



**Economic Commission for Africa
Committee of Experts**
Thirty-fifth meeting

**African Union
Committee of Experts**
Second meeting

**Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union
Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary
Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the
Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic
Development**

Meeting of the Committee of Experts
Addis Ababa, 31 March - 2 April 2016

Report of the 7th Ordinary Meeting of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs. [final version]

Introduction

1. The 7th Ordinary Meeting of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs was held from 24 to 25 September 2015 at Parliamentary Building Headquarters, in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. The theme of the meeting was **Coordinated Border Management-Enhancing Security and Trade Facilitation**.

Participation

2. The following Member States attended the meeting: Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Central Africa Republic, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinee-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The Regional Economic Communities and International organizations present were CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, IGAD, SADC, UNCTAD and WCO respectively. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

Statement by Mr. Deo Rugwiza Magera, Director General of Democratic Republic of Congo Customs and Excise

3. The Director General of the Democratic Republic of Congo Customs and Excise welcomed all the Directors General and participants to the 7th Meeting of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs held under the Theme “Co-ordinated Border Management-Enhancing Security and Trade Facilitation.” The Director General noted that the theme of this year’s meeting focusing on Coordinated Border Management is linked to the objective of establishing the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). The effectiveness of an FTA depends on the free flow of goods and services and the cooperation among Customs Administrations in the community. The theme is also in line with the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which promotes cooperation among border agencies, encourages bilateral cooperation between neighboring countries and supports multilateral cooperation among Member States.

4. The Director General called on Member States to define a strategy that clearly spells out how they will eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers. Implementing Trade Facilitation measures help in promoting trade and improving the efficiency of international logistics and the supply chain.

5. Speaking on the effort that the country has undertaken to facilitate trade, the Director General informed the meeting that the Democratic Republic of Congo has aligned its customs procedures with the WCO’s Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) since the year 2010. The Director General also noted that the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation contains provisions on exchange of information, implementation of the Single Window, and the use of Information Technology Communications. The Democratic Republic of Congo has signed an agreement with the United Republic of Tanzania aimed at simplifying the transit of goods from the Dar-es-Salaam port in Tanzania to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Efforts are underway to sign similar arrangements with other neighbouring countries such as Kenya to facilitate faster movement of goods destined for DRC.

6. The Director General concluded by thanking the outgoing Chairperson and Bureau for their work and achievements during their tenure of office.

Statement by Mr. Kunio Mikuriya Secretary General of the World Customs Organization

7. In his remarks, Dr Kunio Mikuria, the Secretary General of the World Customs Organization, thanked the Government and the People of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the warm welcome to him and all the delegations to the meeting. He also applauded the Customs of the DRC for the various reform and modernization measures it has put in place since 2010 when it adopted a new Customs code that is aligned with the Revised Kyoto Convention. The Secretary General informed the meeting that the WCO is assisting the DRC to accede to the Revised Kyoto Convention especially in respect to capacity building of its human resources.

8. Turning to the theme of the meeting, “Coordinated Border management:- Enhancing Security and Trade Facilitation”, the Secretary General highlighted the importance of the theme towards achieving both the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda of Boosting Intra Africa. He pointed to the contribution of Coordinated Border Management, Single Window and Interconnectivity to facilitating trade and enhancing security given the emergence of the global supply chain and international organized crime. He then concluded by emphasizing the

importance of political will, cooperation across borders and availability of appropriate technology in the implementation of these important measures.

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Fatima Haram Acyl, Commissioner for the Department of Trade and Industry, AUC

9. The Commissioner's speech was read on her behalf by Mrs. Treasure Maphanga, Director of the Department of Trade and Industry,. Mrs. Maphanga informed the meeting that the Commissioner sends her regrets for having been unable to attend the 7th Meeting of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs due to other commitments. The Commissioner however wished the Directors General fruitful deliberations.

10. Her speech is attached as Annex II to this report.

Statement by H.E. Mr Henri Yav Mulang, the Minister of Finance of the Democratic Republic of Congo

11. H.E. Henri Yav Minister of Finance of the Democratic Republic of Congo welcomed all delegates to Kinshasa and to the 7th Directors General of Customs Meeting and thanked the African Union Commission for having chosen the DRC as the venue of the meeting. He underlined the relevance of the theme of the meeting which supports and leads to the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area. He highlighted the role of Coordinated Border Management in trade facilitation and regional integration as well as the importance of cooperation among various customs services. In this regard, he underscored the need to come up with a common policy that takes into account both international and specific internal interests as well as a clear strategy for its implementation.

12. The Honorable Minister pointed out that the DRC belongs to various Regional Economic groupings namely; Great Lakes Region, ECCAS, COMESA and SADC and that further to eliminating trade barriers, the country is closely involved in bilateral agreements. H.E Henri Yav said that he was humbled by the presence of the Secretary General of World Customs Organization and called for continued technical assistance in implementing various customs programmes. He then declared the 7th Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs officially open.

Agenda Item 2: Election of the Bureau

13. The Bureau of the meeting was constituted as follows:-

Chair	-	D.R.C
Vice Chair	-	Zimbabwe
Rapporteur	-	Burundi
Friends of the Chair		
- WCO West/Central Region		Cameroon
- WCO East/Southern Region		South Africa
- WCO Northern Region		Algeria

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the Agenda

14. The agenda was adopted without amendment and is attached as Annex III.

Agenda Item 4: Organization of Work

15. The meeting adopted the following as its working schedule as suggested by the Commission:-

Morning: 09.00 – 13.00

Afternoon: 14.30 – 18.00

Agenda Item 5: Presentation by the outgoing Chair

16. In presenting his report, the outgoing Chair, Mr. Jean Alfred ONANGA thanked the Sub Committee for entrusting his Administration with its leadership. He then highlighted some of the major activities that took place during his chairmanship. These include;

- (i) Presentation of the Report of the 6th Meeting of the AUSCDGCs to both the AU Conference of Ministers of Trade and the Joint Meeting of African Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning
- (ii) Presiding of the following Workshops:
 - a. The 1st AU Customs experts Meeting on the implementation of the Single window in Africa.
 - b. The 2nd Meeting of the African Union Customs experts on Coordinated Border Management
 - c. The 1st African Union Customs Experts Trade Facilitation Forum
- (iii) Represented the Sub Committee in the Commemoration of the African Union Public Service Day

17. He also highlighted the various challenges during his term of office mainly, the lack of adequate resources, which limited the participation of Member States in the various activities that were organized during the period under review.

18. In conclusion he recommended to the African Union Commission to develop implementation plans accompanying all the activities organized under the Sub Committee.

19. The Meeting took note of the Report of the outgoing Chairperson.

Agenda Item 6: Presentation by Democratic Republic of Congo Customs

20. A representative of the Customs Directorate of the Democratic Republic of Congo Customs and Excise made a presentation, through a video projection on the mission, objectives and activities undertaken by that institution. From the presentation it came out that the activities undertaken by the Customs Administration are in conformity with the objectives set by the African Union

Commission in the area of Coordinated Border Management as well as on Trade Facilitation. The meeting took note of the presentation.

Agenda Item 7: Consideration of the Report of the Customs Experts Meeting

21. The Chair of the Experts Meeting presented the outcomes of their meeting for consideration by the Directors General. The Directors General took note of the report and commended the Experts for the work done and made the following observations:

- (i) That adequate resources need to be mobilized to ensure that all stakeholders are taken on board when implementing Single Windows
- (ii) For effective implementation of Single Windows, it may be necessary for the stakeholders involved to enter into service level agreements so as to monitor performance of the Single Window system.
- (iii) It may be necessary to appoint a lead agency when implementing Single Windows to ensure a coordinated approach.

Agenda Item 8: Exchange of views on the meeting theme: Coordinated Border Management- Enhancing Security and Trade Facilitation

22. The Director for Trade and Industry at the African Union Commission, introduced the panel discussion on the meeting theme; “*Coordinated Border Management- Enhancing Security and Trade Facilitation*”. Thereafter, a representative of the African Union Commission made a presentation which informed the Meeting that the Commission is in the process of developing a Border Management (BM) strategy to serve as an instrument for balancing lawful and easy movement of goods and people and the need to enhance border security. The Draft Strategy is based on three pillars: (i) cooperation and coordination, (ii) capacity building, and (iii) community involvement. The meeting was also apprised of the on-going work to incorporate elements on trade facilitation and informal cross border trade in the Draft Strategy.

23. The meeting further received interventions from the Secretary General of WCO, representatives of SADC and COMESA and the Directors General from Uganda, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa on their experiences and initiatives relating to the theme.

24. The following issues were raised by the panelists;

- (i) Coordinated Border Management is important for both trade facilitation and national security;
- (ii) Customs administrations need to work closely with other border agencies including at the national, regional and international levels so as to promote implementation of Coordinated Border Management
- (iii) For effective implementation of Coordinated Border Management, there is need for sensitisation of relevant stakeholders so they appreciate the importance of CBM ;
- (iv) There are various approaches of implementing CBM such as focusing on major transport corridors and also One Stop Border Posts;

25. From the discussions that took place after interventions by the panelists, the following observations were made:
- (i) Political will at continental, regional and national level is important for the implementation of Coordinated Border Management
 - (ii) For successful implementation of CBM, there has to be an enabling legal framework especially at the national level to support CBM measures. The legal framework should
 - enable cooperation among various border agencies
 - Cross border cooperation and
 - Be based on international conventions and agreements such as the WCO Safe Framework of Standards and the RKC
 - (iii) Adequate Infrastructure is required so is the use of appropriate technology to support implementation of CBM.
 - (iv) An implementation strategy with a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism that has been agreed upon by all stakeholders is necessary for the implementation of CBM.
 - (v) The use of risk management techniques will enable the striking of an appropriate balance between Trade Facilitation and Security.
 - (vi) For effective implementation of CBM, it is necessary to implement service level agreements which can be used as monitoring tool on the effectiveness of CBM
26. Thereafter, the meeting made the following recommendations:
- (i) That the AUC continues its advocacy work on CBM with relevant AU policy organs to ensure political will at the Continental level.
 - (ii) Customs Administrations need to sensitize other agencies on the CBM concept and its benefits.
 - (iii) Member States willing to implement CBM could start by establishing interagency Committees that can drive the process
 - (iv) Member States need to involve and sensitize other stakeholders including the border community on the benefits of the CBM practice so as to ensure buy in from them.
 - (v) Member States and RECs need to share Guidelines on implementation of CBM;

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

27. No issue was raised under this agenda item

Agenda Item 10: Date and Venue of the 8th Ordinary Meeting of the AU Sub-Committee of the Directors General of Customs

28. The 8th Ordinary Session of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs will be held in Zimbabwe from 19-23 September 2016.

Agenda Item 11: Adoption of the Record and the Recommendations of the Meeting

29. The meeting adopted its report with amendments and the Recommendations are attached as Annex IV to this Report

Agenda Item 12: Vote of Thanks

30. The delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania delivered a vote of thanks on behalf of the participants. He thanked the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for hosting the meeting and for the hospitality accorded. The delegate concluded by thanking both the African Union Commission and the WCO for having facilitated the hosting of the meeting.

Agenda Item 13: Closing Ceremony

31. In her closing remarks, the Director for the Department of Trade and Industry of the Commission congratulated the Directors General of Customs for having a successful meeting. She extended her gratitude to the Government and People of the Democratic Republic of Congo for hosting the meeting. She concluded by wishing all participants safe travel to respective places.

32. The Chief of Staff in the Minister of Finance's office for the Democratic Republic of Congo, on behalf of the Minister thanked the Directors General, and all the participants for having travelled to Kinshasa for the 7th Meeting of the AUSCDGC Meeting. He expressed his gratitude for the high quality of work done during the meeting. After wishing all the participants safe travel, he declared the 7th Meeting of the Directors General officially closed.

ANNEX IV

Recommendations of the 7th ordinary meeting of the au sub-committee of directors general of customs

WE, the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs assembled in Kinshasa, The Democratic Republic of Congo, on the 24th and 25th day of September 2015, on the occasion of the 7th Ordinary Session

Recommend as follows:

A. On implementation of single windows in African customs administrations

Member States

- (i) In designing implementation of Single Window programs, Member States could draw lessons from the peer-reviews in selected countries undertaken by African Alliance for Electronic Commerce (AAEC);
- (ii) Member States could consider adopting a phased approach as they commence implementing Ports Community Single Window, upgrade to national Single Window and then progress to cross-border Single Window.

Regional Economic Communities

- (i) Develop strategies for implementing regional Single Windows;
- (ii) Mobilise resources for the implementation of Single Window in collaboration with the AUC and Development Partners;
- (iii) Build internal capacity to support the implementation of Single Windows in Member States;
- (iv) Monitor and evaluate implementation of Single Windows in Member States.

African Union Commission and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

- (i) The AUC together with UNECA, using the experience of AAEC, sensitise Member States on the importance of Single Windows with the view to seek political support at national level and
- (ii) Assist in building the capacity of member states to implement Single Window projects.
- (iii) The African Union Commission in collaboration with the African Alliance for Electronic Commerce conduct a study on various Single Window Systems to assess the merits/demerits of implementing them

International Organizations (WCO, UNCTAD, AAEC, inter alia)

- (i) International organizations could consider assisting countries to undertake feasibility studies and develop roadmaps on the implementation of Single Windows
- (ii) Assist countries to identify appropriate technical solutions for the implementation of Single Window.

B. On coordinated border management

African Union Commission

- (i) The AU Commission identifies best practices and organizes a dedicated session involving all border agencies to extensively consider the Draft AU Border Management Strategy;
- (ii) Collaborate with RECs on existing initiatives on CBM to avoid duplication of efforts;
- (iii) The Draft AU Border Management Strategy endeavors to include the relevant conventions and streamline other existing Strategies on Border management and ensure that trade facilitation, migration, peace and security are adequately covered;
- (iv) The AU Commission continues its advocacy work and seek political support for the Implementation of Coordinated Border Management programs.

African Union Member States

- (i) That Member States review and align their respective national customs legislations with international Customs and Trade instruments such as the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention, Safe Framework of Standards, WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement as well as the AU Border Strategy;
- (ii) That there should be coordination by the various agencies working at borders through amongst others ensuring that respective information systems are interconnected;
- (iii) Share best practices particularly on experiences relating to Coordinated Border Management.

C. On the 1st au customs experts trade facilitation forum

- (i) The recommendations from the Forum should be presented to the African Ministers of Trade before the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 15 to 18 December, 2015
- (ii) The AUC is requested to institutionalize the Forum and ensure that it is regularly held
- (iii) The AUC could consider a communication strategy to inform some stakeholders with literacy challenges, but who constitute a large part of cross border traders.

D. On interconnectivity of computerized customs clearance systems;

African Union Commission

- (i) Convene a continental wide meeting of the RECs, corridor management institutions; the private sector; partners and decision makers to consider broadly the issue of interconnectivity;
- (ii) Convene a meeting of the Technical Working Group that would develop an action plan for the implementation of the interconnectivity Strategy with specific roles and responsibilities for all relevant stakeholders.

Regional Economic Communities

- (i) Consider carrying out comprehensive studies on each trans-African transit corridors so as to, where necessary, design transit corridor infrastructure alongside with interconnectivity initiatives;
- (ii) Mainstream the Continental interconnectivity agenda into their work plans and that of their Member States ;
- (iii) Develop trade and Customs legal and legislative regimes and frameworks that support implementation of interconnectivity initiatives in their Membership;
- (iv) Support investment measures and capacity development strategies on interconnectivity;

Member States

- (i) Undertake a review of existing business processes for all relevant government agencies in order to prepare them for interconnectivity initiatives and programs;
- (ii) Adopt WTO and WCO international standards for nontariff barriers, data model, documentation, and harmonization as major components to interconnectivity initiatives;
- (iii) Endeavor to take necessary steps to incorporate and implement programs and initiatives on Interconnectivity in line with the Regional and continental Roadmaps and Strategies.

The Private Sector

- (i) Urged to play a major role in the interconnectivity projects through their National and Regional and Continental fora;
- (ii) Urged to commit to co-sponsor some of the projects on interconnectivity.

E. On the continental free trade area

- (i) That the Chair of the AU Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs should attend the 1st meeting of the CFTA Negotiating Forum and emphasize the need for the AUSCDGCs to be part of the institutional arrangements for the negotiations of the CFTA and
- (ii) Further to the recommendation of the 6th Session of the AU Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs that the Rules of Procedure of the AUSCDGCs be amended to include the mandate of the Customs Technical Committee (CTC) of the CFTA, the Directors General are urged to consider reviewing their Rules of Procedure so that the CTC functions as a Technical Working Group at experts level that reports to the AUSCDGCs.

F. On other matters

- (i) The African Union Commission should include an agenda item covering Matters Arising wherein an update will be given with regards to Recommendations that would have been made in the previous session
- (ii) Assessment of recommendations