

ASYCUDA Newsletter

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Division on Technology and Logistics



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Editorial

This is the second issue of the online ASYCUDA biannual newsletter, which keeps the ASYCUDA community and other interested parties informed about the latest relevant ASYCUDA Programme activities and country operations.

At the end of 2010, this issue presents country-specific projects such as the ones taking place in the former Netherlands Antilles – now BES Islands (Island of Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius), Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

We warmly welcome the Lao People's Democratic Republic, a newcomer in the ASYCUDA community to which we present our best wishes for successful continuation of the implementation of the system.

We also review the communication and information activities undertaken for more than a year in diverse countries in Central Asia and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). We also present the project of cooperation signed with the International Road Transport Union (IRU). The project is aimed at the implementation of an automated data-exchange procedure between ASYCUDA and IRU TIR, to better control and monitor transit operations using the TIR Carnet. We also report about the first working group on Interconnectivity of Customs

Systems organized in Dar-es-Salaam by the African Union.

The UNCTAD Trade Development Board organized in Geneva its Multi-year Expert Meeting on Emerging Challenges and Recent Developments Affecting Transport and Trade Facilitation (8–10 December 2010). The ASYCUDA Programme was responsible for the tenth December session whose subject was “The use of ICT in Logistics, Trade Facilitation and Supply Chain Security”. This session included a contribution from the World Customs Organization and from ASYCUDA user countries, and *compte-rendus* will be proposed in the next ASYCUDA newsletter.

Once again, we hope you will enjoy reading this issue. Please do not hesitate to send us your comments and suggestions at asycuda@unctad.org, to try to make the ASYCUDA newsletter a useful piece of information for all.

We present Season's Greetings to all our readers together with our Best Wishes for 2011!

ASYCUDA Programme Team, Geneva, December 2010



Voici la deuxième édition en ligne de la lettre d'information semestrielle SYDONIA. Son objectif est d'informer les utilisateurs et toutes les autres parties intéressées par le SYDONIA des activités du programme notamment et de la mise en oeuvre opérationnelle du système dans les pays.

Pour cette fin d'année 2010 la lettre SYDONIA présentera des projets spécifiques des pays tels que les anciennes Antilles Néerlandaises, récemment devenues Pays Bas Caraïbes (Iles de Bonaire, Saba et Sint Eustatius) et Curaçao et Sint Maarten. Nous souhaitons la bienvenue à la République Démocratique Populaire du Laos, nouvelle venue dans la Communauté SYDONIA qui a commencé l'implémentation en juillet 2010 et à qui nous présentons tous nos voeux de réussite pour cette mise en oeuvre du système

Nous ferons également le point sur les diverses activités de communication entreprises depuis plus d'un ans dans divers pays d'Asie centrale et de la CEI (Communauté des états indépendants) ainsi que sur le projet de coopération signé avec l'IRU (International Road Union) pour la mise en place de procédures informatisées d'échange de données dans le cadre de la gestion des opérations de transit international sous couvert de carnets TIR.

Nous rendrons également compte du premier groupe de travail organisé à Dar-es-Salaam par

l'Union Africaine sur l'inter connectivité des systèmes douaniers.

Le Conseil du Commerce et Développement de la CNUCED a organisé à Genève du 8 au 10 décembre 2010 une réunion d'experts pluriannuelle sur les transports et la facilitation du commerce ayant pour thème les « Problèmes émergents et faits nouveaux ayant une incidence sur les transports et la facilitation du commerce ». Le programme SYDONIA a été en charge de l'organisation de la session du vendredi 10 décembre dont le titre est « Utilisation des TIC dans les domaines de la logistique, de la facilitation du commerce et de la sécurité des chaînes d'approvisionnement ». Cette session a comporté une contribution de l'Organisation Mondiale des Douanes et des pays utilisateurs, le compte rendu sera publié dans la prochaine lettre.

Nous souhaitons à tous nos lecteurs de bonnes fêtes et nous leur présentons les meilleurs voeux du programme pour l'année 2011.

Nous leur souhaitons bonne lecture et nous les invitons à nous adresser leurs commentaires et propositions sur asycuda@unctad.org afin de faire de cette lettre d'information un outil utile à tous.

Equipe du Programme SYDONIA, Genève, décembre 2010



Esta es la segunda edición en línea del boletín informativo semestral SIDUNEA. Su objetivo es informar a los usuarios y a otras partes interesadas en SIDUNEA de las actividades del programa y, en particular de su funcionamiento en los diferentes países.

Para este fin de año 2010, este boletín presentará algunos de los proyectos específicos en países como las Antillas Holandesas, denominado recientemente como Islas BES (islas de Bonaire, Saba y San Eustaquio), Curaçao y Sint Maarten. Damos la bienvenida a la República Popular Democrática de Laos, un recién llegado en la comunidad SIDUNEA desde julio de 2010, a la que presentamos nuestros mejores deseos para la continuación con éxito de la implementación del sistema.

También revisaremos las actividades de comunicación e información llevadas a cabo desde hace más de un año en diversos países de Asia Central y de la CEI (Comunidad de Estados Independientes), así como el proyecto de cooperación firmado con la IRU (Unión Internacional de Transporte por Carretera) para la introducción de procedimientos informáticos de intercambio de datos entre SIDUNEA y IRU TIR, para un mejor control y seguimiento de las operaciones de tránsito internacional utilizando los cuadernos TIR

También damos cuenta de los trabajos de la primera reunión del grupo de trabajo sobre Ínter conectividad de Sistemas Aduaneros que organizó la Organización de la Unión Africana en Dar-es-Salaam hace unos días.

La Junta de Comercio y Desarrollo de la UNCTAD está organizando en Ginebra una Reunión Multianual de Expertos sobre Transporte y Facilitación del Comercio que se celebrará del 8 al 10 de diciembre de 2010. Este período de sesiones se centrará en los “nuevos retos y acontecimientos recientes que afectan al transporte y a la facilitación del comercio”. El programa SIDUNEA será responsable de organizar la sesión del 10 de diciembre, cuyo tema es “El uso de las TIC en las áreas de logística, facilitación del comercio y seguridad de las cadenas de suministro”. Esta sesión incluirá una contribución de la Organización Mundial de Aduanas y de algunos países usuarios del Programa SIDUNEA. El informe de la reunión se publicará en el próximo boletín informativo de SIDUNEA.

Deseamos a todos nuestros lectores unas felices fiestas y nuestros mejores deseos para el 2011.

Una vez más esperamos que disfruten de la lectura de este número y no dude en enviarnos sus comentarios y sugerencias a asycuda@unctad.org para hacer del boletín SIDUNEA una pieza útil de información para todos.

Equipo del Programa SIDUNEA, Ginebra, diciembre de 2010

ASYCUDA in Central Asia and Caucasus

In 2010, the dialogue between UNCTAD's ASYCUDA Programme and countries of the Caucasus and the Central Asia has been gradually developed and strengthened. The level of awareness of the opportunities that ASYCUDA provides the countries of the region, as well as international and regional organizations, has increased substantially.

Since May 2010, ASYCUDA has been operational at the national level in the Georgian Revenue Service. The successful experience of Georgia in automating customs procedures has attracted interest from other countries and international organizations. A high-level delegation of the State Customs Service of Ukraine visited Georgia in September 2010 to study the Revenue Service experience in customs risk-management, multi-agency interaction at the border, etc. The achievements of Georgia in the customs modernization area were noted by the Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization during his visit to Tbilisi, in October 2010. Currently, the Revenue Service is preparing for piloting a new ASYCUDA/TIR system, which will streamline and facilitate customs TIR transit procedures for the road transport.

In July 2010, the UNCTAD ASYCUDA contributed to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)–World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Seminar “Promoting Integrity in Customs and Border Services” (Almaty, Kazakhstan). The presentation of the ASYCUDA anti-corruption capabilities attracted the attention of both the participants and the organizers of the event. The OSCE and WCO secretariats expressed an interest in continuing the mutually beneficial interaction with UNCTAD on customs-related issues. Later in 2010, UNCTAD ASYCUDA experts participated in the WCO Regional

Workshop on Customs Transit Control Systems (October 2010, Astana, Kazakhstan). During the event, the representatives of customs administrations of the region were informed about the ASYCUDA functionalities allowing efficient control and monitoring of the customs transit operations. On the margins of the workshop, upon the request from the host organization, UNCTAD ASYCUDA delegation organized a special demonstration of the ASYCUDAWorld system for the management of the Kazakh Customs Control Committee.

In October 2010, the UNCTAD ASYCUDA delegation took part in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)–WCO Regional Green Customs meeting (Ashgabat, Turkmenistan) and presented the ASYCUDA solutions for control, monitoring and reporting of import/export of controlled goods. This event has opened a new page in interaction between UNCTAD ASYCUDA and the UNEP–Green Customs Initiative.

At the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Economic Forum of SPECA (October 2010, Geneva) the Deputy Secretary–General of UNCTAD outlined the role of customs modernization and trade facilitation in promoting economic stability in Afghanistan. Further to ASYCUDA implementation in the Afghan Customs Department, under the auspice of the World Bank, the experts of UNCTAD ASYCUDA Programme started a dialogue with the Customs administrations of neighbouring countries (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) with a view to facilitating customs data exchange between Afghanistan and the Central Asia.



WCO Secretary–General Mikuriya with Giorgi Tskhakaia, Head of Revenue Service.

Belastingdienst - Caribisch Nederland



The former Netherlands Antilles was composed of two groups of islands in the Caribbean Sea: Curaçao and Bonaire, just off the coast of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and Sint Eustatius, Saba and Sint Maarten, located south-east of the Virgin Islands. Those five islands formed an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, which occurred 10 October 2010, had the following result:

- Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius became special municipalities of the Netherlands, named “Caribbean Netherlands (Caribisch Nederland)”;

- Curaçao and Sint Maarten became two new separate countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

As an emergency measure, UNCTAD provided support through the ASYCUDA Regional Support Centre for the Americas to install an ASYCUDA++ server in Bonaire to ensure basic customs operations. New support activities for ASYCUDA++ (system update and customization) have been requested to the Regional Centre and are currently under execution. In the meantime, the Netherlands decided to fund a new project for an estimated duration of 12 months for the installation of ASYCUDAWorld in the Caribbean Netherlands. ASYCUDAWorld live is expected to start operation early 2011 first in Saba, St. Eustatius and afterwards in Bonaire.



ASYCUDAWorld prototype preparation by National Project Team.



Lao People's Democratic Republic ASYCUDA Project, 2010–2012

The agreement for the Lao People's Democratic Republic ASYCUDA project was signed on 22 February 2010 by the Government and UNCTAD. The project involves the installation and configuration of ASYCUDA in a phased manner over of 27 to 31 months:

- Phase 1 – building of the prototype for a duration of 7 to 9 months;
- Phase 2 – implementation of the prototype the pilot site of Thanaleng for a duration of 8 to 10 months;
- Phase 3 – roll-out in 10 major sites for a duration of 10 to 12 months.

The project activities started after UNCTAD received the first installment on 15 April 2010, and the official starting date of 1 July 2010 has been endorsed by the first steering committee meeting. After only three months of operations, the ASYCUDA World project has made significant progress.

(a) Project monitoring and management

The Lao Customs Department (LCD) is responsible for the management and implementation of the project. The Director General of Customs has been appointed National Project Director (NPD) by decision of the Minister of Finance on 24 September 2008. A National Project Team (NPT) has been created and a Team Leader appointed by a decision of the Director General of Customs on 2 March 2010.



Mr. Athsaphangthong SIPHANDONE, Project Team Leader.

The NPT is composed of 5 full-time and 18 part-time members. The NPT Office is located at the customs headquarters in Vientiane.



NPT (full-time members) Office

(b) Training

From 26 July to 5 August 2010, six customs officers participated in the ASYCUDA World training in Kuala Lumpur. A second ASYCUDA training was planned for November/December to develop the NPT's capacity further and assist with the development of the prototype. The latter is scheduled to be demonstrated at the upcoming project mobilization seminar in mid-December.

(c) ICT procurement

The NPT equipment has already been procured and delivered, and is currently being used by the team and project experts. Procurement of ICT equipment for the prototype and the pilot site is ongoing. The first version – or v1 – of the prototype was to be ready by the end of November 2010 and reviewed and improved upon during the next training session in Kuala Lumpur (22 November–3 December).

(d) Situation assessment

The review of the prevailing legislation, customs procedures, documentation, tariff and other reference tables is ongoing. The LCD, UNCTAD and the project team are committed to a challenging yet realistic work plan that should see the validation of the prototype early 2011 and its implementation in the Pilot Site in Thanaleng/Friendship Bridge, later that year. Despite the challenges that are inherent to the early stages of such an important project, good progress has been made so far.

African customs administrations on their way to interconnectivity

The African Union organized a two-day meeting of the First Customs Technical Working Group on Interconnectivity of Computerized Customs Systems (13–14 December 2010, Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania) and invited UNCTAD/ASYCUDA to participate in this workshop.

Interconnectivity is one of the new challenges that customs has to face worldwide. Security requirements that appeared almost a decade ago and were formalized in the WCO Framework of Standards, as well as the need for the control agencies to be informed about all aspects of a trade that is nowadays global, raise for the customs administrations the issue of exchanging information between them on a regular basis and in a secure environment.

All aspects above have been taken into account by WCO, which recently launched the Globally Networked Customs initiative, in which they defined the following: “A Globally Networked Customs (GNC) is an inclusive, interconnected Customs-to-Customs information-sharing system to support and improve the functioning of the international trading system, national economic performance, and the protection of society and fiscal management. A GNC will ... reduce the compliance burden for legitimate traders, and enhance enforcement through the sharing of information and intelligence.” (Source: WCO).

The meeting focused on the reasons for and the definition of customs interconnectivity, the expected benefits for the Government, the trade community and finally the people and the conditions for the implementation of such a system. The participants concluded that the interconnectivity of the customs IT systems will only be possible if the countries express clearly their will to participate in such an initiative and if a strong commitment is obtained from the political authorities.

The meeting discussed the need to define a legal framework for data exchange, to use existing standards to define the data and messages to be exchanged and to identify the content of this data. Customs interconnectivity will be of particular interest for customs transit and goods clearance procedures, as well as for the sharing of customs enforcement related information. Efficient and secure technical solutions for implementing the interconnectivity of the customs systems can be easily found in the Internet world.

The debate was very interesting and highly appreciated by all participants. No doubt this first workshop built a common understanding at the level of all participating African customs administrations and creates a sound basis for the consistent continuation of the process, in view of subsequent workshops of the Customs Technical Working Group.

ASYCUDA/TIR Project

UNCTAD and International Road Transport Union agree on cooperation over customs systems

UNCTAD and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) signed in April 2010 a project for the technical integration into ASYCUDA of the latest developments of the IRU TIR system in what is called ASYCUDA/TIR system.

These are the TIR-EPD (Electronic Pre-Declaration) and the Real-Time SafeTIR (automatic validation of the validity of the TIR Carnets and automatic generation of the closing of the transit operations under TIR Carnets).

The implementation of the ASYCUDA/TIR in the beneficiary countries will significantly increase the efficiency of the customs administration in the monitoring and control of transit operations, and will maximize benefits for the trade community through the facilitation of legitimate trade.

The integrated ASYCUDA/TIR prototype is in the final stage of testing by the joint UNCTAD ASYCUDA and IRU technical teams. ASYCUDA/TIR will be subsequently implemented in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, two ASYCUDA-user countries that volunteered to pilot the new version of the system.

The ASYCUDA/TIR system will be available to all countries interested in increasing their operational capacity, in particular control of transit at the national level, through UNCTAD technical assistance projects. The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration already expressed the interest and commitment to implement ASYCUDA/TIR in the first semester of 2011, immediately after the two pilot countries.



Memorandum of Understanding signature ceremony: Martin Marmy, IRU Secretary-General; and Petko Draganov, UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General.

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