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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Fifteenth Session
Rome, 30 March - 3 April 2020
Written reports from relevant international organizations - The World Customs Organization (WCO) Overview
Agenda item 13.2
Prepared by the WCO
English only





WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The World Customs Organization (WCO), established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.

Today, the WCO represents 183 Customs administrations across the globe at all stages of social and economic development that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. They are divided into 6 regions. As the global center of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself 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.

The WCO's work can be categorized into five main areas: setting standards for a number of diverse but inter-linked Customs procedures; promoting international cooperation including information exchange; managing risk; building sustainable capacity including the delivery of quality technical assistance through Customs officials; and, enhancing the image of Customs as a core function of a state service by emphasizing its contribution to national economic prosperity and social development.

Traditionally, to mark International Customs Day each year, the WCO Secretariat dedicates a theme that is pertinent to the challenges facing the global Customs community. The WCO is dedicating 2020 to the contribution of Customs towards a sustainable future where social, economic, health and environmental needs are at the heart of our actions, with the slogan *"Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet"*.

Indeed, Customs is uniquely mandated and positioned at borders to play a prominent role across the international supply chain, ensuring a sustainable, secure, and inclusive future for all. Therefore, with only 10 years left to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and given the direct links between Customs' strategic mission and several of the SDGs, it is important for Customs to meet all the environmental, economic, health and social challenges while scaling up its ongoing efforts to respond effectively in a more proactive manner.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE WCO AND IPPC SECRETARIATS

1. Agreement

There are several matters which are of common interest to the WCO and the IPPC Secretariat to help facilitate the international trade of plants and plant products in a safe and efficient manner. With the purpose of promoting cooperation on these matters of common interest pertaining to their respective mandates and helping implement related decisions by the two respective governing bodies, the FAO on behalf of the IPPC Secretariat and the WCO agreed to establish a formal relationship for bilateral collaboration and signed an Agreement at the WCO Headquarters in Brussels on 19 June 2018.

For more information, please see;

- WCO Website www.wcoomd.org (Some documents and publications are restricted.)
- WCO News (Magazine) <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/wco-news-magazine.aspx>
- Annual Reports

2. Joint Work Plan

Based on the Agreement signed in June 2018, the WCO and IPPC Secretariats agreed on a Joint Work Plan for Cooperation (2019-2022) between the two Organizations on 18 March 2019. The Joint Work Plan consolidates the major activities for bilateral cooperation and explores further areas of joint work between the two Secretariats for the coming three years. This period coincides with the WCO Strategic Plan and also covers the International Year of Plant Health in 2020.

The Joint Work Plan mentions seven areas of cooperation: (i) joint events, especially in the area of trade facilitation; (ii) communication and advocacy; (iii) cross-border e-commerce; (iv) electronic data exchange (e-Phyto); (v) sea containers; (vi) Single Window; and (vii) Time Release Study. These correspond to the priority areas of both Organizations.

3. Sea containers

The Terms of Reference of the IPPC Sea Container Task Force (SCTF) implies WCO membership in the SCTF. As such, a WCO Technical Officer participated in the 3rd meeting of the SCTF in September 2019 and provided information on the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards, the Authorized Economic Operator program (AEO) as well as on the WCO Data Model. The work on exploring possibilities to enhance the AEO concept with sea container cleanliness related issues/agricultural requirements and the use of the WCO Data Model to track phytosanitary risks associated with the movement of sea containers is to be continued.

4. IPPC ePhyto Project

The WCO is a member of the “ePhyto Project Advisory Committee (PAC)” and participated the 2nd PAC in December 2017 and 3rd PAC in July 2018. The WCO Secretariat, together with the IPPC Secretariat, is aligning the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 12 on Guidelines for Phytosanitary Certificates with the WCO Data Model in order to enable the seamless exchange of information and digital collaboration within the context of the Single Window environment.

5. Cross-border E-Commerce

At CPM-14 (2019) the WCO welcomed the IPPC community's support for continued cooperation with the IPPC Secretariat on E-Commerce, and indicated that the *WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce* provides for close collaboration between Customs and other relevant government agencies. In September 2019, the IPPC Secretariat met with a WCO Technical Officer responsible for E-Commerce to exchange information and identified the following opportunities to enhance collaboration between the IPPC Secretariat and the WCO on this topic:

- IPPC Secretariat participation in the WCO Working group on E-Commerce;
- WCO technical officer participation in the IPPC informal network of E-Commerce experts;

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- Annual Reports

- Explore the options for a joint IPPC-WCO guidance or policy paper on E-Commerce; and,
- Joint IPPC-WCO awareness raising and capacity building about phytosanitary risks associated with E-Commerce.

6. IPPC International Year of Plant Health 2020

Promoting the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) and contributing to global plant health events and awareness campaigns in 2020 is reflected in the Joint Work Plan. A representative of the IPPC Secretariat made a presentation on the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) at the WCO Permanent Technical Committee meeting in October 2019.

7. Participation of the WCO to the CPM

The WCO participated in the 14th Session of CPM (2019) and made a presentation on WCO activities and the collaboration between the two organizations. The WCO has also been invited and will participate to the 15th Session of CPM (**2020**) as an observer.

8. Participation of the IPPC Secretariat at WCO meetings

The IPPC Secretariat has been invited to participate as an observer in appropriate WCO meetings such as the E-Commerce Working Group, the WCO WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Working Group, the WCO SAFE Working Group and SAFE Sub-Groups, and the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC).

An IPPC Secretariat representative took part in a panel discussion that addressed the latest challenges and opportunities in cooperation between Customs and other border agencies at the PTC meeting in October 2019, together with representatives from the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission, the International Maritime Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE).

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