

**Remarks of Mr. Kunio Mikuriya
Secretary-General of World Customs Organization**

**The High-Level Meeting for the Euro-Asia Region on Improving
Cooperation on Transit,
Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

7-9 March, 2017, Sheraton Ha Noi Hotel, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

(World Customs Organization)

The World Customs Organization (WCO), with its wide network of 180 Customs administrations, is the centre of Customs expertise and practical information for trade facilitation and border management. The WCO is recognized as the voice of the international Customs community.

(Transit)

Because of their lack of access to the sea, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) must rely on transit through other countries. The additional border crossings and long distances from the market substantially increase their total transport expenses.

A transit operation inevitably involves Customs administrations, and good Customs transit procedures are essential to the smooth operation of international trade, thereby contributing to the economic development of LLDCs. The WCO launched a Transit Handbook in 2014 during the Vienna Conference for LLDCs. To support WCO Members better in establishing more effective transit regimes, we decided that the Transit Handbook should become “Transit Guidelines” containing clear guiding principles and recommended practice for transit regimes.

The WCO will organize Global Conference on Transit on 10-11 July to launch the guidelines.

(Trade Facilitation)

The effective implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is one of the most important topics to ensure economic development of LLDCs. In this regard, the WCO welcomes entry into force of the TFA. The WCO has been, and will continue to be, fully committed to making the TFA a success in practical terms.

The WCO has already produced a wide range of instruments and tools which support the implementation of the TFA and has delivered an extensive number of capacity building and technical assistance projects on trade facilitation.

In June 2014, the WCO launched the WCO Mercator Programme. Under the Mercator Programme, the WCO has delivered around 210 technical assistance missions to more than 70 countries in the past 2 years and will continue to do so.

(Closing)

Undertaken in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation, this Conference will serve to illuminate the importance of LLDCs and the increasing need for all stakeholders to combine their efforts in support of the economic development all LLDCs.

I will commit myself to supporting LLDCs by developing standards on border procedures and providing technical assistance.