



World Customs
Organization

PROGRAMME

African Continental Conference on the **HARMONIZED SYSTEM**



23 – 24 NOVEMBER 2021



Virtual Event





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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The World Customs Organization (WCO) will host the first Continental Conference on the Harmonized System (HS) for Africa, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), on 23 and 24 November 2021, in a virtual format. The Conference is funded by the European Union (EU) within the framework of the EU-WCO Programme for Harmonized System in Africa (HS-Africa Programme).

The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, commonly known as the Harmonized System (HS), is an international trade nomenclature that classifies all goods based on a set of rules that is the same for all countries. The intent of the HS is to facilitate international trade, to streamline the collection of data and statistics, as well as to standardize trade documentation and information exchange. Customs tariffs of more than 200 economies world-wide are based on the HS.

The success of the Harmonized System owes much to its built-in review mechanism whereby the HS Nomenclature is regularly updated. This allows to adapt the HS to changes in technology and constantly evolving patterns of international trade. So far six editions of the HS have been implemented.

On 1 January 2022, the new version of the Harmonized System enters into force. This means that Customs tariffs, all other HS-based instruments and IT-management systems must be migrated to the new standard. Some organizations find this task daunting and are at risk of missing the deadline for implementing the required changes.

Almost all African countries are Contracting Parties to the HS Convention and thus have an obligation to use the latest HS version. With the advent of the African Continental Free Trade Area, this obligation has been further reinforced as under the AfCFTA Agreement State Parties undertake to adopt Customs tariff nomenclatures and statistical nomenclatures which are in conformity with the latest applicable version of the HS.



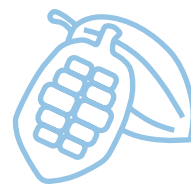
The AfCFTA is already a reality with trade under the agreement officially started on January 2021, laying the foundation for liberalized single market and ultimately a continental Customs union. African countries that ratify the agreement agree to liberalize 90% of tariff lines. This means that countries will reduce, and eventually eliminate, tariffs on 90% of products traded under the AfCFTA. The Harmonized System, beyond being the essence for cross-border trade, is relevant on other key aspects of the operationalization process of the AfCFTA, namely with regard to rules of origin, tariff negotiations and data collection for non-tariff barriers.

In the African continent, experience from the implementation of the current (2017) version of the Harmonized System has shown that there are discrepancies in the application of the HS, with some countries still applying the HS 2007

or HS 2012 and others having big delays in implementing the HS 2017. With the advent of the AfCFTA it is of utmost importance to ensure harmonisation and that all countries engage to implement the HS 2022 and future versions in a coordinated and timely manner.

The objective of the Conference is to create a platform for a wide audience of stakeholders, both from the public and the private sectors, to address a broad range of issues around the implementation of the HS 2022 amendments in Africa and tariff-related work in general, to ensure that both Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and individual Members alike are well informed about the upcoming changes in the HS and feel confident about the road to take.

These issues will be discussed in a broad context of regional and continental integration and trade liberalization dynamics in Africa, in particular, the advent of the AfCFTA, as well as the trade facilitation agenda under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and Customs modernization processes.



Event title

African Continental Conference on the Harmonized System.



Dates, schedule and format

The Conference will be held over two days, on 23 and 24 November 2021. Conference sessions will be held between 12.00 p.m and 3.00 p.m., in an online format.

First day: Directors General and experts sessions

Second day: Experts sessions



Organizers

The Conference is organized by the WCO, in cooperation with the AfCFTA Secretariat, within the framework of the HS-Africa Programme funded by the European Union.



Target audience

Representatives of international organizations, Customs administrations, relevant government agencies, RECs, traders, Customs brokers, academia, international expert community.



Languages

English, French and Portuguese interpretation.



What to take from the Conference

Participants will benefit from presentations and insights by policy makers, senior managers and international expert community on the most urgent and acutely relevant issues related to the HS, tariff classification work and the role of the HS as an enabler of the regional and continental integration in Africa.

The Conference will be a platform of information on the new version of the HS, the tools and instruments supporting its use, and of the best practices in the areas of HS implementation and digital transformation of Customs work. It will also be an opportunity to deepening participants' understanding of the renewed commitment to regional and continental integration in Africa under the AfCFTA and the role of the HS in this process.

About the EU-WCO HS-Africa Programme

The EU-WCO Programme for the Harmonized System in Africa (HS-Africa Programme) is a multi-stakeholder initiative, funded by the European Union and implemented by the World Customs Organization. The anticipated outcome of the Programme is that partner African countries implement and apply the 2022 version of the HS, in line with the HS Convention, relevant international standards, and in conformity with continental and regional commitments. The longer-term objective is to provide African countries and other stakeholders involved in the HS implementation process with the required organizational capacities and resources to apply future HS versions in a timely and coordinated manner throughout the respective regions and the entire continent. By the launch of the programme in 2018, it has been recorded that only 28 African countries were implementing the HS 2017, as of now and with the support of the programme 49 countries in Africa are implementing the HS 2017 and the objective is that by 2022 all African countries apply the HS 2022.

Organizations interested in technical assistance, capacity building or partnership are invited to contact the Programme team at wcoHSAfrica@wcoomd.org.



AGENDA

Day One, 23 November

11h30 - 12h00 Participants log-in and connection

12h00 - 12h10 Keynote address

12h10 - 12h30 Opening remarks

Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General, World Customs Organization
Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, AfCFTA Secretariat
Yankuba Darboe, Commissioner General, Gambia Revenue Authority
Sandra Kramer, Director Africa, Directorate General International Partnership - European Union
Konstantinos Kaiopoulos, Director, Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate, World Customs Organization

Chair

12h30 - 13h15 Panel Discussion:
Effective implementation of the HS as a key enabler of successful trade facilitation

Chair

Paulina Mbala Elago, Executive Secretary, Southern African Customs Union
Adrian P. Swarres, Acting Commissioner Customs and Excise, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, WCO ESA Vice-Chair
Guénolé Mbongo Koumou, Director General of Customs, Republic of Congo, WCO WCA Vice-Chair
Antti Suortti, Head of Unit Customs Tariff, DG TAXUD, European Union
Ebenezer Gebding Tafili, Deputy Director, Capacity Building Directorate, World Customs Organization

13h15 - 14h00 Panel Discussion:
The Private sector as an indispensable partner in the implementation and application of the HS

Chair

Valérie Picard, Deputy Director, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, International Chamber of Commerce
Carol West, Secretary, International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations
Louise Wigget, CEO, Global Trade Solution
Juanita Maree, Chief Executive Officer, South African Association of Freight Forwarders
Liza Helena Vaz, Commissioner General, Cape Verde Customs Administration

14h00 - 14h15 Expert's Voice

Pablo Muñiz, Partner, Van Bael & Bellis



Day Two, 24 November

12h00 - 12h30	HS 2022 amendments as a landmark in making the HS more relevant for its users	Gael Grooby , Deputy Director, Tariff and Trade Affairs Directorate, World Customs Organization WCO Publications & Data Solutions
12h30 - 13h30	Panel Discussion: Optimizing processes for effective and timely implementation of the HS	Demitta Chinwude Gyang , Senior Advisor, Head Customs, AfCFTA Secretariat Felix Kwame Kwakye , Principal Programme Officer - Tariff & Customs Procedures, Directorate of Customs Union & Taxation, Commission of the Economic Community of West African States John David , Information System Officer, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, ASYCUDA Programme Randy Rotchin , Director of Business Development for Global Trade, Avalara Gasper Konneh Neba , Director of Studies, Trade Facilitation and Risk Analysis, Cameroon Customs Larry Liza , Director, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building, World Customs Organization
13h30 - 14h30	Panel Discussion: Administering Tariff Concessions under the AfCFTA; challenges and opportunities	Mohammed Ali , Director for Trade in Goods, AfCFTA Secretariat Roy Santana , Senior Counsellor, Market Access Division, World Trade Organization Trudi Hartzenberg , Executive Director, Tralac – Trade Law Center Donald Tindamanyire , Principal Customs Officer (Tariffs & Valuation), East African Community Maheswar Gaunpot , Section Head Assessment, Mauritius Revenue Authority Larry Liza , Director, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building, World Customs Organization
14h30 - 14h45	Expert's voice	Edvinas Drevinskas , Statistician in the Economic Research and Statistics Division, World Trade Organization
14h45 - 15h15	Open discussion	Open discussion
15h15 - 15h30	Closing	Ricardo Treviño , Deputy Secretary General, World Customs Organization



BIOGRAPHIES

Day One, 23 November



OPENING REMARKS



Kunio Mikuriya World Customs Organization

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya has been Secretary General of the World Customs Organization (WCO) since 1 January 2009. He provides leadership and executive management for the global Customs community's priorities, including developing global Customs instruments, standards and tools; securing and facilitating global trade; protecting taxable amounts through optimal revenue collection; building Customs-business partnerships; and delivering capacity building in support of Customs reform and modernization.

Prior to joining the WCO, he worked for Japan's Ministry of Finance for 25 years. During his career with the Ministry, Dr. Mikuriya occupied a variety of senior posts, which have given him broad experience and knowledge in Customs, trade, development, budget, and financial policies. He served as Director of Enforcement where he led efforts to fight illicit trade, then as Director of Research and International Affairs, paving the way for the conclusion of Japan's first regional trade agreement, and then as a Counsellor in the Tariff and Customs Bureau. He also served as Director of Salaries and Allowances to coordinate remuneration levels for the entire government workforce, and as the Budget Controller for Foreign Affairs, Official Aid, International Trade and Industry, in the Budget Bureau. In addition, he spent time as a Counsellor at the Japanese Mission to the WTO in Geneva and participated in the GATT Uruguay Round trade negotiations.

Dr. Mikuriya has a degree in law from the University of Tokyo (Japan) and a PhD in international relations from the University of Kent (United Kingdom).



OPENING REMARKS



Wamkele Mene

African Continental Free Trade Area

Wamkele Mene was elected by the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States & Government of the African Union, to the position of Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat.

Prior to being elected Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, he served as Chief Director: Africa Economic Relations, at the Department of Trade & Industry of South Africa. In this role, he was South Africa's chief trade negotiator in the AfCFTA and Tripartite FTA negotiations. During his tenure as chief negotiator, South Africa ratified both the AfCFTA and Tripartite FTAs agreements, providing new export markets in fast growing and dynamic markets in East and West Africa.

Prior to assuming this position, Wamkele was Director: International Trade Law & Investment Law at the Department of Trade & Industry, a role in which he was principal legal counsel on international trade law and international investment law.

From 2010 until 2015, Wamkele represented South Africa at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland. During his posting to the WTO, Wamkele was elected by over 130 governments to the position of Chairman of the Committee on International Trade in Financial Services, a committee comprising trade negotiators, financial regulators and financial policy makers from over 160 countries.

Prior to joining the government, Wamkele worked for the law firms Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP in London and Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP in Hong Kong.

Wamkele has written and lectured internationally on international trade law, international investment law and international business law. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Law) degree from Rhodes University in South Africa, a Master of Arts in International Studies & Diplomacy (with specialization in International Economics) from the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), University of London and a LL.M. (Master of Laws) in Banking Law & Financial Regulation from the Law Department of the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE).

Day One, 23 November

OPENING REMARKS



Yankuba Darboe
Gambia Revenue Authority



OPENING REMARKS



Sandra Kramer
European Union

Sandra Kramer is Director Africa at the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships since June 2019.

Sandra joined the European Commission in 1995 in the Directorate-General for External Relations. She served in two EU Delegations, Indonesia as Trade Counsellor and India as Head of Economic Co-operation. Sandra was assistant to the Commission's Chief Spokesperson and assistant to the Deputy Director-General of Directorate-General Enterprise & Industry. She was Head of Unit in the Directorate-General Enterprise & Industry and in the Directorate-General Justice before joining the team of European Commission President Juncker as Director Coordination and Administration.

Sandra holds a Master Degree in Modern Literature from the University of Groningen, and a Master Degree in Economics and International Relations from the Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies, Bologna and Washington DC.



CHAIR



Konstantinos Kaiopoulos
World Customs Organization

Mr. Konstantinos Kaiopoulos is Tariff and Trade Affairs Director at the World Customs Organization (WCO) since 1st March 2021. He provides leadership and management for the development of global Customs instruments, standards, and tools related to the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS Code), the Customs Valuation and the Rules of Origin.

Prior to joining the WCO, he represented the Hellenic Customs Administration to the European Union, the WCO, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation) and the WHO (World Health Organisation)/FCTC bodies. During his 35

years long professional career, Mr. Kaiopoulos worked for Greece's Independent Authority for Public Revenue, the Hellenic Ministry of Economy and Finance, the European Commission and the Newcastle Business School, occupying a variety of senior posts which have given him broad experience and knowledge in Customs, international trade and economics and international business.

Mr. Kaiopoulos is graduated from the London School of Economics, the College of Europe (Belgium), the Sciences Po, the University of Paris IV Sorbonne and the University of Aix-Marseille (France), and is specialised in International Law and International Economic Relations.



PANELLIST - EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS AS A KEY ENABLER OF SUCCESSFUL TRADE FACILITATION



Paulina Mbala Elago

Southern African Customs Union

Ms. Paulina Mbala Elago, is a Trade Economist, currently serving as the second Executive Secretary for the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Secretariat since the 1st April 2014. Her appointment as the Executive Secretary of SACU was renewed for the second term in 2019. Prior to heading the SACU Secretariat, Ms. Elago served as the Tanzania Country Director, for TradeMark East Africa (TMEA). She was responsible for designing, managing and implementation of the TMEA Tanzania's multi-million dollars Country Programme designed to support implementation of East African Community (EAC) regional integration Programmes. This include improving intra-regional trade and trade competitiveness through improved trade facilitation, streamlined procedures and trade related infrastructure development

Ms. Elago has over twenty-five years of professional experience in International Trade, primarily trade policy, regional integration, trade facilitation, investment environment reforms, trade related capacity building and trade related infrastructure development. Additionally, she boasts of 10 years' experience in managing and delivering multi-donor, multi-country and multi-year development programmes to support regional integration and trade competitiveness, primarily in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States including institutional support to regional integration organisations across ACP region.

She has also served as Deputy Chief of Party for the Southern Africa Global Competitiveness Hub in Gaborone, Botswana, Economic Adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London and as Chief Trade Negotiator for the Government of Namibia. She has in-depth knowledge and understanding of the trade and Socio - economic development context on the African continent esp. SACU, SADC and EAC sub-regions, the ACP and Commonwealth groupings as well as the global arena.

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PANELLIST - EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS AS A KEY ENABLER OF SUCCESSFUL TRADE FACILITATION



Adrian P. Swarres

Zimbabwe Revenue Authority - WCO ESA Vice-Chair

Adrian Peter Swarres is currently the Acting Commissioner Customs and Excise with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, he joined the then Department of Customs and Excise in January 1991 and has amassed a thorough knowledge of customs procedures and legislation over the years, and has been very instrumental in the modernization efforts of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. He is a holder of a Master Degree in Business Administrations and a Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Fiscal Studies.



PANELLIST - EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS AS A KEY ENABLER OF SUCCESSFUL TRADE FACILITATION



Guénolé Mbongo Koumou

Congo Customs, WCO WCA Vice-Chair

Guénolé MBONGO KOUMOU, Directeur général des douanes et des droits indirects, Enseignant à la Faculté des sciences économiques de l'Université Marien NGOUABI (République du Congo), est titulaire d'un Master 2 de l'Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne et Docteur en sciences économiques de l'Université de Tours (France).

Il a d'abord travaillé en France après son diplôme d'ingénieur en Réseaux informatiques et Télécommunications en 2006, avant de rentrer au Congo en 2013, date à laquelle il a intégré la Cour des comptes et de discipline budgétaire.

Conseiller à la fiscalité et aux douanes du ministre des finances et du budget entre 2016 et 2018, il était en charge de la coordination des réformes fiscales et douanières.

Il a été nommé Directeur général des douanes et des droits indirects de la République du Congo en décembre 2018 et élu Vice-président du Conseil de l'Organisation Mondiale des Douanes pour la région Afrique occidentale et centrale (OMD-AOC) en septembre 2020.



PANELLIST - EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS AS A KEY ENABLER OF SUCCESSFUL TRADE FACILITATION



Antti Suortti
European Union

Mr Suortti graduated as a lawyer from the Helsinki University. Before joining the European Commission in 1996 he worked for the Finnish Customs. In the European Commission Mr Suortti has worked in the Directorate-General for Budget, heading units in the area of EU own resources and revenue management. Since 2017 he has been in charge of the "Customs Tariff" unit in the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union that also represents the EU in the WCO in relation to the Harmonised System.

CHAIR - EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS AS A KEY ENABLER OF SUCCESSFUL TRADE FACILITATION



Ebenezer Gebding Tafili
World Customs Organization



PANELLIST - THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS AN INDISPENSABLE PARTNER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND APPLICATION OF THE HS



Valérie Picard
International Chamber of Commerce

Valérie Picard is the Deputy Director for the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation based at the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). Based in Paris, Valerie leads ICC's contribution to the Global Alliance working with her team to leverage the ICC's network of businesses, national committees and chambers of commerce to support the work of the Alliance and develop trade facilitation projects. She previously worked at Bolloré Transport & Logistics advising on legal matters relating to public-private partnerships and the development and operation of ports and terminals in Africa and Asia. Valerie holds a BA in Government from Smith College and a JD/LL.M from Duke University School of Law.

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PANELLIST - THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS AN INDISPENSABLE PARTNER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND APPLICATION OF THE HS



Carol West

International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations

Carol West is the Secretary of the International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations (IFCBA) as well as the President and CEO of the Canadian Society of Customs Brokers.

Carol has led and participated in many Canadian and international discussions on harmonization of data requirements, Customs processes, border management, supply chain security and trade facilitation. She understands and articulates the important role of business in the successful implementation of change in Customs administrations. She is a former chair of the WCO Private Sector Consultative Group, and was the private sector co-chair of the WCO SAFE Working Group and a joint working group on Customs-Business Partnership. Carol has contributed to WCO and World Bank capacity building work in Latin America and Asia. She has also supported the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement through work with the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation in Zambia and Malawi. She is a strong advocate for the value and importance of customs brokers and is a committed supporter and promoter of Customs-business partnership, in Canada and worldwide.



PANELLIST - THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS AN INDISPENSABLE PARTNER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND APPLICATION OF THE HS



Louise Wigget

Global Trade Solution South Africa

As the founder and CEO of Global Trade Solution, Louise offers more than 25 years experience and leadership in International Trade, Logistics, Supply Chain, Customs and Information Technology. Along with an entrepreneurial, forward-thinking mindset and a demonstrated track record of accomplishments, she is passionate about innovation and transformation of the business processes within the International Trade environment, both from a Trade and Customs perspective.

Her consulting, business and technology experience includes a vast array of industry segments, namely Manufacturing, FMCG, Food, Canning, Pharmaceuticals, Wine, Fruit, Retail and Footwear and Textile to mention a few.

AEO, MSME development and Women in Trade have over the years become a particular area of focus and interest for her. Embracing technology innovations that improves the International Supply Chain,

Logistics, Trade and Customs domains remains an ongoing area of growth and focus.

Louise holds a B.Com from the University of Stellenbosch and a B.Compt (Hons) from the University of South Africa and passed the professional examinations of the SA Public Accountants' and Auditors' Board. She subsequently obtained a number of diplomas in International Trade and Project Management. Prior to founding GTS, Louise completed her articles at Ernst and Whinney and worked extensively in international trade at various blue-chip companies in Africa and internationally.

Louise has ongoing engagements in several trade modernisation and trade facilitation initiatives as well as participation in several of the Customs modernisation activities across the globe. She is also involved in a number of African (RFA, TSPA, ICC) associations. In addition she is involved with several International Associations, which includes the ICC, WCO and WTO as well as other organisations that are involved in the International Trade and Supply Chain and Logistics environment.

Louise regularly contributes to publications and conference papers, both locally and abroad and regularly participates and contributes to conferences, seminars and panel discussions and public debates across the globe.



CHAIR - THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS AN INDISPENSABLE PARTNER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND APPLICATION OF THE HS



Liza Helena Vaz

Administration des douanes du Cap-Vert

Liza Vaz is a graduate in Law from the Faculty of Law of the Universidade Clássica de Lisboa. She holds a Master in Tax from ISCTE and in Commercial Company Law from the Faculty of Law of the Catholic University of Lisbon.

Prior to joining the Cape Verdean Revenue Authority, she was a Senior Manager at PwC in the corporate taxation department in Lisbon, specializing in Transfer Pricing, Corporate Income Tax in Portugal and Cape Verde. At PwC, she was particularly involved in projects related to corporate taxation and taxation of multinational companies. She also led numerous foreign investment projects in Cape Verde as well as provide advisory support on tax benefits and permanent tax advice to national and international clients in Cape Verde in various sectors of activity including government affairs, tourism, industry and services. She has acted as a key speaker at several National and International Conferences and has collaborated in specialized tax journals, on articles related to taxation in Cape Verde. She was World Bank Doing Business Correspondent for Cabo Verde and Non Executive Administrator of Cabo Verde Telecom. Since July 2016, she is the Commissioner General of Cape Verde's Revenue Authority.

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EXPERT



Pablo Muñiz
Van Bael & Bellis

Pablo is a partner at the law firm Van Bael & Bellis (Brussels - London - Geneva) where he heads the customs practice. He specializes since 2001 in EU trade law, with a particular emphasis on EU customs law. He regularly provides advice on customs classification files - including the implementation of the Harmonized System and its application by WCO members -, origin issues, free trade agreements and other preferential arrangements, repayment requests, customs valuation, duty suspensions, as well as export controls and sanctions. Pablo often handles multi-jurisdictional customs matters involving disputes in several EU Member states.

He regularly advises clients on customs matters involving the EU Courts, the European Commission, OLAF, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and national customs administrations throughout the EU.

Further information is available on [LinkedIn](#).

Day Two, 24 November

HS 2022 AMENDMENTS AS A LANDMARK IN MAKING THE HS MORE RELEVANT FOR ITS USERS



Gael Grooby
World Customs Organization



PANELLIST - OPTIMIZING PROCESSES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS



Demitta Chinwude Gyang
African Continental Free Trade Area

Mrs. Gyang Demitta Chinwude is currently Head of Customs Cooperation, Trade Facilitation and Transit as well as Senior Adviser to the Secretary-General, AfCFTA Secretariat. Before joining the AfCFTA Secretariat, she was Assistant Chief Trade Negotiator and Head of the AfCFTA/ECOWAS department at the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations (NOTN). In her capacity as head of this unit, she was the Alternate Chief Trade Negotiator for Nigeria during the Phase I negotiations of the AfCFTA Agreement. Prior to her deployment to the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations, Mrs. Gyang was a Commercial Officer at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Nigeria, 2006 – 2016 where she served in the Task Force for Trade Facilitation that eventually became the National Committee on Trade facilitation after Nigeria ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. She proceeded to Geneva, Switzerland in 2012 for an Internship at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and was a part of the Project Implementation Unit of the World Bank Growth and Employment Project (GEM), 2014 – 2016. She holds a master's degree in International Law and Economics (MILES) from the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland.

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PANELLIST - OPTIMIZING PROCESSES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS



Felix Kwame Kwakye

Commission of the Economic Community of West African States

I had my tertiary education at the University of Ghana, and the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom. I began my career at the then Ghana Customs Excise and Preventive Service in 1988 and progressively rose through the ranks to the level of Chief Collector before moving on to the ECOWAS Commission in Nigeria as a Customs Specialist.

I am currently the Principal Programme Officer and Head of Division for Tariff and Customs Procedures at the ECOWAS Commission.

I have been involved in the development and management of the ECOWAS Tariff and Statistical Nomenclature since its inception.

As part of my responsibilities at ECOWAS, I oversee the management of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) and ensure that it's kept up to date as well as coordinate all Customs programmes and activities undertaken by the ECOWAS Commission in West Africa.



PANELLIST - OPTIMIZING PROCESSES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS



John David

**United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,
ASYCUDA Programme**

John David is an Information System Officer at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) where he works for the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) Programme. He has 25 years of experience working in the technical field of customs automation and he is presently responsible for the technical development and support of the system including the most recent version - ASYCUDAWorld.

John was raised in the UK, Botswana and Geneva and graduated from Bristol university with a Masters degree in Computer Science. He has participated in international conferences with WCO, EU, OIC-IDB, SADC, WTO and COMESA where he delivered presentations and demonstrations of the ASYCUDA programme and software products.



PANELLIST - OPTIMIZING PROCESSES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS



Randy Rotchin
Avalara

Randy Rotchin is Director of Business Development for Global Trade at Avalara. Randy came to Avalara through the acquisition of his company, 3CE Technologies, a globally recognized leader in the application of artificial intelligence in Harmonized System commodity classification and HS code verification. The company's award-winning solutions are used by a wide variety of international trade stakeholders, including multinational shippers, logistics service providers and Customs authorities. 3CE is considered the gold-standard in technology-enabled HS classification assistance software and is featured in many public-facing resources such as trade-hubs and electronic single windows.

Randy has appeared as an expert witness before several Canadian Parliamentary Committees on such topics as duty remission, quota management, and smart government. He has also spoken at numerous industry conferences on the subject of customs modernization, trade facilitation, and regulatory oversight.



PANELLIST - OPTIMIZING PROCESSES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS



Gasper Konneh Neba
Cameroon Customs

Dr. Konneh is a Senior Inspector of Customs working with the Cameroon Customs Administration. He is currently Director for Studies, Trade Facilitation and Risk Analysis at the Cameroon Customs Headquarters. He has previously held the positions of Director for Legislation and International Cooperation and Director for Legislation and Litigation within the same Administration. He also worked as a Research Officer in the Office of the Vice-Chair of the WCO for the West and Central Africa Region, during Cameroon's tenure of that post from 2014 to 2016. He is a WCO accredited Expert Trainer on the Harmonized System. He is also an accredited Technical and Operational Counselor on the WCO Revenue Package.

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CHAIR - OPTIMIZING PROCESSES FOR EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HS



Larry Liza

World Customs Organization

Larry Liza is the Director of the World Customs Organization, East & Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) in-charge of implementing capacity building initiatives for 24 Member countries in the region. The focus of his service includes promoting growth in intra-regional trade, promoting fair and efficient revenue mobilisation, strengthening intra-regional compliance and enforcement and enhancing integrity and professionalism in human capital. Under Customs-Business partnerships, Mr. Liza cooperates with the private sector, including logistics companies, in light of their critical role in international trade and economic development.

Larry, who is serving on secondment from Kenya Revenue Authority, has a Masters degree in Planning and Management and a Bachelor of Science degree, both from the University of Nairobi, among other qualification. He is a Kenyan born poet, published author and global champion for maternal health.



PANELLIST - ADMINISTERING TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER THE AfCFTA; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Mohammed Ali

African Continental Free Trade Area

Mohamed Ali, is the Director of Trade and Competition at the AfCFTA Secretariat. In February 2021, he was appointed to be the First Director of Trade in Goods and Competition of the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat. Mohamed was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt. He graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Business Management from Cairo University, Egypt. He obtained a Master's degree in Development and Public Policy from the KDI School of Public Policy and Management, Seoul/South Korea.

He was the Director for Africa Relations in the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Egypt's Chief Negotiator in the negotiations of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA). Mohamed later served as the Project Development Manager for Third Country Cooperation in North and West Africa at British Embassy in Cairo. Mohamed has taken part and presided the Egyptian delegation in various technical and high-level COMESA meetings and Tripartite FTA negotiations. Moreover, He has contributed as a senior

trade official and the deputy of the Chief Negotiator of Egypt since the commencement of the negotiations of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is deemed to be one of the most imperative flagship projects of the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. In addition, he assisted in the establishment of a trade policy framework on the national level aimed at identifying trade issues that could be mainstreamed into the development plans and strategy to enhance Intra-Africa trade within the Continent.



PANELLIST - ADMINISTERING TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER THE AfCFTA; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Roy Santana
World Trade Organization

Mr. Santana has more than 20 years of experience on tariffs and other customs matters. He has worked for the Market Access Division of the World Trade Organization since 2004, where he has served as the Secretary of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG), the Committee on Market Access and the Committee on Customs Valuation. He has also provided technical support to the Committee of Participants of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA), the negotiations for the expansion of the ITA, the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF), the Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Products (NAMA), and the negotiations for an Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA). He has served as technical liaison in eight disputes under the Dispute Settlement Understanding of the WTO, contributed to a number of reports and publications by the WTO Secretariat, and frequently trains government officials in various WTO agreements. Between 2001 and 2004, Mr. Santana worked as a Geneva-based delegate for the Government of Costa Rica. In 2003, he was elected vice-chairman of the International Textiles and Clothing Bureau (ITCB), and served as an alternate member of the Textiles Monitoring Body. From 1998 to 2000 he worked as a trade negotiator on issues relating to Market Access, Agriculture, and Trade & Competition Policy in numerous agreements, including the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), and bilateral trade negotiations with Central America, Canada, Chile, the European Communities, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Panama.

Mr. Santana holds an LL.M. in Trade Regulation from New York University (NYU), a degree in Law from the University of Costa Rica and a bachelor's degree in Economics from the same university. Mr. Santana is a member of the New York and Costa Rican Bars. He lectures at the Catholic University of Lyon, and the World Trade Institute (WTI) in Bern, the LLM on Food Law of the Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali "Guido Carli" in Rome, and the LLM in International Economic Law (IEL) at the European Public Law Organization (EPLO).

Day Two, 24 November



PANELLIST - ADMINISTERING TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER THE AfCFTA; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Trudi Hartzenberg
Trade Law Center

Trudi Hartzenberg is the Executive Director of the Trade Law Centre (tralac). Her research areas include international trade, competition policy, industrial development and Africa's integration agenda.

She has a special interest in capacity building. She designs and delivers academic and tailored short courses a broad range of trade-related topics, investment, competition policy and industrialisation.

She currently serves on the WTO Chairs Advisory Committee and is a member of the Committee for Development Policy of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



PANELLIST - ADMINISTERING TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER THE AfCFTA; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Donald Tindamanyire
East African Community

Donald Tindamanyire, is currently the Principal Customs Officer, responsible for Tariffs, Valuation and Rules of Origin at the East African Community Secretariat, based in Arusha, Tanzania. Donald's experience in Customs Management spans over 19 years, specifically in the areas of valuation, tariff, Rules of Origin and trade facilitation. Donald holds a Master's Degree in Customs Administration, from the University of Muenster, Federal Republic of Germany, and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB), from the University of Dar es Salaam, in Tanzania.

As a regional expert, Donald's key responsibilities centre on ensuring the overall administration and monitoring on the application of the EAC Common External Tariff, Agreement on Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin, by EAC Partner States, and in accordance with the EAC Customs Union Protocol. Donald is currently coordinating the EU-WCO Programme for Harmonized System (HS) in Africa within EAC region. He is overseeing the transposition and implementation of the HS 2022 version, which will include a Digitalized / Electronic Tariff and advanced ruling system. Donald also oversaw the awareness creation, for border agencies, on measures taken to facilitate smooth movement of goods within the region including the WCO HS reference guide on classification for COVID 19 medical supplies, in order facilitate expedited clearance.

Donald has also led the facilitation of various reviews of EAC Tariff regimes based on the EAC policy requirements, as well as participated in the negotiations on Rules of Origin for Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the recently concluded Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Donald previously worked with the Tanzania Revenue Authority, where he held various senior portfolios, such as, Assistant Regional Manager Customs & Excise Department and Head of Rules of Origin, where he led various teams in the development and implementation of various policies and procedures on revenue collection, trade facilitation and protection of society.

From his legal background, Donald is an Advocate of the High Court of Tanzania, and a Member of both requisite professional bodies of the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) and East Africa Law Society (EALS).

PANELLIST - ADMINISTERING TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER THE AfCFTA; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Maheswar Gaunpot
Mauritius Revenue Authority



CHAIR - ADMINISTERING TARIFF CONCESSIONS UNDER THE AfCFTA; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Larry Liza
World Customs Organization

Larry Liza is the Director of the World Customs Organization, East & Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) in-charge of implementing capacity building initiatives for 24 Member countries in the region. The focus of his service includes promoting growth in intra-regional trade, promoting fair and efficient revenue mobilisation, strengthening intra-regional compliance and enforcement and enhancing integrity and professionalism in human capital. Under Customs-Business partnerships, Mr. Liza cooperates with the private sector, including logistics companies, in light of their critical role in international trade and economic development.

Larry, who is serving on secondment from Kenya Revenue Authority, has a Masters degree in Planning and Management and a Bachelor of Science degree, both from the University of Nairobi, among other qualification. He is a Kenyan born poet, published author and global champion for maternal health.

Day Two, 24 November



EXPERT'S VOICE



Edvinas Drevinskas
World Trade Organization

Edvinas Drevinskas is a statistician in the Economic Research and Statistics Division of the World Trade Organization. He has many years of experience working with tariffs and trade data. This allowed him to gain expertise in the Harmonized System especially on the evolution of codes across different versions of the HS. Edvinas is also an excellent data scientist and R programmer and has developed various computer modules to automate database verification, analysis, and data visualization in his job. Mr. Drevinskas is one of the main developers of several WTO data analytics tools, including a recent tool HS tracker.

Mr. Drevinskas holds a Master of Science in Statistics from the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and a bachelor's degree in Statistics from Vilnius University (VU).



CLOSING REMARKS



Ricardo Treviño
World Customs Organization

Ricardo Treviño Chapa holds a Bachelor's degree in Financial Administration/Business from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education) in Mexico and a Master's degree in Global Banking and International Finance from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom.

With a public sector career spanning 20 years, he first worked for Mexico's Government at the Institute for Protection of Bank Savings, focusing on areas such as process improvement, financial support analysis and asset management.

In 2007 he was appointed as General Director for Revenue Collection in the State of Mexico Government. Revenue collection tripled during his term of office, thanks to the implementation of automated processes. He also served as General Director of the Social Security Institute of the State of Mexico, where he led spearheaded a legal reform to strengthen the pension system.

In 2015 he was appointed as General Administrator of Customs by the President of Mexico, with ratification by the Senate. During his

tenure in office, Mr. Treviño Chapa promoted digitization of Customs procedures as well as cooperation with other border agencies and with Customs administrations of the country's main trading partners. Through the implementation of technology and data analysis, the risk alert effectiveness increased exponentially, impacting positively on revenue collection stemming from external trade. During this period of his career, he was also the WCO Regional Vice-Chair for the Americas and Caribbean region and, in this capacity, coordinated the first ever regional Strategic Plan in line with WCO objectives and priorities.

Since January 2018 Ricardo Treviño Chapa has held the post of WCO Deputy Secretary General, after being elected by the WCO Council. His current duties include leading the efforts to define and implement the WCO Strategic Plan for the period 2019-2022, which is based in an inclusive and transparent approach by taking, for the first time, contributions by the Organization's 183 Members into consideration. He has also succeeded in upgrading the strategic indicators, goals, priorities and deliverables for the Strategic Plan.

In his role as Deputy Secretary General, he follows up on the correct implementation of the WCO Strategic Plan, overseeing and coordinating efforts made by the Organization's three Directorates: Compliance and Facilitation, Tariff and Trade Affairs, and Capacity Building.

Some of the main activities addressed in the WCO Strategic Plan are the promotion and updating of the Organization's conventions, tools and instruments, including the Revised Kyoto Convention, Harmonized System, SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade, and Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce. To ensure implementation of the Organization's strategic goals, Mr. Treviño Chapa also follows up on the delivery of capacity building initiatives aimed at actively assisting Customs administrations to roll out training sessions and modernization initiatives. In addition, the development of a new mechanism to oversee proper implementation of WCO tools and measure the performance of Customs processes is one of the projects he is currently carrying out.

With a focus on results, transparency, Members' integration and innovative processes, Ricardo Treviño Chapa has been working together with other WCO Secretariat staff to ensure business continuity during the current global health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2013 he joined Mexico's Tax Administration Service as Administrator General of Evaluation and Internal Affairs, where he was responsible for developing actions to strengthen integrity and transparency in Customs and tax.



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