



**OPENING REMARKS**  
**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION, MR**  
**KUNIO MIKURIYA, TO THE JOINT CONFERENCE ON ENHANCING AIR**  
**CARGO SECURITY AND FACILITATION**

(Singapore, 5 July 2012)

Why is Customs involved in air cargo security? WCO's mission is to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of Customs more concretely by setting standards, promoting international co-operation and, providing capacity building assistance. Traditionally, Customs' role has been revenue collection, fighting against illicit trade and trade facilitation.

Following the 2001 terrorist attacks in US, Customs' mission evolved to include trade security. As a response, the WCO developed SAFE Framework of Standards to facilitate and secure global supply chain – in cooperation with other relevant international organisations, including the ICAO and IMO which had already developed ISPS code for security of ships and maritime ports.

Initially, we had more focus on maritime security but the 2010 air cargo incident, where Yemen air cargo packages to US involving explosives were intercepted in UK and Dubai, made us turn our focus on air cargo security. While air cargo security is primarily the responsibility of aviation regulators, the WCO discussed internally and agreed that in the same manner as maritime trade, Customs can provide help in enhancing security as we have knowledge of trade and traders.

In 2011, at the WCO Council Session, we invited the ICAO Secretary-General, US DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano and her counterpart Commissioner Semeta from the European Commissioner, as well as the President of UPS International from the private sector, showing cooperation among States, International Organisations and businesses. This was intended to

send a strong message to the international community that aviation authorities and Customs can work together to enhance air cargo security and facilitation. From there, the WCO and ICAO started joint experts meetings in Brussels and Montreal. While SAFE is a framework of standards for multi-modal transport system, consist of Customs-to-Customs cooperation and Customs-to-Business partnership as the two major pillars, partnership between Customs and other agencies is also recognised essential – in the content of this Conference, with the aviation regulators. As business partnership is important, the WCO also invites experts from industry for the experts meeting, e.g. IATA, GEA and another international organisation, UPU, due to the huge amount of small consignments by air transport.

Since then, the WCO has been making progress, especially in the two areas which ICAO Secretary-General has just mentioned. One, sharing of advance information and data – this could be useful for assessing the risk of air cargo, for both Customs and aviation regulators. Two, seeking synergy between the ICAO's air cargo programme and the WCO's AEO programme.

The WCO has continued to work on trade security and facilitation. Last week, the WCO Council Session:

- Noted on progress made together with ICAO.
- Witnessed the conclusion of MRA between Singapore and China on AEO programmes as an example of Customs-to-Customs co-operation.
- Agreed to work on emerging and evolving risks including, reviewing tools and programmes with partner administrations and international organisations like ICAO.
- Launched of the Economic Competiveness Package to show Customs' contribution to economic development, in face of economic difficulties worldwide, including Customs-Business Partnership and enhancing co-ordination among agencies in border management. And of course, security is part of competitiveness.

This Conference provides a platform for strengthening the efforts by the ICAO and WCO which should be supported and implemented at national level. I would like to encourage dialogue, understanding of each other, and cooperative ties among different players, including aviation regulators, Customs and businesses, for the benefit of better world. Finally, I thank Singapore for hosting this important forum.