



JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT OF THE 28TH MEETING OF THE ASEAN DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF CUSTOMS

Vientiane, Lao PDR, 11 – 13 June 2019

1. The 28th Meeting of the ASEAN Customs Directors-General was held on 11 - 13 June 2019 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Bounpaseuth Sikounlabout, Acting Director General of the Lao Customs Department. The Meeting was attended by the ten (10) ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the ASEAN Secretariat.
2. The ASEAN DGs of Customs noted and provided guidance on the progress of the work of the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Customs (CCC), the Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group (CPTFWG), the Customs Enforcement and Compliance Working Group (CECWG), the Customs Capacity Building Working Group (CCBWG) and the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC).
3. The ASEAN DGs of Customs commended the following significant progress under ASEAN customs integration:

- a. ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) aims to achieve the seamless flow of goods in transit in the context of a *single truck, single declaration and single guarantee* to facilitate and promote trade growth in ASEAN.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs welcomed the intensified efforts to have the legal framework in force to implement the ACTS pilot "Go Live" in both corridors¹ in December 2019, followed by the subsequent linking of the corridors and operationalisation of ACTS.

- b. Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) and ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on AEO. The establishment of AEO programme enhances the security of supply chain and facilitates trade.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs are pleased to note that six (6) AMS have implemented national AEO programmes whilst remaining AMS' AEO programmes are under development with target implementation by 2020.

An ASEAN MRA on AEO provides a platform to recognize national AEO programme of respective ASEAN Member States, facilitates secured movement of goods and helps reduce trade transaction cost in the region.

¹ ACTS Pilot North-South Corridor comprises Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand (MST); East-West Corridor: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam (CLMV). Myanmar will be on board by 2020 and is not in the plan pilot "Go Live" in December 2019.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs also welcomed the completion of the feasibility study of an ASEAN AEO MRA and endorsed the establishment of the Sub-Working Group to commence work on the proposed ASEAN AEO MRA on a pathfinder approach by 2020.

- c. Survey on “Ease of Doing Business in ASEAN Region with Reference to World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) Provisions” aimed to take stock of the current trade facilitation measures and implementation progress of the WTO TFA from the perspective of the private sector.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs are pleased to note the survey provided a good overview of the private sector’s perspective on ASEAN’s implementation of the WTO TFA provisions and identified the areas of improvement to enhance trade facilitation in the region.

- d. ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN). The AHTN was established to harmonise tariff nomenclature in ASEAN and ensure uniformity, transparency, and simplification in the classification of goods.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs noted the preparation in the review of AHTN 2017 and encouraged the ASEAN Member States to coordinate with relevant ministries and stakeholders to come up with proposals in the development of AHTN 2022 version.

- e. Border security and control to protect society. Balancing trade facilitation with border security and control to protect society is an ongoing challenge for all customs administrations.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs welcomed the good progress made by respective ASEAN Member States on customs enforcement and underscored the need to further enhance cooperation among Member States to formulate initiatives and programmes to address the challenges.

- f. Capacity building of Customs Officers in ASEAN. The necessity to develop, build up and sustain the capability as well as to promote the integrity of Customs officers are recognized and prioritised.

The ASEAN DGs of Customs are pleased to note the capacity building activities done by ASEAN Member States and those held in cooperation with Dialogue Partners and the Private Sector.

4. The ASEAN DGs of Customs commended the progress of the implementation of the Strategic Plans of Customs Development (SPCDs) 2016-2020 and tasked all relevant Customs working bodies to commence the new cycle of the SPCDs covering the period of 2021 to 2025.

5. The ASEAN DGs of Customs also commended the progress under the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) and urged the Live Operation of ATIGA electronic Certificate of Origin Form D exchanged among all ASEAN Member States by 2019.

6. The ASEAN DGs of Customs held consultation sessions with the Customs Administrations of Australia, China, Japan, Korea and the WCO to strengthen Customs-to-Customs cooperation in the region.

7. The ASEAN DGs of Customs also held consultation sessions with the private sector, namely the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry as observer, the EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) and the US-ASEAN Business Council (US-ABC) to strengthen Customs-to-Business partnerships in the region.

Issued on 13 June 2019

**At the end of the 28th Meeting of ASEAN Directors-General of Customs,
in Vientiane, Lao PDR**



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