



## PRESS RELEASE

### THE 8<sup>th</sup> ASEM CUSTOMS PROCEDURES WORKING GROUP MEETING

Singapore hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Customs Procedures Working Group (PWG) on 27-28 April 2005 at the Pan Pacific Hotel, under the chairmanship of Ms Teo Siew Lan, Assistant-Director General (Controls) of Singapore Customs. The meeting was attended by Customs officials from 21 Asian and European countries and regions – *Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, China, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Vietnam, the United Kingdom and the European Commission* – to exchange ideas and experience on topics related to trade facilitation, and harmonisation and simplification of customs procedures.

2 The 8<sup>th</sup> ASEM Customs PWG Meeting endorsed the Trade Facilitation Action Plan (TFAP) 2004-2006 that provides the framework of priorities for customs procedures. The TFAP aims to reduce non-tariff barriers, increase transparency and promote trade opportunities between Asia and Europe.

3 The Meeting also acknowledged the importance of harnessing Information Technology to facilitate trade flow and reduce business costs, and recognised the value of developing the “Single Window” as a means to enhance the efficiency of documents submission for imports and exports. Noting that time and certainty are essential in the clearance of goods, the Meeting agreed on the usefulness of conducting “Time Release Survey” to identify problems and bottlenecks in Customs procedures.

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