



“DIGITAL CUSTOMS: Progressive Engagement” International Customs Day 2016



The Secretary General of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Kunio Mikuriya, announced that the year 2016 will be dedicated to promoting the digitalisation of Customs processes under the slogan “**Digital Customs: Progressive Engagement.**” It is envisioned that Members of the WCO will have the opportunity to showcase their use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), thereby promoting its benefits universally, through information sharing.

There are varying interpretations on the concept of ICT, but generally ICTs may be categorized as any medium that utilizes telecommunications or technology to transmit information. Examples include television, radio, print media, and more recently cellular telephones, database applications systems, and multimedia tools. The internet is arguably the most comprehensive ICT tool being used for information sharing, as it has the ability to combine the existing elements of ICTs and promote user engagement. The international Customs community has long recognized the importance of ICT use, as it relates to Customs efficiencies, and through the efforts of the WCO, promotes benefits that may be derived for core mandates such as trade facilitation, revenue collection, and border protection.

In commemoration of the inaugural session of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), which took place on January 26, 1953, **International Customs Day is celebrated annually on January 26.** The International Convention establishing the CCC was signed on December 15, 1950 and entered into force on November 4, 1952. In 1994 the CCC adopted its new name, the World Customs Organization (WCO), and has the responsibility of choosing the annual theme for International Customs Day through its Secretariat.

WHAT IS DIGITAL CUSTOMS?

According to the WCO, the term Digital Customs refers to any automated or electronic activity that contributes to the effectiveness, efficiency, and coordination of Customs activities, such as:

- **automated Customs clearance systems,**
- **the Single Window concept,**
- **electronic exchange of information,**
- **websites to communicate information and promote transparency,**
- **and the use of smart phones.**



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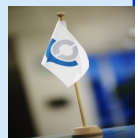
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“Border agencies are increasingly embracing digitalisation to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. The WCO has an extensive portfolio of instruments and tools to support WCO Members in their efforts to further adopt Digital Customs.”

“Over the course of 2016, I invite all WCO Members to promote and share information on how they are implementing and using digital technologies to advance and achieve their objectives.”

Kunio Mikuriya
WCO Secretary General



Automated Customs Clearance Systems

It has been well established that maximum use of ICT contributes to the clearance process and enhances the efficiency of Customs procedures. As import and export volumes increase, the use of ICT becomes a relevant and necessary tool to manage data, relating to Customs processes and data collection. The use of ICT creates a digital record of Customs activities that can be used to facilitate trade and the collection of statistical data.

Automated Customs clearance systems are designed to expedite the trading process by simplifying and automating Customs procedures, eventually leading to a paperless system. This would support trade facilitation objectives for any country, and would be particularly beneficial for developing countries that wish to encourage foreign investments. Such countries would be favourably positioned among countries that rank high in the Ease of Doing Business index, encouraging further investment and economic development.



The particular ICT selected by the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) for Customs clearance is the Automated System for

The Single Window Concept

A single window is defined as a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport, to lodge standardized information and documents to fulfill all import, export, and transit related regulatory requirements, within a single entry point.



The single window is a trade facilitative measure, that allows for the submission of data through a single portal, submitted once in a standardized format, relating to goods which can be accepted and processed by all relevant border control agents. Although a

modern ICT system is recommended and yields greater efficiencies, this does not preclude operation of the single window in a manual environment. If goods examination is deemed necessary, then a coordinated physical inspection would occur through the relevant border control agencies, enhancing the single window concept. Jamaica has embraced the single window concept, which will yield greater efficiency with the full implementation of ASYCUDA and PCS. Both systems will play a significant role in an effective and efficient Single Window, as automation and information exchanges will greater enhance Customs clearance processes.

Customs Data (ASYCUDA) World. Implementation of ASYCUDA World began in December 2014 with pilot entities, and should see completion during 2016. ASYCUDA is in keeping with the strategic objectives of the Government of Jamaica, to improve trade facilitation and service delivery of the JCA, as well as relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). ASYCUDA facilitates real time data transfer between the JCA and key MDAs such as the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), and the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce (MIIC), thereby enhancing cooperation and coordination among government entities. ASYCUDA is integral to reform and modernization initiatives by the JCA. It features online applications and automated Customs processing, which strengthens risk management, and serves to simplify and standardize procedures for both Customs and traders. Benefits include reduced processing times, reduced errors, more accurate and consistent tax calculations, and increased revenue collection through greater accountability and enhanced control systems. A Port Community System (PCS) initiated under the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ), is currently underway, with capabilities to electronically link processes between Customs and the PAJ. PCS is a neutral and open electronic platform enabling intelligent and secure information exchange between public and private stakeholders, with the objectives of improving the competitive position of the sea and airports.

Electronic Exchange of Information

The electronic exchange of information between Customs administrations can facilitate legitimate trade and improve border crossings. This is a significant tool that supports risk assessment at the international level and facilitates border controls, relating to transit operations. Ultimately, legitimate trade will be further facilitated, resulting in greater cost reductions in the trading process.

Exchange of electronic information between Customs and the business community also yields significant gains, through the use of internationally standardized processes. Turn around times of Customs to business processes will be greatly reduced, creating greater ease in doing business, which will encourage greater compliance from traders.

The exchange of electronic information in both Customs to Customs and Customs to Business interactions, fosters greater cooperation among the global Customs community, and improves compliance and cooperation between Customs and the business community, leading to greater efficiencies.



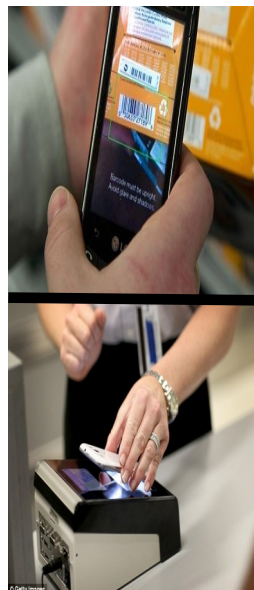


Websites to Communicate Information and Promote Transparency

Websites are one of the most effective modern day tools that is used by Customs administrations worldwide for information dissemination. By granting users access to information, Customs is able to communicate efficiently, while promoting transparency of Customs procedures which also serves to strengthen the organization’s integrity. Through this medium Customs is able to communicate with its employees, the general public, traders and their authorized representatives. Websites are constantly developing and allows for real time exchanges, especially in the area of customer service, where users can have live interfaces with Customs personnel. Such access to accurate information facilitates compliance among traders, that increases revenue collection and sustainable development. Customs administrations are also recognizing the benefits of having a strong presence on social media platforms, which can be used as a strategic tool for greater information dissemination and enhanced reach amongst various demographics.

Use of Smart Phones

Due to the rapid rate of innovations in mobile technology, smart phones have become an indispensable tool used by Customs officials to facilitate trade and secure the borders, in more modernized environments. Travelers as well as traders may now benefit from the conveniences afforded by the use of smart phones to aid in faster clearance times for both people and commodities. In more advanced environments, smart phones are used by passengers to prepare and submit Customs declarations, through an approved mobile application prior to arriving at their destination. This electronic submission allows for expedited clearance and facilitates travelers that have close flight connections.



Smart phones are also used as verification tools by Customs officials, where barcodes can be scanned to determine the authenticity of goods being traded by authorized personnel. Intellectual property rights (IPR) infringing goods can be more easily detected in such circumstances, through the use of smart phones by Customs officials, who once registered, can access the WCO Intellectual Property Management (IPM), which is the only global anti-counterfeiting platform. Among other services, Customs officials can access product specific analytical data on IPM, which can be transmitted in the real time to officers on the ground. It also facilitates direct access to rights holders who can also validate the authenticity of their products.

Digitalization Initiatives of the Jamaica Customs Agency:

Automated Customs clearance systems:

ASYCUDA World

- Jamaica Electronic Trade System (JETS)

The Single Window concept:

One Stop Shop

- Norman Manley International Airport
- Kingston Container Terminal



Electronic Exchange of Information:

The Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) -
 Electronic exchanges between Customs and AEOs.

Websites to communicate information and promote transparency:

- JCA Website** - serving external and internal stakeholders.
- JCA Intranet** - serving internal stakeholders.

The Use of Smart Phones.

ASYCUDA Track and Trace - ASYCUDA allows for declaration tracking, and bill of lading tracking via smart phones.

CUSTOMS WEEK EVENTS

“Digital Customs – Progressive Engagement”
January 24-29, 2016

Church Services

Sunday, January 24th

Bethel Baptist Church, 6 Hope Road, Kingston 10: 10: 15 a.m.
Calvary Baptist Church, Corinaldi Ave, Montego Bay, St. James: 10:00 a.m.

Montego Bay Symposium & Outside Broadcast

Monday, January 25th, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Montego Bay Convention Centre, Rose Hall, Montego Bay
Presentations: Charities Act & ASYCUDA World Project, etc.

JCA’s Newspaper Supplement – Gleaner & Observer

Monday, January 25th

Stakeholders Appreciation Day & Outside Broadcast

(International Customs Day)

Tuesday, January 26th, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00p.m.

Kingston: Customs House
Montego Bay: SIA Customs Hall, Container Station (Freeport), Air Cargo
Prizes & Giveaways
Music & Entertainment

“Inside Customs” tour with training institutions

Tuesday, January 26th, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Alison Moore Room Dedication & Official Opening Ceremony

Tuesday, January 26th at 4:30 p.m.

Kingston: Head Office, Court Yard

Montego Bay Lunch Hour Concert

Wednesday, January 27th - To be advised

Customs House

Kingston Symposium

Thursday, January 28th, 12:00 noon – 4:00p.m.

Knutsford Court Hotel, New Kingston

Presentations: Charities Act & ASYCUDA World Project, etc.

Kingston & Montego Bay host “Vibes Day”

Friday, January 29th, 4:00 pm – Until ...

Games Competition

Music & Entertainment



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Country Above Self

The International and Industry Liaison Unit is committed to raising the level of awareness on topics relating to the Caribbean Community, as well as issues concerning the wider topic of international trade, to both our internal and external stakeholders. Our monthly newsletter seeks to highlight global trade topics and their importance to Customs Administrations worldwide and specifically how they affect the Jamaica Customs Agency. As we realize our vision of becoming a modern Customs administration delivering excellent service, we recognize the importance of knowledge transfer in delivering our objectives and use this forum as our way of contributing to the vision of the JCA. The International Liaison Unit is located at the Myers Wharf head office and our officers are available to respond to your queries and clarify any points of concern.

We're on the Web!
<http://www.jacustoms.gov.jm>

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