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Workshop on enhanced IT interconnectivity in Africa

Participants from AU countries with the Director General of MRA and the WCO resource person

The Commission of the African Union held its 6th Technical Working Group Meeting on interconnectivity of Computerised Customs I.T. Systems in Africa from 12 to 14 June 2019 at the seat of WCO-ESA Regional Training centre, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Custom House, Mer Rouge. This meeting was a follow-up to the fifth workshop held from 19 to 21 June 2018 in Dakar, Senegal. It was equally recommended by the Directors General of Customs Administrations during the 10th Ordinary Session held in Moroni, Comoros in September 2018. They also proposed that member states adopt the WCO Globally Networked Customs (GNC) concept to allow interconnectivity and data exchange, as well as the WCO Data Model to allow harmonization of data elements.

The Seychelles Revenue Commission uses the IT platform, ASYCUDA (Automated System for Customs Data), as compared to CMS (Customs Management System) used by the Mauritius Revenue Authority, thereby making it difficult for exchange of information. Hence, the aim of this workshop was to bring representatives of Customs Administration within the African Union

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to reflect, share ideas and elaborate on the way forward for the mapping of Data Elements so that African Union Member States can benefit from interconnectivity in a harmonised and coordinated manner.

Mr Sudhamo Lal, Director General of the MRA, highlighted the need for interconnectivity in line with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement officially in force on the 30th of May 2019.

Mr. Iboura Moussa, Head of Customs Cooperation Division, Department of Trade and Industry, African Union Commission, laid emphasis on the harmonisation of data by customs administrations among member states, in line with the model of the World Customs Organisation to enable exchange of electronic data.

According to the participants, the workshop was a highly fruitful one. They emphasized that African countries, members of the African Union, can benefit from the expertise of Mauritius. It makes no doubt that the use of ICT by Customs will reduce duplicative processes and that data capture will help increase efficiency of Customs administrations within the African Union, they affirmed.

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