

Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF) NEWSLETTER

IN FOCUS:

ADB-ESCAP Workshops on National Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism (TTFMM) for SASEC Countries

Ad-hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on Regional Arrangement for Cross-border Paperless Trade

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The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) countries, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), gathered in Bangkok on 26-27 November 2013 to take stock of the implementation of the Business Process Analysis (BPA) project (concluded last year) on selected products along the key corridors and discuss way forward. An important conclusion drawn at the meeting was that the SASEC countries, especially Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, should move forward to establish long-term national integrated and sustainable trade and transport facilitation monitoring mechanism (TTFMM). To this end, a series of national training workshops will be organized in Bhutan on 10-14 March, in Nepal on 15-18 April and in Bangladesh on 21-24 April 2014 (all dates to be confirmed), with support of ADB and UNESCAP. The workshops aim to equip the teams with skills and knowledge on the key components of TTFMM including Business Process Analysis (BPA), Time Release Study (TRS) and Time-Cost-Distance (TCD) methodologies, so that they can conduct relevant studies subsequent to the workshop. Furthermore, a detailed plan for implementation of TTFMM will also be made during the workshops.

An Ad-Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade will be organized on 22-24 April 2014 at UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. It is expected to be participated by official nominees from seat of government of ESCAP members and/or national focal points to the implementation of ESCAP resolution 68/3. At the third session of the ESCAP Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) in November 2013, ESCAP member states reviewed and noted the progress made on the implementation, and supported the desire of member States for a regional arrangement on cross-border paperless trade. The CTI also agreed to move forward with negotiation of the arrangement and, taking note of the need for further discussion, requested the secretariat to organize another member consultation in the form of an ad hoc intergovernmental meeting prior to the seventieth session of the Commission in order to incorporate relevant revisions to the existing draft text. (*see page 6*)

ESCAP-WCO UNNExT Masterclass on Single Window and Paperless Trade

The intensive 2-week course was held successfully in Republic of Korea last October (*see page 8*)

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Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF): UPDATE

The second annual meeting of the Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF) in Asia and the Pacific was held in Beijing in collaboration with China International Electronic Commerce Centre and Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 9 September 2013. The meeting was attended by eleven international and regional organizations and one organization joined via skype. The participants discussed about the progress of the ROC-TF mechanism and an update was provided by ESCAP as its secretariat. Each organization briefed about their initiatives on trade facilitation in the Asia Pacific region. The meeting also highlighted the opportunities to improve exchange of information and greater collaboration. One key opportunity that was discussed was adoption of a common performance monitoring framework in trade facilitation among the agencies represented in the meeting. In this regard, ESCAP presented its annual country survey on trade facilitation implementation for consideration. A number of new organizations participated and contributed to the meeting including UNDP China, Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) and Pacific Island Trade and Invest (PT&I). The other organizations that attended the meeting were: Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Oceania Customs Organization (OCO), UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), USAID-ASEAN SW Project, World Customs Organization's Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO-ROCB), UNDP's Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).



Participants at the Second ROC-TF Annual Meeting, Beijing, China, 9 September 2013

The meeting recommended the following to enhance the cooperation of ROC-TF participating organizations:

- Improve modalities of cooperation among the organizations including co-organization of events and opportunities to attend meeting of each other where possible. In this connection, it was mentioned that ESCAP was provided a three-year Guest status to attend APEC's Sub Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP) meetings.
- Find out more areas of cooperation on research and analysis, and substantive areas in trade facilitation including monitoring trade facilitation performance.
- Share the results of the Annual ESCAP Trade and Transport Facilitation Country Survey 2013 including the survey questionnaire with the ROC-TF organizations for potential application in countries where they operate.
- Continue publishing the bi-annual newsletter and focus more on knowledge products. In this respect, organizations were requested to provide information on their projects, activities, publications, achievements etc. in due time. It was emphasized that the number of downloads or hits to newsletter page be counted.
- Continue updating the joint calendar of events so that each organization is aware of the events ahead of time and can coordinate activities on similar areas. In this respect, timely submission of information was requested.
- Continue inviting new organizations to ROC-TF.



PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

Selected project/activity update from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Three-Year Blueprint/Action Plan on Transport and Trade Facilitation Endorsed by GMS Vice Ministers in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar



Senior Officials of the National Transport Facilitation Committee and Subcommittees of Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Countries Met in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

The 4th Joint Committee Meeting (4th JCM) for the GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion) Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 21-22 November 2013. A key outcome of the meeting was endorsement of the 3-Year (2013-16) Blueprint or Action Plan on Transport and Trade Facilitation by the GMS Vice Ministers.

The 3-Year TTF Plan will enable stronger cooperation, improve the efficiency of transport and created a favorable climate for dialogue, and increase awareness and exchange of information, resulting in increased trade between GMS countries.

The 3-Year Blueprint highlights the reduction of nonphysical barriers to transport and trade is key to increasing the benefits of improved connectivity among GMS countries. It also emphasized the continued commitment from the 6 GMS countries to fast tracking and streamlining TTF measures and work on transforming transport corridors to economic corridors.

The 6 GMS countries have aligned their TTF strategies with ASEAN initiatives and with the investment needs of the GMS through the following pragmatic, realistic, and results-oriented TTF initiatives:

- Mainstreaming TTF into national laws and regulations
- Trade Route expansion and Traffic Rights Exchange (i.e. expanding transport and trade routes and increasing existing transport permit quotas, agreement on new bilateral and trilateral MOUs)
- Customs Cooperation and Border Management (i.e. streamlining single window and single-stop inspection mechanisms, and strengthening customs cooperation mechanisms, and improved capacity-building)
- Private Sector Cooperation Mechanisms (i.e. establishment of Subcommittee on Private Sector/Guaranteeing Organizations, encourage the establishment of cross-border vehicle insurance cooperation mechanisms between/among GMS countries).

Other outcomes of the meeting included i) reporting of the deliverables achieved and challenges faced under the GMS TTF Action Plan from the 3rd JCM in June 2010 in Vientiane, Lao PDR; ii) endorsement of relevant MOUs and newly proposed initiatives by Senior Officials of the National Transport Facilitation Committees (NTFC), discussed during the previous NTFC Senior Officials' Meetings on 21 November 2013 and 4-5 September 2013; iii) sharing of relevant information on new TTF initiatives with development partners; and iv) public launching of the GMS TTF Knowledge Portal.



PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

Selected project/activity update from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

Senior Officials of the National Transport Facilitation Committee and Subcommittees of Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Countries Met in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

The Meeting of Senior Officials of the National Transport Facilitation Committee was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on 4-5 September 2013. The Meeting was attended by senior officials representing Transport, Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, Commerce, the GMS National Coordination Office, and CEOs from Guarantee Organizations (private sector) of each country. The objectives of the meeting were to: i) discuss and finalize the Joint Statement for the six Transport Ministers and the Three-Year Strategic Blueprint/Action Plan for GMS Transport Facilitation, ii) provide updates on the status of implementation of transport facilitation initiatives in the GMS, and identify issues and bottlenecks, iii) conduct a stocktaking of the deliverables under the GMS Transport and Trade Facilitation Action Plan from the 3rd Joint Committee Meeting of the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (3rd JCM) in June 2010 in Vientiane, Lao PDR and iv) finalize program and agree on arrangements for the upcoming 4th JCM.

GMS Consultation Workshop with the Private Sector on Emerging Transport and Trade Facilitation Issues in the Greater Mekong Subregion, 14-15 August 2013, Pingxiang, China

This meeting was organized in the context of recent positive developments on the expansion and increased capacity of the corridors, upgrading of logistics and border facilities, as well as the increased demand and trade flows in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). During this meeting, the participants were able to: (i) share knowledge and expertise from ongoing and planned transport facilitation initiatives in the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) and North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC), (ii) provide collective views and inputs on the feasibility of proposed transport facilitation initiatives (i.e. establishing a customs transit facilitation systems in the EWEC, undertaking time-cost distance measurements, etc.), and iii) collectively agree on a course of action/next steps for accelerating the facilitation of transport facilitation initiatives in the GMS.

The recent signing of the MOU on the expansion of the EWEC to GMS capitals and deep sea ports, last February 2013 provide an impetus for the countries to revisit key transport facilitation mechanisms and the issue of instituting a workable customs transit system in the EWEC. The issue is also timely in light of the completion of the Chiang Khong-Houayxay Bridge connecting Thailand, and Lao PDR in June/July 2013 (with the new bridge, vehicles no longer have to take a ferry to cross the Mekong river) increasing the capacity of the Kunming-Bangkok highway and the smooth flow of traffic between the countries. Thailand, Lao PDR and PRC have also agreed in principle to sign the MOU on the exchange of traffic rights and plan to sign the agreement very soon. This opens up renewed interest in establishing new transport facilitation mechanisms (including a customs transit system and undertaking time-cost distance studies) in the North-South Economic Corridor since the 1,807 KM Kunming-Bangkok highway is an important roadway between China and ASEAN countries.

National Workshops on Time Release Study conducted in Southeast Asian Countries

Three Time Release Study (TRS) Workshops were held to plan the study in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Hanoi, Viet Nam; and Yangon, Myanmar on 19 February, 21-22 February and 6-8 November 2013 respectively. The objective of the workshop was to provide each country with knowledge to conduct TRS based on the methodology developed by World Customs Organization (WCO) and to support them to determine the scope of study, the implementation plan. The workshops were organized in coordination with the Customs Department of each country under RETA 8079: Trade Facilitation Support for AEC Blueprint Implementation (GMS/IMT) for Cambodia and Viet Nam; and TA 8190 – Trade Facilitation Support for AEC Blueprint Implementation for Myanmar. World Customs Organization (WCO), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Customs also joined the workshops to provide their expertise on TRS for the participants. Recently, Cambodia and Viet Nam are drafting



PROJECT/ACTIVITY UPDATE

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the reports on TRS since they have conducted the study, and Myanmar is planning to conduct TRS in the second quarter of 2014.

A workshop to publish the report on TRS was conducted in Thailand on 20 September 2013. The Customs Department of Thailand conducted TRS at Laem Chabang Port and the land-border check point of Aranyaprathet in June 2012. The workshop was organized in coordination with the Customs Department of Thailand under RETA 8079: Trade Facilitation Support for AEC Blueprint Implementation (GMS/IMT). Business communities and major development partners in Thailand, including the Federation of Thai Industries, the Customs Broker and Transport Association, port operators, UNESCAP, WCO, and JICA joined the Workshop.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

APEC's Sub Committee on Customs Procedure (SCCP): An Update

SCCP's work program focuses on trade facilitation/supply chain connectivity, trade security and related enforcement matters. It adopted an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Capacity Building Framework outlining the next steps for capacity building development for AEO and mutual recognition agreements. The SCCP is actively pursuing development of the Single Window (SW) by 2020 and accelerate seamless data sharing between/among SW systems. SCCP also approved the APEC Guidelines for Customs Border Enforcement of Counterfeiting Piracy to guide its IPR border enforcement work. Private sector engagement has also been enhanced in the SCCP through the Customs-Business Virtual Working Group (VWG) that was formally launched in 2013.

2013 Outcomes of SCCP on Supply-chain Connectivity

SCCP continued to implement the proposed actions relevant to customs under the SCFAP (Supply-Chain Framework action Plan) for chokepoint 1 (Lack of transparency/awareness of the full scope of regulatory issues affecting logistics; Lack of awareness and coordination among government agencies on policies affecting logistics sector; Absence of single contact point or champion agency on logistics matters), chokepoint 4 (Inefficient clearance of goods at Customs; Lack of coordination among border agencies, especially relating to clearance of regulated goods 'at the border'), chokepoint 5 (Burdensome customs documentation and other procedures (including for preferential trade) and chokepoint 8 (Lack of regional cross-border customs-transit arrangements).

Specifically, under Chokepoint 4, a Single Window questionnaire identified that functions related to customs procedures that are effective for trade facilitation have been covered by the systems of most economies, whereas functions which are effective for risk management and security need more progress. SCCP also reviewed the analysis of the result of the questionnaire on Chokepoint 4 that discusses WCO Guidelines for the Immediate Release of Consignments and Time Release Study (TRS). With regard to the former, the responses indicated that most economies have regulations in line with the guidelines, but the expansion of categories applied to the guidelines still poses a challenge. Responses concerning Time Release Study (TRS) indicate that many economies have understood the importance of TRS.

Under Chokepoint 8, SCCP supports the work led by Chile on developing a set of Customs-Transit Guidelines for APEC FTAs. At SCCP1, the sub-committee reviewed the results of the survey on regulation and procedures for the transit of goods. At SCCP2, it received a presentation from Chile on her analysis of a comparative study on the free trade agreements in transit matters.



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APEC lines of action for 2014 – Trade Facilitation

APECs Economic Leaders Declaration (AELM)

- Modernize our trade-related as well as customs and border agencies, including by progressing the development of single windows in APEC economies.

Statement by APECs Ministerial Meeting (AMM)

- Development of Single Window Systems in each APEC economy towards the promotion of interoperability amongst economies' Single Window Systems
- Formation of a Virtual Customs Business Working Group in APEC to enhance collaboration with the private sector on customs-related issues.
- Continued work to build capacity for implementing Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programs throughout the APEC region in line with the WCO/APEC SAFE Framework of Standards.
- Instruction to include Emergency Response Travel Facilitation (ERTF) as a continuing agenda of discussion at the Emergency Preparedness Working Group in collaboration with the Business Mobility Group (BMG), and Sub-Committee on Customs and Procedures (SCCP).

Statement by APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT)

- Importance of further simplification of customs procedures in line with the international standards such as ones developed by the World Custom Organization (WCO).

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Implementation of ESCAP Resolution 68/3 is Moving Ahead



Participants at the Ad Hoc Meeting on Development of Regional Arrangements for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade on 12 September 2013 in Beijing, China

The ESCAP secretariat has continued the implementation of Resolution 68/3 by organizing the Ad Hoc Meeting on Development of Regional Arrangements for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade on 12 September 2013 in Beijing, China, back-to-back with the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2013. The meeting was participated by national focal points, official nominees or experts from 18 member countries as well as representatives from other international and regional organizations.

Based on the outcome of member consultation through three subregional and the regional meetings, the secretariat presented the results on development of regional arrangements to the ESCAP Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) at its third session on 20-22 November 2013 for next step. The CTI noted the progress made on the implementation and supported the desire of member States

for a regional arrangement on cross-border paperless trade. The CTI agreed to move forward with negotiation of the arrangement and, taking note of the need for further discussion, requested the secretariat to organize another member consultation in the form of an ad hoc intergovernmental meeting prior to the seventieth session of the Commission in order to incorporate relevant revisions to the existing draft text. In this context, the ESCAP secretariat will organize the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade on 22-24 April 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand, and report to the Commission at its seventieth session, to be held on 19-23 May 2014, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.



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ESCAP and ADB

Public and Private Sector Discuss Efficient and Inclusive Supply Chains through Trade Facilitation at the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2013 in Beijing, China

The Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) 2013, jointly organized by ESCAP and ADB on 10-11 September 2013 in Beijing, China was attended by approximately 250 participants from nearly 40 countries of the Asia Pacific region and outside the region. This year's theme was 'Towards more efficient and inclusive supply chains: public and private sector perspectives'. The newly updated ADB-ESCAP Publication "Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific: 2013 Update" was launched during the Forum. This year's Forum included a high level panel discussion and four thematic sessions on trade logistics, trade finance, paperless trade and single window, respectively. In parallel with the Forum, an exhibition on Trade Facilitation was held to maximize information sharing on practices, case studies and findings of trade facilitation.

Overall, there was wide ranging consensus at the Forum that reforms to help small-to-medium-sized businesses (SMEs) cannot be limited only to border-related procedures, but need to extend well behind the border. This is to ensure that the business environment is conducive to their direct or indirect participation in international trade, both in terms of the availability of competitive logistics and of financing. The Forum also recommended that regional arrangements for SME trade finance and cross-border paperless trade should be actively pursued.

Some of the highlights of the Forum discussions are as follows:

- Legal framework is essential to improve efficiency in supply chains at the national level
- Role of associations providing services in supply chain should be enhanced and their capacities be improved
- International trade logistics cannot be completely separated from domestic logistics performance, and both can contribute to inclusive development.
- Lack of access to trade finance is a key barrier to integration of SMEs in international supply chains
- The region is strongly committed to paperless trade, but capacity gaps are slowing progress
- Deeper cooperation between public and private sectors would enable and speed up cross-border paperless trade
- Reforms to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) cannot be limited only to border-related procedures, but need to extend well behind the border



Launching of ADB/ESCAP Publication 'Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific: 2013 Update', Beijing, China.



Participants at the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) 2013, Beijing, China



Visitors at the Exhibition booths, APTFF 2013, Beijing, China

The Next APTFF is expected to be held in Bangkok on 24-25 September 2014.



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ESCAP and WCO

The First ESCAP - WCO UNNExT Masterclass held in Cheon-an, Republic of Korea

The ESCAP-WCO UNNExT (United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific) Masterclass on Implementing Single Window and Paperless Trade was organized at the Korea Customs Border Control Training Centre, Cheon-an, Republic of Korea on 7 to 18 October 2013. It was attended by 22 officials from 12 Asia-Pacific developing countries including 8 LDCs and LLDCs. The participants were mostly from Customs agencies as well as from trade ministries. The training evaluation showed that 95 Percentage had increased their capacity on the topic of paperless trade and single window implementation. The Masterclass is an intensive two-week capacity building programme intended to build the capacity of Governments to simplify trade procedures and implement paperless trade systems, including single window facilities. It is delivered by experts and practitioners with extensive experience on trade facilitation and paperless trade in English. Jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the World Customs Organization (WCO), in collaboration with the Korea Customs Service (KCS) with the support of Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF) Korea, the Masterclass combined lectures with group discussions, hands-on use of paperless trade applications and field visits to maximize learning and interactions among course participants. All the participants successfully completed the Masterclass and issued with UNNExT certificates. The second Masterclass is expected to be organized in October 2014.



Participants at the First ESCAP - WCO UNNExT Masterclass, Cheon-an, ROK

For more information please visit: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/unnext/masterclass13.asp>

ESCAP and Other UN Regional Commissions

UN Regional Commissions Join Forces for Global Trade facilitation and Paperless Trade



Participants at the Global Trade Facilitation Conference 2013

The Global Trade Facilitation Conference 2013, organized by the five UN Regional Commissions took place in Bangkok, Thailand, on 18-19 November 2013, calling on all countries to continue their efforts to cut red tape and simplify trade procedures in order to achieve more sustainable and inclusive development. The conference was organized during the Third Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Week held by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and is part of the 'Joint UN Regional Commissions Approach to Trade Facilitation'. Building on the first Conference held in December 2011 in Geneva, the theme of the Global event was 'Beyond Single Window: Paperless Supply Chains for Trade Facilitation and Inclusive Development'. The conference brought together policy makers, private sector service providers and experts from about 40 countries from around the World.

While highlighting the significant performance gaps among countries and regions in terms of trade costs and supply chain connectivity, the conference acknowledged the significant progress made in many developing countries, including least developed countries, in automating customs procedures and developing national single



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window and related paperless systems for trade facilitation. In light of the investments being made in national systems and the increasingly stringent supply chain security requirements in major markets, the Conference called on countries and regions to work together to ensure inter-connectivity of paperless trade systems within and across countries. This would ultimately enable the development of paperless supply chains, where all the parties involved in international trade transactions exchange information and documents in electronic rather in paper form, leading to tremendous increase in transparency and efficiency. The regional arrangement for cross-border paperless trade facilitation under discussion among ESCAP Member States could provide a good framework for other World's region, along with related UN/CEFACT recommendations being developed at UNECE.

The conference concluded that moving towards cross-border paperless supply chains was both visionary and timely but stressed that this was a long-term effort that required close collaboration among countries as well as among the public and private sector. Within the public sector, transferring knowledge from Customs to other government agencies (OGAs) involved in trade control would be important as OGAs often lagged behind in terms of use of modern information and communication technologies. Institutionalizing public-private sector collaboration and developing conducive national and international legal frameworks would also be essential. In that context, the conference emphasized the need for development partners to provide sufficient capacity building and technical assistance to developing countries for trade facilitation and paperless trade, in particular least developed and landlocked countries.



Opening Session of the Global Trade Facilitation Conference 2013

World Customs Organization Regional Office for Capacity Building in Asia Pacific

WCO National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) for Lao PDR

World Customs Organization's Regional Office for Capacity Building in Asia-Pacific (WCO ROCB-AP), in cooperation with World Customs Organization (WCO) and Asia Development Bank (ADB) organized National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 6 to 8 August 2013 under the sponsorship of Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF) Japan. The Workshop was attended by 27 mid-level customs officers of Lao PDR. Mr. Yoshihiro Kosaka, Head of ROCB AP attended this workshop as an expert. Ms. Krittika Panprasert from Thai customs also participated as an expert and shared her valuable experience in Thai customs for the preparation of the RKC accession.



Participants at the WCO National workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) for Lao PDR

In light of the Regional Strategic Plan 2012-2014, ROCB-AP makes every effort to accelerate Members' accession to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC). In April 2013, the WCO Sub-regional workshop on RKC for South East Asian Countries, under the sponsorship of CCF Japan, was held in Malaysia with the involvement of three WCO accredited experts. As one of the follow-up activities, this national workshop was held to provide the targeted technical support to Lao PDR based on gaps identified in the sub-regional workshop. By conducting a gap analysis, they now have a clear roadmap to accede to RKC in the near future. In addition, customs officials now have an improved understanding on the RKC, particularly on its benefits.



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Selected project/activity update from ROC-TF organizations on Trade Facilitation

WCO National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) for Maldives



Participants at the WCO National workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) for Maldives

WCO ROCB-AP in cooperation with Maldives customs and Japan customs, under the sponsorship of Customs Cooperation Fund (CCF) Japan, organized a five day workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) from 31 August - 4 September 2013. This workshop was attended by mid-level managers of Maldives Customs who were in-charge of the RKC Gap Analysis and RKC implementation. Mr. Yoshihiro Kosaka, Head of ROCB-AP participated in this workshop as an expert and shared his knowledge on RKC and experience of capacity building. He also assisted Maldives Customs in organizing consultation sessions for stakeholders.

As indicated by the Maldives customs, this workshop improved their understanding on RKC, particularly on its benefits. The initial gap analysis and the follow up activities were discussed and identified. According to the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) 2012-2014, ROCB-AP has been assisting customs administrations in acceding to the RKC with a view to meeting the target of 18 CPs in June 2014. In response to the request from the Commissioner General of Maldives Customs in June 2013, ROCB-AP decided to offer this timely technical assistance and managed to secure the support from CCF Japan for this workshop. Maldives Customs administration highly appreciated this timely assistance. Both ROCB AP and Japan Customs would continue to support Maldives Customs to join the RKC. ROCB-AP would like to express the highest appreciation to Japan Customs, as well as CCF Japan for their strong support for this workshop.

WCO ROCB-AP contributed to the ADB Workshop on Time Release Study (TRS) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Responding to the request from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mr. Jing Cheng of ROCB AP joined the WCO expert team to conduct the workshop on Time Release Study in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 21-22 August 2013. It was attended by 23 participants from customs departments of five Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) countries, namely Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan financed by the ADB. The objective of this workshop was to enable customs officials to explore options for employing the TRS to strengthen customs cooperation among CAREC members. WCO experts systematically introduced the WCO instruments and tools, TRS overview, purpose and methodology, the development of the process map, work plan and timetable and the use of WCO TRS software.



Participants at the Workshop on Time Release Study (TRS) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

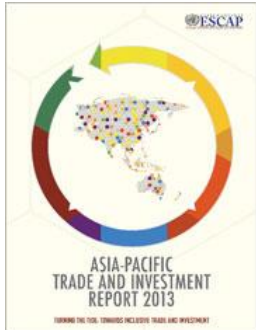
This workshop also provided participants with an opportunity to exchange the information and experience on their customs procedures and the implementation of TRS. Uzbekistan customs introduced the results of TRS implemented in 2011 and 2012, which provided useful information for the other four participating countries. At the end of the workshop, participants agreed to discuss TRS implementation at the next CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee meeting in September. All participants expressed the willingness to disseminate the acquired knowledge and ideas among their colleagues.



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS (PUBLICATIONS)

Publication Highlight

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2013: Unacceptably high trade costs undermine benefits for least developed and landlocked developing countries, Published November 2013



Along with improving the availability of, and access to trade related infrastructure, streamlining trade procedures has become essential for firms in developing countries to participate effectively in the regional and global production networks that are responsible for an increasing share of global trade flows. This year's Report uses three different metrics to track the progress of regional economies in terms of trade facilitation. Based on the findings of ESCAP's survey, despite the significant overall progress observed, implementation of specific trade facilitation measures in the region's developing economies is generally lacking. Not surprisingly, implementation of trade facilitation and paperless trade varies significantly across Asian countries: Singapore, Japan and the Republic of Korea lead the way, followed closely by Thailand. In contrast, the least

developed countries and landlocked developing countries from the region generally remain far behind in overall implementation of trade facilitation and paperless trade. It is encouraging, however, that many of these countries have established national trade facilitation bodies to facilitate both inter-agency and public-private sector collaboration on trade facilitation.

This Report also uses the most recent version of the ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database to review the performance of economies in the Asia-Pacific region. In most cases, it remains costlier to trade between Asian subregions than between Asian subregions and countries or regions outside Asia and the Pacific. For example, the cost of trading between the ASEAN-4 economies (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand) and SAARC-4 (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) is almost double than between the ASEAN-4 and the United States. Similarly, trade costs between North and Central Asia and the ASEAN-4 are more than twice those between North and Central Asia and the France, Germany and the United Kingdom (the EU-3).

The third metric used in the Report is a newly designed index measuring the overall trade facilitation performance of a country along the international supply chain. This index is based on the Trading Across Border indicators from the World Bank Doing Business Report and the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index of UNCTAD. The top five world performers (out of 180 economies) in terms of their connectivity to international supply chains are all Asia-Pacific economies, namely, Singapore; Hong Kong, China; the Republic of Korea; China; and Malaysia. In general, countries from East and South-East Asia have better Connectivity Index scores than those from other subregions in Asia and the Pacific. Mongolia, although landlocked, obtains a higher ranking compared to many other developing countries since it uses China's maritime ports.

Much of this year's Report is devoted to an examination of the circumstances under which trade, investment, and trade facilitation can support inclusive growth: that is, growth which benefits all. The main message of the Report is that the region's dominant export led growth model should not be abandoned but needs to be supplemented by a range of complementary measures and policies, not the least social protection and employment policies to make trade and investment more inclusive. Recommendations related to trade facilitation featured in the report include (1) Improve (behind-the-border) domestic business environment, including availability and access to logistics and financial infrastructure and services, to facilitate sharing and transmission of benefits from trade to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); (2) Facilitate transfer of technology and build capacity for adoption of paperless trade and e-commerce, especially for MSMEs. (3) Support development of economic corridors for increased participation of the local communities in providing trade support services. (5) Facilitate agricultural trade as part of an overall strategy to address food security, safety, nutrition issues, taking into account both the need for increased income as well as cheaper imports for the poor.

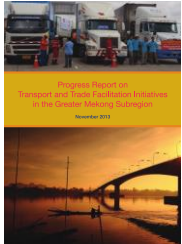
Available at: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/aptir2668.asp>



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS (PUBLICATIONS)

ADB

Progress Report on GMS Transport and Trade Facilitation, Published November 2013

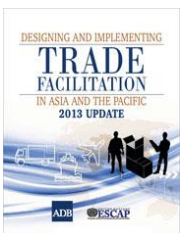


The progress report details the recent key milestones and challenges in implementing TTF in the

GMS, which include among others: establishment of the legal basis for sustainable implementation of TTF in the GMS, institutional mechanisms firmly in place (i.e. National Transport Facilitation Committees established, high-level/ministerial advisory body established for addressing disputes and regional issues, subcommittees to address transport, customs immigration, and quarantine established), opening of additional border crossings, expansion of transport routes, facilitation of key border crossing formalities, and close cooperation with the private sector in implementing GMS TTF.

ADB-ESCAP

Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific 2013 Update, Published September 2013



This is the second edition of *Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific*, co-published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the UN Economics and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Since the first edition was co-published by ADB and ESCAP in 2009, noticeable trade facilitation reforms have been designed and implemented at both domestic and regional levels. Substantial progress in trade facilitation has been observed in many countries in Asia and the Pacific. At the same time, various challenges for further advancing trade facilitation still lie ahead. This reference book aims to support the implementation of trade facilitation measures in Asia and the Pacific. It attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice in trade facilitation. It provides operational guidance on how to assess the status of trade facilitation, what measures and reforms are necessary, how to design trade facilitation initiatives, how to implement them at national and regional levels, and which organizations can help.

Available online at: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/adbescapbook13.asp>

ESCAP

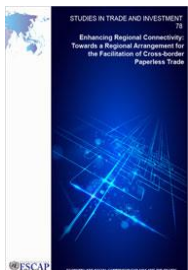
Towards a National Integrated and Sustainable Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism: BPA+, Published January 2014



The global trade facilitation performance surveys and databases now available are useful benchmarking and awareness raising tools, but they do not provide sufficiently detailed information to develop or update national trade facilitation action plans. In addition, while trade and transport facilitation assessments of various scopes are often conducted in least developed countries or landlocked developing countries, these assessments are typically ad-hoc in nature, with little coordination among development partners and limited buy-in by the governmental agencies concerned. The trade and transport facilitation monitoring mechanism should also provide sufficiently concrete and detailed information so as to enable identification of specific trade facilitation measures to be prioritized for further improvement. Considerations should also be given to ensuring the sustainability of the performance monitoring and improvement mechanism.

Available online at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2683.asp>

Enhancing Regional Connectivity: Towards a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade, Studies in Trade and Investment No. 78, Published January 2014



Facilitating cross-border paperless trade poses more challenges than those involved in implementing paperless trade at the national level, mainly because it requires the coordination and harmonization of different legal, regulatory and technical requirements in two or more countries. Prepared by compiling the outcomes from various projects and other work undertaken in the area of cross-border paperless trade, including the implementation of ESCAP Resolution 68/3 and the United Nations Development Account 7th Tranche Project, entitled "Strengthening the capacity of developing and transition economies to link to global supply



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS (PUBLICATIONS)

chains through the reduction of trade obstacles", this publication comprehensively assesses the current status of paperless trade in the region and beyond, elaborates on the need for having regional arrangements to facilitate cross-border paperless trade, and provides specific direction and details for putting a practical regional arrangement in place.

Available online at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2684.asp>

Trade facilitation potential of Asian transit agreements in the context of the WTO negotiations, published January 2014



This paper examines how freedom of transit and transit facilitation are addressed in trade, transport as well as transit specific agreements in the ESCAP region, with a view to identifying good practices and the extent to which existing agreements meet the transit facilitation provisions set out in the draft text of the WTO trade facilitation agreement (TFA). Following an overview of the provisions on transit found in 153 preferential trade agreements involving ESCAP countries, the study provides a more detailed analysis of a sample of 19 international transport and transit agreements in Asia in terms of their trade facilitation potential. Although some useful provisions for transit facilitation considered during the WTO negotiations did not find their way into the final TFA, the text agreed in Bali strengthens the basis for implementation of freedom of transit in the Asia-Pacific region.

Available online at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/swp114.pdf>

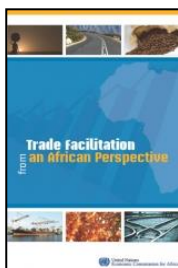
Impacts of trade facilitation measures on poverty and inclusive growth: Case studies from Asia, Published December 2013



This publication is a compilation of research studies carried out by ARTNeT (Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network) researchers in South, Southeast and East Asian countries. The book starts with a review of existing literature on trade facilitation and definition of poverty reductions and its indicators. It also provides a conceptual framework for trade facilitation and poverty reduction including transmission channels between them.

Available online at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2687.pdf>

UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)



Trade Facilitation from an African Perspective, Published November 2013

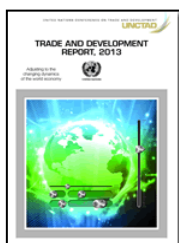
This paper provides a thorough analysis of key trade facilitation issues from an African perspective in the context of the WTO trade facilitation negotiations. The premise of this analysis is that there is a consensus in the empirical literature, regardless of the methodology utilized, on the positive and significant impact trade facilitation could have for Africa's trade performance. Taking some distance from the negotiations as such, it rather takes a technical stance and focuses on key aspects related to trade facilitation, as outlined below.

Available online at

http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/publications/trade_facilitation_eng.pdf

UNCTAD

Trade and Development Report (TDR) 2013, Published September 2013



The Trade and Development report analyses current economic trends and major policy issues of international concern, and makes suggestions for addressing these issues at various levels. TDR 2013 notes that developed countries must address the fundamental causes of the crisis: rising income inequality, the diminishing economic role of the State, the predominant role of a poorly regulated financial sector and an international system prone to global imbalances; while developing and transition economies that have been overly dependent on exports need to adopt a more balanced growth strategy that gives a greater role to domestic and regional demand. These



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS (PUBLICATIONS)

countries should rely increasingly on domestic sources for investment finance. It affirms that central banks should enlarge their mandates beyond inflation control and, through a credit policy, play a much more engaged role financing the real economy.

Available online at http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2013_en.pdf

Review of Maritime Transport 2013, Published 2013

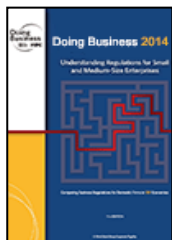


The UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport, produced by the Division on Technology and Logistics, is the acknowledged United Nations source of statistics and analysis on seaborne trade, the world fleet, freight rates, port traffic, and the latest trends in the legal and regulatory environment for international maritime transport. As with all previous issues published since 1968, the Review of Maritime Transport 2013 contains a wealth of analysis and unique data. The 2013 edition of the Review of Maritime Transport estimates global seaborne trade to have increased by 4.3 per cent, with the total reaching over 9 billion tons in 2012 for the first time ever. Driven in particular by growing domestic demand in China and increased intra-Asian and South-South trade, seaborne trade nevertheless remains subject to persistent downside risks facing the world economy and trade.

Available online at <http://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=753>

WORLD BANK

Doing Business 2014: Understanding Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises, Published October 2013



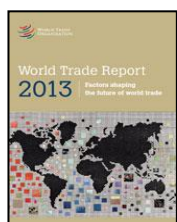
Doing Business 2014: Understanding Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises assesses regulations affecting domestic firms in 189 economies and ranks the economies in 10 areas of business regulation, such as starting a business, resolving insolvency and trading across borders. This year's report data cover regulations measured from June 2012 through May 2013. The report is the 11th edition of the Doing Business series.

Available online at

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/~media/GIAWB/Doing%20Business/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB14-Full-Report.pdf>

WTO

World Trade Report 2013: Factors shaping the future of world trade, Published 2013



The World Trade Report 2013 examines likely trends in world trade and how current and future economic, social and political factors might weigh on these trends. Relationships are not uni-directional, with trade being both the cause and effect of certain developments. The Report starts with an overview of past, present and future economic activity and trade, highlighting chronological milestones, trends and possible scenarios. It stresses in particular the importance of technology and politics in this narrative. While much economic literature focuses on these factors, broader socio-economic factors are also key. A particular concern of this report is the effect that

likely trends will have on the multilateral trading system and the challenges it faces as well as ways that the multilateral trading system could influence outcomes (see Section E). Section F concludes by summarizing key factors to watch.

Available online at http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/world_trade_report13_e.pdf

Global Value Chains in a Changing World, Published 2013



Global value chains are a major driving force of globalization. This volume is the product of a dialogue with policy makers in the Asian region, where economists, political scientists, management specialists, development thinkers and business executives joined together in an exploration of the multiple dimensions of supply chains: what drives them, how they operate, how they adapt in a rapidly changing world, and what they mean for development and for policy.

Available online at http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/aid4tradeglobalvalue13_e.pdf



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS (PUBLICATIONS)

World Economic Forum

The Global Competitiveness Report 2013–2014, Published 2013



This year's Report features a record number of 148 economies, and thus continues to be the most comprehensive assessment of its kind. It contains a detailed profile for each of the economies included in the study, as well as an extensive section of data tables with global rankings covering over 100 indicators. This Report remains the flagship publication within the Forum's Global Competitiveness and Benchmarking Network, which produces a number of related research studies aimed at supporting countries in their transformation efforts.

Available online at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalCompetitivenessReport_2013-

14.pdf

Online Resources

ADB

GMS Transport and Trade Facilitation Knowledge Portal, Announced on 22 November 2013

The GMS Transport and Trade Facilitation Knowledge Portal (www.gms-cbta.org) is expected to serve as: (i) an information exchange hub for transport and trade facilitation, (ii) a tool for increased collaboration between GMS countries in order to increase awareness on TTF issues and disseminate best practices, (iii) A public interface and repository for data and statistics on border monitoring indicators, indicators for corridor performance, traffic and trade data.

ESCAP

Updated (August 2013) ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database Available

The ESCAP Trade and Investment Division, in support to the ARTNeT research programme on trade facilitation, initiated development of a bilateral trade cost database in 2010 in an effort to increase understanding of the cost of trading between countries in Asia and the Pacific and beyond. The trade cost measure, based on Novy (2012), is a comprehensive all-inclusive measure based on micro-theory and calculated using macro-economic data, providing an alternative measure of trade facilitation performance. In late 2011, United Nations ESCAP and the World Bank (WB) joined hands to develop a common standard methodology for calculating comprehensive international trade costs and provide the research and policy community with a global reference. The resulting ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database issued in December 2012 covered 178 countries. The current version includes data from 1995 to 2011 for over 180 countries. It is available below, as well as on the World Bank website. The database can be accessed at: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/trade-costs.asp>

New International Supply Chain Connectivity (ISCC) Index Available

The ESCAP International Supply Chain Connectivity (ISCC) Index is developed to measure the overall trade facilitation performance of a country along the international supply chain. ISCC is based on the trading across border (TAB) indicators from the World Bank Doing Business Report and the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI) of UNCTAD. The Index provides an overall performance score for a particular country based on its performance in terms of (1) TAB underlying import indicators (i.e. number of documents, time, and cost involved in import); (2) TAB underlying export indicators (i.e. number of documents, time, and cost involved in export); and (3) the UNCTAD LSCI score. Equal weight (one third) is given to import, export and liner shipping performance for non-landlocked countries. The current version of this database includes the data from 2006-2012 for 179 countries. The database can be accessed at: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/iscci.asp>



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS (PUBLICATIONS)

UNCTAD

New Online Repository on National Trade Facilitation Bodies launched

The Trade Facilitation Section of UNCTAD launches the renewed and interactive online Repository on National Trade Facilitation Bodies gathering more than 80 country cases. The repository can be accessed at <http://unctad.org/TFcommittees>

UNCTAD has actively participated and supported the establishment of TF bodies in developing countries, which have increased exponentially in the last 30 years. In line with this long-standing commitment, UNCTAD launches the renewed on-line Repository on National TF bodies around the world. With a more interactive and user-friendly interface, the on-line repository is expected to assist member States in creating or strengthening TF bodies as well as provide useful information about country-cases from different geographical regions on the establishment and management of TF bodies. Collected through research and surveys, the country-cases and data contained in the online repository provide information on different kinds of TF bodies which could be identified as: a. PRO-committees, b. National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committees, c. National TF Committees, and d. WTO Negotiations on Trade Facilitation Support Groups.



UPCOMING EVENTS

REGIONAL

- Sub-Committee on Customs Procedures (SCCP) Meeting, Ningbo, China, 19-21 February 2014 (APEC)
- Port Security Drills and Exercise Workshop, Malaysia (ADB SERD)
- ESCAP-EIF-UNOPS "Asian NIUs Capacity Building Programme- Pilot Workshop", Bangkok, Thailand, 3-6 March 2014 (ESCAP)
- Technical Working Group Meeting on the One Borneo Quarantine Program, Brunei Darussalam, March 2014 (ADB SERD)
- Time Release Study (TRS) Workshop, March 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Inception Workshop, March 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- CAREC Federation of Carrier and Forwarder Associations (CFCFA) Meeting, March 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Workshop on CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM), March 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Workshop on Operational Risk Management for Quarantine and Human Health, Indonesia, March 2014 (ADB SERD)
- Expert Group Meeting on Model Paperless Trade Provisions in FTAs/RTAs, 21 April 2014 (ESCAP)
- Capacity Building Workshop on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade, 22-24 April, 2014, Bangkok, Thailand (ESCAP)
- Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade, 22-24 April 2014, Bangkok (ESCAP)
- Customs Trainers' Training, Shanghai Customs College (SCC) , China, April 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention and Self-Assessment Tools, April 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Port Security Drills and Exercise Workshop, Brunei Darussalam, April 2014 (ADB SERD)
- Technical Seminar on Quarantine Pests/Diseases, Venue TBD, April 2014 (ADB SERD)
- 9th BIMP-EAGA CIQS Working Group Meeting, Philippines, April 2014 (ADB SERD)
- Publication of Simplified Port Facility Security Program Guidebook and Compendium of Quarantine Training Resources, May 2014 (ADB SERD)
- Joint Customs Control (JCC) Phase 2 Workshop and Seminar on Coordinated Border Management (CBM), May 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Learning Opportunity for CAREC NFPs: Modernizing SPS Measures - the Baltic Experience, May 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- Business Domain Committee (BDC); Technology and Methodology Committee(TMC); Tourism, Travel and Leisure (TT&L) Meetings, Chiang Mai, Thailand, May 2014 (AFACT)
- Steering Committee Meeting, Chiang Mai, Thailand, May 2014 (AFACT)
- CAREC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), Kyrgyz Republic, June 2014 (ADB CAREC)
- 5th CFCFA Annual Meeting, July 2014, (ADB CAREC)
- Supply Chain Management and FIATA Standards Trainers' Training, July 2014, (ADB CAREC)



UPCOMING EVENTS

NATIONAL

- WCO National Workshop on RKC for Brunei, 13-16 January 2014 (WCO-ROCB)
- Business Case Development Workshop for Malaysia, 24-28 February 2014 (WCO-ROCB)
- SASEC National Training Workshop on Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism (TTFMM): BPA+ in
 - Bhutan, 10-14 March 14 (ADB-ESCAP)
 - Nepal, 15-18 March 14 (ADB-ESCAP)
 - Bangladesh, 21-24 April 14 (ADB-ESCAP)
- National Training on Electronic Traceability for Agricultural Trade Facilitation in
 - Bangladesh, March 2014 (ESCAP) (tbc)
 - Nepal, March 2014 (ESCAP) (tbc)
 - Bhutan, May/June 2014 (ESCAP) (tbc)
 - Cambodia, April 2014 (ESCAP) (tbc)
 - Myanmar, June 2014 (ESCAP) (tbc)
 - Lao PDR, June 2014 (ESCAP) (tbc)
- SATNET Project Steering Committee Meeting in Bogor, Indonesia, 1 May 2014 (ESCAP)



GLOBAL

WTO members gear up for trade facilitation deal, The Jakarta Post, 27 January 2014

A number of World Trade Organization (WTO) members agreed on Saturday to step up efforts to implement a trade facilitation deal that could add US\$1 trillion to the global economy. The commitment was achieved during a mini-ministerial meeting of the WTO attended by 22 countries, including the US, the European Union (EU), Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, Nigeria, Switzerland and Turkey and WTO director general Roberto Azevedo, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF). The trade facilitation deal was one of the three accords achieved during the 160-member WTO ministerial meeting in Bali last December, marking its first-ever global trade deal since its creation in 1995.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/01/27/wto-members-gear-trade-facilitation-deal.html>

Roadmap published to help material handling, logistics industries identify key trends through 2025, DC velocity, 22 January 2014

A long-awaited roadmap has been published that will help the material handling and logistics industry identify key supply chain trends over the next 11 years and determine ways to capitalize on them, MHI, the material handling industry's trade group, said. The 67-page "U.S. Roadmap for Material Handling & Logistics," released on Jan 15, was developed over 18 months by more than 100 participants from industry, academia, trade association, the media, and government. During four roundtable events between April and June, they offered suggestions on the capabilities that the industry needs to develop to take advantage of trends that will evolve between today and 2025.

<http://www.dcvelocity.com/articles/20140122-mhi-roadmap/>

ITC publishes business guide on new WTO trade facilitation agreement, ITC, 16 December 2013

Following the approval of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Ninth Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, earlier this month, the International Trade Centre (ITC) has published a guide for businesses and policymakers in developing countries explaining the operational elements and benefits of the agreement. 'It is important that traders understand from the start

what new measures will come into force, so that they can make plans accordingly,' said Arancha González, ITC's Executive Director. 'Understanding the rules will also allow businesses to use them to reduce the costs of trading' The agreement, which will cut red tape and ease and simplify customs formalities, is expected to increase global GDP by US\$ 1 trillion and create 21 million jobs, according to the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

<http://www.intracen.org/news/itc-publishes-business-guide-on-new-wto-trade-facilitation-agreement/>

Bangladesh – China-India-Myanmar

Diplomats detail problem areas in BCIM trade ties, Indian Express, 11 January 2014

Tariff and non-tariff barriers, complicated system of visa allotment of India and poor connectivity are two major impediments of trade ties between India and the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) countries, say the consul corps of those countries. Wang Xuefeng, Consul General of The People's Republic of China in Kolkata said that in 2013, 7,00,000 Indians visited China whereas only one lakh Chinese came to India. "There is still a big gap to be bridged. One of the big reasons for this huge gap is the complicated process of visa application in India. Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Consul General of Nepal in Kolkata, said removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers at the earliest was one of the utmost necessities.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/diplomats-detail-problem-areas-in-bcim-trade-ties/>

BELARUS – CHINA

Belarus, China to set up trade and logistics center, BelTA, 22 January 2014

Belarus and China agreed to set up a joint trade and logistics center, Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich said in an interview with China Daily in Beijing, BelTA has learnt. "We have agreed with Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang to set up a transport and logistics center. We have not decided on the location yet, but I think it may be on of the airports at the border with the European Union - Brest or Grodno Oblasts," the Belarusian head of government said.

<http://news.belta.by/en/news/econom?id=738185>



CHINA

China to amend laws for admin procedure cuts, Xinhua, 23 December 2014

China's top legislature has started review of a motion to streamline business administration through changes to seven laws, exempting more items from central government approval. Tabled by the State Council, China's Cabinet, the bill involves amendments of laws concerning administration of pharmaceuticals, customs procedures, fisheries, marine environment protection, metrology and the tobacco monopoly.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-12/23/c_132990082.htm

CHINA-KAZAKHSTAN

China, Kazakhstan to promote trade cooperation, China Daily, 7 September 2013

China and Kazakhstan pledged to promote bilateral trade and energy cooperation and push forward their natural gas pipeline project. The two countries made the pledge in a joint declaration issued after talks between visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Kazakh counterpart, Nursultan Nazarbayev. In the document, the two sides vowed to keep on tapping potential in economic and trade cooperation, optimizing bilateral trade structure, promoting trade facilitation, building more platforms and working toward the goal of increasing bilateral trade volume to \$40 billion in 2015.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013xivisitcenterasia/2013-09/07/content_16952087.htm

INDIA

Reforms and measures undertaken by CBEC to facilitate trade, SME Times, 11 January 2014

Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has been an early starter in introducing reforms and substantial reforms have already been carried out in the Central Excise laws and procedures since 1994. The object of these reforms was to repose a greater trust in the taxpayers and bring about a substantial improvement in the delivery system and compliance through automation and trade facilitation measures.

<http://www.smetimes.in/smetimes/in-depth/2014/Jan/11/reforms-and-measures-undertaken-by-cbec-to-facilitate-trade.html>

ADB to give \$400 million loan to boost India's private infrastructure investment, Financial Express, 22 January 2014

Manila based multi-lateral funding agency Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide \$ 400 million (Rs 2,472.4 crore) loan to boost private investment in the infrastructure sector in the country. "The ADB and the Government of India today signed an agreement for USD 400 million first tranche loan under the Accelerating Infrastructure Investment Facility in India (AIIFI) to support the government's efforts to accelerate infrastructure growth through increased private sector investment," ADB said in a release.

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/adb-to-give-400-mn-loan-to-boost-indias-pvt-infrastructure-investment/1219884>

All business entities may now use advance rulings before actual trade happens, Business Standard, 23 January 2014

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has widened the scope of advance rulings in its recent agreement on trade facilitation following the Bali Summit. In addition to the public sector enterprises, now even private organisations - corporates or private bodies engaged in import or export may prefer advance ruling before actual trade of goods. This means Indian companies importing from overseas and foreign countries importing from India – be it public limited or private owned are entitled to advance rulings from the destinations countries respectively.

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/all-business-entities-may-now-use-advance-rulings-before-actual-trade-happens-114012300607_1.html

INDONESIA

Empowering customs to facilitate Trade, Jakarta Post, 25 January 2014

The centerpiece of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) "Bali Package" of trade agreements, finalized at the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference meeting last December, is the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (ATF)(...) The agreement involves specific commitments to reform, simplify and modernize procedures, and increase transparency and predictability for traders.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/01/25/empowering-customs-facilitate-trade.html>



IRAN – KAZAKHSTAN

Iranian, Kazakh Ports Start Negotiations for Trade Ties, Tasnim, 24 December 2013

Trade delegations representing Kazakhstan and Iran on Tuesday discussed the procedures to enhance commercial ties between the two countries' ports on the rim of the Caspian Sea. A trade delegation from the Kazakh seaport of Aktau started an official visit to the Iranian northern province of Mazandaran today in a bid to explore avenues for the further expansion of trade ties between the two countries.

<http://www.tasnimnews.com/English/Home/Single/230057>

NEPAL

Nepal-China trade meet concludes, The Himalayan, 12 August 2013

The 4th Nepal-China Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee meeting concluded today with signing of an agreement to simplify procedural problems at the customs point and address complexities facing duty-free entry of Nepali products into the Chinese market. During the two-day meeting, joint secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies Jib Raj Koirala explained host of problems faced by the country that was preventing trade between Nepal and China from taking off.

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Nepal-China+trade+meet+concludes&NewsID=387122>

PAKISTAN – TURKEY

Pakistan, Turkey agree for preferential trade agreement, The Nations, 24 December 2013

Pakistan and Turkey have agreed to conclude preferential trade agreement to promote trade between the two countries. The understanding came at a meeting between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip in Islamabad on Tuesday. Later in a press stake out along with his Turkish counterpart, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif expressed the confidence that this economic framework will significantly contribute to trade facilitation between the two friendly Muslim countries.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/islamabad/24-Dec-2013/pakistan-turkey-agree-for-preferential-trade-agreement>

PHILIPPINES

Exporters see trade, processing potential in ecozones, Business World Online, 3 January 2014

TRANSFORMING the country's economic zones into trade facilitation hubs can boost the country's competitiveness amid an increasingly integrated Southeast Asia, Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (Philexport) said in a recent statement. Quoting a study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), Philexport said: "[T]he overall performance of SEZs (special economic zones) can still be improved."

<http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Economy&title=Exporters-see-trade,-processing-potential-in-ecozones&id=81495>

Congress of the Philippines: Align Philippine Customs administration with global standards, 4 Traders, 6 January 2014

To achieve efficiency and negate opportunities for corruption, there is a need to modernize and upgrade the country's customs administration in consonance with international standards, a lawmaker today stressed.

<http://www.4-traders.com/news/Congress-of-the-Philippines--Align-Philippine-Customs-administration-with-global-standards--17757307/>

SRI LANKA

Customs for facilitating legitimate trade in Sri Lanka, Daily Mirror, 28 January 2014

January 26th was International Customs Day. The theme for this year is, "Communication: Sharing Information for Better Cooperation". Trade facilitation measures are important means of achieving improved communication and transparency, and hence the focus of this article is on the subject with reference to Sri Lanka to mark the International Customs Day this year.

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/business/features/42200-customs-for-facilitating-legitimate-trade-in-sri-lanka.html>

VIETNAM

Fourth Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge Completes "Missing Link" in the Greater Mekong Subregion, The Establishment Post, 2 January 2014

A new bridge straddling the Mekong River between Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) is open for business, signaling completion of physical



works along one of the Greater Mekong Subregion's (GMS) most critical economic corridors. "The bridge is the 'missing link' along the North-South Economic Corridor, which is the main land route for trade between Yunnan province in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Thailand, as well as being a gateway for connectivity between the PRC and Association of Southeast Asian (Asean) countries," said Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President Stephen Groff.

<http://www.establishmentpost.com/new-thai-laos-friendship-bridge-completes-missing-link-in-the-greater-mekong-subregion/#ixzz2rZodck5z>

Vietnam's trade turnover through e-customs procedures hit \$252.8 billion in 2013, Xinhua, 3 January 2014

Vietnam's export and import turnover through e-customs procedures hit 252.8 billion U.S. dollars in 2013, up 25 percent year-on-year, said a report posted Friday on the website of the Ministry of Finance (MOF). The report released at a conference on reviewing tasks of 2013 and implementing tasks of 2014 in Hanoi on Thursday said the export-import turnover through e-customs procedures accounts for 96 percent of the country's total export and import revenue.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/business/2014-01/03/c_133017349.htm

WB stresses importance of logistics, waterway transport to Vietnam's growth, Global Time, 8 January 2014

Efficient logistics and greater investment in inland and coastal waterways can build a foundation of future growth for Vietnam, the World Bank said on Tuesday. Released in Vietnam's capital Hanoi, the two WB reports, namely "Efficient Logistics: A Key to Vietnam's Competitiveness" and "Facilitating Trade through Competitive, Low-Carbon Transport", provide new insights on Vietnam's freight logistics sector, including inland and coastal waterways, highlighting that it can be a new driver of growth for Vietnam.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/836328.shtml>

SOUTH ASIA

EU wants to help SAARC with regional cooperation, The Himalayan Times, 8 January 2014

Ambassador of the European Union to Nepal, Rensje Teerink, today said the EU wants to share its

experience of regionalism and extend help in areas of trade facilitation and public diplomacy to SAARC countries. Speaking in a programme titled 'EU-SAARC relations: Towards deeper engagement' in the Capital today, Teerink pointed that the EU has expertise in achieving better cooperation among regional members, and would like to share the knowhow with the South Asian countries.

<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=EU+wants+to+help+SAARC+with+regional+cooperation&NewsID=402350>

Economic integration, smooth trade in South Asia stressed, the Frontier Post, 17 January 2014

The economic integration and smooth trade in South Asia is need of the hour to alleviate abject poverty and usher an era of progress, development and prosperity in the region. (...) stressed the need for closer co-operation among the private and public sectors of all member countries of the SAARC for better economic and trade relations mainly aimed at welfare and greater weal of the people of the region.

<http://www.thefrontierpost.com/article/69023/Economic-integration-smooth-trade-in-South-Asia-stressed-69023/>

Red tape obstacle in trade among neighbors in subcontinent: Study, TNN, 29 January 2014

Commerce ministers from Saarc countries who met recently spoke of increasing trade within the region but a study shows how the subregion in South Asia comprising India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan remains one of the toughest places to move goods due to archaic procedures. Sample this: it may take up to a month for pulses, juices and carpets to move within three countries, when the actual driving time is much less. The study done by Delhi-based thinktank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) for Asian Development Bank and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has detailed how trade through three key corridors in the four countries faces major delay because of tardy procedural clearances.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/Red-tape-obstacle-in-trade-among-neighbours-in-subcontinent-Study/articleshow/29522751.cms>



OTHER REGIONS

AFRICA

Rwanda: Trade Facilitation Agreement to Reduce Barriers to Trade, All Africa, 18 December 2013

Rwanda is optimistic that the new World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) which was recently signed in Indonesia will help cut down barriers to trade and boost the country's exports.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201312200607.html>

EGYPT

Foreign Trade Minister says multilateral agreement to benefit Egypt, Daily News, 7 January 2014

Foreign Trade and Industry Minister Mounir Fakhry Abdel-Nour announced that Egypt participated in the signing of a multilateral agreement that will help preserve the rights of developing countries. The agreement was signed during the World Trade Organisation's 9th ministerial conference held in Indonesia in December 2013.

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/01/07/foreign-trade-minister-says-multilateral-agreement-to-benefit-egypt/#sthash.e79y6Flr.dpuf>

EUROPE

Neighbor Intensifies Relations with International Trade Center, FINBAY, 21 January 2014

The Government of Sweden stands ready to support the International Trade Centre (ITC) in its efforts to help developing countries implement the recent Trade Facilitation Agreement. ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

<http://www.finnbay.com/neighbor-sweden-to-intensify-relations-with-international-trade-center/>

NIGERIA – GERMANY

Nigeria, Germany Strengthen Economic Ties Through Trade Facilitation, All Africa, 15 January 2014

Nigeria and the Federal Republic of Germany are set to partner on trade facilitation and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) development as part of efforts to strengthen the already existing economic ties between the two countries.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201401150393.html>

OMAN

Regional seminar identifies norms for facilitating trade, OMAN Daily, 20 January 2014

The regional seminar dedicated for the GCC States and Jordan on 'Evaluating and Identifying the Requirements and Priorities in the Negotiations with World Trade Organisation for Facilitating Trade', hosted by the Sultanate represented by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry kicked off at Barr Al Jissah Resort yesterday and lasts for five days.

<http://main.omanobserver.om/?p=49591>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES-CHINA

Dubai Customs Delegation to Visit China to Promote Trade, 14 September 2013

A delegation from the Dubai Customs will start a five-day visit to China on Sunday, with efforts to promote trade and share experiences with their Chinese counterparts, the Dubai Customs said on Saturday. "Our visit to China is set with the objective to enhance commercial trade relations through coordination and exchange of experiences with the China Customs, and to learn about its customs and commercial practices, aiming at optimizing coordination of customs procedures between both parties," said Ahmed Butti Ahmed, director general of the Dubai Customs in a statement.

<http://english.cri.cn/6966/2013/09/14/3441s787683.htm>

ZAMBIA

Zambia to benefit from WTO single trade window, Zambia Daily Mail, 27 December 2013

ZAMBIA should revise its border operation and institutional reforms to effectively benefit from the newly signed US\$1 trillion World Trade Organisation (WTO) single window for trade logistics deal. (...) Creation of a single window for trade logistics is one of the sure paths towards overall trade facilitation and realisation of benefits from WTO deal and ZRA is keen to play its role on this aspect," Mr Kufekisa said.

<http://daily-mail.co.zm/blog/2013/12/27/zambia-to-benefit-from-wto-single-trade-window/>

WCO

WCO issues Dublin Resolution on the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, European Shippers, 13 December 2013

The Dublin Resolution, which was issued at the conclusion of the Policy Commission meeting in Dublin, Ireland on 11 December 2013, welcomes the WTO Agreement On Trade Facilitation (the "Trade Facilitation Agreement"), as embodied in the Bali



NEWS

Package's Ministerial Decision, adopted at the WTO's Ninth Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia from 3 to 7 December 2013, under the framework of the Doha Development Agenda. The Dublin Resolution emphasises the commitment of the WCO to the efficient implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

<http://www.europeanshippers.eu/news/regulators/wco-issues-dublin-resolution-wto-agreement-trade-facilitation/>

WTO-TRINIDAD and TOBAGO

Ministry hosts trade facilitation workshop, *Guardian*, 11 September 2013

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment in collaboration with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) began a week-long Trade Facilitation National Needs Assessment Workshop on Monday. The five-day event is being hosted at the Capital Plaza, Port-of-Spain and is designed to assess T&T's compliance with the rules and obligations currently being negotiated in the WTO Forum on Trade Facilitation.

<http://guardian.co.tt/business/2013-09-11/ministry-hosts-trade-facilitation-workshop>

WTO - OTHER

WTO Agreement to Facilitate Agriculture Trade, *Food Product Design*, 9 December 2013

BALI, INDONESIA—The World Trade Organization (WTO) has reached an agreement that could benefit the global agricultural market. (...) The package also focuses on a number of issues related to development, including food security in developing countries as well as cotton. It also includes a political commitment to reduce export subsidies in agriculture and keep them at low levels, according to the WTO.

<http://www.foodproductdesign.com/news/2013/12/wto-agreement-to-facilitate-agriculture-trade.aspx>

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