

# THE ROLE OF CUSTOMS IN MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**COVID-19 RESPONSE MEASURES  
IMPLEMENTED BY THE CUSTOMS  
ADMINISTRATION OF GHANA**

# WHAT ISSUES CONFRONT CUSTOMS?

- Trade facilitation
- Supply Chain Security
- Combatting smuggling



# WHAT IS CUSTOMS LOOKING OUT FOR DURING COVID-19?

- **ADVERSARIES**

Individuals, Smugglers, Organized Crime, Terrorist Organizations

- **MATERIALS**

Prohibited/Restricted Goods, Dual Use Goods, Intellectual Property Rights Violations, Substandard Goods

- **TACTICS**

Concealment, False Description, False Documentation



# INTERVENTIONS BY GRA DURING COVID-19

- Ghana Customs is a Division Under the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA)
- Peer education of staff on the COVID-19 pandemic
- Visible display of COVID-19 posters in all offices
- COVID-19 safety measures are championed by top management of GRA



# INTERVENTIONS BY GRA DURING COVID-19

- Customs is part of the National COVID-19 Technical Response Team responsible for managing the pandemic
- Customs has intensified patrols to deter, detect and curb smuggling during the period
- An institutional Technical Response Committee has been established to ensure strict adherence to WHO guidelines, protocols and recommendation within the organization as well as at the various PoE
- Isolation areas have been designated in various customs offices nationwide for staff who show symptoms pending evacuation

# INTERVENTIONS BY GRA DURING COVID-19

...contd.



The Ghana Customs Laboratory produces large quantities of sanitizers for use by the staff and clients of GRA, Finance Ministry and other corporate institutions



# INTERVENTIONS BY GRA DURING COVID-19 ...contd

**B&E** MONDAY, JULY 8, 2020 news 31

## GRA, GIZ give two mobile laboratory vans to KCCR for enhanced COVID-19 testing

By Kato CUDJOE, Kumi

The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), working in partnership with GIZ, has handed two mobile laboratory vans to the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research (KCCR) toward scaling-up testing of potential COVID-19 patients, particularly in "hard-to-reach" communities.

To support government's commitment to stop and contain spread of the virus through enhanced testing of exposed persons, the GRA said it is making available two mobile laboratory vans as well as a team to man the operations, whereas the GIZ will provide logistical support. KCCR, on the other hand, will be in charge of the operations.

This latest development, according to Assistant Commissioner GRA in charge of Customs Laboratory, Phyllis Sakyi-Djan, was reached through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed between the three organisations.

Speaking at the handover of one of the mobile laboratory vans to the KCCR on the forecourt of the facility in Kumasi, she noted that the world is facing one of the most difficult hazards in modern history.

She said in trying to deal with the situation, every country is pulling available resources together. It is thus as a contribution to Ghana's capabilities to test for COVID-19 infections that this support has been made.

Mrs. Sakyi Djan was speaking on behalf of Col. Kato Danesh (Rtd), and said the GRA commends that "This joint effort will go a long way in enhancing Ghana's collective character in combating and bringing coronavirus infections under control in the country, and possibly eradicating Ghana of the disease". She also added that the second mobile laboratory van will soon be made available to KCCR.

The Scientific Director of KCCR, Prof. Richard Oduro Phillips, said the MoU, signed between the three organisations,

that the decision reached offers an opportunity to take laboratory services and testing closer to the doorstep of patients.

"With the mobile

laboratory, we will be able to visit hotspots of the disease and people who have little access to diagnostic testing; this van will be able to reach them so that they don't have to travel all the

way to KCCR for such testing," he stated.

He said the innovation is a significant contribution to the COVID-19 fight, and operations will immediately

commence. He added that, already, there are some places mapped where testing is limited, and will therefore be prioritised as operations begin.

Prof. Oduro Phillips said in terms of reporting, the overall lines of reporting will be maintained and continue the collaboration with Ghana Health Service (GHS) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) while keeping up with ongoing efforts.

While expressing his appreciation to the organisations involved in the initiative, GRA and GIZ, he also added that results from the work will soon be realised.



Prof. Oduro Phillips of KCCR, extreme left, inspecting the mobile laboratory van with Mrs. Sakyi Djan of the GRA, right, and other officials



GRA has partnered with *Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research* by the deployment of Ghana Customs Laboratory staff and mobile vans to test for SARS-CoV-2 in Ghana



# CLEARANCE OF RELIEF AND ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

- COVID-19 relief supplies are given priority and expedited clearance over other cargo as our borders remain open to general cargo. Pre-entry clearance is granted to critical medical supplies and physical protection equipment (PPE) for fighting the pandemic.
- Administrative plans for the protection of critical infrastructure in the event of an emergency has been activated. This plan ensures business continuity during the COVID-19 period



# MEASURES FOR SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Ghana Customs has chemists stationed at the various POE to examine medicines, PPEs and other supplies related to the pandemic
- Enhanced inspections and patrols aimed at identifying and interdicting illicit and falsified COVID-19 medicines and supplies
- Ghana Customs is participating in joint COVID-19 operations such as Operation STOP by the WCO



