

# ASYCUDA Newsletter

## UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics



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## NOTE

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## Editorial

In this publication of the ASYCUDA Newsletter, we would like to address a theme that is essential to the ASYCUDA Programme: diversity.

Diversity Day, also known as “The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development”, was proclaimed by UN General Assembly Resolution 57/249 in December 2002 following the UNESCO Universal Declaration On Cultural Diversity in November 2001. It is held on May 21<sup>st</sup> every year and consists of valuing diversity and learning to live together – in particular through innovative use of media and Information and Communications Technologies. This year, on Diversity Day, Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, sent a message on going beyond the acknowledgement of diversity and recognizing its benefits. Indeed, various studies show how diversity leads to economic growth [1] and innovation [2], and how countries with high levels of diversity are better able to adapt new technologies and ideas [3]. UNESCO Director-General further recognized that diversity is not a factor of progress in itself. “It requires learning, learning about otherness, the ability to shift focus away from oneself, to dialogue and to recognize the value concealed in each culture”, she added. UNCTAD’s mandate supports this statement: “Development depends on the participation of all actors, and recognizes the diversity and complementarity of their functions”.

Within the ASYCUDA Programme, UNCTAD’s largest technical assistance programme, recognizing diversity and its contribution is one of our key success factors. Indeed, our presence in more than 90 countries requires it. Nevertheless, our definition of diversity goes beyond the geographical and cultural aspects. We also value diversity in experience, skills/competencies, academic background and gender. The ASYCUDA Programme is known for its development of a system for automating customs data. This may lead people to think the Programme is only composed of IT developers and database management experts. However, developing the system and implementing it in the field also requires strong knowledge and experience in trade facilitation, customs reform, automation of customs procedures, project management, knowledge sharing for training and in administrative and Human Resources matters.

Variety in experience matters too. Senior officers share theirs with customs administrations based on their experience in other countries/regions while junior officers bring their ability to adapt to the constantly evolving world of Information Technology and Trade.

Representing UN and UNCTAD all around the world, it is our mission to share these values, set an example in the field and encourage everyone to follow this direction. For instance, UNCTAD SG, Dr Mukhisa Kituyi, emphasized the “strong women presence in top leadership at Angola Customs” during his visit to Angola in April 2018. Gender balance is also a mark of showing respect for diversity and its contribution to the world.

In this edition, we travel around the world to introduce you to some of our experts in the field and in Geneva who are keen to share their experiences. The Programme relies on more than 150 national and international experts in the field and 20 in UN Geneva’s headquarters. It is therefore a good opportunity for the readers to get to know some of them and demonstrate how diversity contributes to the richness of the Programme. Due to the large number of ASYCUDA experts in the world, we could not introduce everyone. We would like to apologize to those who are not in this publication. There will be other opportunities to introduce them in future newsletters.

We invite you to send any comments you might have to [asycuda@unctad.org](mailto:asycuda@unctad.org). You can also follow us on our official twitter account: [@AsycudaProgram](https://twitter.com/AsycudaProgram).

ASYCUDA Programme,  
Division on Technology and Logistics,  
Geneva, August 2018.

[1]<https://www.citylab.com/life/2011/12/diversity-leads-to-economic-growth/687/>

[2] <https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation>

[3] <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html>



A travers cette publication de la Newsletter du Programme SYDONIA, nous voudrions aborder un thème essentiel au Programme : la diversité.

La « Journée mondiale pour la diversité culturelle, le dialogue et le développement » a été proclamée par résolution de l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies 57/249 en décembre 2002 suite à la Déclaration Universelle de l'UNESCO sur la Diversité Culturelle en novembre 2001. Elle a lieu le 21 mai de chaque année et consiste en la valorisation de la diversité et le vivre-ensemble en harmonie – notamment à travers l'utilisation des médias et des Technologies de l'Information et des Communications. Le 21 mai de cette année, la Directrice Générale de l'UNESCO, Mme. Audrey Azoulay, a adressé un message visant à aller plus loin dans la reconnaissance de la diversité en reconnaissant ses avantages. En effet, plusieurs études ont montré que la diversité mène à la croissance économique [1] et l'innovation [2], et comment les pays avec un haut niveau de diversité s'adaptent mieux aux nouvelles technologies et idées [3]. Toutefois, la Directrice Générale de l'UNESCO a tempéré cette conclusion en reconnaissant que la diversité n'est pas un facteur de progrès en soi. « Elle demande un apprentissage et une ouverture sur les autres, la faculté à détourner l'attention de soi et à dialoguer et reconnaître la valeur de chaque culture », ajoute-t-elle. Le mandat de la CNUCED soutient cette déclaration : « le développement dépend de la participation de tous les acteurs et reconnaît la diversité et la complémentarité de leur fonctions ».

SYDONIA, programme principal d'assistance technique de la CNUCED, reconnaît la diversité et sa contribution comme un des facteurs clés de son succès. En effet, notre présence dans plus de 90 pays l'exige et en témoigne. Néanmoins, notre définition de la diversité va plus loin que les aspects géographiques et culturels. Nous valorisons aussi la diversité d'expérience, de compétences, de formation et de genre. Le Programme est reconnu dans le monde pour avoir développé un système d'automatisation de procédures douanières. Cela peut mener certaines personnes à penser que le Programme est seulement composé d'informaticiens chargés du développement logiciel et de la gestion des bases de données. Toutefois, développer le système et le mettre en œuvre sur le terrain nécessitent des capacités et une grande expérience dans la facilitation du commerce et des échanges, la réforme de la douane, l'automatisation des procédures douanières, la gestion de projet, le partage de

connaissances pour la formation et la gestion de l'administratif et des ressources humaines. La variété dans l'expérience est aussi essentielle. Les experts seniors partagent avec les administrations douanières leur vécu dans d'autres pays et régions tandis que les juniors apportent leur habilité à s'adapter au monde en permanente évolution des technologies de l'information et du commerce.

En tant que représentants de l'ONU et de la CNUCED, il est de notre devoir de partager ces valeurs, de montrer l'exemple sur le terrain et d'encourager tout le monde à suivre cette direction. Par exemple, en avril 2018, le Secrétaire Général de la CNUCED, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, a souligné la forte présence féminine dans le leadership de la Douane Angolaise lors de sa visite en Angola en avril 2018. La parité hommes-femmes est aussi une marque de respect de la diversité et de sa contribution au monde.

Dans cette édition, nous voyageons autour du monde afin de vous présenter quelques experts du Programme sur le terrain et à Genève. Le Programme compte plus de 150 experts nationaux et internationaux sur le terrain et 20 à Genève. Cette newsletter est donc une bonne opportunité de mieux faire connaissance avec certains d'entre eux et de montrer comment la diversité contribue à la richesse du Programme. Etant donné le nombre important d'experts SYDONIA dans le monde, nous ne pouvons présenter tout le monde. Nous aimerions nous excuser auprès de ceux qui ne font pas partie de cette édition. D'autres occasions se présenteront pour y remédier dans les prochaines newsletters.

Nous vous invitons à adresser vos commentaires à l'adresse suivante : [asycuda@unctad.org](mailto:asycuda@unctad.org). Vous pouvez aussi nous suivre sur notre compte officiel twitter : [@AsycudaProgram](https://twitter.com/AsycudaProgram).

Programme SYDONIA.  
Division de la Technologie et de la Logistique,  
Genève, Août 2018.

[1]<https://www.citylab.com/life/2011/12/diversity-leads-to-economic-growth/687/>

[2] <https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation>

[3] <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html>



En esta publicación del Boletín Informativo del Programa SIDUNEA, nos gustaría abordar un tema que es esencial para el Programa SIDUNEA: la diversidad.

La Declaración Universal de la UNESCO sobre la Diversidad Cultural se aprobó en 2001 y seguidamente, la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas declaró el 21 de mayo como el Día Mundial de la Diversidad Cultural para el Diálogo y el Desarrollo, a través de su resolución 57/249 de diciembre de 2002, con el cual se trata de reconocer la diversidad cultural mediante una utilización innovadora de los medios y de los TIC en particular que conlleve al respeto y a la comprensión mutua. En el presente año, durante las celebraciones del Día de la Diversidad, la Directora General de la UNESCO, la Sra. Audrey Azoulay, dirigió un mensaje para ir más allá de la simple constatación de la diversidad y a reconocer los beneficios del pluralismo cultural. De hecho, varios estudios muestran cómo la diversidad conduce al crecimiento económico [1] y la innovación [2], y cómo los países con altos niveles de diversidad son más capaces de adaptarse a las nuevas tecnologías e ideas [3]. Sin embargo, la Directora General de la UNESCO atenuó esta conclusión al reconocer que la diversidad no es en sí misma un factor de progreso. "Para ello es necesario un aprendizaje: el aprendizaje de la alteridad, la aptitud para salir de sí mismo y para dialogar, el reconocimiento del valor que atesora cada cultura". El mandato de la UNCTAD respalda esta afirmación: "El desarrollo depende de la participación de todos los actores y reconoce la diversidad y la complementariedad de sus funciones".

Dentro del Programa SIDUNEA, el programa de asistencia técnica más grande de la UNCTAD, el reconocimiento de la diversidad y su contribución es uno de nuestros factores clave de su éxito. De hecho, nuestra presencia en más de 90 países lo requiere y lo atestigua. Sin embargo, nuestra definición de diversidad va más allá de los aspectos geográficos y culturales. También valoramos la diversidad de experiencia, aptitudes y competencias, formación académica y género. El Programa SIDUNEA es conocido por su desarrollo de un sistema para automatizar la información de aduanas. Esto puede llevar a las personas a pensar que el Programa solo está compuesto por desarrolladores de TI y expertos en gestión de bases de datos. Sin embargo, desarrollar el sistema e implementarlo sobre el terreno también requiere un fuerte conocimiento y experiencia en facilitación del comercio, reforma aduanera,

automatización de procedimientos aduaneros, gestión de proyectos, intercambio de conocimientos para la capacitación y gestión administrativa y recursos humanos. La variedad en la experiencia también es esencial. Los oficiales superiores comparten con las administraciones de aduanas sus experiencias en otros países y regiones, mientras que los expertos más jóvenes aportan su capacidad de adaptación a la constante evolución del mundo de la tecnología de la información y el comercio.

Como representantes de las Naciones Unidas y la UNCTAD en todo el mundo, nuestra misión es compartir estos valores, dar ejemplo en el campo y alentar a todos a seguir esta dirección. A modo de ejemplo, el Secretario General de la UNCTAD, el Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, enfatizó la fuerte presencia femenina en los altos cargos de la Administración de Aduanas durante su visita a Angola en abril de 2018. La igualdad de género también es una muestra de respeto por la diversidad y su contribución al mundo.

En esta edición, viajamos por todo el mundo como de costumbre para presentarles a algunos de nuestros expertos sobre el terreno y Ginebra, que desean compartir sus experiencias. El programa cuenta con más de 150 expertos nacionales e internacionales en el terreno y 20 en la sede de la ONU en Ginebra. Así pues, es una buena oportunidad para que los lectores conozcan algunos de ellos y demostrar cómo la diversidad contribuye a la riqueza del Programa. Debido al gran número de expertos SIDUNEA en el mundo, no hemos podido presentar a todos. Les pedimos disculpas a todos los que no aparecen en esta publicación. Habrá otras ocasiones para presentarlos en futuros boletines.

Le invitamos a enviarnos sus comentarios sobre [asycuda@unctad.org](mailto:asycuda@unctad.org). También puede seguirnos en nuestra cuenta oficial de Twitter: [@AsycudaProgram](https://twitter.com/AsycudaProgram).

Programa SIDUNEA,  
División de Tecnología y Logística,  
Ginebra, agosto de 2018.

[1]<https://www.citylab.com/life/2011/12/diversity-leads-to-economic-growth/687/>

[2] <https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation>

[3]<https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html>



**Mariam ABBAS**

Administrative Assistant

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

10 years' experience in total

“I have been working with the ASYCUDA programme for almost two years now. In this time frame, I have been able to cultivate and study mostly about what UNCTAD and ASYCUDA are all about. As an administrative assistant at the ASYCUDA Regional office in Kuala Lumpur, I have the opportunity of working with people from different parts of the world, with their own culture and own working attitude.

Being a Malaysian, growing up in a multi-cultural society, the term diversity didn't really sink in until I had a chance to work with a more variety group of people and their own way of communication. I had to constantly adapt to avoid misunderstanding and offending of one's culture.

At times, the knowledge of the end results is rewarding, and at times it can be frustrating to even pull through by the end of the day. Sometimes the misunderstanding of communication, such as words used, send the wrong idea to both parties. Despite these kinds of setbacks once in a while, working here is promising.

I am also happy to say that I have been given an opportunity to be part of an exceptionally experienced team where we are able to work hand in hand, in order to provide a better transition in the work flow, despite setbacks once in a while.

It is all about learning and the willingness to adapt to new things, new people and new ways of interacting.



**Fabian ALLEN**

Programme Officer

Geneva, Switzerland

4 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

33 years' experience in total

“I have been with the ASYCUDA Programme since May 2014 as Programme Officer, responsible for overseeing/managing ASYCUDA administrative team, specifically in the areas of human resources, travel and procurement as well as providing strategic guidance to the Chief of ASYCUDA and staff in these areas. Prior to joining ASYCUDA I have had extensive experience in the field of administration. Since joining the Organization in 1989, I worked as a General Service staff in procurement, staff development/HR and payments/budget. I later joined the Professional ranks after having successfully passed the UN competitive examination in Administration, where my first assignment was a Human Resources Officer in Bangkok, Thailand. I also worked as an Administrative Officer in United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva and later as Human Resources Officer and Chief of General Service Unit (GSU) in UNCTAD.

I have a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Bernard Baruch College.

My impression of ASYCUDA so far has been positive. It has been an interesting and wonderful experience working with ASYCUDA. First, it is very enlightening, as having my main experience working in administration, I now have a better overview of the challenges faced by the programme/substantive area, since they are expected to deliver good and timely service/products, which require financial and human inputs, for which this needs to be facilitated within the constraints of the rules/procedures of the organization. It is very refreshing to be part of a team that embodies the true meaning of the Organization, by effectively contributing to the development of economically challenged countries/and their people through the enhancement of trade by automating Customs procedures.”



**Monia GHORBEL AYADI**

Customs Expert

Nouakchott, Mauritania

3 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

27 years' experience in total

“I am a Colonel Major in Tunisia Customs with a long experience (27 years) in the field of Customs Technology and Customs Clearance. The various functions that I occupied allowed me to develop my skills, to be operational and productive and therefore gain valuable professional experience.

In June 2015, I joined UNCTAD’s ASYCUDA Programme as a customs expert. My mission was to provide assistance on implementation of the new version of ASYCUDA system at the Administration of Customs of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

It is a real opportunity to work with several international experts and get involved to improve my skills. I recognize that my experience with ASYCUDA has allowed me to gain new professional experience and discover new technologies.

With ASYCUDA and with the spirit of modernization, I felt the need to go further in analysis, advice, design and implementation: the goal is the automation of manual procedures. National needs have been determined and while referring to the country's legislation, we have succeeded in integrating several national modules into ASYCUDA system. I also had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge, to develop my

methodological skills in project management and my relational skills.

Despite the challenges that I faced like the specificities required by national legislation, the respect of the deadlines and the increased requirements for the transfer of know-how and the mastery of the System, we have succeeded the transition to the new version of ASYCUDA system and we have achieved results that exceeded even expectations.

I really appreciate how women are valued in UNCTAD and I am deeply touched by UNCTAD’s respect for women! The fact of being respected, sustained and enhanced helped me build great self-confidence.

As a mother, I have to mention that living far from my family is sometimes very hard to bear and requires a lot of sacrifices. But, my new career with ASYCUDA is an ambition and pride not only for me but also for my whole family. On this occasion, I want to thank my husband and my children for their patience and their sacrifices.

Finally, I would like to say That I Am truly grateful to my supervisors for all their support and encouragement to excel and go beyond my limits.



**Miguel Fernando SILES-BUSTOS**

Regional Coordinator for East and Southern Africa

Lusaka, Zambia

26 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

33 years' experience in total

“I was born in La Paz, Bolivia in September 1958. Married and father of two sons, I joined UNCTAD in June 1992 as UNCTAD Expert in El Salvador, Central America supporting the implementation of ASYCUDA, one of UNCTAD’s most important systems. My experience of almost 26 years with UNCTAD includes leading roles in the automation of Customs in several countries such as El Salvador, Nigeria, Palestine, Rwanda, Seychelles and Zambia; and supporting roles in Honduras, Bolivia, Venezuela, Burundi and Uganda. Eventually between years 2000 and 2003 I also joined IMF

evaluation missions in the Caribbean. During my time with UNCTAD, I successfully delivered ASYCUDA Functional training to more than 300 Customs Officers of different countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East. Since November 2015, I was promoted to ASYCUDA Regional Coordinator for East and Southern Africa, supervising more than 18 projects in the Region. My major goal was and still is the contribution to the improvement of trade facilitation through the automation of Customs.”



**Salma BEN HAJI**

Information Systems Officer

Geneva, Switzerland

16 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

17 years' experience in total

“I am an Information Systems Officer whom has been working for the ASYCUDA Programme in Geneva for 16 years and one year in the regional office in Malaysia. I have a post-graduate engineering background and contributed to the development of core modules of the ASYCUDAWorld software and its additional components. Working in an IT-based project has meant working in a largely male-dominated environment which has raised some challenges. However, my presence along with other female colleagues and their ongoing contribution to the ASYCUDA programme have helped bringing down barriers and progressively building gender

awareness and equality. I appreciate working in a multi-national team and organisation as diversity is an eye-opener in terms of opening one's mind, but this can also produce conflict requiring compromise and quick resolutions. I am currently ensuring the smooth running of a number of ASYCUDA projects in several regions but also working on building new ASYCUDA-centric projects in prospective countries. I believe that the Women's Empowerment's Principles (WEPs) being implemented in the United Nations will slowly but surely help progress gender equality as this has been visible in my current work environment.”



**Idris ELM I DOUBED**

Customs Expert

Antananarivo, Madagascar

5 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

23 years' experience in total

“I am graduated of the Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah University of Fez in Master of Economics (1996). At the French National School of Customs, I completed a diploma training of Customs Inspector (2001). In 2003, I followed the training cycle of senior customs officer.

Before joining customs, I taught at the Secondary School of Education as Professor of Economics and Management (1997) and then held the position of Head of Accounting at the Ministry of Justice in Djibouti for three years.

Recruited at the General Directorate of Customs, I served as head of the largest revenue office at the Port of Djibouti, head of the service of exemptions, head of the deferred control, etc.

In 2011, I was nominated ASYCUDA's project manager in Djibouti, where I was responsible for the project management and project team supervision.

In 2013, I joined UNCTAD's staff and more specifically the ASYCUDA programme to

implement ASYCUDAWorld in African countries (The Republic of Guinea, Burkina Faso, Togo...). From November 2016 to March 2017, I participated in the implementation of data exchange as part of the single window in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I am also involved in the implementation of the regional transit in the ECOWAS region. Since July 2017, I have been working in Antananarivo, Madagascar where I am in charge of implementing customs reforms required for the migration to ASYCUDAWorld.

On a personal level, I have been facing needs to support the implementation of the ASYCUDA system through changes in regulations and customs procedures. Intervening, working and collaborating in an international context with various administrative entities, different regulations and different modes of decision-making has been very rewarding and has made us realize that customs are facing quite similar economic realities.



**Pilar BORQUE FERNANDEZ**

Administrative Assistant

Geneva, Switzerland

12 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

25 years' experience in total

“I arrived in UNCTAD in 2000 to start working as Administrative Secretary of the Electronic Commerce Branch in the DTL Division. Prior to assuming this position, I was working at DG Enlargement at the European Commission in Brussels. Later in 2006, to take up new challenges, I moved to the ASYCUDA Programme. The transition to my new duties was smooth because I was already familiar with the team and some of the activities of the Programme.

My professional experience during all these years has been rich, satisfying and full of enlightening

challenges as a result of the diversity and good dynamism of the team and the orientation of our work (technical assistance to member states). The close interaction with our clients and the easily measured achievements, make my daily job pleasant and motivating.

I feel proud to contribute to the accomplishment of the activities of the Programme by ensuring from the back-office its effective functioning and look forward to new rewarding successes.



**Jacques HILLINGER**

Project Manager

Harare, Zimbabwe

16 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

32 years' experience in total

“Born and raised in a suburb of Montréal, Canada, I am the youngest of a family of eight children. I went on to complete a computer degree at the University of Quebec in Montréal.

Before joining the United Nations in 2002, I spent 16 years as a system developer and Project Leader for Revenue Canada Customs & Excise and thereafter consultant for a famous consulting group. One of my last projects in Canada was the implementation of a National Customs Postal System, which was a joint venture between Revenue Canada and Canada Post. As for the position at the consulting group, I was stationed in Africa where I started implementing the first and second versions of ASYCUDA.

The love story of ASYCUDA continued while I was posted in Namibia as a Project Manager to implement the second and latest versions of ASYCUDA. This is when I joined the United Nations and since still enjoy the product and the functionalities it provides for the trading community. During that period, I had the opportunity to assist other countries on several missions for the implementation of ASYCUDA and this was an enriching experience.

Lately, I was transferred to Harare for a migration and support project for the Government of Zimbabwe. A stunning experience so far and I am grateful to be part of the great team of ASYCUDA.”



**Emmanuelle CARTIER**

Team Assistant  
Geneva, Switzerland  
4 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
25 years' experience in total

“I joined the ASYCUDA Programme in March 2014 as a team assistant following previous administrative posts in the United Nations in Geneva. My role is as an administrative focal point for both French and English-speaking African countries as well as the Americas and the Caribbean. My tasks and responsibilities consist of diverse day-to-day administrative support including travels, consultancy contracts, troubleshooting and processing for ASYCUDA project activities. I perform a broad range of tasks related to the administrative support of the section which is

responsible for several meetings, events and technical cooperation programmes, often under time and resources constraints. Working in a multinational team with people coming from different backgrounds and cultures has its challenges but also opens ones' eyes to wider perspectives, experiences, expectations as well as approaches. The UN has taken a number of steps to incorporate a better gender balance and this has been visible in the different ASYCUDA recruitments that I have seen from an administrative point of view and hopefully this will continue in the future.”



**Terence LEONARD**

Implementation Advisor  
Georgetown, Guyana  
8 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
33 years' experience in total

“I have been fortunate to work alongside an excellent team of highly skilled and highly motivated professionals at ASYCUDA/UNCTAD since 2010 serving in various capacities as a Regional Project Manager, a consultant and an Implementation Advisor for the ASYCUDAWorld Projects in the Caribbean Region. Prior to joining the ASYCUDA team, I served as an officer of the Customs and Excise Department of Saint Lucia for twenty-five years. My public service included holding various senior management positions including Comptroller of Customs and Excise and Director of Trade Facilitation in the Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Investment in Saint Lucia from 2009 to 2010. I hold a Masters' degree in International Trade Policy and Bachelors' degrees in Economics and Management from the University of the West Indies.

One of the major challenges I experienced during my years of service at UNCTAD was working with the ASYCUDA team in partnership with the various Customs Administrations to significantly reduce the Customs intervention rate in the Caribbean whilst simultaneously combatting systemic internal malpractice and commercial fraud; promoting revenue enhancement as well as trade facilitation. We achieved great inroads in tackling these issues by the introduction of a Voluntary Compliance Programme (which was later rebranded as the Trusted Trade Programme). I look forward to continuing to pursue my passion whilst working with this extremely critical ASYCUDA programme in aiding developing countries worldwide in fighting corruption, mismanagement of scarce resources and promoting sustainable economic development and alleviation of the scourge of poverty.



**Marianne DUMONT**

Regional Coordinator for Asia

Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

22 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

27 years' experience in total

“After eighteen years of implementing ASYCUDA project in eight developing countries, spanning three different geographic regions (Eastern Europe, the South Pacific and South East Asia), and after a transition period of one year, I have recently taken the posting of ASYCUDA Programme coordinator for Asia.

The incredible experience gained over all those years in dealing, interacting with people of different backgrounds, cultures and environment have contributed to the development of my listening and organizational skills, my ability to analyse and

synthesize information, to find solutions in problematic circumstances and my capacity to adapt to different contexts.

It has not been an easy journey; sometimes results seemed to be out of reach; sometimes giving-up seemed easier.

However, I believe continuous learning, continuous improving gave me the necessary confidence to embrace new challenges in both my professional and personal life and to be an inspirational example to my son and some persons I have been working with.”



**Reza MOHAMMADI**

Programme Management Officer

Astana, Kazakhstan

18 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

24 years' experience in total

“I am an experienced ASYCUDA Project Manager at UNCTAD. I have demonstrated a history of working in the international trade and development and government sector. I am skilled in Customs Modernization & trade facilitation, Government, and Technical Assistance. I implemented successful ASYCUDA projects in Iran, Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan. Strong program and project management professional with a master’s degree focused in Management Information Systems. Long-term experience in post-conflict countries and regional development & connectivity. I served longest ever UN international staff position in Afghanistan (more than 14 years).

I am UN and PRINCE2 Project Manager certified, with more than 23 years relevant work experience in Customs processes, with extensive knowledge of the entire project/programme cycle.

The results of the ASYCUDA Project in Afghanistan is widely recognized and presented as a model of cooperation between a UN member state, UN/UNCTAD and the international community. This was achieved through permanent and consistent work in the difficult and ever-changing environment

of the Afghanistan Ministry of Finance and Customs Department.

The entire assignment in Afghanistan was carried out in the most imaginable multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment, and it was about maintaining effective working relations with people of different national and cultural backgrounds. The specific daily work with the Afghan counterparts as well as with UNOPS, European Commission, US Embassy/Border Management Task Force, USAID and their contractors, NATO and ISAF representatives and (sub-)contractors was a unique experience in this respect. In the same time, the huge success of the ASYCUDA Project in Afghanistan proves that the joint work of all parties involved in the Customs sector was effective.

During the implementation of the ASYCUDA project in Afghanistan, I was responsible for the development of clear goals and detailed project plans in line with the implementation strategies agreed between the World Bank, the Afghan Government, UNOPS (as execution agency) and UNCTAD.”



**Lilia BAHLOUL**

Programme Management Officer  
Bujumbura, Burundi

7 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
28 years' experience in total

“My experience in customs on a national and international scale allowed me to strengthen my professional capacities and to acquire robust skills of communication as well as the capacity to be multitasking under pressure.

More than 20 years of experience within the Tunisian Customs Head Office and my participation in the cooperation between Customs and international organizations allowed me to master customs procedures, contribute to the modernization of customs and gain expertise in automation and facilitation of customs procedures as well as management capacities in the organizational and administrative plan.

My career as a customs expert with diverse international organizations began more than 8 years ago. My first experience was within the framework

of the "Technical Assistance to Trade Strengthening Program (TEP)" project in Syria funded by the European Commission for the automation of warehouse management, the management of the free zone and risk management.

My second experience was with UNCTAD's ASYCUDA Programme. It allowed me to reinforce my experience and my communication skills through short-term missions in Conakry, Djibouti, Brazzaville, Ouagadougou... and long-term assignments (Burundi, Mauritania and Haiti). I managed projects and assisted local teams, generally composed of men. However, it has never prevented me from moving forward. On the contrary, it motivated me to show that women are capable of being in the field and properly carrying out their missions.”



**Innocent ONEGA**

Information Systems Officer  
Harare, Zimbabwe

3 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
11 years' experience in total

“I am an experienced Information System Officer on the field currently based in Harare, Zimbabwe supporting the ASYCUDA Project. I have been working in ICT industry for the last 11 years after graduating from University. My journey in UNCTAD officially started in 2015 as an Expert developing system to help the government of Zambia in monitoring mineral production statistics and controlling export quota.

My first interaction with the ASYCUDA Programme was in 2008 when I was still an

employee of Uganda Revenue Authority, where I participated in implementing e-payment interface between ASYCUDA++ and the commercial banks. I was then involved in several East African Regional ICT projects to help facilitate regional trade like the RADDEx (Revenue Authority Digital Data Exchange) and the Single Customs Territory core customs system integration. I have undertaken a number of mission to Customs in Africa and Asia, and currently looking forward to being involved in all future projects of ASYCUDA programme.”



**Juliet KABOHA**

Customs Expert  
Lusaka, Zambia

9 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
20 years' experience in total

“I am Ugandan by nationality. Before I joined UNCTAD, I was employed by Uganda Revenue Authority within the Customs department for nine years as a Supervisor for the ASYCUDA Project. I have been working for UNCTAD under the ASYCUDA Programme since June 2009 when I was first posted to Liberia as the ASYCUDA Customs Expert. Since then I have worked in two other countries that are Lesotho and Zambia as a long-term expert and another eight countries as a short-term expert.

Working for UNCTAD has exposed me to diverse and multinational cultures, usually as the only female amongst men either as colleagues or as teams that I am supporting. Interestingly enough, despite being the only female, this has not derailed me from achieving many of the functions required of a professional Customs Expert in the ASYCUDA programme. This is because I strive to remain professional in all that I undertake and focus on the efficient and organized execution of my duties. My approach is to always inculcate a high level of

teamwork, learning, integrity and initiative, some of which are my strong points.

My 18 years' experience of using the ASYCUDA system as a Customs automation tool initially from my country and now through UNCTAD, has enabled me to support different countries to achieve their main goal, among others, of facilitating trade, a very important facet for any Customs Administration. Some of the roles I play include business process re-engineering for Customs processes, training users in the use and maintenance of the ASYCUDA system, supporting user countries in the interaction with Other Government Agencies that play some roles in trade facilitation, supporting countries in the introduction of other modules related to ASYCUDA, monitoring and evaluation of ASYCUDA projects and so on.

I appreciate the support provided by my superiors who have entrusted me with a responsibility to assist countries achieve their goals on UNCTAD's behalf.”



**Laurent REY**

Information Systems Officer  
Luanda, Angola

16 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
25 years' experience in total

“I am an experienced Information System Adviser on the field. I have been working for 16 years now mainly on ASYCUDAWorld. At the beginning, I was involved in the creation of e-Document development tutorials and courses, which we still use until today. Starting as consultant, I participated actively in the implementation of the first country with ASYCUDAWorld system, Moldavia. Thanks to my knowledge I trained all new experts joining the ASYCUDA Programme. Later, I reached the position of IT regional adviser in the ASYCUDA

Regional Center for the Americas. During all this period, I participated in several ASYCUDAWorld implementations. On every project, I tried as soon as possible to work closely with the developers so they are not dependant and to be able to focus on major aspects of the implementation like support to develop local functionalities and integration of public local administrations in ASYCUDAWorld system. I am still continuing my mission on Africa continent to spread ASYCUDAWorld.”



**Connie KUNOU**

Administrative Assistant  
Suva, Fiji

15 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
25 years' experience in total

“As a professional Fijian woman working in an environment increasingly driven by automated technology, I have found that its impact on the lives of Pacific women has indeed been profound, both in terms of empowering them in the workplace and improving their social status within their communities, and most importantly, their families. I have worked with the ASYCUDA (ASMP - ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for the Pacific) for 15 years. As an Administrative Assistant based in Suva, the skills I have developed and my

understanding of the system have allowed me to interact in a Pacific environment in which that the gender balance of men and women is as professional as it is pleasant.

I relish the opportunity of learning more about ASYCUDA because it has provided me a fair equal remuneration along with its perks of health benefits and leave, and even more importantly, I have gained independence and respect as an earning wife and mother to fulfil the basic needs and security for me and my family.”



**Jayvee SANTOS**

Regional Coordinator for the Pacific  
Suva, Fiji

21 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme  
24 years' experience in total

“I have been working for the ASYCUDA Programme since 1997. I started as a programmer under the Philippine Tax Computerization Project and serving as the Project Manager from 1999-2000. This was followed by doing consultancy work for UNCTAD in the Maldives and Sri Lanka ASYCUDA projects.

When East Timor regained independence in 1999, UNCTAD was involved in the institutional rebuilding of the customs service to reform the process and to deploy ASYCUDA++. I was selected to be the ASYCUDA Expert for the project in 2002, where ASYCUDA went live in 2003.

In 2006, I was reassigned to the ASYCUDA Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where I provided support to the ASYCUDA projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Laos, the Maldives, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

After spending 8 years in the regional office, I was selected for the ASYCUDAWorld migration project in Fiji and moved to Suva in November 2014. With the completion of the ASYCUDA project in Fiji and reduced need for a full-time expert presence, I was

involved in the ASYCUDAWorld migration projects in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu and providing support to the ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for the Pacific.

I was also involved in coordinating the proof-of-concept activity to validate the deployment of ASYCUDA in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), with Kiribati as the participating administration. I also conducted feasibility studies to deploy ASYCUDAWorld in American Samoa and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I have also represented UNCTAD in a number of regional conferences on trade, statistics, and customs organised by the Oceania Customs Organisation and other agencies. In January 2018, I was named to directly manage, develop the work plan and daily activities for the ASYCUDA Sub-Regional Office in Fiji as the Coordinator.

With a number of activities happening in the Pacific in assisting the smaller customs administrations to modernize and to automate, and in implementing Single Window systems in the bigger administrations, I am excited and privileged to lead UNCTAD's engagement in these areas.



**Firyuza NAFASOVA**

Project Assistant

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

1-year experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

5 years' experience in total

“UNCTAD’s ASYCUDA programme has been implementing the technical assistance project for the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan. The project will increase the efficiency and control functions of the customs service facilitating trade relations and country’s preparedness to WTO accession in the future.

I am proud to be a part of this project that gives me an opportunity to bring my contribution to the

development of my country. I have been working in the spirit of ASYCUDA team that is a supportive community of professionals encouraging and providing a platform for my self-development and career growth. My work on ASYCUDA project is very interesting as I work in multicultural environment, meet many experts with different backgrounds that helps me to broaden my horizons and learn more.”



**Olivio Correia BORGES**

Programme Management Officer

Luanda, Angola

25 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

31 years' experience in total

“I am a Senior Customs Expert and ASYCUDA Functional Specialist, whom has been working with various ASYCUDA systems since 1983 (versions 1, 2, ++ and ASYCUDAWorld).

I am finalizing a master’s degree in Law. I have a Degree in Law, High Studies of Customs and Diploma in IT systems management. My skills include customs procedures modernization, Trade Facilitation, Governance and Technical Assistance. I participated int the successful implementation of ASYCUDA Projects in Cape Verde, East Timor, Sao Tome and Principe and Guinea Bissau.

In East Timor, I worked in a post-conflict environment as National Project Director,

contributed in training and building capacity of Nationals as well as building a new Customs Service.

I am now an ASYCUDA Project Manager for UNCTAD in Angola where the system successfully processes more than 75% of import/export.

I worked as a customs procedures modernization consultant for the World Bank, the International Finance Cooperation, ECOWAS, and the European Union.

In Cape Verde, I was Senior Customs Inspector and Senior Minister Adviser. For 3 years, I acted as Negotiator for a Common External Tariff within ECOWAS Region.”



**Noraida Carolina WILHELM DE CORDOVA**

Customs Expert

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

18 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

31 years' experience in total

“Working for the ASYCUDA Programme has been one of the most important challenges because it allowed me to undertake different responsibilities and learn from my colleagues, especially from 2001 until 2010, when I was a national consultant in Venezuela within the framework of the ASYCUDA project there. I was involved in the implementation and coordination of the project. I delivered functional trainings on the system, wrote documentation for a proper use of the system and participated in the reengineering of customs procedures.

In 2015, I had the opportunity to assist the implementation of the ASYCUDA system in Angola by delivering training to the local customs team and work with the project manager on ASYCUDAWorld guides, design of procedures and flow charts.

In May 2016, I was posted in Equatorial Guinea for the implementation of ASYCUDAWorld. It was the most important challenge because I had to move to

Africa without my family. I led the local customs team in the preparation of the system prototype, by configuring of the system, integrating the regional tariff, implementing the risk management module, delivering training to the local customs team and coordinating the training of the customs officers and the economic operators...

Being a woman in customs has not been easy. In the end, the only thing that matters is being professional, positive and having self-confidence to lead the local teams for the implementation of ASYCUDAWorld. I feel happy and proud as a woman and as a professional having worked more than 18 years with ASYCUDA, especially in a multi-cultural environment. I feel respected by everybody and never had a problem with anyone. I am also very proud of having delivered training to more than 3000 ASYCUDA-users around the world since I have been working with the Programme”.



**Saeid YARANDI**

Information Systems Officer

Dili, East Timor

15 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

22 years' experience in total

“I am an Information System Officer on the field. Since the start of my career in 1996, I have been involved with implementation of the third generation of ASYCUDA system, also known as ASYCUDA++, in the Middle East and North Africa region (COMESA).

I then participated in training and providing technical support for the first ASYCUDAWorld system implementation in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region in 2005. Over the years, I have taken part in development of ASYCUDAWorld system, providing technical training and assistance to the

member countries of Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia.

In recent years, I was the resident expert in Bangladesh during the ASYCUDAWorld project. One of the most memorable challenges was to be present in office, seven days a week for the whole first year of the project. Currently, I am the resident expert in East Timor where the country has successfully implemented ASYCUDAWorld system and is changing gears to implement Single Window using ASYCUDAWorld platform.”



**Priscilla MADERO**

Information Systems Officer

Georgetown, Guyana

11 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

15 years' experience in total

“I am currently working with UNCTAD and assigned in Georgetown, Guyana as an Information Systems Officer within the ASYCUDAWorld (AW) Implementation Project with the Guyana Revenue Authority. My responsibilities include the technical configuration of the ASYCUDA system and in particular the designing and building of new reports for the end users in preparation for the live implementation of the system. I have been working with the ASYCUDAWorld application for 11 years, commencing with the Programme in Caracas, Venezuela. This assignment in Caracas included the creation of the Andean Declaration of Value (Customs Value Declaration), assisting with the training of end users and the pilot implementation. Thereafter, I participated in the creation and

implementation of ASYREPORT (a module to generate reports) in Venezuela, Trinidad, Bonaire, Curacao, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos, Anguilla and Belize. In 2011, I assisted the Belize AW Project team and other UNCTAD experts in the implementation of AW. This included the formulation of special e-documents as well creating a web-service portal on AW for electronic payment of duties via the Central Bank of Belize and some commercial banks. During these assignments, I have always been diligent and team oriented, focusing on ensuring the application of proper planning and evaluation of the quality of the products delivered alongside the AW National Project Team and other UNCTAD Experts.”



**Venkatasubramani PASUPATHY (Pasu)**

Programme Management Assistant

Geneva, Switzerland

17 years' experience with ASYCUDA Programme

39 years' experience in total

“I enjoy working in ASYCUDA collaboratively with colleagues in a team or independently. Towards a common goal, I thrive on maintaining effective working relations in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity which I felt a unique opportunity for me to be with ASYCUDA. My work experience with ASYCUDA has allowed me to become familiar not only with a lot of administrative procedures and UN regulations and rules but also the importance of timely execution by providing the assistance in achieving the goals for a team. With my strong background in performing a full range of office

management and back office support for ASYCUDA, which is highly complex in nature, makes me interested and proud to be a family member of ASYCUDA and I believe that I can bring added value to the ASYCUDA Programme, the Division and the Organization. Outside of work, I am an accompanying artist in Music (Indian Drum - mridangam) and therefore fully aware of the importance on how to be a team player. I am open to learn new procedures and enjoy sharing my or any knowledge I have gained to enrich myself and anyone interested in gaining more knowledge.”



**Jaime MENDOZA**

Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean

Kingston, Jamaica

25 years' experience with the ASYCUDA Programme

31 Years' overall experience

“I was born in Bolivia; however, from a very young age had to move and live in Central America.

My journey with UNCTAD dates back to September 1992 when I joined the ASYCUDA Programme as an IT adviser to assist with the implementation of the ASYCUDA version 2 system at Guatemala's Customs Administration. Since then until now, I have had the opportunity to assist in the reform and modernization of trade facilitation programs in 24 countries in Latin America, Africa and for the past 15 years in the Caribbean. Initially, in an IT expert capacity, which has changed over the years towards one of being a team leader with project management responsibilities and subsequently as a Regional Adviser providing assistance and guidance to multiple projects.

For the past two years, I have been given upgraded responsibilities as the ASYCUDA Regional Coordinator for the Latin American and Caribbean region. Position which gives me the opportunity to positively influence the policy and decision-making level of the Programme and a better more direct outreach of those in Government.

It does not seem that 25 years have gone by, thus far. I am very grateful for the opportunities I have been afforded working for UNCTAD's largest technical cooperation and being able to assist and contribute to so many developing countries in their reform efforts.