas, offering practical insights into how Customs can leverage publicly available information to enhance enforcement capabilities. On the operational front, joint initiatives such as Operation Thunder 2024 demonstrated the power of international cooperation. Coordinated by the WCO and INTERPOL, the operation led to the seizure of nearly 20,000 live animals and significant quantities of endangered species products. With participation from 138 countries and the arrest of 365 suspects, Operation Thunder disrupted six transnational criminal networks – a vivid example

of what Customs, police and environmental agencies can achieve together. Similarly, Operation Calypso resulted in the seizure of more than 350 firearms, thanks to the coordinated efforts of 28 Customs administrations across the Americas. These initiatives not only disrupted dangerous supply chains but also reinforced regional and global security.

We have also made significant progress in modernizing and simplifying Customs procedures. The 2024 WCO Technology Conference and Exhibition, held in Rio de Janeiro, welcomed over 1,300 participants from 117 countries. Under the theme “Digital Frontiers: Customs Embracing Innovation with Traditional and New Partners”, the event showcased cutting-edge technological solutions and fostered critical discussions on the role of data analytics, artificial intelligence and blockchain in shaping the future of Customs. With 54 exhibitors present, the Conference sent a clear message: the digital transformation of border management is already well under way.

In the field of revenue and nomenclature, the WCO released a comprehensive study on rules of origin cumulation. This review of free trade agreements and related administrative practices provides Members with a detailed reference for navigating the procedural and compliance dimensions of preferential trade. Another notable development was the release of the Exploratory Study on the Strategic Review of the Harmonized System – a forward-looking document that recognizes the Harmonized System (HS) as a global standard while also identifying areas where it must evolve to remain effective in a changing trade landscape.

Strengthening supply chain integrity remains a top WCO priority. The 21st Meeting of the WCO Counterfeiting and Piracy (CAP) Group addressed a wide range of issues – from counterfeit pharmaceuticals to IPR crime in free trade zones. This year also saw the execution of Operation SECURE HORIZON under Programme Global Shield. Conducted across South-East Europe and neighbouring regions, this initiative led to 280 seizures of explosive precursors and improvised

explosive device (IED) components, underscoring the persistent risks to supply chains posed by malign actors and the importance of Customs cooperation in disrupting their activities.

While our efforts to develop and maintain international Customs standards yielded very positive results, those to support their implementation continued at pace. Between July 2024 and June 2025, 514 capacity-building missions provided WCO expertise to Member administrations, helping them build the capacity needed to implement these standards. In this endeavour, the WCO continued to apply its multiplier approach so as to maximize impact. The pool of WCO accredited experts grew to 786 – reflecting the successful effort to complement WCO staff with trained regional experts who deliver resource-efficient and tailored, hands-on support in areas such as trade facilitation, enforcement and digitalization. Meanwhile, in the area of ethics and inclusion, we continued to promote values that form the foundation of modern and principled Customs. The WCO Network for Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs held its Fourth Global Conference, and we introduced two new integrity training kits designed to help Customs administrations strengthen the fight against corruption.

Our partnerships have also expanded and deepened. This year, the WCO signed several new Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), including MoUs with both the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the European Space Agency (ESA). The MoU with the ESA opens exciting new possibilities to explore space-enabled solutions in border management and crisis response. The WCO also participated actively in international events, including the G7 Industry Stakeholders Conference, the G20 Leaders' Summit and the Munich Security Conference's Leaders Meeting. Representing the WCO at the United Nations (UN) ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, our Deputy Secretary General emphasized the vital role of Customs in enabling sustainable development and domestic resource mobilization.

Equally important are our cooperation and engagements with the private sector and the wider trade community. Highlights include the WCO's participation in the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations World Congress and the 44th Meeting of the WCO-Universal Postal Union (UPU) Contact Committee, where Customs and trade stakeholders worked together to improve the efficiency and security of postal and logistics networks. These gatherings provided opportunities to align efforts, share experiences and co-design solutions that benefit both Customs and trade stakeholders alike.

As we look forward to the first year of implementing our new Strategic Plan 2025-2028, I encourage you to explore the contents of this Annual Report. Behind each figure and initiative is a story of innovation, dedication and cooperation. "Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity" is more than the WCO's theme for this year – it is our collective promise, and I am confident that, together, we will continue to fulfil it.

Thank you for your tireless efforts, your trust and your unwavering commitment to the mission we all share.

With warmest regards,



Ian Saunders
Secretary General
World Customs Organization





WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

The WCO Annual Report
for 2024-2025 summarizes
the Organization's structure
and activities and includes
data on all 186 WCO Members.

WHO WE ARE

As the global centre of Customs' expertise and the voice of the international Customs community, the WCO provides an ideal forum for Customs administrations and their stakeholders to hold in-depth discussions, exchange experiences, and share best practices on a range of international Customs and trade issues.



1952

Establishment of the World Customs Organization (WCO) as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC)

Status

Independent intergovernmental Organization



Mandate

Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations worldwide



Headquarters

Brussels, Belgium



186

Members across the globe at all stages of social and economic development

Find out more



Website: wcoomd.org
General enquiries: communication@wcoomd.org

UNDERSTANDING THE WCO



Vision

Bringing Customs together for a safer, more prosperous and sustainable world.

Borders divide, Customs connects.



Mission

The World Customs Organization provides leadership on Customs matters by developing international standards and building capacity to foster an environment that facilitates legitimate trade, ensures fair revenue collection and protects society.



Values

Excellence, Innovation, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Sustainability.

We work to embody our values as an organization and ensure that they underpin all that we do. In our pursuit of excellence, we are responsive to the needs of our Members.

We are committed to inclusiveness and to building a diverse workforce which reflects our membership and global society.

We hold the WCO and its staff to high standards of accountability and integrity.

We are evidence-based and data-driven, producing innovative and sustainable activities and products.



2 core functions

In order to fulfil its Mission and deliver the appropriate support in terms of trade facilitation, revenue collection, protection of society and organizational development, the WCO builds on two core functions where cooperation is the linkage between them.

1. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

providing Members with a set of instruments with which to face the realities of the modern Customs landscape. This function can be implemented through the development of new tools, responding to new opportunities and challenges, and also through the updating of existing tools, to make them fit for purpose with regard to these opportunities and challenges.

Cooperation

promoting and supporting coordination and cooperation, both between Customs administrations and with other agencies and the private sector. Further cooperation can support the implementation of standards and increase the influence of Customs at borders. This function therefore focuses on the practical aspects of Customs-to-Customs cooperation, by supporting the exchange of information and intelligence, facilitated by the organization and conduct of joint operations.

2. CAPACITY BUILDING

delivering capacity building support and technical assistance to assist Members in implementing WCO standards and strengthening Customs cooperation. To support the modernization of Customs, these actions also provide assistance in developing the organizational capacity of Customs administrations.

99% of world trade is collectively processed by the WCO Members which represent 186 Customs administrations around the globe.

STRUCTURE OF THE SECRETARIAT

The World Customs Organization (WCO) has undertaken a major transformation of the structure of its Secretariat as part of its broader modernization effort. This reform responds to a clear and growing need to improve internal efficiency, strengthen strategic coherence and better serve the evolving needs of Member Customs administrations across the globe.

The outcome of this structural review is a refined, streamlined and modernized organizational model, built around the WCO's two core functions:



1. Development of policies and standards; and

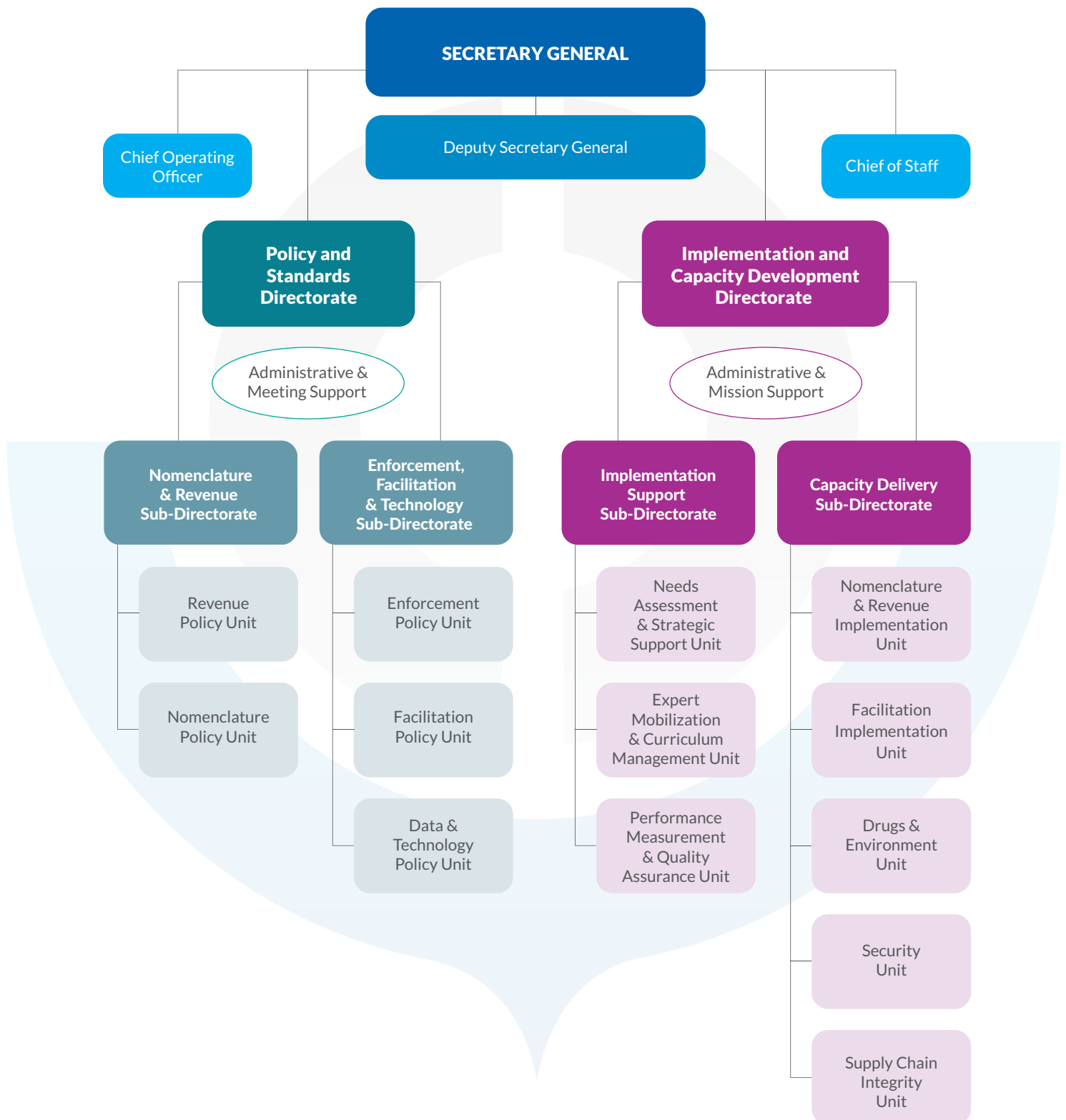


2. Support for their implementation through technical assistance and capacity building.

The restructured Secretariat emphasizes stronger coordination, strategic leadership and Member-focused service delivery – positioning the WCO to continue leading global Customs modernization well into the future.



WCO Organization Chart



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL (SG)

The Office of the SG has been reorganized to ensure stronger oversight, strategic coordination and operational clarity. It now includes:

Secretary General (SG) and **Deputy Secretary General (DSG)**: providing overall leadership and strategic direction;

Chief Operating Officer (COO): overseeing internal services including Accounting & Finance, HR, IT, Central Services, Publications and Event logistics; and

Chief of Staff (COS): overseeing the Communication Service, Legal & Procurement Service, as well as Regionalization and the Language Service. In addition, the Chief of Staff will manage the newly created **Project Management Office (PMO)** and **Stakeholder Engagement Office (SEO)**.

This structure ensures strategic coordination of operational functions, increases transparency, improves information flows and accelerates decision-making.

POLICY AND STANDARDS DIRECTORATE (PSD)

The PSD consolidates the development and maintenance of all WCO instruments and standards under a single leadership structure. It is composed of two sub-directorates:

Nomenclature & Revenue (NR) Sub-Directorate: managing core Customs functions in areas such as the Harmonized System (HS), Customs valuation and rules of origin; and

Enforcement, Facilitation & Technology (EFT) Sub-Directorate: focusing on policy frameworks related to border security and supply chain integrity, the simplification and modernization of Customs procedures to facilitate trade, and the use of technology and data.

Each sub-directorate is led by a Deputy Director, supported by Heads of Unit to ensure timely decision-making and effective leadership. This structure promotes focused policy development and enhances the WCO's capacity to respond to emerging Customs issues.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE (ICD)

This directorate is responsible for delivering assistance to and building the capacity of Member Customs administrations. It includes:

Implementation Support (IS) Sub-Directorate: conducting needs assessments, converting policies into training tools, ensuring performance measurement and following up on capacity-building initiatives; and

Capacity Delivery (CD) Sub-Directorate: managing technical assistance projects focused on revenue, enforcement and facilitation. It also coordinates with field experts and ensures effective knowledge transfer.

A strong focus on **monitoring and evaluation** ensures that capacity building is both impactful and evidence-based. The IS and CD Sub-Directorates work closely with the PSD, creating a continuous feedback loop between policy development and implementation efforts.

REGIONAL ENTITIES OF THE WCO



THE REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE LIAISON OFFICES (RILOs)

are responsible for collecting and analysing enforcement-related data. There are 12 RILOs in total: one in the Asia/Pacific region (Japan); one in the East and Southern Africa region (Zimbabwe); two in the West and Central Africa region (Cameroon and Senegal); three in the Europe region (Germany, Poland and the Russian Federation); three in the Americas and the Caribbean region (Chile, Guatemala and Saint Lucia); and two in the North of Africa, Near and Middle East region (Morocco and Saudi Arabia).



THE REGIONAL OFFICES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING (ROCBs)

assist WCO Members with their capacity-building programmes at the regional level. There are six ROCBs in total: one in the Asia/Pacific region (Thailand); one in the East and Southern Africa region (Kenya); one in the West and Central Africa region (Côte d'Ivoire); one in the Europe region (Azerbaijan); one in the Americas and the Caribbean region (Uruguay); and one in the North of Africa, Near and Middle East region (United Arab Emirates).



THE REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES (RTCs)

contribute to the regionalization of capacity building by providing training facilities. There are 33 RTCs in total: 11 in the Asia/Pacific region (Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Malaysia and Thailand); four in the East and Southern Africa region (Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Zimbabwe); three in the West and Central Africa region (Burkina Faso, Congo (Republic of the) and Nigeria); seven in the Europe region (Azerbaijan, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine); one in the Americas and the Caribbean region (the Dominican Republic); and seven in the North of Africa, Near and Middle East region (Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia).



THE REGIONAL CUSTOMS LABORATORIES (RCLs)

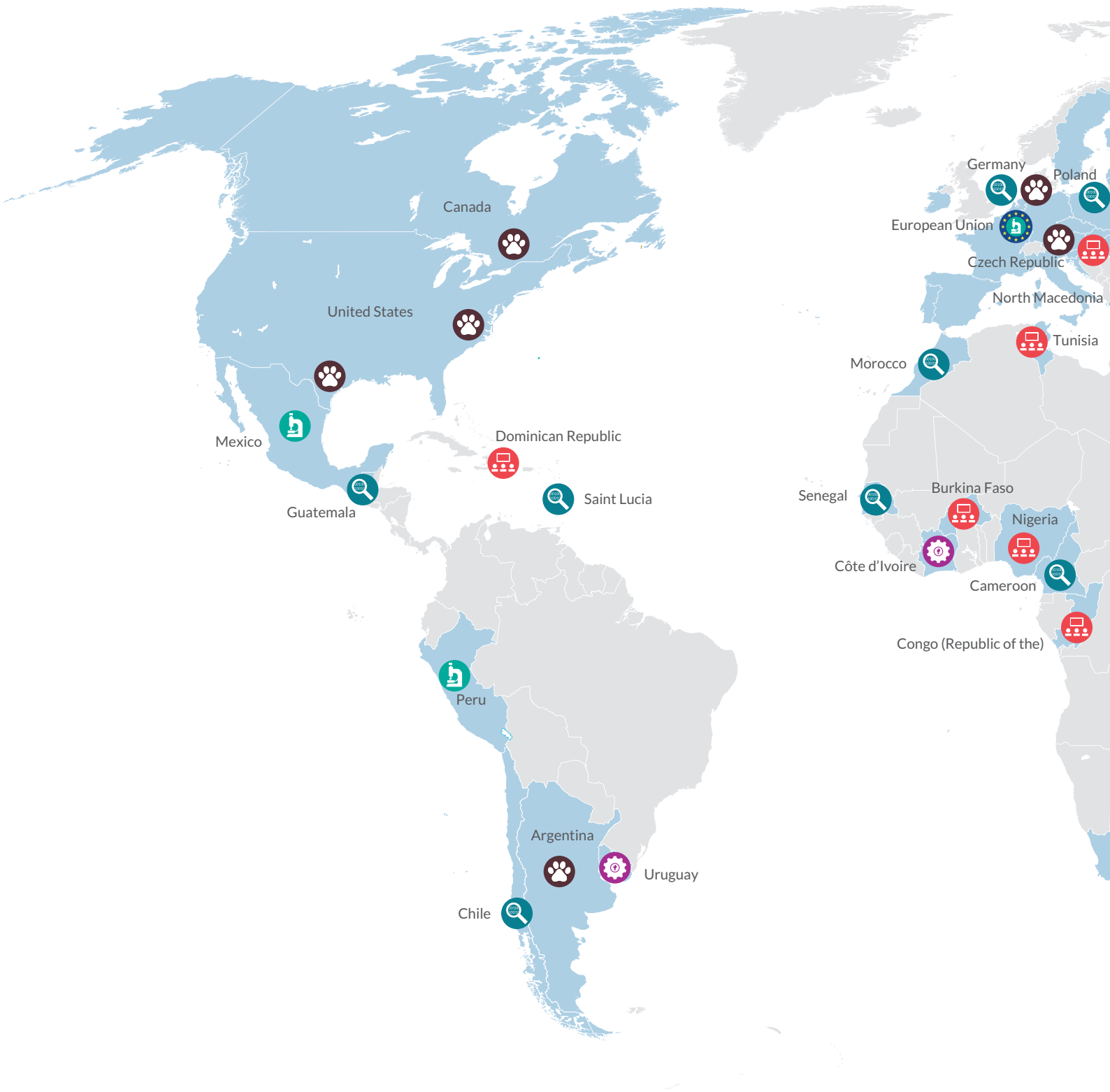
provide training and resources for WCO Members on methods of identifying and analysing chemical samples for HS classification purposes. They are vital focal points for developing excellence in Customs laboratory practices within their regions and beyond. There are 10 RCLs in total: five in the Asia/Pacific region (China, Japan, India, Indonesia and Korea (Republic of)); three in the Europe region (the European Union, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan); and two in the Americas and the Caribbean region (Mexico and Peru).

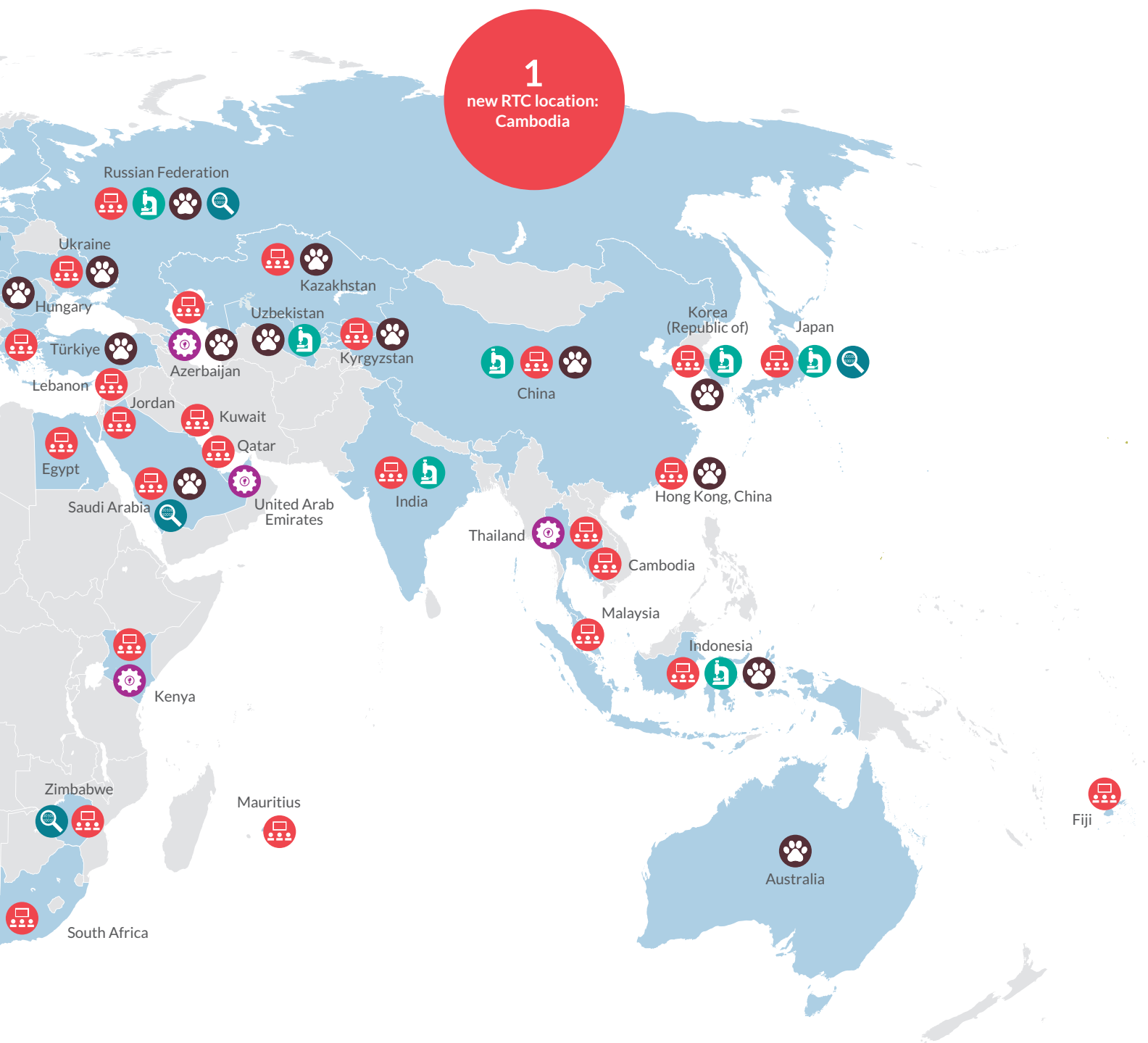








THE WCO REGIONAL DOG TRAINING CENTRES (RDTCs)

provide practical training programmes for dog handlers, ensuring that Customs canine units are properly equipped to detect a variety of illegal products. There are 21 RDTCs in total: five in the Asia/Pacific region (Australia, China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia and Korea (Republic of)); 11 in the Europe region (Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Germany (Bleckede and Neuendettelsau), Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan); four in the Americas and the Caribbean region (Argentina, Canada and the United States (Texas and Virginia)); and one in the North of Africa, Near and Middle East region (Saudi Arabia).

REGIONAL ENTITIES OF THE WCO





- | | |
|--|---|
|  Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) |  Regional Customs Laboratory (RCL) |
|  Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) |  Customs Laboratories European Network
consists of 89 laboratories and mobile laboratories in its 27 Member States. |
|  Regional Training Centre (RTC) | |
|  Regional Dog Training Centre (RDTTC) | |

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the World Customs Organization.

MAJOR WCO WORKING BODIES

COUNCIL & POLICY COMMISSION (PC)

Chairperson:
Edward Kieswetter (South Africa)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Raju Boddu
(Antigua and Barbuda)

The Finance Committee is responsible for budgetary and financial matters.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Blanca Barandiarán
(Peru)

The Audit Committee assists the Policy Commission and the Council by evaluating WCO programmes, policies and administrative procedures.

PRIVATE SECTOR CONSULTATIVE GROUP (PSCG)

Chairperson: Jaime King
(International Federation of Customs
Brokers Associations, IFCBA)

The Private Sector Consultative Group informs and advises the WCO Secretary General, the Policy Commission and WCO Members on Customs and international trade matters from the perspective of the private sector.

CAPACITY BUILDING COMMITTEE (CBC)

Chairperson: Yoshiro Baba (Japan)

The Capacity Building Committee develops capacity building, technical assistance, and training strategies, standards, and tools, and provides a forum for cooperation and information exchange on organizational development topics.

INTEGRITY SUB-COMMITTEE (ISC)

Chairperson: Alvaro Fernández
(Spain)

The Integrity Sub-Committee evaluates the WCO Integrity Development Programme and Integrity related tools, ensuring that Members' needs and views are included, and acts as a focal point for all integrity related issues within the WCO and among its Members.

THE GLOBAL MEETING OF THE REGIONAL ENTITIES ESTABLISHED BY THE WCO MEMBERS AND THE COUNCIL VICE-CHAIRS' OFFICES (GMRE)

Chairperson: Souod Salem AlAgroobi
(Head of ROCB MENA)

GMRE guides and coordinates the work of the Regional Entities and Council Vice-Chairs' Offices in the area of capacity building, enhances co-operation between them, promotes the application of common standards in order to ensure a harmonized approach and performance, and provides advice to the WCO Capacity Building Committee.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MECHANISM PROJECT TEAM (PMMPT)

Chairperson: Sean Borg (Canada)

The PMMPT is mandated to ensure the maintenance and implementation of the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism (PMM), which is supported by a digitized platform. The WCO PMM outlines the methodology for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of all Customs competences. The PMM also aims at measuring the application of the main WCO instruments and tools that have a major impact on Customs performance.

WORKING GROUP ON DATA AND STATISTICS (WGDS)

Chairperson: Brij B. Gupta (India)

The WGDS aims to enhance Customs statistics, knowledge of data governance, and analytics, provide guidance on the WCO Data Strategy, and integrate WCO into global statistical initiatives, through bi-annual meetings, virtual work, and international collaboration.

The Council is the supreme decision-making body of the WCO and convenes once a year. It is during these annual Council Sessions that final decisions regarding the Organization's work and activities are agreed upon. The Policy Commission submits policy recommendations and the WCO Strategic Plan to the Council.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON CUSTOMS VALUATION (TCCV)

Chairperson: Qianyu Lin (China)

The Technical Committee on Customs Valuation was established in accordance with Article 18 of the Agreement on Implementation of Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, under the auspices of the WCO, with a view to ensuring, at the technical level, uniformity in interpretation and application of the Valuation Agreement.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON RULES OF ORIGIN (TCRO)

Chairperson: Sun Hwa Cho (Korea)

The Technical Committee on Rules of Origin was established under Article 4.2 of the WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin, under the auspices of the WCO. Its two major mandates are: to undertake the technical exercise of the work programme for harmonizing non-preferential rules of origin (this work was submitted to the WTO in 1999), and to assume its permanent responsibilities, such as examining specific technical problems arising in the day-to-day administration of the rules of origin of Members.

ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Hugo Mayer (Austria)

The Enforcement Committee contributes to the strategic direction of work done by the WCO in the enforcement domain within the framework of the WCO Strategic Plan in areas such as commercial fraud, IPR enforcement, drug trafficking, money laundering and terrorist financing, environmental crime, transnational organized crime and violent extremism, trafficking of cultural goods, small arms and light weapons, weapon systems and their components, as well as ammunition, explosive precursors and dual-use items (strategic trade controls), as well as cross-cutting functions, such as passenger controls, risk management and intelligence.

GLOBAL RILO MEETING (GRM)

Chairperson: Munerah AlRasheed (Head of RILO ME)

The 12 RILOs come together within the Global RILO Meeting (GRM), which is in charge of establishing a common standard for the network and sharing best practices as regards the exchange of information and intelligence. Following the sunset of the CENMaT in 2023, the GRM is also mandated to oversee the overall management of the CEN applications (CEN, nCEN, and CENcomm) from technical perspective.

WORKING GROUP ON REVENUE COMPLIANCE AND FRAUD

Chairperson: Hugo Richard Mayer (Austria)

The Working Group on Revenue Compliance and Fraud is responsible to study the nature and extent of revenue fraud and analyze its linkages with money laundering, organized crime and terrorist financing, to identify strategies and best practices aimed at enhancing revenue compliance and effective mechanisms to deal with cases of non-compliance, to develop appropriate tools to address revenue compliance and fraud, and to propose strategies and methods of international cooperation in this area.

THE COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY GROUP MEETING (CAP)

Chairperson: Oumou Keita Traore (Mali)

The CAP Group was established in 2009 to serve as a forum for Customs administrations to share their experiences, practices and initiatives on border measures to be adopted in respect of goods that infringe intellectual property rights (IPRs) and/or are detrimental to consumer health.

THE RIGHTS HOLDERS CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING (RHCG)

Chairperson: Jan de Visser (Philips)

The RHCG was established in 2010, the same year that the Customs-Business Partnership was established. The aim of the RHCG is to promote the exchange of best practices and information between RHs and the WCO Secretariat, particularly regarding new trade trends and challenges together with potential areas of cooperation between the public and private sectors to combat IPR infringements.

GLOBAL INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP (GIIS)

Chairperson: Ira Tan (The Netherlands)

The GIIS Working Group is responsible for the development and continuous enhancement of risk management, information and intelligence sharing under the Enforcement Committee. It contributes to the updating of the WCO Risk Management Compendium – the WCO's flagship tool for Customs enforcement and compliance.

COUNCIL & POLICY COMMISSION (PC)

Chairperson:
Edward Kieswetter (South Africa)

HARMONIZED SYSTEM COMMITTEE (HSC)

Chairperson: Tom Beris (United States)

The Harmonized System Committee (HSC) is the principal body for the management of the Harmonized System (HS). It is responsible for the amendments of the HS and its tools, as well as the interpretation of the HS legal texts to secure uniform classification of goods, including settlement of classification disputes between contracting parties.

HSC WORKING PARTY (PRE-SESSIONAL)

Chairperson: Christof Zimmermann (Switzerland)

The HSC Working Party is a drafting body responsible for drafting Classification Opinions based on HSC classification decisions and, when requested, drafting Explanatory Note amendments (current edition) to reflect the decided views of the HSC. These texts are subsequently sent to the HSC for their final adoption.

HS REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE (RSC)

Chairperson: Kaie Van Muylem (European Union)

The Harmonized System Review Sub-Committee (RSC) is responsible for the initial review of proposed amendments to HS legal texts, the drafting of such amendments, and the drafting of the consequential amendments to the Explanatory Notes and Compendium of Classification Opinions. Amendments drafted by the RSC are then proposed to the HSC for potential inclusion in the next edition of the HS.

SCIENTIFIC SUB-COMMITTEE (SSC)

Chairperson: Dr. F. M. Sieberth (Austria)

The Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) is an advisory body of the Council, reporting to the HSC. It assists the HSC and RSC in their work, in particular on the classification of chemical products and the classification of pharmaceutical substances newly assigned an International Nonproprietary Names (INN) by the World Health Organization. It also provides the WCO forum for the Customs laboratory services of Members.

PERMANENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (PTC)

Chairperson: Hoai Nguyen (Vietnam)

The Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) is one of WCO's key technical decision-making committees responsible for matters relating to trade facilitation and procedures. It contributes to the strategic direction of work done by the WCO in respect of the promotion, development and administration of trade facilitation instruments and tools. After the closure of a number of working bodies such as the Information Management Sub-Committee (IMSC), the Working Group on E-Commerce (WGEC), Working Group on Performance Measurement and the Working Group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFAWG), the PTC is also responsible for ensuring continuity of those work areas.

The Working Bodies reporting to, requesting guidance from, or informing the PTC are:

WCO/IATA/ICAO API-PNR CONTACT COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Shinji Oda (Japan)

The API-PNR Contact Committee develops passenger reporting standards for the transfer of information that usually exists in aircraft operators' reservation and departure control systems, for use by Customs and partner government agencies for risk management purposes. With the approval of Council in June, this committee will transform to include the work of the PFCWG.

CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE A.T.A. CONVENTION

Chairperson: Jianping Chen (China)

The Contracting Parties to the A.T.A. Convention meet when necessary to secure uniform operation, interpretation and application of the Convention by examining the questions raised by Contracting Parties or issuing and guaranteeing associations; examining proposals for amendments to the Convention; and making recommendations for the settlement of disputes among the Contracting Parties.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

Chairperson: Jianping Chen (China)

The Administrative Committee of the Istanbul Convention oversees the implementation of the Convention, takes measures to secure uniformity in the interpretation and application thereof, and any amendment proposed thereto. The Committee can also decide upon the incorporation of new Annexes into the Convention.

The Council is the supreme decision-making body of the WCO and convenes once a year. It is during these annual Council Sessions that final decisions regarding the Organization's work and activities are agreed upon. The Policy Commission submits policy recommendations and the WCO Strategic Plan to the Council.

COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY (CAP) GROUP*

Chairperson: Oumou Keita Traore (Mali)

The CAP Group was established in 2009 to serve as a forum for Customs administrations to share their experiences, practices and initiatives on border measures to be adopted in respect of goods that infringe intellectual property rights (IPRs) and/or are detrimental to consumer health.

*This working body also reports to the Enforcement Committee

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE CUSTOMS CONVENTION ON CONTAINERS, 1972

Chairperson: Hugo Richard Mayer (Austria)

The Administrative Committee for the Customs Convention on Containers, 1972, oversees the implementation of the Convention and considers any amendment proposed thereto. The Administrative Committee also maintains the Container Convention Handbook.

DATA MODEL PROJECTS TEAM (DMPT)

Chairperson: Niclas Gustafsson (Sweden)

The Data Model Projects Teams is responsible for driving the Customs digitalization agenda by ensuring global supply chain interoperability through data harmonization and standardization. The DMPT develops and maintains the WCO Data Model, an international standard for cross-border trade which covers multiple border regulatory requirements, such as those of Customs, Food Safety, Agriculture, Marine Safety and other cross-border regulatory agencies, and provides a standardized dictionary of data that enables regulators to enhance the capability of risk management systems.

TECHNICAL EXPERTS GROUP ON NON-INTRUSIVE INSPECTION (TEG-NII)

Chairpersons: George Acres (United States) and Christopher Hogg (Rapiscan Systems AS&E)

The Technical Experts Group on Non-Intrusive Inspection oversees the development of a standard NII data format for various use cases among which facilitating the exchange of images within and between Customs administrations for Customs purposes, and facilitating the development of databases or libraries of images. The TEG-NII also discusses other NII-related technical matters.

WCO/UPU CONTACT COMMITTEE

WCO Co-Chairperson: Patrick Balbo Gatogang (Botswana) and **UPU Co-Chairperson:** Diane Burdon (United Kingdom)

The Contact Committee deals with issues of common interest to Customs and Posts, and seeks to facilitate and simplify Customs formalities in the postal service. The Contact Committee promotes, among others, information exchange, effective Customs control of postal items, the development of standards and tools, the improvement of data quality, and capacity building.

SAFE WORKING GROUP

Customs Chairperson: Rae Vivier (South Africa) and **Private Sector Chairperson:** Jaime King (PSCG)

The purpose of the SAFE Working Group is to advise, as appropriate, the Policy Commission, the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) and the Secretary General on the full range of issues concerning the SAFE FoS. Such issues may include matters relating to implementation and amendments concerning the SAFE FoS, as well as the further development and monitoring of other WCO initiatives and related Customs matters that impact the operation of the SAFE FoS.

REVISED KYOTO CONVENTION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (RKC/MC)

Chairperson: Maria Vournou (Greece)

The RKC/MC oversees the implementation of the Convention, ensures its uniform interpretation and application, and considers any amendments proposed thereto. The Contracting Parties to the RKC are members of the RKC/MC. The competent administration of any entity qualified to become a Contracting Party to this Convention, or any Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), is entitled to attend the sessions of the RKC/MC as an observer. The RKC/MC may invite representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations as observers.

TIMELINE

A glance at the highlights of 2024

The WCO led discussions on corruption in global supply chains by hosting a workshop titled “**Corruption in global supply chains - organized crime's deadly tactic**”, convened by the WCO's Anti-Corruption and Integrity Promotion Programme and the Australian Border Force WCO Supply Chain Integrity Project at the 21st iteration of the International Anti-Corruption Conference held in Vilnius, Lithuania.



JUNE

The 143rd/144th Sessions of the WCO Council were held at WCO Headquarters in June. They saw the participation of Directors General of Customs representing the WCO's 186 Members. Under the guidance of the WCO Council Chairperson, Edward Kieswetter, Commissioner of the South African Revenue Service, Members examined the work carried out by the WCO Secretariat and working bodies throughout the year, in accordance with the WCO Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The review covered the technical work done in various areas related to the Organization's main strategic objectives, namely trade facilitation, revenue collection, protection of society, and organizational development.



An agreement was signed with German Customs establishing a **new Customs Cooperation Fund of Germany (CCF/Germany) for the period 2024 to 2028**. The aim is to enhance capacity-building initiatives for WCO Members from the European Union, potential candidate countries, and countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy.



The WCO Council adopted a **Resolution on Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience** which responds to the growing need for collaboration between Customs administrations and industry partners to ensure global security and economic stability amidst rapid technological advancements, environmental challenges, and other emerging threats. It seeks to develop the Customs-Industry relationship from a focus on trade facilitation to building resilience in the supply chain, encouraging Customs administrations to review and develop robust business continuity plans that are prepared for disruptive global events.



JUNE

A grant agreement was signed with the **State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan**, represented by its Chairman Shahin Baghirov, to establish the Customs Cooperation Fund of Azerbaijan. This fund aims to bolster Customs cooperation and capacity building for Members located along the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, also known as the Middle Corridor.



The WCO released an in-depth **study on the cumulative rules of origin**, which meticulously reviews the cumulation provisions of existing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and presents the administrative practices of WCO Members regarding cumulation. The primary aim of this study is to provide a detailed overview of FTAs incorporating cumulation, and the procedural requirements relating to cumulation.



The WCO Secretary General delivered keynote remarks at the **G7 Industry Stakeholders Conference** in Reggio Calabria, Italy. During the session titled “Reconciling Economic Security and Free Trade”, the Secretary General emphasized the importance of government-industry partnerships in achieving economic stability and equity within a free market.



JULY

The **WCO-Japan Career Development Programme for 2023-2024** ended with a ceremony during which the WCO Secretary General, Ian Saunders, awarded the 10 participating Professional Associates with certificates to mark their successful completion of the Programme.



Following the **declaration of an mpox outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)** by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the WCO confirmed that it was closely monitoring developments with a view to ensuring that WCO Members with public health and safety responsibilities were properly informed about the situation and involved in national response strategies, so as to guarantee their preparedness to mitigate epidemic-related public health and safety risks. In addition, the WCO conducts operations specifically focused on combating the trade in counterfeit medications. Looking forward to the Organization's mid- to long-term efforts, it is placing greater emphasis on more effective identification by Customs, at global level, of cross-border transactions involving certain critical medical supplies, including vaccines.



AUGUST

WCO Deputy Secretary General, Ricardo Treviño Chapa, participated in a **high-level session at the Regional Post-Customs Strategy Meeting** in Oranjestad, Aruba, during which he spoke about the WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce and the WCO Data Strategy. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation with Postal operators and other stakeholders to address the emerging threat of illicit goods smuggled through global Postal supply chains.



The WCO published a new Study Report titled **"Unlocking the Value of Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) in Customs Enforcement"**, which explores how OSINT can be harnessed to enhance enforcement practices. Designed for senior Customs management, the Study Report stems from the Fragile Borders Action Plan, adopted by WCO Members at the 2023 Council Sessions, and recognizes the critical importance of OSINT, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations.



SEPTEMBER

The WCO organized a **session at the World Trade Organization Public Forum 2024** on "Leveraging digitalization in Customs for inclusive trade". The session focused on digitalization, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, Single Window, and Authorized Economic Operators. This year's Public Forum, with the theme "Re-globalization: Better Trade for a Better World", explored how re-globalization could help make trade more inclusive and ensure that its benefits reach more people.



The WCO Secretary General warmly welcomed the **new cohort of nine Professional Associates selected under the WCO-Japan Career Development Programme for 2024-2025**. He emphasized the importance of them harnessing their unique expertise to make meaningful contributions to the Organization, while encouraging them to apply their newfound knowledge and skills to drive positive changes within their home administrations after completing the Programme.



Some 26 WCO Member Customs administrations joined forces to combat counterfeiting in the Asia/Pacific region through their participation in the operation codenamed “**Operation Action IPR A/P III**”. On 3 October, an event was held to launch the report on the operation's outcomes. Members' unwavering commitment led to 399 seizures, comprising some 600,000 pieces and more than 42,000 kg of counterfeit products. A pre-operational regional workshop was held in Hanoi (Vietnam) to ensure close collaboration and exchange of information with rights holders.



SEPTEMBER

The EU-WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme, aimed at assisting African partners in implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area, released a publication about the rules of origin for the textile and vehicle sectors, titled “**A Comparative Study of the Rules of Origin in the Textiles and Vehicles Sectors**”. The Study compares the drafting styles of Product-Specific Rules in eight free trade agreements.



OCTOBER

WCO Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Treviño Chapa attended the **XLIV Annual Customs Directors Meeting from Latin America, Spain and Portugal**. Alongside representatives of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Deputy Secretary General took part in the panel discussion titled “Experience from WCO, IADB and IMF: practical cases and results in the region”, during which he shared the WCO's approach to capacity building, notably referring to several initiatives involving collaboration with other international organizations.



The WCO Secretary General, Ian Saunders, and European Space Agency (ESA) Director General, Josef Aschbacher, signed a **Memorandum of Intent to enhance collaboration between the WCO and the ESA** by strengthening security and crisis response efforts through space-enabled solutions.



WCO Secretary General, Ian Saunders, attended the **International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations World Congress** held in Panama City, Panama and the **Business Alliance for Secure Commerce Global Conference** in Miami, Florida. The WCO's participation in these events highlights the strategic importance of the collaboration between Customs administrations and private sector stakeholders in addressing the challenges and opportunities within the global logistics industry.



OCTOBER

During the **34th Meeting of the Revised Kyoto Convention Management Committee (RKC/MC)**, delegates endorsed 26 updates to the General Annex and Specific Annexes to the RKC Guidelines, reflecting the contributions of eight RKC Contracting Parties and three international organizations. Delegates also welcomed Honduras as the 137th Contracting Party to the RKC.



The **74th Session of the Harmonized System Committee (HSC)** ended on a high note after successfully bringing its 80-item Agenda to a close. After opening remarks by the WCO Secretary General, the Committee went on to produce outstanding results, including an examination of a wide range of work presented in the Reports of the 64th Session of the Review Sub-Committee and the HSC Pre-session Working Party.



The 245th/246th Sessions of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC), held at WCO Headquarters, opened with a keynote address by the Deputy Director-General Angela Ellard of the World Trade Organization (WTO), who highlighted the deep and long-standing collaboration between the WTO and WCO in many areas of work. After thanking the WTO Deputy Director-General for her inspiring speech, Secretary General Saunders emphasized the strong synergies between the WCO and WTO, noting that trade policy and Customs practices must evolve in tandem to meet the challenges of the global trade environment. The PTC then discussed a wide range of topics including the Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce, the Single Window Compendium, the Smart Customs Project, Green Customs, data exchange, the Interconnectivity Framework for Certificates of Origin, and an update on the status of the Glossary of International Customs Terms.



The 21st Meeting of the WCO CAP Group, discussed the latest developments in the fight against substandard and counterfeit pharmaceutical products; follow-up actions relating to the WCO Symposium on "removing counterfeits from e-commerce"; strategies to mitigate counterfeiting of car parts; the possible connection between intellectual property right (IPR) crime and money laundering; and enforcement challenges faced by rights holders and Customs in Free Trade Zones with respect to IPR protection.



OCTOBER

The WCO Secretariat released a report summarizing the findings of the "Exploratory Study on the Possible Strategic Review of the Harmonized System (HS)". Launched in 2022, this Study aims to deliver an analysis of the Harmonized System's relevance in an evolving global trade landscape. While the HS has served as the backbone of global Customs classification for decades, this study highlights key observations and recommendations, offering insights into potential areas for improvement.



Some 19 Customs administrations from South-East Europe, the Baltic and the Balkans participated in the **WCO Programme Global Shield (PGS) Operation SECURE HORIZON**. This regional operational exercise, which took place over two weeks in September 2024 and was aimed at countering the threat posed by the illicit trade in explosive precursors and additional improvised explosive device components, led to a total of 280 seizures.



The **Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P)** celebrated its **20th anniversary** with an event held in Bangkok, Thailand. This event marked two decades of dedication to enhancing the capacities of WCO Member Customs administrations in the Asia/Pacific region. The event, co-organized with Thai Customs, brought together distinguished delegates from Customs administrations across the region.



NOVEMBER

The **2024 WCO Technology Conference and Exhibition** took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, under the theme “Digital Frontiers: Customs Embracing Innovation with Traditional and New Partners”, with nearly 1,300 registered participants from 117 countries in attendance. The Exhibition, which ran concurrently with the Conference, featured 54 booths showcasing cutting-edge technological solutions designed to enhance Customs operations. During the Conference, participants acknowledged the need for reshaped and reimagined Customs processes, the potential of emerging technologies and data analytics to revolutionize the work of Customs, and the progress already made in this regard.



On the sidelines of the G20 Leaders’ Summit, the WCO Secretary General participated in the **Munich Leaders Meeting** held by the Munich Security Conference in Rio de Janeiro, with a specific focus on Latin America and the Caribbean. This exclusive event brought together around 80 senior decision-makers and experts to engage in crucial discussions about foreign and security policy.



The 2nd Meeting of the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism Project Team (PMMPT) was held at the WCO, during which the outcomes achieved during the first cycle of the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism were highlighted. Participants in the meeting demonstrated a shared commitment to contribute actively to the further improvement and application of the WCO Performance Measurement Mechanism (PMM) through the deployment of an innovative, fully digitized PMM Platform.



At the invitation of the Commissioner of the South African Revenue Service and Chairperson of the WCO Council, Edward Kieswetter, the Heads of 30 of the 31 Customs administrations that form the WCO Policy Commission gathered in Cape Town, South Africa to discuss key issues and chart the way forward for the Organization over the following months.



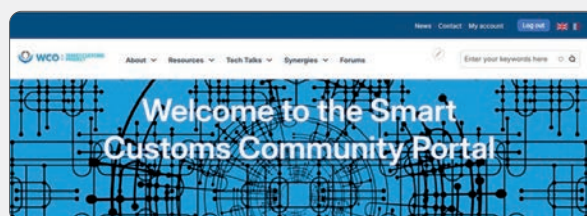
NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

The WCO and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) jointly held the 44th Meeting of the WCO-UPU Contact Committee in Brussels. This year, the Committee continued its work, in accordance with the 2022-2025 cycle, with Members and observers from both Organizations. The meeting gathered experts from 71 Customs administrations, 29 Designated Postal Operators and four international organizations.



The WCO unveiled its **Smart Customs Community Portal**. This is a platform developed under the Smart Customs Project, funded through the Customs Cooperation Fund of China, which aims to bridge the digital divide between WCO Members by empowering them to leverage disruptive technologies to enhance global supply chain security and efficiency. The Portal fosters peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing and serves as a launchpad for Customs administrations to boost their performance, explore innovative technological solutions, and drive progress through collective expertise and innovation.



DECEMBER

The WCO Secretariat marked **International Anti-Corruption Day** by showcasing tangible action taken by Members to combat corruption and by organizing a round table with key WCO officials, followed by a get-together with WCO staff and Customs Attachés at its Headquarters in Brussels. The aim of the event was to remind everyone of the critical importance of integrity in Customs operations, and of the need for a collective commitment to combating corruption.



TIMELINE

A glance at the highlights of 2025

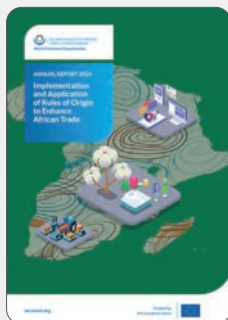


Some 20 Customs administrations, from Sub-Saharan Africa and from South Asia, supported by the INAMA Project and the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime ICCWC, joined forces as part of the **third edition of the Operation PRAESIDIO series**. This operation was aimed at combating wildlife trafficking and led to 224 seizures, including 130 tonnes of timber, 30 tonnes of elephant meat, 63 kg of pangolin scales, 1.5 tonnes of shark fins, and 8,000 pieces of various specimens, thereby providing valuable insights into international wildlife trade patterns and the most trafficked commodities.

JANUARY

The EU-WCO Rules of Origin and the Harmonized System for Africa Programmes released their **Annual Reports for 2024**.

The Reports highlight both Programmes' achievements and roles in supporting African trade integration and Customs modernization through targeted support, substantial capacity building and digitalization efforts.



The WCO held its **2nd Symposium on “Removing counterfeits from e-commerce”**, offering a forum to discuss issues arising from substandard, counterfeit and falsified medicines and medical devices traded through e-commerce. The discussions focused on the scale of the phenomenon; the need to protect consumers from criminal networks that exploit the proliferation of social media and the Internet to sell substandard, counterfeit and falsified medicines and medical devices online with impunity; and the importance of Customs' engagement to successfully counter this threat.



The WCO and the WTO signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to enhance cooperation and collaboration on Customs-related matters. The MoU was signed by WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders and WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on the sidelines of the annual World Economic Forum in Davos. Both Organizations agreed to identify opportunities to collaborate on Customs-related topics and in areas of common interest, including the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and to coordinate their participation in external fora.



JANUARY

During the celebrations to mark International Customs Day, co-organized by Belgian Customs this year, WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders announced the theme for 2025: **"Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity"**. He explained that this theme was aimed at challenging both the WCO Secretariat and the international Customs community to communicate more effectively to the world about how their individual and collective work made a difference.



The WCO Global Forum titled **"Facilitating Trade with Origin Interconnectivity: From Framework to Implementation"** gave participants an opportunity to exchange views on origin digitalization and interconnectivity during a two-day event featuring 32 speakers across five panel sessions at WCO Headquarters. Discussions on key aspects of Origin Interconnectivity were held focusing on collaboration between Customs administrations, issuing authorities, the private sector and regional economic communities.



FEBRUARY

Operation Thunder 2024, a global operation targeting wildlife and forestry trafficking coordinated jointly by the WCO and INTERPOL led to the seizure of nearly 20,000 live animals and substantial numbers of animal parts, all of which were endangered or protected species. Operation Thunder brought together Customs, Police, border control, forestry and wildlife officials from 138 countries and regions. Authorities arrested 365 suspects and identified six transnational criminal networks suspected of trafficking animals and plants.



Over 120 in-person delegates and observers, with more registered online, took part in the **43rd Session of the Technical Committee on Rules of Origin (TCRO)** in Brussels. This session held special significance as it coincided with the 30th anniversary of the WTO Agreement on Rules of Origin and the subsequent establishment of the TCRO. To mark this milestone, a special panel was held to reflect on three decades of progress, achievements, lessons learned and the way forward.



The WCO hosted the **20th Global Meeting of the Regional Entities** established by WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices. The two-day event brought together key regional stakeholders, strengthening collaboration and alignment with the WCO's strategic objectives for enhanced capacity building and modernization.



FEBRUARY

The **Directors General of Customs from the WCO North of Africa, Near and Middle East (MENA) region** met in Cairo, Egypt on 23 February to discuss coordination and cooperation between the region's Customs administrations and the WCO, Customs developments in the region, and the work of the WCO Policy Commission and its recommendations for Members. During the meeting, WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders presented an overview of the Organization's Strategic Plan for 2025-2028, including its vision and objectives. Reports on Customs operations, information exchange among MENA Members, and the outcomes of joint operations were also reviewed.



The **WCO Capacity Building Committee held its 16th Session** under the theme "Reimagining the WCO Capacity-Building Paradigm - Thriving with Strategic Purpose and Resource Optimization". In his address to the Committee, WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders set the tone for the deliberations on the draft Capacity Building Paradigm, intended to address the need for an update to the 20-year-old Capacity Building Strategy.



The 24th Session of the **WCO Integrity Sub-Committee** brought together WCO Members, global experts and practitioners to explore innovative strategies and reinforce the commitment to integrity and anti-corruption in Customs administrations.

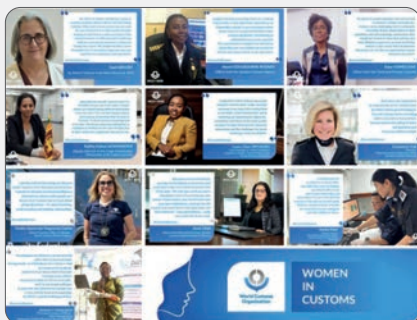


At the 49th session of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO) Facilitation (FAL) Committee**, WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders formally submitted a proposal to amend the FAL Convention to introduce mandatory reporting of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Booking and Reservation Information (BRI) for maritime transport. This proposal is aimed at strengthening passenger data management and enhancing security in the maritime domain, in line with international standards. The proposal will be duly examined by IMO working bodies at their future sessions.



MARCH

The WCO celebrated **International Women's Day 2025** by highlighting the outcomes of its "Successful Women in Customs" campaign. Launched by WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders in March 2024, the campaign has brought to the forefront the inspiring stories of 10 strong and capable women from all around the globe working in Customs.



The 45th Session of the **Enforcement Committee** was held at WCO Headquarters with the theme "Customs Canine Units: Delivering Enforcement in an Era of Technological Change". Highlights of the 45th Session included the Committee's endorsement of its draft Work Programme as well as of six new tools, designed to enhance the capabilities of Customs administrations in addressing illicit trade in various enforcement domains.



The WCO Smart Customs Project, financed by the Customs Cooperation Fund of China released a detailed **Report on the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) in Customs**.



The 75th Session of the Harmonized System Committee (HSC), concluded its two-week intensive discussion session with the provisional adoption of the Article 16 Recommendation that will form the new 2028 edition of the Harmonized System (HS). This means that all the negotiations have been completed. The Recommendation will be submitted for adoption by the Council at its 145th/146th Sessions in June 2025. After formal adoption at the end of December 2025, the Recommendation will be made public in January 2026 and will come into effect on 1 January 2028.



The WCO Secretary General was a keynote speaker at the **first International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Global Air Cargo Summit**. Secretary General Saunders noted the growing importance of the aviation sector along with emerging threats such as terrorism, illicit trade and infiltration by organized crime groups, emphasizing the role of the WCO-ICAO partnership and the importance of the use of their Joint Guidelines to address these threats.



APRIL

Following the release of **two new integrity training kits** developed under the WCO Anti-Corruption and Integrity Promotion (A-CIP) Programme, the WCO hosted two live remote introductory sessions to present these new resources to Members. The sessions offered a comprehensive overview of the training kits and their practical application.



Operation Calypso led to the seizure of more than 350 firearms by the 28 participating Customs administrations. By enhancing detection capabilities and promoting real-time operational coordination, Operation Calypso aimed to reinforce regional security and stability across the Americas.



The 14 English-speaking Fellows participating in the **91st edition of the WCO Fellowship Programme** completed the second component of the Programme at WCO Headquarters in mid-April. The Programme follows a standard structure and is split into three components over a seven-week period.. A study trip to observe operational practices in a partner Customs administration constitutes the third and last component of the Programme.



The **35th Meeting of the RKC/MC**, held in a hybrid format, brought together representatives of Contracting Parties, Member administrations, Observers and partner organizations. Participants discussed and provided guidance on possible amendments to RKC Annexes and other proposals. The Committee endorsed the incorporation of two national experiences as Appendices to the RKC Guidelines and adopted the RKC/MC's 2025-2028 Work Programme. Participants also witnessed the official ceremony during which the Ambassador of the Republic of Seychelles to Belgium, His Excellency Kenneth Racombo, deposited his country's Instrument of Accession to the RKC with the WCO Secretary General. This makes Seychelles the 138th Contracting Party to the RKC.



APRIL

The **Technical Committee on Customs Valuation (TCCV)** held its landmark **60th Session** at WCO Headquarters, adopting three pivotal instruments to address critical challenges in Customs valuation, which will be submitted for approval to the WCO Council. Bringing together 53 delegations, the **60th Session** also featured a special panel discussion commemorating 30 years of the Technical Committee.



The **Heads of 52 Customs Administrations from the WCO Europe region** gathered in Brussels for a two-day conference convened by the Director General of Norway Customs, Øystein Børmer, in his capacity as Vice-Chair for the region. In his remarks to the conference, Secretary General Saunders presented the new WCO Strategic Plan for 2025-2028 and the ongoing implementation of the Modernization Plan. Discussions also focused on the Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB), based in Azerbaijan. In addition, delegates heard about the practical experiences of Customs administrations when performing their security role, reflecting the WCO theme for 2025: "Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity".



Represented by Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Treviño Chapa, the WCO underscored Customs' vital role in sustainable development at the **2025 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-Up** (FfD Forum) and the Preparatory Committee meeting for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, United States. During his intervention, the Deputy Secretary General stressed that Customs administrations are instrumental in both revenue generation and in facilitating international trade.



Over the four days of the recent Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) sessions, delegates came together to shape how Customs will respond to the defining challenges of our time: climate disruption, digital transformation, and the ever-growing volume of international trade, including e-commerce. From advancing Green Customs to tackling e-commerce-related concerns and empowering micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), the PTC took tangible steps towards delivering on the WCO's 2025 commitment to efficiency, security and prosperity.



MAY

Hosted for the first time by El Salvador, the **Heads of Customs Administrations from the WCO Americas** and the Caribbean region gathered in San Salvador. The conference sought to enhance regional cooperation and modernization in Customs operations. During the event, the WCO Secretary General presented the new Strategic Plan for 2025-2028 and the ongoing Modernization Plan. Delegates representing the region's 33 Members were also encouraged to help shape and tell the positive story of Customs and its global impact, as reflected in the WCO's theme for this year.



WCO Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Treviño Chapa participated in the opening ceremony of the **5th Joint Forum between Customs and the Regional Private Sector Group (RPSG) of the Americas and Caribbean** in San Salvador, El Salvador. This Forum was held back-to-back with the 45th Meeting of the Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the National Customs Directorates of Latin America, Spain and Portugal (COMALEP), with both events promoting public and private cooperation at the international level.



Opened by the South African Revenue Service (SARS) Commissioner and WCO Council Chair, Edward Kieswetter, the **WCO East and Southern Africa (ESA) Governing Council** held its 31st Session in Pretoria, South Africa, bringing together 24 Members to reflect on progress and reach alignment on strategic priorities. The WCO Secretary General addressed the Council and provided an update on the WCO Strategic Plan 2025-2028, emphasizing the WCO's work to respond effectively to Members' needs and enhance their ability to fulfil Customs' varied missions. Delegates also received detailed briefings on the recent activities of the WCO Audit and Finance Committees, thereby increasing transparency and accountability at every level of the Organization's work.



The Heads of Customs Administrations from across the **WCO Asia/Pacific region**, comprising 35 Members, met to strengthen cooperation; discuss key regional Customs issues such as e-commerce growth, smart Customs development, data analytics and exchange of information; and move forward with preparations for the annual WCO Council Sessions in June. At the opening of the meeting, Secretary General Saunders underscored the vital partnership between the Asia/Pacific region and the WCO, welcoming the region's active engagement in shaping the Organization's future. He also gave an update on the WCO's modernization efforts, encompassing a new organizational structure and strategic reforms.



MAY

Operation Pandora led to 80 arrests and the seizure of over 37,700 cultural goods in a major cultural goods trafficking bust. Codenamed Pandora IX, the operation involved law enforcement and Customs authorities from 23 countries. In total, 258 cases were reported by participating Members. Several investigations are still ongoing, with further arrests and seizures expected. Operational support was provided by Europol, INTERPOL and the WCO, while the operation was coordinated by Spain (Guardia Civil).



The WCO successfully hosted the **Programme Global Shield (PGS) Global Symposium** on 20 and 21 May 2025 at its Headquarters in Brussels. Held under the theme "Global Security through Partnership", this two-day hybrid event brought together approximately 90 Customs administrations, six Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices, and representatives from international organizations, enforcement agencies and the private sector. The Symposium served as a strategic platform for knowledge exchange, operational planning and technological insight. Participants also engaged in panel discussions and various technical briefings over the two days.



The Heads of Customs administrations from across the WCO's 24-Member West and Central Africa (WCA) region gathered for the **31st Regional Conference**, dedicated to the WCO's theme for 2025 - Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity. Opening the event, the WCO Secretary General, Ian Saunders, recalled how the WCO modernization process would lead to improved delivery of service to the Organization's Members and shared an update on the WCO Strategic Plan 2025-2028. This Regional Conference was the last in the Organization's six-region consultation cycle ahead of the annual WCO Council Sessions in June.



MAY

The **WCO Study Report on Smart Security Devices** explores the growing role played by connected devices, such as smart locks, track-and-trace sensors and smart containers, in modernizing the supervision of cross-border cargo and finds significant benefits for trade operators and enforcement authorities. While new technologies contribute to trade facilitation, supply chain security and integrity, several critical challenges remain, including data security, legal frameworks and interoperability, which need to be addressed through international cooperation.



On 25 June, the **annual Dialogue between the WCO Policy Commission (PC) and the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG)** was held at WCO Headquarters in Brussels. The Dialogue provided a timely opportunity to strengthen public-private collaboration on both longstanding and emerging Customs and trade issues, and was preceded by a dedicated PSCG meeting on 23 and 24 June. The agenda focused on the PSCG's collaboration and proposals aimed at formalizing and strengthening its cooperation with the WCO.



JUNE

"I do feel like I am at home here, with family", said WTO Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala while **opening the 2025 June sessions of the WCO Council**, the governing body of the Organization. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who had been Nigeria's Finance Minister for seven years and had Customs under her responsibility, called the WCO Council to continue working with the WTO to ensure that border procedures are not a barrier to trade, but a bridge to secure predictable and legal trade, and to help achieve the WTO's purpose of enhancing living standards, helping create jobs and supporting sustainable development.



WCO NEWS

Telling the story of Customs

The magazine of the global Customs community, brought to you by the WCO

WCO News is published three times a year in English, French and Spanish, and sheds light on key topics relevant to Customs and the international trade community.

We welcome contributions from all Customs administrations and stakeholders.

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October 2024



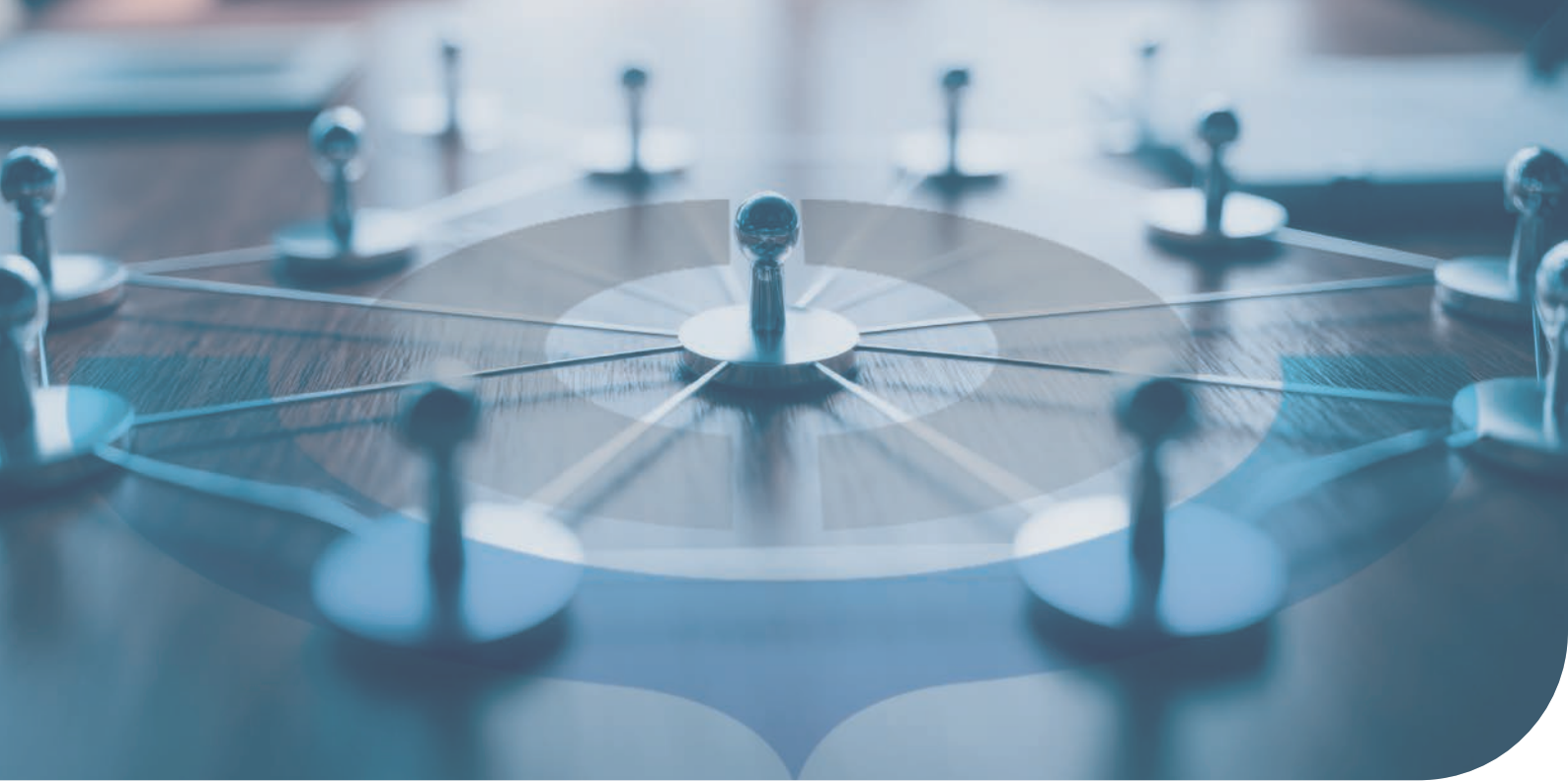
February 2025



June 2025

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WCO STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

Overview of the WCO Strategic Plan 2025-2028

SERVING DATA-DRIVEN CUSTOMS FOR A CONNECTED WORLD

The WCO Strategic Plan 2025-2028, entitled “Serving data-driven Customs for a connected world”, provides the strategic direction for the Organization over the next three years.

It was developed through an inclusive and evidence-based planning cycle, grounded in the **Environmental Scan 2024**, and incorporates input from both WCO Members and the Secretariat. The plan emphasizes alignment with global trends such as digital transformation, sustainability, geopolitical shifts and supply chain disruptions.

To maximize impact, the plan introduces a renewed emphasis on prioritization, aligning limited resources with what creates the greatest value for Members, while also enhancing the WCO’s ability to remain relevant and adaptable.

In a fast-changing and increasingly volatile world, the WCO leads with excellence, sharpens focus through prioritization and amplifies impact through strategic communication, empowering Customs to drive prosperity, security and sustainability.

Principles of the Strategic Plan 2025-2028

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSING ON EXCELLENCE, PRIORITIZATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Strategic Plan is built on three core principles:

1. EXCELLENCE

Leading through excellence: ensuring relevance and adaptability

The WCO aims to remain a solutions-oriented organization that responds proactively to global changes such as the digital economy, e-commerce and sustainability. At the heart of this principle is a strong emphasis on evidence- and data-driven Customs, supported by Members during consultations.

2. PRIORITIZATION

Focusing on what matters most: prioritization and strategic alignment

Through a defined prioritization framework, the WCO seeks to channel its efforts into areas of greatest impact, aligning initiatives and avoiding duplication.

3. COMMUNICATION

Creating impact and visibility: communicating the Customs story

Strategic communication plays a central role in demonstrating Customs' value. The WCO is committed to improving how it measures outcomes and tells the Customs story, emphasizing trade facilitation, revenue collection, societal protection and broader global goals.

Vision, mission and values of the WCO

UPDATING OUR SHARED VISION, MISSION AND VALUES TO STAY ON COURSE IN A CHANGING WORLD

As part of the development of the Strategic Plan 2025-2028, the WCO updated its Vision, Mission and Values.

OUR VISION

Bringing Customs together for a safer, more prosperous and sustainable world.

**Borders divide,
Customs connects.**

OUR MISSION

The World Customs Organization provides leadership on Customs matters by developing international standards and building capacity to foster an environment that facilitates legitimate trade, ensures fair revenue collection and protects society.

The WCO operates according to the following core values, now embedded across all strategic messaging and activities:

OUR VALUES

Excellence, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Innovation, Sustainability

These values are designed to reinforce accountability, diversity and a forward-looking, data-driven culture within the Organization.

The Strategic Map 2025-2028

Moving towards increased strategic alignment

At the centre of the Strategic Plan is the Strategic Map, which sets out the WCO's strategic logic and main pillars.

The WCO's core functions and statutory work

The Strategic Map identifies two key core functions, which define the nature of the work carried out by the Organization and its practical expertise:

Core function 1: Development and maintenance of Customs standards and policy

Upholding the WCO's global leadership role in shaping Customs standards.

Core function 2: Implementation and capacity development

Supporting Members in applying standards through capacity building and technical assistance.

The WCO's statutory work

is defined as the essential and legally mandated work of the Organization. It ensures continuity while enabling strategic flexibility through prioritization.

The WCO's strategic objectives

These reflect the fundamental nature of Customs administrations:

Trade
facilitation

Revenue
collection

Protection
of society



Focus areas

To enhance adaptability, three cross-cutting focus areas are identified:





WCO Strategic Map 2025-2028:

Serving data-driven Customs for a connected world



Vision

Bringing Customs together for a safer, more prosperous and sustainable world.
Borders divide, Customs connects.



Mission

The World Customs Organization provides leadership on Customs matters by developing international standards and building capacity to foster an environment that facilitates legitimate trade, ensures fair revenue collection and protects society.



Core functions & statutory work

Core function 1
Developing and maintaining customs standards and policy

Core function 2
Implementation and capacity development



Strategic objectives

Strategic objective 1:
Trade facilitation

Strategic objective 2:
Revenue collection

Strategic objective 3:
Protection of society



Areas of work

Nomenclature & revenue

Simplification & modernization

Supply chain integrity

Border security



Focus areas

FA1:
Technology and innovation

FA2:
E-commerce

FA2:
Green Customs



Values

Excellence

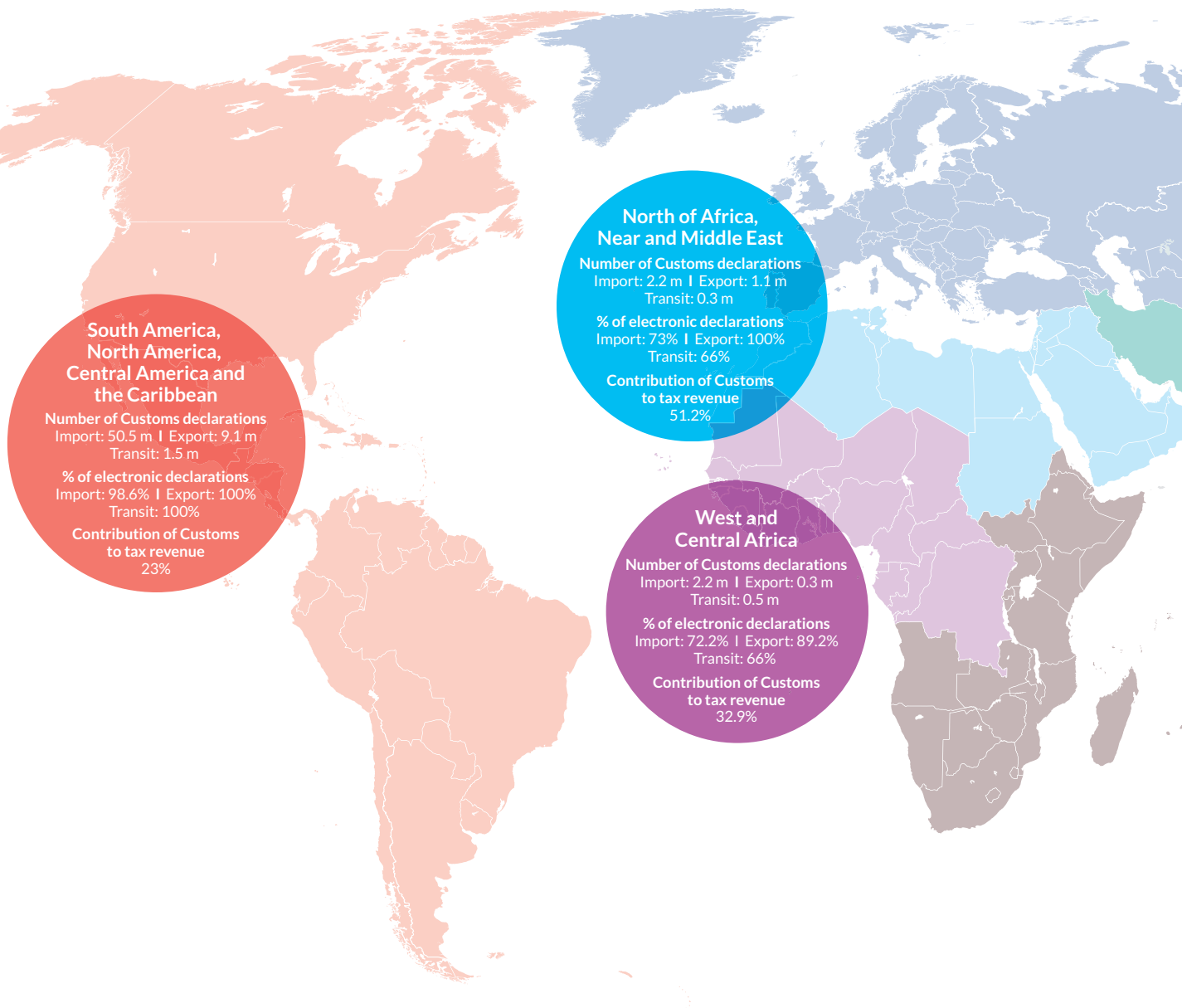
Innovation

Inclusiveness

Integrity

Sustainability

CUSTOMS: A GLOBAL SNAPSHOT



Europe**Number of Customs declarations**

Import: 731.2 m | Export: 419 m
Transit: 60.2 m

% of electronic declarations
Import: 98% | Export: 91.3%
Transit: 83%

Contribution of Customs to tax revenue
20.4%

Far East, South and South East Asia, Australasia and the Pacific Islands

Number of Customs declarations
Import: 73.3 m | Export: 114.2 m
Transit: 6.4 m

% of electronic declarations
Import: 96.5% | Export: 99%
Transit: 100%

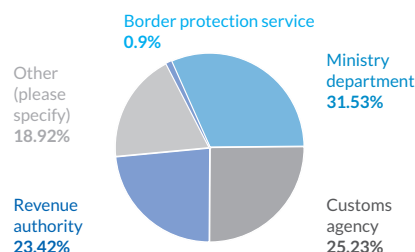
Contribution of Customs to tax revenue
21.2%

East and Southern Africa

Number of Customs declarations
Import: 10.5 m | Export: 5.7 m
Transit: 1.6 m

% of electronic declarations
Import: 100% | Export: 100%
Transit: 100%

Contribution of Customs to tax revenue
37.9%

Type of organization

511,059

Customs officers are employed worldwide



98.10%

of Customs administrations use/apply the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Harmonized System – HS)



54.95%

of Customs administrations use their own automated clearance system



38%

of Customs administration staff are female

16%

of Heads of Customs administrations are female

26%

of senior managers of Customs administrations are female

1 The figures shown here are based on the data specified in this Report's 'Member Profiles' tables.

2 All the figures are an aggregate amount or simple average of the relevant data.

3 The data represented is only Members that responded to the survey.



ANALYSIS OF THE ANNUAL SURVEY

The World Customs Organization (WCO) Annual Survey serves as a key instrument for gathering comprehensive data from Member administrations. This data provides invaluable insights into the operational status, strategic practices and challenges faced by Customs administrations globally, as well as their evolution over time. This year, 111 out of 186 WCO Members responded to the survey, providing sufficient data to highlight global trends, while also underlining that more needs to be done in terms of information collection to advance towards statistical excellence.

Understanding trade from a Customs perspective

To remain efficient and relevant to Customs while contributing to economic growth, the WCO must closely monitor the evolving nature of trade, both in practices and emerging trends. This section examines the current trade landscape from a Customs perspective, with a focus on the types of declarations submitted and their respective

shares in trade value and volume. The second part applies the same approach to trade viewed through the lens of transport modes. A clear understanding of these dynamics is essential for the WCO to refine its strategic actions, set appropriate objectives and ensure the effective allocation of resources.

Focusing on declaration types to understand world trade

Chart 1 – Share of total Customs declarations by entry type

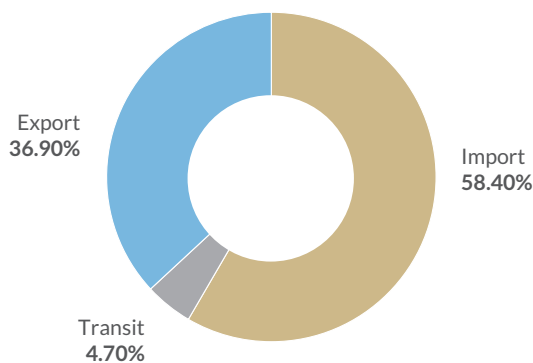


Chart 2 – Share of global trade value among entry types

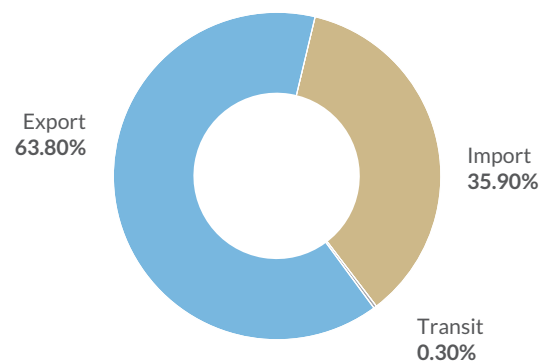


Chart 3 – Share of global trade volumes among entry types

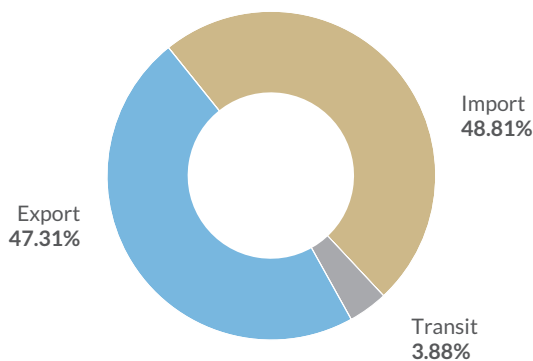


Chart 1 shows the distribution of the total number of declarations processed across three entry types: export, import and transit. Charts 2 and 3 further illustrate the distribution of total trade value and trade volumes (measured in tonnes) associated with these entry types. The data demonstrates that relying solely on the number of declarations is insufficient to draw robust conclusions. Careful consideration of the additional data provides a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics. This breakdown is useful for assessing the logistical burden and infrastructure needs associated with each regime.

The dominance of exports in trade value may point to well-developed export facilitation systems, preferential trade agreements or efficient logistics corridors supporting outbound trade. In contrast, import declarations account for just over a third of total trade value, suggesting a relatively balanced role in economic activity, possibly influenced by domestic consumption levels, import regulations or tariffs.

Meanwhile, data on trade volumes shows a near balance between imports (48.81%) and exports (47.31%), indicating that the physical flow of goods into and out of countries is relatively symmetrical on average. When considered alongside the chart on trade value, the similarity in import and export volumes suggest that exports may, on average, consist of higher-value goods per unit

(e.g. finished goods or commodities), while imports may include bulkier or lower-value items (e.g. raw materials or intermediate goods).

As for transit, this accounts for a negligible share in Customs statistics – representing only 0.30% of trade value and 3.88% of trade volumes – underscoring its marginal role compared with imports and exports. This reflects the administrative nature of the transit regime, which is primarily designed to monitor goods moving through a country en route to another destination, rather than to capture transactions directly linked to domestic economic activity. Nonetheless, the efficiency and integrity of transit systems remain essential, particularly for landlocked or transit-dependent countries, where smooth transit operations are critical to regional trade.

Chart 4 – Share of electronic declarations in entry types

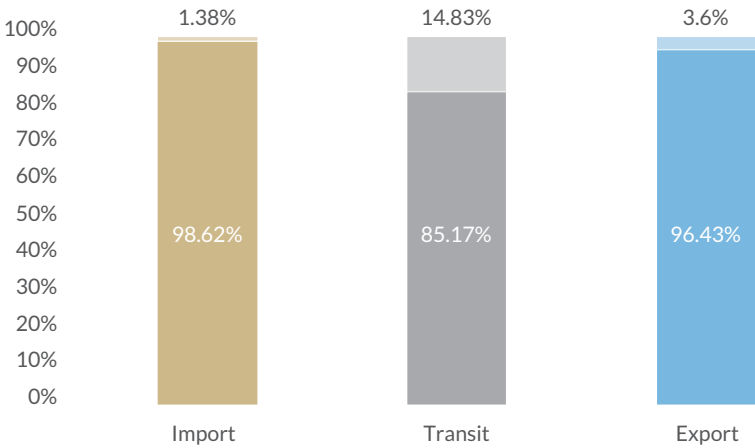


Chart 4 illustrates the adoption rate of electronic Customs declaration systems across the three entry types previously mentioned. The data reveals a strong overall trend towards digital processing and reflects a highly automated environment for handling goods entering or leaving the country.

In comparison, the transit regime shows a lower electronic declaration rate of 85.17%, suggesting that, while digitalization is well advanced, it is not yet fully comprehensive in this area. This discrepancy

may stem from the more complex nature of transit operations, which often involve coordination between multiple Customs administrations, cross-border movements and varying infrastructure capabilities or system interoperability.

Strengthening electronic processes for transit could enhance the overall efficiency and security of supply chains, especially for landlocked countries or regions heavily reliant on overland routes.

Focusing on transport modes to understand world trade

Chart 5 – Share of transport modes in the total number of declarations submitted

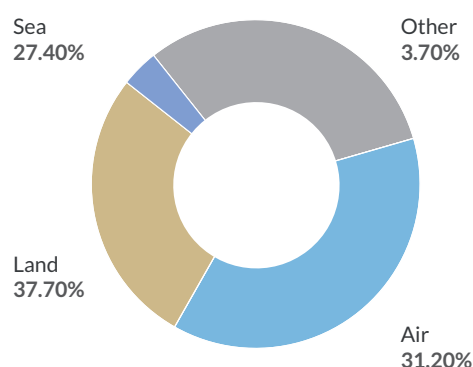
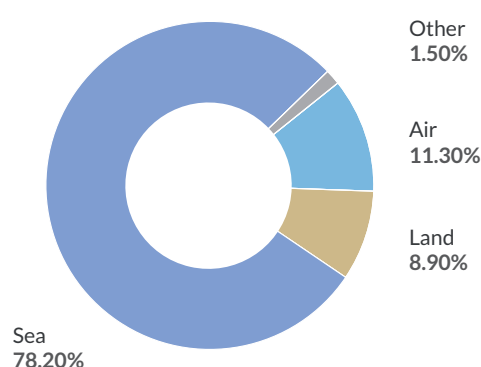


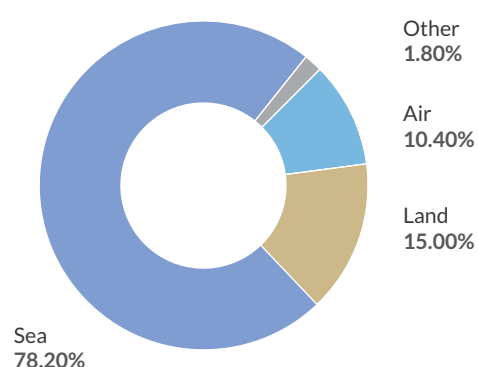
Chart 6 – Share of transport modes in the value of global trade carried



Charts 5 to 7 show trends similar to those observed for entry types, reinforcing the need to use multiple angles of analysis to understand trade practices and operations fully. The data on transport modes used in global trade provides further valuable insights, offering an additional perspective on the dynamics at play. In terms of trade value, sea transport overwhelmingly dominates, carrying 78.20% of the total. This underscores the central role of maritime shipping in global commerce, particularly for bulk commodities, large-scale containerized trade and intercontinental exchanges. Air transport, with 11.30% of trade value, serves a niche but critical function for high-value and time-sensitive goods such as electronics, pharmaceuticals and perishables. Land transport accounts for 8.90%, reflecting its importance in regional and cross-border trade, especially among neighbouring countries and within Customs unions. The remaining 1.50% under “Other” modes – including rail, inland waterways or multimodal combinations – suggests a more specialized or context-specific role.

When measured by trade volumes (measured in tonnes), the picture remains similar: sea transport leads with 72.80%, reaffirming its suitability for moving large quantities of goods such as raw materials and industrial products. Land transport, at 15.00%, highlights its indispensable

Chart 7 – Share of transport modes in the volumes of global trade carried



role in linking seaports to inland destinations and supporting intra-regional trade. Air transport represents 10.40% of volumes, consistent with its limitations in capacity and cost, while “Other” modes contribute a minor 1.80%.

By contrast, the distribution of Customs declarations reflects the operational workload faced by administrations. Land transport generates the highest share of declarations at 37.70%, underscoring its role in frequent, small-scale cross-border shipments. Air transport follows at 31.20%, reflecting the high turnover of smaller, high-value consignments. Sea transport,

despite dominating trade value and volumes, accounts for 27.40% of declarations, indicating that maritime goods are processed in fewer but more consolidated submissions. “Other” modes contribute just 3.70%.

Taken together, the data underscores the strategic importance of maritime infrastructure and port efficiency, given the dominant role of sea transport in global trade. At the same time, it highlights the complementary and often overlooked role of air and land transport in shaping operational realities. While maritime shipping moves the

bulk of trade value and volume, the Customs workload is more heavily influenced by land and air, where frequent, smaller-scale transactions require intensive processing. This contrast calls for a balanced approach: continued investment in ports and maritime logistics, coupled with modernization strategies at land borders and airports. Strengthening intermodal transport networks that connect sea, land and air will be essential to building resilient and efficient global supply chains, while enabling Customs to allocate resources effectively and manage risks across all modes.

Understanding the importance of Customs in generating revenue

Effectively addressing the principal flows and trends in world trade is a core element of the WCO’s mission to its Members. Equally important is the focus on sustaining Customs administrations as key contributors to domestic revenue generation. To this end, the Annual Survey incorporates a series of questions on

revenue collection, aimed at understanding the nature of Customs’ impact and providing targeted support in this area. This section examines the contribution of Customs to state revenues, with particular attention to their composition and sources.

Chart 8 – Customs revenue as a share of total government revenue

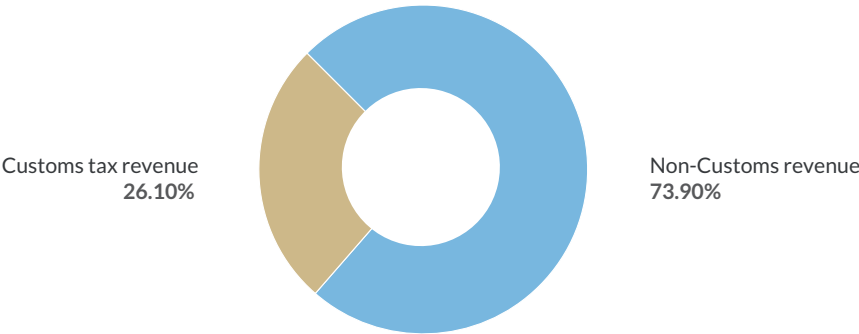


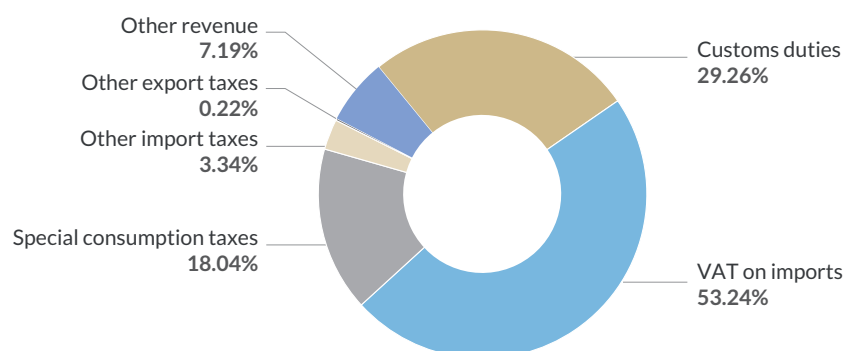
Chart 9 – Breakdown of Customs revenue by tax type

Chart 8 illustrates the relative contribution of Customs tax revenue to total government revenues worldwide. According to the data, Customs tax revenue accounts for 26.10% of total government income, while non-Customs revenue makes up the remaining 73.90%.

This significant 26.10% share underscores the critical role that Customs administrations play in national fiscal policy, particularly in developing and emerging economies where external trade may be a primary source of taxable activity.

Chart 9 provides a detailed breakdown of the various tax types that contribute to total Customs revenue. The data shows that VAT on imports is the largest component, representing 53.24% of Customs-related collections. This is unsurprising, as VAT is widely applied at the border in many countries and often represents a major source of fiscal income.

The second-largest category is Customs duties, which account for 29.26% of the total. These tra-

ditional border taxes remain a significant revenue stream. Special consumption taxes (18.04%) form the third-largest category and typically apply to goods such as alcohol, tobacco, fuel and luxury items. These taxes serve both revenue-generation and regulatory purposes, targeting specific consumption behaviours.

This distribution highlights the fiscal importance of border-based VAT systems, while also demonstrating the continuing relevance of Customs duties and excise-style taxes in border revenue collection. Understanding this composition is essential for tax policy planning, trade negotiations and the modernization of Customs operations.

Charts 8 and 9 underline the strategic importance of modern, efficient and transparent Customs systems, not only for trade facilitation and border security but also for sustainable revenue mobilization. Strengthening Customs capacity can directly affect a government's ability to fund essential services and development programmes, particularly in revenue-constrained contexts.

Today’s face of Customs in terms of human resources

Customs administrations continue to be perceived as attractive workplaces by the public. In this context, it is important to examine the current profile of Customs personnel, particularly in terms of gender balance. The Annual Survey collects data on active staff worldwide, enabling

the monitoring of trends and changes over time. This section provides an overview of the current state of human resources in Customs and highlights the key insights drawn from these figures.

Chart 10 – Female representation across staff levels (2021-2025)

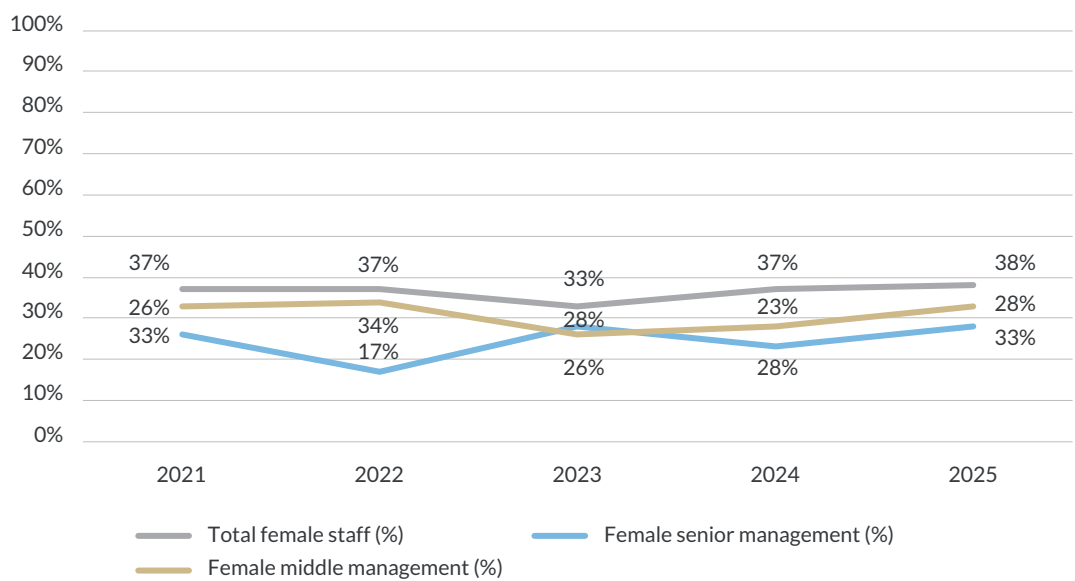


Chart 10 highlights both persistent imbalances and gradual progress over time. Data on staffing levels, segmented into total workforce, middle management and senior staff categories, reveals that male personnel continue to predominate at all levels, although the degree of imbalance varies.

In 2025, women constitute 38% of staff overall, slightly over one third of the workforce. Representation decreases at higher levels of responsibility: 33% in middle management and 26% in senior staff, reflecting a clear downward trend in female presence as staff levels rise. This pattern indicates structural barriers or unequal access to professional development and promotion opportunities, underscoring the importance of targeted gender equity measures.

Tracking trends from 2021 to 2025 provides additional insight. Overall female representation fluctuated modestly, from 37% in 2021 to 38% in 2025, suggesting incremental progress towards gender balance. In middle management, a similar

upward trend is seen, with female representation rising from 26% in 2023 to 33% in 2025. Senior management positions remain the most male-dominated, with female representation increasing only slightly from 26% in 2021 to 28% in 2025.

These trends highlight persistent challenges in ensuring female leadership across all levels of Customs organizations. To address these gaps, focused initiatives such as mentorship programmes, inclusive recruitment and promotion practices, leadership development and succession planning are critical. Enhancing female representation at senior levels would not only advance diversity objectives but also support more effective decision-making and overall organizational performance. As dynamic administrations, Customs should give careful consideration to these themes, with the WCO providing support to its Members in their ongoing efforts towards modernization.

Closing summary

The 2024-2025 Annual Survey analysis offers a broad overview of the evolving global Customs landscape. It reaffirms the central role of Customs as both a facilitator of trade and a guardian of public revenue, while also highlighting the importance of modernization and reform.

The findings emphasize the need for balanced approaches to global trade management, the continued push towards digital transformation and the critical role of Customs in supporting national fiscal health. They also underline the

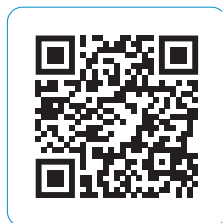
human dimension of institutional progress, calling for inclusive practices and greater gender equity in leadership.

As global trade, technology and society continue to evolve, Customs administrations must remain adaptive and forward-looking. The WCO is committed to accompanying its Members on this path, ensuring that Customs remains resilient, inclusive and equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A-CIP	WCO Anti-Corruption and Integrity Programme
AI	Artificial intelligence
AMS	WCO South America, North America, Central America and the Caribbean (Americas and the Caribbean) region
A/P	WCO Far East, South and South East Asia, Australasia and the Pacific Islands (Asia/Pacific) region
API	Advance Passenger Information
BRI	Booking and Reservation Information
CAP	Counterfeiting and Piracy
CBC	Capacity Building Committee
CCC	Customs Co-operation Council
CCF	Customs Cooperation Fund
CD	Capacity Delivery
CEN	Customs Enforcement Network
CENcomm	Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform
CLEN	Customs Laboratories European Network
COMALEP	Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the National Customs Directorates of Latin America, Spain and Portugal
COO	Chief Operating Officer
COS	Chief of Staff
DMPT	Data Model Projects Team
EFT	Enforcement, Facilitation & Technology
ESA	European Space Agency
ESA	WCO East and Southern Africa region
EU	European Union
GIIS	Global Information and Intelligence Strategy
GMRE	Global Meeting of the Regional Entities
GRM	Global Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO) Meeting
FfD	Financing for Development
FTA	Free trade agreement
HS	Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System
HSC	Harmonized System Committee
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICCCWC	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
ICD	Implementation and Capacity Development Directorate
IED	Improvised explosive device
IFCBA	International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO FAL Committee	International Maritime Organization Facilitation Committee
IMSC	Information Management Sub-Committee

INN	International Nonproprietary Names
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IPR	Intellectual property right
IS	Implementation Support
ISC	Integrity Sub-Committee
MENA	WCO North of Africa, Near and Middle East region
ML	Machine learning
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
nCEN	National Customs Enforcement Network
NR	Nomenclature & Revenue
OSINT	Open-source intelligence
PC	Policy Commission
PGS	WCO Programme Global Shield
PHEIC	Public health emergency of international concern
PMM	Performance Measurement Mechanism
PMO	Project Management Office
PMMPT	Performance Measurement Mechanism Project Team
PNR	Passenger Name Record
PSCG	Private Sector Consultative Group
PSD	Policy and Standards Directorate
PTC	Permanent Technical Committee
RCL	Regional Customs Laboratory
RDTC	Regional Dog Training Centre
RHCG	Rights Holders Consultative Group
RILO	Regional Intelligence Liaison Office
RKC	Revised Kyoto Convention
RKC/MC	Revised Kyoto Convention Management Committee
ROCB	Regional Office for Capacity Building
RPSG	Regional Private Sector Group
RSC	Harmonized System Review Sub-Committee
RTC	Regional Training Centre
SAFE Framework	Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SEO	Stakeholder Engagement Office
SSC	Scientific Sub-Committee
TCCV	Technical Committee on Customs Valuation
TCRO	Technical Committee on Rules of Origin
TEG-NII	Technical Experts Group on Non-Intrusive Inspection
TFAWG	WCO Working Group on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement
UN	United Nations
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WCA	WCO West and Central Africa region
WCO	World Customs Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WGDS	Working Group on Data and Statistics
WGEC	Working Group on E-Commerce
WTO	World Trade Organization



Contact us:

communication@wcoomd.org

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**World Customs
Organization**

Rue du Marché 30,
B-1210 Brussels, Belgium
communication@wcoomd.org

#WCOOMD
wcoomd.org

