

## WP.5 Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group Meeting on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis

9 June 2020

### Session on Lessons learned from the crisis and challenges in re-opening of cross-border traffic

*World Customs Organization (WCO) - Speaking notes*

- I. Thank UNECE for inviting the WCO to the Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group Meeting on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis
- II. WCO response to the COVID-19 pandemic:
  1. In mid-March created a dedicated [COVID-19 section](#) of the WCO web-site containing existing instruments and tools.
  2. Newly developed guidance was also uploaded on that section – [HS Classification reference for medical supplies](#), [List of priority medicines for Customs during COVID-19](#), a [Secretariat Note on How to establish and utilize essential goods lists](#), etc.
  3. Repository of Members' practices – 113 practices up to date. The WCO Secretariat developed a [document](#) categorizing Members' practices in four categories: i) facilitating the cross-border movement of relief and essential supplies; ii) supporting the economy and sustaining supply chain continuity; iii) protecting staff and iv) protecting society.
  4. Joint statements – with [WTO](#) on trade related measures (any border action should be targeted, proportionate, transparent, non-discriminatory and temporary), with [IMO](#), [ICC](#), [IRU](#), [OTIF and OSJD](#) and with [UN-OHRLLS](#), as well as a joint letter with UPU. All joint statements call for sustaining the supply chain continuity.
  5. Currently the WCO holds the 227<sup>th</sup>/228<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) in the form of a document-based meeting. The PTC is the committee preparing the work of the Council in the area of procedures and facilitation. The role of Customs in mitigating the effects of COVID-19 is a topic on the PTC agenda and Members and Observers are invited to submit their comments by 12 June 2020, when Phase 1 of the document-based PTC meeting ends.
- III. Lessons learned:
  - Preparedness – use of electronic services, risk management, non-intrusive inspection (NII) equipment (those Members that have completed their Customs modernization reforms are reaping the fruits of their efforts), availability of disaster response plans and business continuity plans.
  - Coordination – whole of government approach, Coordinated Border Management (CBM), coordination with neighbouring countries and/or at regional level.
  - Streamlining and simplifying Customs procedures – green lanes for freight traffic. Transparency is also a very important aspect in this regard – make all necessary information publicly available.