

# Conclusions and recommendations

of the

## Seminar for the Promotion of Electronic Exchange of Customs Information and the Adoption of Standard Electronic Messages

Geneva, 21 June 2016

organized in the framework of the

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT 1213AA: "STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION TO FACILITATE LEGITIMATE BORDER CROSSING, REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION"

by



in collaboration with



UNITED NATIONS  
الاقتصاد  
ESCWA



The participants thanked UNECA, UNECE, UNECLAC, UNESCAP and UNESCWA for the organization of the Seminar for the Promotion of Electronic Exchange of Customs Information and the Adoption of Standard Electronic Messages held in Geneva on 20- 21 June 2016.

In conclusion:

The participants underlined the importance of internationally harmonized processes and data requirements to further facilitate trade and transport across borders, in particular for land locked countries. They noted the ICT specific objectives of the Vienna Program of Action and agreed that the standards and conventions to achieve them are already available. They emphasized the need to adopt the internationally available standards and recommendations, in particular those developed by UN/CEFACT and WCO. The participants also stressed the importance of standardising the computerization of the applications of international legal instruments, e.g. the computerization of the TIR procedure (eTIR). They reconfirmed the usefulness of tools such as the trade facilitation implementation guide (TFIG), which centralizes trade facilitation recommendations, conventions, guidelines, standards and best practices.

The participants agreed that Customs-2-Customs (C2C) electronic exchange of information will greatly support risk assessment for transit operations and, ultimately, facilitate legitimate trade and transport, reduce informal trade, increase government revenues through import duties and taxes, improve and secure border crossing, as well as reducing related costs. Moreover, they pointed out that internationally standardized Business-to-Customs (B2C) electronic messages for transit not only facilitate the submission of information by the business community but also the exchange of data among customs administrations.

Furthermore, the participants noted the relevance of the tools developed by the IRU, such as the TIR Electronic Pre-Declaration (TIR-EPD) and the Real Time SafeTIR (RTS) systems for simplifying, securing and accelerating transit. They greatly welcomed the information related to the UNESCAP Model on Integrated Controls at Border Crossings, Secure Cross-border Transport Model and the Logistics Information System. The participants also welcomed the information on the features of the UNCTAD ASYCUDA program that allows the management of transit operations, such as TIR or the common transit, as well as B2C and C2C data exchange.

Moreover, the participants recognized the importance of the existing international conventions for implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, including its ICT related provisions. In particular, the participants noted the obvious benefits of the TIR Convention, the Harmonization Convention and the Revised Kyoto Convention when it comes to implementing the WTO-TFA in practice.

The participants welcomed the results of the United Nations Development Account project “Strengthening the capacities of developing countries and

countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration” and acknowledged its benefits. This hold for both pilot and other countries that took part in the events organized in the framework of the project. The participants appreciated that the project outcomes would be published on the project website<sup>1</sup> and encouraged countries to make use of the Central Exchange Platform (CEP) developed in the framework of the project to facilitate the C2C exchange of transit data. The participants also recommended the further dissemination of the project’s outputs in the different regions through capacity building and other follow-up activities. In this context, the initiative by the Support Program for Central American Integration and Implementation of the Association Agreement between this sub-region and the European Union (PRAIAA), ECLAC and WTO to implement jointly a series of training activities for Customs Offices in these countries was welcomed.

The participants expressed their support to promote regional data exchange initiatives, for example in the context of the African and Arab regions through UNECA and UNESCWA. They stressed that the implementation of such initiatives will improve the adoption of standards. Moreover, these standards will contribute to the implementation of the regional integration agreements.

Finally, the participants greatly welcomed the exchange of good practices and the opportunities provided to learn, in more detail, how data exchange issues related to transit are dealt with in different regions, e.g. Central America, EU, Mercosur and different countries, e.g. Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

The participants stress the need for customs administrations, regional commissions and other organizations to seek funding to ensure the implementation of the action plans and other efforts to enable C2C electronic data exchange.

The participants completed an evaluation form. The results of the evaluation are presented in Annex.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unece.org/trans/themes/unda\\_customs-to-customs.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/themes/unda_customs-to-customs.html)

## Annex

### Evaluation of the Seminar for the Promotion of Electronic Exchange of Customs Information and the Adoption of Standard Electronic Messages

Participants replied to the following questions indicating if they were very satisfied (5), satisfied (4), neutral (3), unsatisfied (2) or very unsatisfied (1).

Questions	Average score
How satisfied are you... with the organization of the event?	4.8
with the topic of the event?	4.5
with the usefulness/scope of the information presented?	4.3
with the quality of the presentations/speaker?	4.5
with the overall meeting format?	4.7
that you had sufficient time to network and share ideas with your peers?	4.3
with the meetings' overall value in helping you improve your professional capacity?	4.4
with the conclusions and recommendations	4.4
that you and your peers received appropriate recognition and appreciation at the meeting for your contributions?	4.3

The overall level of satisfaction averaged 4.4.

*In their comments participants mainly thanked for the good organisation of the seminar and highlighted the importance of such events, in particular at inter-regional level. Some indicated that the program was too dense and that not enough time was devoted to debates. One participant regretted the absence of interpretation in Arabic.*