
2022 INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS DAY
26th January 2022

The 26th of January every year is earmarked by all members of the World Customs Organization (WCO) for the Customs administrations around the world to commemorate as ***International Customs Day***; a special day that is committed to celebrate the work and role of Customs administrations in the World and in each member's country.

Every year a theme of the commemoration is provided by the World Customs Organisation, depicting the emphasis for celebration; and the assigned theme for this year's commemoration is "***Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem***". In supporting the theme, WCO has highlighted three ways in which Customs can give new impetus to its digital transformation:

1. Building a Customs Data Ecosystem based on trust;
2. Embracing a data culture by bridging the human resource gap; and
3. Fostering a collaborative culture among Customs administrations and its stakeholders

In view of this year's commemoration, Samoa Ministry of Customs & Revenue's program was set and started from Monday 17th January 2022 up to the set date on 26th January 2022. We placed our priority this year on our Customs Asycuda World system, as this is the core data element of our work. This is the system in which Customs operates day in, day out to carry out our core functions. From the record of cargo which entered into, transit through and exported from our borders, to the assessment of duties, taxes and fees for import and exports, the release of cargo through to the accounting of all such cargo. The program featured refresher and awareness sessions for our staff on our key standard operating processes and most importantly, a session for our key stakeholders as they are the key inputters of all data which comes through the ASYCUDA system for Customs purposes. Unfortunately, the finale of our commemoration program to be held this week especially today was cancelled due to our national lockdown due to reasons known to all.

Our Ministry has had in the last three years worked together with our importers and agents in our Self Assessment and Authorized Economic Operator program (SAAEO). Although the lockdown this week has halted the final step, the accreditation of this program, we still wish to recognize the efforts and support of the five selected companies which were supposed to be fully accredited Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) today. The program for this year also included as part of our collaboration efforts, an opportunity to meet with our key agencies that we share information with in combating illicit and fraudulent trade, in view to further enhance and discuss means in which we can effectively share and use our information to boost our collective roles in border protection and trade facilitation.

We are grateful to all our customers and stakeholders, both in the private and the public sectors, for the support and cooperation extended to our Ministry every day throughout our journey every year which had enable us to meet our assigned responsibilities by the government for all citizens of Samoa, which are to collect revenues from taxes, duties and licenses; facilitate trade at the borders; and provide customs assurance and protections against imported illicit, prohibited and dangerous goods and people from entering Samoa through our borders. We hope we have met your expectations and have been good providers

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of all related services. And with our earnest prayers, we continue to request for your satisfactory compliance as to enable our relationship to work well and our economy to flourish as a result of our partnership. We also thank our government for the annual funds approved every financial year to commemorate this important day and we will, but not promise, to bring more positive returns of your investment in our staff and resources, especially our Customs services which is the focus of today. We look forward to working together with you for a Secure and Prosperous Samoa throughout 2022 through digital transformation of our services.

As a Ministry, we wish all our Customs colleagues a “Happy International Customs Day”.

Stay safe and God Bless!!

Matafeo Avalisa Viali-Fautua'alii
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER