

# Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF)

## NEWSLETTER



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### EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum (APTFF) 2012 was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Sri Lanka in Colombo on 30-31 October 2012. Sri Lanka became the first South Asian country to host the APTFF.

The theme of this year's Forum was "Enhancing Public-Private Collaboration for Trade Facilitation, Paperless Trade and Cross-border Connectivity". The Forum was attended by more than 250 trade facilitation officials, experts, practitioners and technical assistance providers from 30 countries of the region and beyond, bringing together an extraordinary wealth of knowledge and experience on trade facilitation, paperless trade and public private collaboration. More than 10 international

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### MAJOR UPCOMING EVENTS

- Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 5-7 March 2013
- Asia and the Pacific and the Americas: Customs Leaders' Partnership Dialogue - Efficient and Secure Trade for Shared Prosperity, Panama, April 2013
- WCO IT Conference & Exhibition 2013, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 14 - 16 May 2013

### IN FOCUS

#### Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2012 – Trade Facilitation Highlights

The Report provides an overview of Trade and Investment Trends including trade facilitation in the Asia-Pacific Region. It highlights that many economies of the Asia-Pacific region are still better connected with markets in Europe and North America than with each other.

#### ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database

Although the international economy has integrated considerably in recent decades, a new database developed jointly by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the World Bank reveals that trade costs fall disproportionately on developing countries. The new data, which cover the time period 1995-2010 and 178 countries, stress the importance of supply chains and connectivity constraints in explaining the higher costs and lower levels of trade integration observed in developing countries. The database is accessible at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/trade-costs.asp>. Link to the related paper is available in publication section.

#### ESCAP/ECE/UNNExT Single Window Implementation Toolkit

This capacity building toolkit provides a complete set of guides for paperless trade and trade facilitation. It is available at: <http://www.unescap.org/unnext/tools/default.asp>

organizations, including UNCTAD, UNECE, WCO, World Bank, as well as SAARC and APEC Secretariats participated. A Multimedia Exhibition was organized in parallel with the Forum, attended by 18 private and public sector entities involved in paperless trade, logistics services or technical assistance in trade facilitation. The UNNExT Capacity Building Kit for Single Window Implementation containing five technical guides was launched at the Forum by Honorable Ministers and other dignitaries.

According to the evaluation conducted after the Forum, about 90 percent of the respondents noted that their knowledge on trade facilitation and paperless trade increased as a result of their attendance to the Forum.

The Forum sessions included a High-level Panel Discussion on Enhancing Public-Private Collaboration for Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade, Plenary Sessions on E-Trade for SME Integration in Regional and Global Value Chains, Cross-border Recognition and Exchange of Trade Documents for Regional Connectivity and Subregional Breakout Sessions on the Forum theme.

### Recommendations for the Asia Pacific Region

The Forum participants put forward some recommendations for the Asia Pacific region during plenary and subregional breakout sessions. Key recommendations for the region included:

- Work towards mutual acceptance and exchange of electronic data, documents and certifications among countries, including through Proof of Concept (PoC) project(s) on cross-border paperless trade and reinforcing legal framework for cross-border exchange of e-documents
- Introduce electronic transit system to landlocked and transit countries and improve trade and transport facilities at border crossings, particularly those essential for the transit of goods from/to landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)
- Address special needs of SMEs for trade facilitation and for value chain participation; and encourage development partners to address such needs
- With the support of ESCAP, ADB, UNNExT and other relevant organizations, take measures to facilitate agricultural trade, including by developing guidelines and capacity building programmes on traceability, e-SPS certification and related system development.

### Back-to-Back Events

A total of nine events were organized back-to-back with the Forum during the week of 29 October – 2 November including a visit to the Colombo Port, SASEC Stakeholders Workshop on Subregional Trade and Transit Collaboration, UNNExT Advisory Committee Meeting, Expert Review Meeting on Regional Arrangements for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade and the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) Conference.



*Dignitaries launched the UNNExT Capacity Building Kit for Single Window Implementation at the opening session of APTFF 2012*



*Participants at one of the side events, UNNExT Advisory Committee Meeting, 29 October 2012, Colombo*

**For the detailed summary, presentations and other information about the APTFF 2012 and back-to-back events, please visit: <http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/tfforum12.asp>**

**APTFF 2013 will be held in Beijing, China on 10-11 September 2013 in collaboration with China International Electronic Commerce Center (CIECC).**





## Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF): Summary of the Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF) was held on 29 October 2012 at the Galadari Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka on the side of the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2012. It was participated by eight international organizations working on Trade Facilitation in the Asia Pacific region, namely ADB, APEC, AFACT, ESCAP, OCO, SAARC, WCO and the World Bank. ASEAN and ECO, who could not join the meeting this year, submitted briefing papers on their activities in Trade Facilitation to the meeting.



*Participants at the ROC-TF meeting, Colombo, 29 October 2012, Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Dr. Ravi Ratnayake, Director, Trade and Investment Division, ESCAP, opened the meeting and highlighted the need for all organizations working on trade facilitation in the region to deepen their collaboration and exchange of information as recommended by ESCAP Member States during the last Committee on Trade and Investment held in July 2011. Mr. Yann Duval, ESCAP briefed the meeting on ESCAP's on-going work on trade facilitation. He also briefly informed of the actions taken by the Secretariat in implementing the recommendations made at the Dialogue on Regional Cooperation on Trade Facilitation held in Republic of Korea in October 2011.

All the representatives of the international organizations presented at the meeting. Mr. Shintaro Hamanaka of the ADB Office of Regional Economic Integration provided an overview of the (sub)regional trade facilitation initiatives of ADB. Mr. Lu Zhi Wei, Programme Director, APEC Secretariat, made a presentation on the wide range of activities of APEC on trade facilitation, informing in particular of the possibility for ROC-TF participants to apply for participation in relevant working groups as observers. It was followed by Mr. Lee-Sang Hyup, WCO Asia-Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building, who explained that the capacity building training activities most demanded by Member States were in the area of advance rulings, risk management, and Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programmes.

Mr. Amrit Lugun, Director (Economic, Trade, and Finance), SAARC Secretariat, gave an extensive briefing on the history of trade liberalization and trade facilitation among SAARC member countries, highlighting recent breakthroughs in this area between Pakistan and India. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Mainaga Taape, Trade Facilitation Officer, OCO Secretariat on the initiatives by OCO in the Pacific Island countries. Mr.

Mahmood Zargar, General Secretary, AFACT briefed the meeting on the trade facilitation activities of both AFACT and ECO, inviting ROC-TF members to collaborate and attending the Regional Event for Trade Facilitation Forum (REFACT) for ECO countries in Kish Island, Iran on 22-25 April 2013.

Mr. Florian Alburo, President, Center for the Advancement of Trade Integration and Facilitation, University of the Philippines, briefed the meeting on the ASEAN Trade Facilitation initiatives, emphasizing the need for all organizations to promote the use of existing data available in paperless customs and trade systems in identifying procedural bottlenecks and inefficiencies, as most countries in and outside ASEAN now had systems in place but were not using the data.

Ms. Alina Mustra, GFP Coordinator from the World Bank introduced the new website of the Global Facilitation Partnership for Trade and Transport (GFP), which provides new functionalities such as online discussion groups, which could be used to facilitate information exchange among ROC-TF members. Mr. Markus Pikart from UNECE briefed the meeting on the newly launched TFIG ("Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide"), which brings together the various trade facilitation tools and instruments developed by GFP and other relevant organizations.

Some of the key recommendations made at the Meeting are as follows:

- Develop a joint ROC-TF calendar for trade facilitation events.
- Continue to hold the annual ROC-TF meeting and to open it to more organizations involved in trade facilitation activities in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Publish the ROC-TF newsletter twice a year, at the end of January and July.
- Discuss capacity building needs of subregions in future ROC-TF meetings among the Donor/Technical Assistance organizations and recipient organizations.
- Aim to develop a region-wide harmonized monitoring and assessment framework for trade facilitation performance.

To find out more about ROC-TF, please visit:  
<http://www.unescap.org/tid/roctf.asp>



*Deliberations at the annual ROC-TF Meeting, 29 October 2012, Colombo, Sri Lanka*



# Trade Facilitation Publications & Knowledge Products

## IN FOCUS

### Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2012 – Trade Facilitation Highlights

The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report is produced annually by ESCAP Trade and Investment Division. It provides an overview of Trade and Investment Trend in the Asia-Pacific Region. Trends and updates on trade facilitation are included in the report and are summarized briefly below.

The ESCAP region hosts both the most- and least-efficient economies in conducting international trade transactions, measured by trade time and costs. According to the World Bank "Doing Business Database", Singapore, Hong Kong, China and the Republic of Korea continue to lead in the top three world rankings in terms of ease of trading across borders. Malaysia, Thailand and Japan also continue to be among the economies with the most efficient trade procedures. At the same time, however, landlocked countries such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Bhutan and Uzbekistan continue to remain at the bottom of the rankings. The gaps in trade time and costs between the best and worst performing economies are significant.

Many economies of the Asia-Pacific region are still better connected with markets in Europe and North America than with each other. With cumbersome border procedures, sometimes requiring literally hundreds of approval documents, for many countries in the region it is very often much easier (i.e., cheaper) to trade with Europe or other developed countries than with other countries in the region. The costs of regulatory procedures and meeting documentary requirements have been estimated to account for between 7% and 10% of the costs of the goods traded; however, with proper streamlining of policies, the potential savings could be in excess of \$300 billion annually for the region as a whole.

**Table 1. Intra- and extra-regional trade costs in Asia-Pacific, excluding tariff costs**

Region	ASEAN-4	East Asia-3	North and Central Asia	SAARC-4	AUS-NZ	European Union-3	United States
<b>ASEAN-4</b>	79% (-9.5%)	73% (-5.9%)	291% (-14.2%)	134% (2.1%)	90% (-12.3%)	97% (-4.9%)	77% (3.0%)
<b>East Asia-3</b>	73% (-5.9%)	47% (-21.1%)	187% (-32.7%)	119% (-2.8%)	78% (-15.7%)	70% (-19.0%)	53% (-13.5%)
<b>North and Central Asia</b>	291% (-14.2%)	187% (-32.7%)	149% (-20.5%)	270% (-22.4%)	270% (-22.2%)	149% (-26.0%)	165% (5.0%)
<b>SAARC-4</b>	134% (2.1%)	119% (-2.8%)	270% (-22.4%)	113% (-2.7%)	130% (-23.5%)	101% (-17.0%)	99% (-11.1%)
<b>AUS-NZ</b>	90% (-12.3%)	78% (-15.7%)	270% (-22.2%)	130% (-2.7%)	45% (-23.5%)	89% (-17.0%)	82% (-11.1%)
<b>European Union-3</b>	97% (-4.9%)	70% (-19.0%)	149% (-26.0%)	101% (-3.2%)	89% (-17.0%)	32% (-32.6%)	51% (-18.2%)
<b>United States</b>	77% (3.0%)	53% (-13.5%)	165% (-17.3%)	99% (5.9%)	82% (-11.1%)	51% (-18.2%)	

*\*Note: Referring to data 2007-2009 in ESCAP Trade Cost Database (version 2). Trade costs may be interpreted as tariff equivalents. Percentage changes in trade costs between 2001 - 2003 and 2007-2009 are in parentheses. Available online at <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/trade-costs.asp>*

*Source: Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2012, available at [http://www.unescap.org/tid/ti\\_report2012/home.asp](http://www.unescap.org/tid/ti_report2012/home.asp)*

The high cost of conducting intraregional trade in goods in Asia and the Pacific is highlighted in table 1. Taking the European Union as a benchmark, the non-tariff-related comprehensive cost of trading goods among the three largest European Union economies is estimated to be equivalent to a 32% average tariff on tradeable goods. China, the Republic of Korea and Japan (East Asia-3) come closest to matching the low intra-European Union trade costs, averaging trade costs among themselves of less than 50% tariff-equivalent in 2007-2009. Middle-income members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), i.e. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand (ASEAN-4), also have achieved a reasonable level of trade facilitation among themselves, with average intra-ASEAN-4 trade costs only slightly more than twice those of the European Union-3. In contrast, intraregional trade costs among North and Central Asian countries, at five times those among European Union-3 countries, are highest in the region, followed by those among South Asian countries.



# Trade Facilitation Publications & Knowledge Products

## IN FOCUS (Continued)

Measures and initiatives have been taken by ESCAP member countries to overcome challenges and further progress trade facilitation. While typically achieved through improvement of both hard and soft infrastructure supporting trade transactions, a major driver of improvement is the increased use of modern information and communication technologies to automate trade procedures as well as speed up the exchange of information between the many stakeholders involved in trade transactions behind the border. Many countries in Asia and the Pacific have developed automated customs or port systems, and many are now moving towards implementation of fully-fledged national single windows.

Facilitating trade also means looking beyond national borders to develop systems that can facilitate information exchange between all the parties involved in the international supply chains. ESCAP member States made it very clear that more regional cooperation was needed in this area when they adopted ESCAP Resolution 68/3 on "Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation" during the 68th ESCAP Commission Session in May 2012. Among the issues addressed, the resolution invited ESCAP member countries to work towards the development of regional arrangements on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade. Accordingly, the ESCAP secretariat was requested to facilitate the process, and to continue and further strengthen its support for capacity-building activities related to trade facilitation and paperless trade.

### ESCAP Resolution 68/3 on Enabling Paperless Trade for Trade Facilitation

Although some countries in ESCAP have very advanced paperless trade systems in place, trade procedures in some ESCAP developing countries remain very inefficient. For example, the time to complete trade procedures can be three times the OECD average. Such disparity makes it difficult or impossible to exchange cross-border trade information.

In this context, the ESCAP member countries adopted ESCAP Resolution 68/3 on "Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation" at the 68th Session of the ESCAP Commission convened in May 2012. In this Resolution, among the other issues addressed, the ESCAP member countries were invited to work towards the development of regional arrangements on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade. Accordingly, the ESCAP secretariat was requested to facilitate the process, and to continue and further strengthen its support for capacity-building activities related to trade facilitation and paperless trade.

### Trade Facilitation Agreement in The Doha Round: An Update

In July 2004, WTO Members formally agreed to launch negotiations on trade facilitation. Under the mandate of the so-called "July package", Members have been directed to clarify and improve GATT Article V (Freedom of Transit), Article VIII (Fees and Formalities connected with Importation and Exportation), and Article X (Publication and Administration of Trade Regulations). The negotiations also aim to enhance technical assistance and capacity-building in this area and to improve effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues.

The first negotiating text was released in December 2009 and has undergone 13 revisions, the latest having been released on 24 October 2012 (TN/TF/W/165/Rev.13). Despite its very advanced stage, the fate of the negotiating text of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation remains uncertain because it is part of what is termed as the "Single Undertaking" of the Doha Round of negotiation. One of the underlying principles of "Single Undertaking" is that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed". In other words, "trade facilitation" negotiations, in principle, cannot be completed separately from other subjects under negotiation. However, in view of the current impasse faced by the nearly 11-year Doha negotiations as well as the advanced stage and consensus on the draft negotiating text on trade facilitation, some WTO Members have proposed that it may be beneficial to take the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation out of the "Single Undertaking" and sign it separately as a stand-alone agreement.

While there is widespread acknowledgement by WTO Members that the Agreement on Trade Facilitation could be useful in delivering the Round, some developing countries either oppose or are reluctant, at least in the short term, to accept it. The main concerns are that:

(a) A stand-alone trade facilitation agreement may discourage the Members to negotiate other aspects of the Doha Round, such as agriculture; and

(b) Without a firmer and more specific commitment from the developed countries on provisions of financial and technical support to implement the agreement, it may still be too early to conclude it, as financial resources and human capacities will be required for its implementation.

There is no convincing evidence that the agreement can be adopted in the near future. However, considering the efforts being made by some WTO member countries in this regard, the possibility of a stand-alone Agreement on Trade Facilitation will certainly continue to be discussed, including during the Ninth WTO Ministerial to be held in Bali in December 2013. In the meantime, the WTO draft negotiating text may provide a useful template for designing trade facilitation provisions as well as chapters of bilateral and regional trade agreements. Should the agreement be finally concluded at WTO, it will certainly provide further impetus for countries of the region to further accelerate trade facilitation reforms.





# Trade Facilitation Publications & Knowledge Products

## **Trade Costs in the Developing World: 1995 – 2010, UNESCAP, ESCAP-World Bank, ARTNet Working Paper Series No. 121/December 2012**

This working paper uses newly collected data on trade and production in 178 countries to infer estimates of bilateral trade costs in agriculture and manufactured goods for the 1995-2010 period.

**Published: December 2012,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/pub/wp12112.pdf>



## **Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2012: Recent Trends and Developments, ESCAP, (available online, pdf version 5.28 MB, 2198 page)**

This report aims to deepen understanding of regional trends and developments in trade and investment; emerging issues in trade, investment and trade facilitation policies; and impacts of these policies on countries' abilities to meet the challenges of achieving inclusive and sustainable development. APTIR 2012 focuses on trends and developments in the economies of Asia and the Pacific in their post-recovery from the 2008-2009 crisis and trade collapse.

**Published: 14 December 2012,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/aptir2650.pdf>



## **Study on the Readiness of eCO Implementation in Cross-Border Trade in APEC Region, APEC, (available online, pdf version, 2.04 MB, 105 page)**

This report includes summaries on the basic conditions to a successful ECO cross-border transmission via analyzing and drawing lessons from Korea-Chinese Taipei eCO Pathfinder Project. Based on these basic conditions, the report has analyzed the readiness of APEC member economies in implementing eCO cross-border transmission, and put forward corresponding suggestions so as to promote the process of paperless trading and trade facilitation in APEC region.

**Published: November 2012,** [http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\\_id=1339](http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub_id=1339)



## **Doing Business 2013: Smarter Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises, World Bank, (available online, pdf version, 282 page)**

This year's report data cover regulations measured from June 2011 through May 2012. The report marks the 10th edition of the Doing Business series. Over the past decade, these reports have recorded nearly 2,000 regulatory reforms implemented by 180 economies.

**Published: 23 October 2012,** <http://www.doingbusiness.org/~media/GIAWB/Doing%20Business/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB13-full-report.pdf>



## **Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, UNECE, (Web-based interactive tool)**

UNECE launched its Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide on 25 October 2012. This is a web-based interactive tool designed to help countries simplify cross-border trade.

**For more information,** <http://tfig.unece.org/>



## **Capacity Building of Different Aspects in E-commerce of Supply Chain Connectivity Implementation, APEC, (available online, pdf version, 6.61 MB, 105 page)**

This report is a compilation of the workshop conclusions, recommendations and presentations.

**Published: August 2012,** [http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub\\_id=1300](http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub_id=1300)



## **Trade and Trade Facilitation in the Greater Mekong Subregion, ADB (available in PDF version, 3.1 MB, 182 pages)**

This book brings together studies highlighting deeper, structural challenges to trade facilitation in the GMS, including need for governance and bureaucratic reforms, trade competitiveness, and improved alignment of the regional corridors to trade flows.

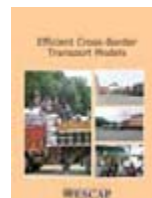
**Published: August 2012,** <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/pub/2012/trade-and-trade-facilitation-gms.pdf>



## **Efficient Cross-border Transport Models, ESCAP, (available online, pdf version, 73 page)**

This study analyzes the solutions available for efficient cross-border transport in terms of improving operations, lowering operating cost and reducing the time spent at the border.

**Published: September 2012,** [http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/Publications/TFS\\_pubs/ECBTM/ECBTM-fulltext.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/Publications/TFS_pubs/ECBTM/ECBTM-fulltext.pdf)





# Trade Facilitation Publications & Knowledge Products

## **Single Window Planning and Implementation Guide, ESCAP-UNECE (available online pdf version, 1.3 MB, 103 pages)**

The objective of the Guide is to assist the decision makers, Government officials and private stakeholders to address managerial issues that may affect the planning, the development and operation of Single Window systems, including their cross-border interoperability.

**Published: September 2012,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/unnext/tools/implement-guide.pdf>



## **Electronic Single Window Legal Issues: A Capacity-Building Guide, ESCAP-UNECE, (available online pdf version, 7.4 MB, 73 pages)**

This Guide covers the wide-ranging legal issues that are related to the development and operation of a SW and, to a certain degree, some of the important electronic commerce legal concepts and approaches applicable to the single window environment.

**Published: 25 September 2012,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2636.asp>



## **Business Process Analysis Guide to Simplify Trade Procedures (Updated September 2012), ESCAP, (available online pdf version, 6.27 MB, 139 pages)**

This Guide is an updated version of previous BPA guide that offers a simple methodology to elicit, document, and analyse the existing "as-is" business processes involved in international trade, as well as aid in developing recommendations for further improvement.

**Published: September 2012,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/publication/tipub2558new.pdf>



## **Illegal Trade in Environmentally Sensitive Goods, OECD (available online pdf version, 2.04 MB, 147 pages)**

In this report, evidence-based on customs data and information from licensing schemes is used to document the scale of illegal trade, as well as the economic and environmental impacts of such trade. National and international policies have an important role to play in regulating and reducing illegal trade and the report highlights a range of measures that can be taken at both levels.

**Published: 21 September 2012,** [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/trade/illegal-trade-in-environmentally-sensitive-goods\\_9789264174238-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/trade/illegal-trade-in-environmentally-sensitive-goods_9789264174238-en)



## **Review of Maritime Transport 2012, UNCTAD (available online pdf version, 3215.84 KB, 196 Pages)**

The 2012 Review contains critical analysis and a wealth of unique data, including long-term data series on seaborne trade, fleet capacity, shipping services and port handling activities.

**Published: 27 September 2012,** [http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/rmt2012\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/rmt2012_en.pdf)



## **Developing a Trade Information Portal, World Bank, (available online, pdf version, 48 page, 12.15 MB)**

This Guide discusses the issues and challenges that developing nations are likely to face when implementing a Trade Information Portal and provides a checklist of practical guidelines for the steps that might be required in order to achieve effective implementation.

**Published: 10 July 2012:** <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETTRADE/Resources/Pubs/TIP-Complete-Version.pdf>



## **Non-Tariff Measures - A Fresh Look at Trade Policy's New Frontier, World Bank (available online, pdf version, 319 page, 6.31 MB)**

This CEPR/World Bank volume brings together recent work by young scholars that draws on original data to shed light on some of the key analytical and policy issues.

**Published: 10 July 2012:** [http://www.cepr.org/pubs/books/cepr/NTM\\_measures.pdf](http://www.cepr.org/pubs/books/cepr/NTM_measures.pdf)



## **Trade Facilitation Terms: An English - Russian Glossary, UNECE, (available online pdf version, 1.60 MB, 310 pages)**

The UNECE and the Secretariat of the Commission of the Customs Union (EurAsEc) collaborated on the revised second edition of this glossary, which is expected to be the new standard reference on trade facilitation terms.

**Published: June 2012,** <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/Publications/ECE-TRADE-377EngRus.pdf>





## On-Going and Upcoming Trade Facilitation Projects

### ADB

#### Trade Facilitation Support for ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint Implementation (GMS/IMT), (2012-2014)

**Objective:** To support participating ASEAN countries in the GMS and the IMT-GT enhance trade facilitation regimes and move closer to the vision of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Specifically, it will establish trade facilitation indicator using World Customs Organization methodology for Time Release Survey, support more efficient and modernized border agencies, improve legal and regulatory frameworks and strengthen capacity in trade facilitation institutions.

**Please find more details at:** <http://www.adb.org/projects/45100-001/main>

### ESCAP

#### Network for knowledge Transfer on Sustainable Agriculture Technologies and Improved Market Linkages in South and Southeast Asia (SATNETAsia), (2012-2014)

**Objective:** To contribute in part to improve food security in South and Southeast Asia by enhancing regional trade facilitation for food products.

#### Key Results of the project includes:

Effective trade facilitation measures for agro and food products are identified and recommended in six South and Southeast Asian countries.

#### Upcoming Events:

- SATNET Annual Meeting of Project Stakeholders
- National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Business Process Analysis Studies: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Myanmar (February - April 2013)

**Partners:** The Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA); Trade and Investment Division (TID), ESCAP; The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT); The World Vegetable Centre; and Food Security Centre (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim in Germany

#### Strengthening the Capacity of Developing Countries and Transition Economies to Access the Global Supply Chains, (September 2011 - August 2013)

**Objective:** To strengthen the capacity of developing and transition economies to link to the global supply chain through reduction of trade obstacle at national/regional level.

#### Key Results of the project includes:

(i) Increased knowledge by policy makers & managers of techniques to detect regulatory, procedural, organizational barriers to trade and of international standards and best practices to address them. (ii) Enhanced capacity by policy makers & managers to formulate and implement trade facilitation policies, measures and instruments for linking to global supply chain. (iii) Improved coordination at inter/intra regional level among key institutions for trade facilitation & improved dialogue with the business community.

**Upcoming Activities:** Background Study on "Roadmap: enhancing information exchange in international supply chains" by each UN Regional Commission

**Partners:** Lead - Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

#### Cross-border Business Process Analysis (BPA) of South Asian Trade and Transit Corridors for Sub-regional Cooperation, (2012-2013)

**Objective:** To facilitate subregional trade and transit among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal by identifying at and behind the border bottlenecks for trade along major trade and transit corridors in these countries through an in-depth analysis.

#### Key Results of the project includes:

The analysis study report will list all the bottlenecks and impediments and propose practical recommendations and strategic action plans on facilitation measures in the areas of harmonization of processes and documentation, infrastructure, policy framework (bilateral and multilateral agreements, etc.), application of ICT, etc. In addition, the project aims to enhance capacity of stakeholders, in particular those of Nepal and Bhutan, to assess issues and bottlenecks in trade and transit procedures and design corrective measures.





## On-Going and Upcoming Trade Facilitation Projects

**Partners:** United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)

### UNCTAD:

#### Supporting Trade Facilitation in South and South East Asia, (2012-2013)

**Objective:** To help developing countries in Africa and Asia strengthening their capacities to participate effectively in bilateral, regional and multilateral trade facilitation arrangements. More concretely, the project focuses in one transit and two landlocked countries of South Asia, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal and three East African countries namely, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

#### Key Results of the project includes:

National implementation plans for each country, regional assessments, training events, inter-regional information sharing mechanism. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon and Guatemala, where the project activities started in February - March 2012, the individual interviews with TF stakeholders have been completed and the preparations of the first draft of the national implementation plan are at their final stage.

**For more information:** [http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdtltlb2012d2\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdtltlb2012d2_en.pdf)

### UNIDO:



#### Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF): Conformity Assessment Capacity-Building in Bhutan, (2012-2013)

**Objective:** To ensure the protection of the public from fraudulent trade transactions and to enhance public safety by the country-wide verification of measuring instruments used in trade and the inspection and testing of identified strategic electrical components and products, particularly in the building industry.

#### Strengthening Bangladesh Accreditation Board (BAB) through UNIDO: Institutional cooperation between Norwegian Accreditation (NA) and BAB

**Objective:** To ensure that BAB has established the necessary infrastructure for handling applications, assessment of conformity assessment bodies and surveillance visits of accredited bodies by using technically competent personnel and appropriate recognized quality systems. The ultimate goal of the programme is to ensure that BAB becomes a signatory to Multilateral Recognition Arrangements established by APLAC, ILAC and IAF.

#### Trade Capacity-Building in the Mekong Delta Countries of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, through Strengthening Institutional and National Capacities Related to Standards, Metrology, Testing and Quality (SMTQ) Phase III

**Objective:** The overall development goal of the project is facilitation of the industrial development, consumer protection and enhanced export capabilities through further strengthening of standards, metrology, testing and quality management institutional infrastructure and national capacities. The enhanced quality infrastructure will in turn strengthen the integration of Mekong Delta countries into the multilateral trading system.

#### Post WTO Accession Support to Vietnam - TBT/SPS Compliance Capacity Development Related to Key Export Sectors

**Objective:** To develop and strengthen demand-oriented Standards, Metrology, Testing and Quality capacities that will enable Vietnam's export products to conform to the ever-tightening international regulations, thereby aiming to reduce technical barriers to trade.

#### Key Results of the project includes:

Reduction of export rejection cases of Vietnamese exports as well as international accreditation of testing laboratories by 2015



# Upcoming Trade Facilitation Events and Meetings

## Regional and Sub-regional

- SATNET Annual Meeting of Project Stakeholders, Bogor, Indonesia, 12 February 2013, (organized by ESCAP)
- APEC Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) Regional Capacity Building Workshop Bangkok, Thailand, 27-28 February 2013, (organized by APEC)
- Roundtable Meeting on Customs Modernization and International Trade Facilitation, Astana, Kazakhstan, March 2013, (organized by UNECE)
- Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 5-7 March 2013, (organized by ADB, ESCAP, OHRLLS, UNECE and the Government of Lao PDR)
- Asia and the Pacific and the Americas: Customs Leaders' Partnership Dialogue - Efficient and Secure Trade for Shared Prosperity, Panama, April 2013, (organized by ADB)
- Consultation Meeting on Paperless Trade Arrangements for ECO countries, Kish Island, Iran, 22 April 2013 (tbc), (organized by ESCAP)
- ESCAP-ECO Trade Facilitation Conference, Kish Island, Iran, 22-23 April 2013 (tbc), (organized by ESCAP)
- Trade Logistics Training, Kyrgyzstan, May 2013, (organized by ADB)
- Customs Trainer's Training for CAREC Countries, Shanghai, China, June 2013, (organized by ADB)
- Committees and Working Groups (TMC, CSC, eCOO, BDC, TT&L) Meetings, Hanoi, Vietnam, 9-10 May 2013, (organized by AFACT)
- Steering Committee Meeting, Hanoi, Vietnam, 9-10 May 2013, (organized by AFACT)
- Workshop on Trade Facilitation in South Asian Countries, Kathmandu, Nepal, May/June 2013 (tentative) (organized by UNCTAD)
- 4th TFIG Workshop, ECE region, Almaty Kazakhstan, 3 to 5 June 2013 (to be confirmed). (organized by UNECE in collaboration with ESCAP)
- WCO IT Conference & Exhibition 2013, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 14 - 16 May 2013 (organized by WCO)

## National

- National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Business Process Analysis Study for Agricultural Trade, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 28 February 2013, (organized by ESCAP)
- Workshop on WCO self assessment tools and SAFE Training, Astana, Kazakhstan, March 2013, (organized by ADB)
- National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Business Process Analysis Study for Agricultural Trade, Kathmandu, Nepal, 12 March 2013, (organized by ESCAP, tbc)
- National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Business Process Analysis Study for Agricultural Trade, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 14 March 2013, (organized by ESCAP, tbc)
- National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Business Process Analysis Study for Agricultural Trade, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 20 March 2013, (organized by ESCAP, tbc)
- National Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Business Process Analysis Study for Agricultural Trade, Yangon, Myanmar, 2 April 2013, (organized by ESCAP, tbc)



## Past Trade Facilitation Events



### ESCAP

#### **ESCAP/ITD/DTN/WTO Capacity Building for Free Trade Agreements Negotiations, the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand, 20-24 August 2012**

**Organized By:** Trade and Investment Division, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), International Institute for Trade and Development, Thailand, Department of Trade Negotiations, Thailand, World Trade Organization (WTO)

**For more information,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/cbfta.asp>

#### **UNNExT Training Workshop on Business Process Analysis for Paperless Trade, the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand, 10-11 September 2012**

**Organized By:** Trade and Investment Division, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

**For more information,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/unnext/bpathai.asp>

#### **The Asia Pacific Business Forum 2012: "Advancing Regional Economic Integration: Connecting Business, Strengthening Partnerships, the Sunway Resort & SPA, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15-16 October 2012**

**Organized By:** The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

**For more information, please visit** <http://www.unescap.org/apbf/>

#### **UNNExT Workshop on Business Process Analysis to Facilitate Logistics and Connectivity in South Asia, the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand, 16 October 2012**

**Organized By:** The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations Network Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific (UNNExT)

#### **ESCAP-ADB SASEC Stakeholder Workshop on Sub-regional Trade and Transit Collaboration Galadari Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 29 October 2012**

**Organized By:** Trade and Investment Division, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)

#### **Expert Review Meeting on Regional Arrangements for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade, Galadari Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1 November 2012**

**For more information,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/projects/pta.asp>





## Past Trade Facilitation Events

### **The Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP): Transit Facilitation for Regional Connectivity: Enhancing Corridor Performance, Galadari Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1-2 November 2012**

**Organized By:** Trade and Investment Division, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB)

**For more information,** <http://www.gfptt.org/Entities/EventProfile.aspx?id=2ffd3322-9c5b-470a-8aab-0ce425012383>

### **ARTNeT Conference on Empirical and Policy Issues of Integration in Asia and the Pacific, Galadari Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1-2 November 2012**

**Organized By:** Trade and Investment Division, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

**For more information,** <http://www.unescap.org/tid/artnet/mtg/epii.asp>

## **UNCTAD**

### **Validation Workshop for the Implementation Plan of Future Trade Facilitation Measures, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 26-27 November 2012**

**Organized By:** the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

### **Training on Trade Facilitation and Validation Conference for the Implementation Plan of Future Trade Facilitation Measures, Thimphu, Bhutan, 11-12 December 2012**

**Organized By:** the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

**For more information,** <http://www.moea.gov.bt/readmore/PressreleaseTFWorkshop.pdf>

## **WCO**

### **Southern Africa Trade Facilitation Conference (SATFC), "21st Century Trade Facilitation Tools: Increasing International Competitiveness", Emperors Palace, Johannesburg, South Africa, 10-11 September 2012**

**Organized By:** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Customs Organization (WCO)

**For more information,** <http://www.satradehub.org/trade-facilitation/sath-content/newsroom/hub-happenings-articles/usaids-world-customs-organization-wco-trade-facilitation-conference-september-10-11-2012>

## GLOBAL

### **Poor Europe-Asia land routes hinder trade, China Daily, 5 September 2012**

Inefficient transport links prove costly for businesses. Inefficient land transportation between Europe and Asia has become a key barrier in trade between the two continents, according to international logistics experts. "Many Eurasian countries have experienced difficulties in trade growth because of poor connectivity with each other," said Babar Badat, vice-chairman of the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, at a logistics development forum on Monday. The forum was hosted at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** Business Day, which was part of the second China-Eurasia Expo that opened in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on Sunday. The SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization founded in 2001 in Shanghai by six nations - Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The group's aim is to promote cooperation in politics, trade and business. Although the road and railway systems connecting Asia and Europe have been improved, road transportation is still not effective, the experts said.  
[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-09/05/content\\_15734597.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-09/05/content_15734597.htm)

## ASIA PACIFIC

### **Trade facilitation for growth, Daily Financial Time, 31 October 2012**

Participants from 30 countries meet to find the way forward for Asia Pacific countries in a challenging global environment. Implementing trade facilitation reforms for regional connectivity, effective consultation between public and private sectors and developing systems for information exchange between countries were among the main issues that were discussed at the fourth Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum held yesterday.

#### *ESCAP views*

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) Trade and Investment Division Director Ravi Ratnayake in his address called for these points to be discussed as member countries are grappling with a changing global economic environment. He pointed out that there is a growing realisation that the developed economies are unlikely to return to a "growth as usual" or "trade as usual" scenario in the near term. There is also a growing realisation that the Asia-Pacific region should search for new drivers of economic growth in earnest. It is UNESCAP belief that deeper regional connectivity can be a strong driver of growth and poverty reduction. "The somewhat shocking reality is that Asia Pacific is still better connected to Europe and America than with itself. Our latest research shows that trade costs of the region with North America and European Union are 20% less than those with itself. With cumbersome border procedures for many countries it is easier and cheaper to trade with far away developed countries rather than the one next door," he said.

Ratnayake added that inadequate transport and logistics is a major issue and one that will require a massive amount of investment over the coming decades in many developing countries. However what countries should focus on is ensuring that whatever hard infrastructure they have is used at maximum efficiency. This can only happen if "soft infrastructure" issues are addressed.

<http://www.ft.lk/2012/10/31/trade-facilitation-for-growth/>

### **Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum ends in Colombo, The Financial Express, 7 November 2012**

Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2012, jointly organized by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Colombo ended recently with the call for the countries of the region to reduce non-tariff trade barriers. Strengthening regional connectivity for trade facilitation within the region was also highlighted.

Dr. Sarath Amunugama, Senior Minister, International Monetary Cooperation of Sri Lanka in his inaugural address suggested the need for developing and expanding the regional connectivity for increased trade within the Asia Pacific Region in view of the continuous economic slow down in Europe and the USA.

The opening ceremony was also addressed by Abdul Rishad Bathiudeen Minister, Industry and Commerce of Sri Lanka, Dr. Ravi Ratnayake, Director, Trade and Investment Division, ESCAP and Ms. Rita A. O'Sullivan, Country Director, ADB Sri Lanka.

The Minister also launched the publication on "Capacity Building Kit for Single Window Implementation" jointly published by UNNEXt (United Nations Network of Exporters for Paperless Trade in Asia and Pacific), UNESCAP and UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe).

<http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/index.php?ref=MjBfMTFFMDdfMTJfMV85MF8xNDkxNTc=>

## ADB

### **ADB assists developing nine priority sectors in Asia, Financial Times, 19 September 2012**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is concentrating on developing nine sectors including infrastructure in Sri Lanka and the far eastern region including Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos to foster economic development. "Asian Development Bank has assisted sub regional economic cooperation in the Greater Mekong Sub region (GMS) to enhance their economic relations, covering nine priority sectors," said ADB in Sri Lanka Country Director Rita O' Sullivan at the recently held Interactive evening of the Sri Lanka-Vietnam Greater Mekong Sub-Region Business Council of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. The nine priority sectors developed in the GMS region included agriculture, energy, environment, human resource development, investment, telecommunications, tourism, transport infrastructure and transport and trade facilitation. The Greater Mekong Sub region has enjoyed a period of sustained and buoyant economic growth over the last decade averaging 6.5 per cent. Over the last decade, the Greater Mekong Sub region economic cooperation program has mobilised over \$14 billion in completed and planned investments. It has facilitated and delivered multi-modal transport systems, anchored in transport/economic corridors, energy interconnections and investments in the information superhighway-laying the basis for expanded physical connectivity, enhanced production and employment opportunities and improved livelihoods.

<http://www.ft.lk/2012/09/19/adb-assists-developing-nine-priority-sectors-in-asia/>



## News Items on Trade Facilitation

### APEC

#### **APEC backs green tariff cuts, Financial Review, 9 September 2012**

Asia-Pacific leaders have agreed to cut trade barriers for environmental products and resist controls on food trade as they seek to bolster the region as the world's key driver of global economic growth. Tariffs will be cut to 5 per cent or less by 2015 on 54 environmental products including solar panels, water purification equipment and certain incinerators in a rare display of international co-operation in this area after the breakdown of multilateral efforts to deal with greenhouse gas emissions. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group leaders also used their statement on Sunday to head off limits on food trade in the face of political pressures for controls due to recently rising prices. Russian President Vladimir Putin moved to calm commodity market fears that Russia could curtail exports of wheat due to a drought. The leaders of the 21 APEC nations, meeting in Vladivostok, Russia, also embarked on a new project to liberalise education by supporting easier trans-border movement by students with reciprocal credit arrangements and easier access for universities wanting to establish offshore campuses.

[http://www.afr.com/p/national/apec\\_backs\\_green\\_tariff\\_cuts\\_S7n0YoLeq0xuqymlsupDsM](http://www.afr.com/p/national/apec_backs_green_tariff_cuts_S7n0YoLeq0xuqymlsupDsM)

### ASEAN

#### **Asean to adapt World Customs Org's model to enhance trade, Philippines Information Agency, 17 September 2012**

The Philippines along with other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) member-states have agreed to adopt the World Customs Organization (WCO) Data Model as a tool to assist the development of customs procedures that would enhance trade facilitation. Director Kissinger V. Reyes and Reginaldo Linang of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) Management Information System and Technology Group (MISTG) and Department of Finance-Information Technology (DOF-IT) Director Angelica Sarmiento represented the country in the first Asean Single Window (ASW) Technical Working Group (TWG)-WCO Consultation which coincides with the 20th meeting of the Working Group on Technical Matters. During the ASW meeting held on September 4 to 7 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the members discussed the adoption of the WCO Data Model as part of their future work and collaboration with the WCO.

<http://www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=231347849771>

### CAREC

#### **CAREC programme set to improve regional roads, New Europe, 3 November 3, 2012**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s Tajikistan Resident Mission (TJRM) recently stated that the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme will offer support to more than 500 kilometers of regional roads in Tajikistan, Asia-Plus reported. CAREC promotes project-based cooperation in transport, energy, trade facilitation, and trade policy. The roads which are part of the CAREC corridor network, will ensure safer and faster year-round travel between Dushanbe and borders with Kyrgyzstan at Sarytash and Uzbekistan at Tursunzoda and Panjakent. Asel Chyngysheva, Officer-in-Charge at ADB TJRM said that improved roads will reduce transport costs and also duration of travel, increase incomes, create employment opportunities, improve access to markets and social services,

and strengthen competitiveness.

<http://www.neurope.eu/article/carec-programme-set-improve-regional-roads>

### CHINA

#### **Revival of Eurasian passage to boost regional trade, stability, Xinhua, 4 September 2012**

China has called for reinvigorating the once-glorious "Silk Road" trade route by stepping up Eurasian cooperation, which is expected to boost regional trade and stability. The heads of the states and governments, as well as investors, are discussing the prospect of reviving a trade route across the vast Eurasian land, at the ongoing second China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi, capital of the northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, where the Silk Road once threaded through. "The construction of the grand Eurasian passage is speeding up," Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said at the opening ceremony of the expo on Sunday. Seventeen state-level open ports, two international airports and extensive roads and railways link the landlocked Xinjiang, China's westernmost region, to the country's neighbors to the west. The second cross-border railway between China and Kazakhstan has been linked up and the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan highway will soon be finished.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/business/2012-09/04/c\\_131826576.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/business/2012-09/04/c_131826576.htm)

#### **China to simplify customs procedures in 7 ports incl. Xiamen port, 16 September 2012**

China will improve its efficiency on inspections and quarantines during customs clearance as a major effort to boost the country's foreign trade, officials said. Administrative procedures on inspections and quarantines will be simplified in the country's seven ports in the near future, including the Tianjin, Dalian, Shanghai, and Xiamen ports, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine said on Friday. In Xiamen port, for instance, specific details of goods to be imported and exported now are shared via an online information platform among local authorities in charge of maritime safety, port management, inspection and quarantine. "Under the platform, we can make arrangements on inspections and quarantines before goods enter the port. Thus, the stay of goods on the port will be shortened," said Zhan Siming, head of the Xiamen entry-exit inspection and quarantine bureau. "Such simplified procedures on inspections and quarantines will cover all the ports in the country in the next three to five years," said Wei Chuanzhong, deputy chief of the administration, at a working conference on Sept 14 in Xiamen. Also, inspections and quarantines during customs clearance will be free in all the ports in the country from October to December, and such costs will be lowered beginning next year in order to lower costs for traders, the administration said.

<http://www.whatsonxiamen.com/news27184.html>

### INDIA

#### **UPA Govt. makes e-payment of customs duty mandatory, News Track India, 7 September 2012**

In order to further reduce transaction cost of the importers and as a trade facilitation measure, the government on Friday made e-payment of customs duty mandatory. According to a release issued by the Ministry of Finance, it has been decided to make e-payment mandatory for importers registered under Accredited Clients Programme and importers paying customs





## News Items on Trade Facilitation

duty of one lakh rupees or more per Bill of Entry with effect from 17.09.2012. Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has issued instructions advising all the Chief Commissioners of Customs to give wide publicity to enable trade to be ready in case any change in their software or any internal procedure for effecting e-payment is required. As a large number of **taxpayers would be required to pay the taxes electronically**, it is requested that importers, trade and industry may be provided all assistance so as to help them in adopting the new procedure. E-payment is advantageous to tax payers as well as the Government. To the taxpayers, it affords the facility of making payments from their own offices on a 24X7 basis. It also facilitates quicker release of cargo. To the Government, it ensures immediate collection of taxes and error free data relating to tax payments. E-payment facility at Customs locations was introduced in 2007 and is available through more than one authorized bank at all major Customs locations having ICES facility. Though voluntary, the facility has been used by numerous importers. Besides expediting the process of payment of Customs duty and clearance of imported goods, the facility of e-payment has resulted in reduction of transaction cost.

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/09/07/386-UPA-Govt-makes-e-payment-of-customs-duty-mandatory-.html>

### **India to give APTMA-specific visa facility, Fibre2fashion, 12 November 2012**

All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) to lead trade facilitation process with India, said Group Leader Gohar Ejaz during the visit of Indian High Commissioner Sharat Sabharwal to All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA). On his suggestion for **multiple APTMA-specific visa facility**, the Indian HC announced a special visa service for APTMA members in line with the SAARC model. Further, he announced one year triple entry visas for APTMA covering 10 cities with one side entry through land border and return through airport, exempted from police investigation. He said the visas would be for the CEOs and Directors of APTMA members and their spouses, followed by the executives of the companies. Mr Gohar Ejaz said the APTMA would be prepared to act as one stop shop for match-making of trade and investment projects between the entrepreneurs of two countries in order to alleviate the menace of growing unemployment in the region. Chairman APTMA Ahsan Bashir welcomed at the APTMA Punjab office. Chairman APTMA Punjab Shahzad Ali Khan and other office-bearers besides the Executive Committee members were also present on the occasion. According to him, the current level of trade between two countries was hardly at \$1.15 billion, which can be reached \$10 billion by facilitating the entrepreneurs of two countries. Chairman APTMA Punjab Shahzad Ali Khan suggested in his address establishment of joint container company for increase in trade between India and Pakistan for overcoming transport infrastructure constraints in the larger interest of trade and investment between two countries. He also proposed for the establishment of joint meeting facility at the borders until visa relaxations.

[http://www.fibre2fashion.com/news/textile-news/newsdetails.aspx?news\\_id=117966](http://www.fibre2fashion.com/news/textile-news/newsdetails.aspx?news_id=117966)

### **INDIA – MYANMAR**

**Team from Indian Chamber of Commerce explore Myanmar for border trade Issues hampering border trade discussed threadbare, The Sangai Express, 4 September 2012**

A high-level delegation led by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) visited Myanmar from August 26 to 31 to study and explore opportunities of Border Trade. The first ever trade delegation to enter Myanmar through Moreh-Tamu Border with the help of Government of Manipur travelled through the India-Myanmar Friendship road which was inaugurated in 2002 to strengthen border infrastructure and facilitate border trade between the two countries. ICC delegation interacted with traders at Moreh-Tamu border and discussed the issues hampering formal border trade. The discussion highlighted issues like **lack of adequate banking facilities, limited items for border trade, high cost of doing business, infrastructure bottlenecks, complex documentation formalities etc.** conveyed a statement issued by ICC Director General Dr Rajeev Singh.

<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/sangai-express-news.php?newsid=18939>

### **KAZAKHSTAN**

#### **OSCE Centre in Kazakhstan supports trade and transport facilitation, Trend, 17 September 2012**

A two-day high-level meeting on international trade, trade facilitation and aid for trade was held on 13 and 14 September 2012 in Almaty with the OSCE's participation, Kazinform reported. The meeting was organized by Kazakhstan's Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. It brought together key decision makers from these countries, local and international experts, the business community and civil society representatives. The conference reviewed the progress achieved in the area of international trade and transport facilitation under the 2003 Almaty Programme of Action, outlined challenges and priorities for further action, and developed recommendations to be considered in the final outcome document of the Ten-Year Review Conference, which will be held in 2014, the press service of the OSCE Centre in Astana said.

<http://en.trend.az/regions/casia/kazakhstan/2066017.html>

### **MALAYSIA**

#### **Asean to fully implement self-certification system by 2015, Business Times, 3 September 2012**

The self-certification system allows certified exporters to issue invoice declarations on their own without having to apply for the preferential certificate of origin form from the respective International Trade and Industry Ministry (Miti). For Malaysia, Miti is the only authorised body to certify preferential certificates of origin for various bilateral and regional free trade agreements signed by Malaysia. With self-certification, the procedures and bureaucracy will be reduced. This process is trade facilitative and save cost and time. The first pilot self-certification scheme has been implemented since November 2010. Four Asean member states namely Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei are participating in the scheme. International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the pilot scheme has been extended to end of 2015.

[http://www.btimes.com.my/Current\\_News/BTIMES/articles/20120829000157/Article/index\\_html#ixzz25OV7HeuD](http://www.btimes.com.my/Current_News/BTIMES/articles/20120829000157/Article/index_html#ixzz25OV7HeuD)

#### **Trade facilitation key to growth, The Stars, 16 October 2012**

Government working with port operators and freight forwarders

to overcome bottlenecks. Improving trade facilitation is one of the Government's priorities in growing the economy, said International Trade and Industry Ministry secretary-general Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria. "It is not so much about market liberalisation. More important is trade facilitation. You can have zero tariffs but if you cannot move a particular product from country A to B due to bottlenecks, then you have negated all that you did to bring tariffs down," she said at the Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2012. Dr Sta Maria said the ministry was working with the Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Transport Ministry, port authorities, freight forwarders and "other parties in the logistics chain, in order to sort out bottlenecks." She also spoke about the Economic Transformation Programme, and said the Malaysian story "is about re-inventing ourselves". "In the face of international competition, transformation is our only option. Members of the public sector have been told they have a key role in this national endeavour, that it is in their power to enable or stifle economic growth." Dr Sta Maria pointed out that Malaysia's global competitiveness is a function of the collaboration between the public and private sectors, and civil society. <http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/10/16/business/12176809&sec=business>

## PAKISTAN

### **USAID urged to execute Indo-Pak cross-border trade assessment study, Breccorder, 14 November 2012**

President, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Muhammad Haroon Agar has urged Chief of USAID Trade Project to execute Indo-Pak cross-border trade assessment study from Khokrapar-Monabao Border to start trade on the pattern of Wagah-Attari. Exchanging views with Brian Graul, Chief of Party, USAID Pakistan Trade Project he appreciated ongoing USAID Trade Project which supports trade policy implementation, capacity building programme of government departments concerned including the FBR, Customs to improve regional and cross-border trade particularly with Afghanistan and India. He emphasised that for cross-border trade, Pakistani borders lack sufficient infrastructure and modern integrated check-posts and indispensable services. Customs and border procedures are not ideally oriented for trade facilitation. Single window facility as per international trade practices is essential. <http://www.breccorder.com/business-a-economy/189/1258056/>

### **Trade Facilitation Committees being activated: TDAP chief, The Nations, 23 January 2013**

Trade Development Authority of Pakistan Chief Executive Abid Javed Akbar has said that TDAP believes in purposeful and result-oriented efforts to enhance country's exports to \$50 billion soon. He exchanged these views during his visit to Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He stated that KCCI can be made focal Chamber for trade with D-8 countries. He said TDAP is keeping abreast business and industrial community on GSP+ 2014 in European Union. He offered TDAP's entire support to organize seminar on Pakistan-EU trade on recently enforced Autonomous Trade Preferences (ATPs) with concessional tariff arrangements on 78 items. He also sought KCCI's proposals to work on GSP+ with USA.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/business/23-Jan-2013/trade-facilitation-committees-being-activated-tdap-chief>

## PHILIPPINES

### **BOC boosts trade facilitation program, Journal Online, 16 August 2012**

THE Bureau of Customs (BOC) further boosted its trade facilitation campaign with the adoption of an "economic operator program" compliant with international customs procedure and intended to "enhance the bureau's partnership with the private sector through trade facilitation." Customs Commissioner Rozzano "Ruffy" Biazon said he is pleased to announce the signing by Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Cesar Purisima of Customs Administrative Order (CAO) 1-2012. The order, Biazon said, committed the BOC to implement the World Customs Organization (WCO) Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (WCO-SAFE), as well as the Revised Kyoto Convention on the Harmonization and Simplification of Customs Procedures.

<http://www.journal.com.ph/index.php/news/national/36166-boc-boosts-trade-facilitation-program>

### **DTI conducts sessions to improve exporters' "bottom line", Philippine Information Agency, 15 November 2012**

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) through the Bureau of Export Trade Promotion (BETP) in cooperation with the Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) and the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (Philexport) recently conducted an information session to provide updates on trade facilitation to improve the "bottom line" of exporters and make them competitive in the world market. "If we (government and other agencies) are able make ourselves irrelevant, it means that we have really levelled up to a situation where we can actually trade without having the intervention of so many agencies," said Bureau of Export Trade Promotion (BETP) Director Senen M. Perlada during the recent updates on trade facilitation. This one-day seminar intends to provide exporters information on productivity and efficiency measures, and clarify issues on trade. It is part of the series of seminars under the Philippine Export Competitiveness Program (PECP) that provides exporters with helpful information on operating their businesses.

<http://www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=1781352943197>

## RUSSIAN FEDERATION

### **APEC to Work with Customs Union - Putin**

Russia will actively promote collaboration between its economic union with Kazakhstan and Belarus and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) bloc, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday. Dozens of APEC countries have already applied for trade agreements with the Common Economic Space group, Putin said at a press conference the APEC summit in Vladivostok. "Russia is representing the consolidated position of the Common Economic Space here," Putin added. Russia and New Zealand have already begun negotiations on a bilateral trade agreement, and Vietnam is about to follow suit, Putin said. The Common Economic Space, which is based on a customs union of the three countries, can provide a connection between the Far East and Europe, Putin said. The group, which formally came into existence in 2012, is offering its infrastructure to its prospective economic partners of the Pacific Rim, he added.

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20120907/175823986.html>



## News Items on Trade Facilitation

### SASEC

#### **SASEC to provide \$15m to facilitate trade with SAARC members, Republica, 6 November 2012**

The 4th South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) meeting to be held from Wednesday in Bhutan is set to decide on providing US\$15 million rupees to trade facilitation and upgrading customs facilities to boost Nepal's trade with major South Asian trade partners. Lal Mani Joshi, secretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, who is leading Nepali delegation for the two-day meeting, told Republica on Tuesday that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) would announced its plans to provide the amount to facilitate Nepal's trade with Bangladesh through Kakadvitta-Banglabanda route and upgrade facilities at Panitanki on the Indian side of the border. At the meeting the ADB also will announce to facilitate trade through Rohanpur -Singhabad railway route and improve the facility of Mungla Port of Bangladesh. "Different agreements will be signed during the meeting including upgrading roads and a railway route for trade facilitation of Nepal with Bangladesh and improving the physical facility of Panitanki customs, which is crucial for Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Bhutan," said Joshi. The sub-regional block includes Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Bhutan. The ADB has been supporting to SASEC to upgrade the trade infrastructures to facilitate trade and promote economic cooperation among the member countries of the sub-regional grouping.

[http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=44551](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=44551)

### SRI LANKA

#### **ADB to finance Lanka's trade facilitation upgrade, Daily News, 6 November 2012**

ADB is to finance Sri Lanka's trade facilitation upgrade by committing almost 20 % of its global trade facilitation budget solely to Sri Lanka. "As of end of 2011, ADB assisted Sri Lanka's Industry with more than \$ 243 million and for trade, \$ 555 million from Y2008. Also, ADB's assistance scheme using our banking sector is a model to be adopted in our industries. "We thank ADB for their valuable partnership support in Sri Lanka's new growth phase not only for infrastructure, industry sectors but even for trade facilitation," said Rishad Bathiudeen, Minister of Industry and Commerce recently. Minister Bathiudeen expressed these views after his meeting with Rita O'Sullivan, Country Director of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Sri Lanka Resident Mission (SLRM) recently. The meeting took place during the side-lines of the morning inaugural event of Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum 2012 (APTFF) on October 30 at Galadari Hotel, Colombo. The first ever APTFF forum in Colombo to be held, was based on the theme 'Enhancing public-private collaboration for trade facilitation, paperless trade and cross-border connectivity.'

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2012/11/06/bus03.asp>

### WCO

#### **World Customs Organization : ASEM Leaders recognize WCO instruments and tools to promote trade facilitation, 4 Leaders, 6 November 2012**

The World Customs Organization (WCO) welcomes the Chair's Statement by Leaders attending the 9th Summit of the Asia-

Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic under the theme "Friends for Peace, Partners for Prosperity" which highlights the importance of implementing WCO instruments and tools to promote trade facilitation. Heads of State and Government of 49 Asian and European countries attended the event, as well as the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary-General of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEM Leaders held candid and in-depth discussions, exchanged views on important regional and international issues of common interest and concern, reviewed cooperation between Asia and Europe in the political, economic and socio-cultural fields, and set out the future direction of ASEM. In dealing with the issue of trade and investment facilitation and liberalization, ASEM Leaders recognized the importance of implementing WCO instruments and tools in the Customs field, especially in the context of the ASEM Trade Facilitation Action Plan on Customs Matters.

<http://www.4-traders.com/news/WCO-World-Customs-Organization-ASEM-Leaders-recognize-WCO-instruments-and-tools-to-promote-trade--15479858/>

### WTO

#### **WTO changes focus to trade facilitations, The Jakarta Post, 17 October 2012**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) will be focusing on trade facilitations, as negotiations in removing global trade barriers have not progressed since the deadlock in 2008, a senior executive of the world's trade governing body says. WTO deputy director general Valentine Rugwabiza said on Tuesday in Jakarta that one of the key areas was trade facilitation, which would be central to emerging countries like Indonesia. The basic trade facilitation would include easing customs procedures, providing transparency and predictability for the implementation of the procedures and lower costs, she said. "Trade facilitation is a key area and one that is progressing. We hope that by some time next year, it will come to fruition," Rugwabiza said during an interview with The Jakarta Post. Rugwabiza said progress was also being seen in the area of market access for least-developed countries to further integrate into the market. At the WTO ministerial meeting last year, several major trading partners of least-developed countries, such as China, expressed their commitment to open access to their market. Trade negotiations during the Doha Round, which aimed to eliminate trade barriers around the world to free up global markets, cut agricultural subsidies and enhance the international trading system, have been deadlocked since 2008. Developing countries like China and India refused to slash import tariffs on industrial goods, while developed markets, led by the US and the European Union, did not want to compromise on measures to protect farmers in poorer countries.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/10/17/wto-changes-focus-trade-facilitations.html>

### OTHER REGIONS

#### **Africa:**

#### **AUC – EC Forum on Trade Facilitation, Brussels. cta, 24 January 2013**

The African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Commission (EC) organised the first Joint Customs and Trade Facilitation Forum titled "A Customs Strategy for the Continental



**Free Trade Area** in Brussels from 11 to 13 December 2012. Customs and Trade Facilitation is one of the actions jointly implemented by the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) in the framework of the Joint Africa EU Strategy to foster cooperation between both EU and African customs administrations and amongst African customs administrations. The objective of the Forum was to contribute to the identification of concrete measures to be taken by the AU, its RECs and Member States' customs authorities in their area of competence for the implementation of the customs aspects related to the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). It follows the decision taken by Heads of States at the African Union Summits of January and July 2012 to move toward a CFTA by 2017.

[http://brussels.cta.int/index.php?option=com\\_k2&id=7420:auc-ec-forum-on-trade-facilitation&view=item&Itemid=54](http://brussels.cta.int/index.php?option=com_k2&id=7420:auc-ec-forum-on-trade-facilitation&view=item&Itemid=54)

## Trade facilitation to open up Africa's potential - Davies, Engineering News, 10 September 2012

Africa's economic potential as the next leading source of global economic growth could remain unfulfilled if the barriers to international and inter-regional trade were not addressed, Trade and Industry Minister Dr Rob Davies said on Monday. Speaking at the Southern Africa Trade Facilitation conference, in Johannesburg, he pointed out that, despite Africa's position as the second-fastest growing continent after Asia, inadequate infrastructure, the limitations of small and fragmented markets and the inadequate diversification of industrial structures, were responsible for the low levels of trade. The World Bank's 'Trading Across Borders' indice ranked Southern African countries in the lowest quartile, ranking between 136 and 164, among 183 countries. The high costs and lengthy duration of movement of goods over Southern African borders, which reduced commerce and industry competition and discouraged trade, needed to be mitigated through efficient trade facilitation and cost-effective transport services, logistics and customs reforms. Davies commented that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) free trade agreement (FTA), which was expected to be implemented this year, would boost inter-regional trade, as almost all tariff lines would be duty-free. The SADC FTA, incorporating the East African Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, would extend through 26 countries, comprising a combined population of 600-million, and open up markets reaching a gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$1-trillion.

<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/trade-facilitation-to-open-up-africas-potential---davies-2012-09-10>

## East Africa:

### Regional Lawmakers Call for Business Facilitation, All Africa, 31 August 2012

Members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) have called on the member states to improvise means of easing doing business among East Africans as a way of deepening the regional economic integration. The lawmakers believe that for the community to elevate its economic potential, some issues like infrastructural challenges and trade restrictions and other challenges must be immediately addressed to pave way for EAC economic development. They are members of the EALA committee on communications, trade and investment and are in Kigali to discuss investment opportunities and industrialisation policies in member states. The meeting is also attended by

government officials from different ministries of all partner states. In an interview with The New Times, Angela Charles Kizigha, the chairperson of the committee said that member states had not done enough to ease and promote the business flows in the region. "We need to look at development of the key transport infrastructure, especially railways, harbours, roads and ports as well eliminating all trade barriers to facilitate the traders", she said. Kizigha added that if the challenges are properly addressed, the intra-trade among the community will make the citizens benefit more from the integration process. She further reiterated EALA's commitment towards playing its role in advocating for the removal of all the restrictions. Economists say that within the region, about 75 percent of the value of exports cover transport costs, and an example they give is Burundi, where the poor road network makes importation of goods from any other member state take even months.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201208310484.html>

## Ghana:

### Shippers trained on trade facilitation, Ghana Web, 23 January 2013

The Ghana Shippers' Authority in collaboration with USAID-West Africa Trade Hub has held a training programme for importers, exporters, transport operators and clearing agents at the Paga-Dakola border. The programme was to offer participants ready assistance by way of information to shippers and transit shippers alike, to help facilitate trade across the Ghana and Burkina Faso borders. This follows the successful launch and opening of Information Centres at the Paga and Dakola borders in September 2012. The training programme saw participants taken through presentations and dissemination of informational material on import and export trade procedures, with respect to customs administration and the work of other regulatory agencies operating at the border.

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=262948>

## Kenya:

### Kenya gets Sh300m for trade facilitation, Standard Media, 29 November 2012

Nairobi: Kenya's trade across her borders got a boost from a Sh300 million kitty extended by Investment Climate Facility (ICF).

The funding will go to Kenya Trade Network Agency (Kentrade) to implement the National Electronic Single Window System.

This system will enable submission, receipting, and processing of documentation used in clearing trade-related cargo. It will be the sole entry point for lodging trade transaction documents in Kenya. The platform will link up key trade stakeholders such as the Kenya Revenue Authority, Kenya Ports Authority, Kenya Bureau of Standards, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services, Port Health Services with clearing and freight forwarding agents. [http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000071685&story\\_title=Kenya-Kenya-gets-Sh300m-for-trade-facilitation](http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000071685&story_title=Kenya-Kenya-gets-Sh300m-for-trade-facilitation)

## Nigeria:

### Single Window Will Make Nigeria Relevant, Competitive In International Trade, Leadership, 4 September 2012

Valentina Mintah is the Programme Manager for the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) single window feasibility study. The expert, who is currently working towards a PhD in evaluating the

impacts of ICT related interventions in trade facilitation, holds a Master's degree in systems analysis and design. She has worked with various IT organisations and development agencies on a number of public sector reform programmes involving Customs and tax implementation systems. In this interview with JULIET ALOHAN, she speaks on the huge impact the single window environment will have on the Nigerian economy, and advises on the contingency plans which must be put in place to ensure sustainability of the system.

What necessitated the need for a National Single Window (NSW) in Nigeria?

Single window is a trade facilitation measure being pursued by several countries around the world to help simplify, reduce cost and time in international trade around the world.

[http://leadership.ng/nga/juliet\\_alohan/34099/2012/09/04/single\\_window\\_will\\_make\\_nigeria\\_relevant\\_competitive\\_intl\\_trade.html](http://leadership.ng/nga/juliet_alohan/34099/2012/09/04/single_window_will_make_nigeria_relevant_competitive_intl_trade.html)

## Rwanda:

### New Strategy to Boost Cross-Border Trade, All Africa, 1 September 2012

The government has introduced a new strategy aimed at facilitating and promoting cross-border trade. The strategy is the first to focus on cross border-trade and will be able to address challenges hindering smooth running of business at the borders. Speaking to The Sunday Times yesterday, Alice Twizeye, the Director of External Trade in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, said traders based near border points face many challenges that need to be addressed. Some of the challenges include lack of financial facilitation, especially loans from Banks, due to their small business status. They also need permanent market points at the border areas to reduce transportation costs while crossing into neighboring countries to sell their products. "What we want is to facilitate our traders and ease their doing business by playing advocacy roles with", Twizeye explained. She added that the new strategy expected to be launched this month will also tackle the issue of solving infrastructural challenges like roads and markets.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201209020108.html>

## South Africa

### South Africa is World Bank's 'most improved' in facilitating cross-border trade, Business Day Live,

## 16 November 2012

The World Bank has identified South Africa as the country that has shown the most improvement in the ease of trading across borders, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan said on Friday. The improvement was a result of the customs modernisation programme of the South African Revenue Service (SARS), which Mr Gordhan said was having a "significant impact" on trade facilitation for legitimate goods. Mr Gordhan quoted the World Bank Doing Business Report 2013, published in October, as saying: "In 2011-12 South Africa improved the most in the ease of trading across borders as measured by Doing Business. Through its customs modernisation programme it implemented measures that reduced the time, cost and documents required for international trade.

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/business/trade/2012/11/16/sa-is-world-banks-most-improved-in-facilitating-cross-border-trade>

## United Arab Emirates:

### MOFT hosts Seminar on Trade Facilitation among Arab Countries, The Kaleej Times, 15 October 2012

The Ministry of Foreign Trade (MOFT) hosts a 'Seminar on Trade Facilitation among Arab Countries and their Integration into the Multilateral Trading System', organised by the Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Islamic Development Bank, within the framework of the ongoing regional and World Trade Organization negotiations. The seminar opening today will continue until 17th this month at the JW Marriot in Dubai, with the participation of a number of Arab countries and international organizations such as the WTO, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade. The seminar's themes and topics will include; a general overview of the latest developments of the Doha negotiations on trade facilitation (TF); a look at GATT Rules; an assessment of the proposed TF text/agreement in the WTO; TF and Developing countries perspective in negotiations; special and differential treatment and the implementation of a future WTO TF agreement; recent trends in international trade; institutional support needs at the national level during both the negotiations and implementation phases; the development dimension of the trade facilitation negotiations and expected results (challenges and opportunities); trade facilitation from



Oceania Customs Organisation Secretariat

