



CAPACITY BUILDING
DIRECTORATE

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Conference on Partnership in
Customs Academic Research and
Development

Brussels, 25 April 2006.

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE
ON PARTNERSHIP IN CUSTOMS ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

(1 – 3 March 2006)

1. The Conference on Partnership in Customs Academic Research and Development was held at WCO Headquarters from 1 to 3 March 2006. Ninety delegates attended, representing Universities, Research establishments, Training managers, Planning managers and the private sector.
2. In the opening speech, *Mr. Kunio Mikuriya*, Deputy Secretary General of the WCO, invited the delegates to explore the potential for research in Customs and expressed the hope that it would herald the start of long mutually beneficial relationships. He said that the need for Customs to modernize its procedures and organization and improve its efficiency implied a need for professional development for customs officers as well. He wished all participants a productive session that will potentially shape the future agenda of the WCO.
3. *Mr. Lars Karlsson*, Director Capacity Building for the WCO, announced that this new WCO initiative would be known as the PICARD programme and that it was one of the key pillars of the WCO Capacity building policy. He also introduced the Columbus, Integrity and the E-learning programmes. He expressed his conviction that the PICARD programme would become a major programme in modernizing Customs worldwide.
4. Mr. Karlsson said that the administration of Customs demands broad domain knowledge including the trade and economic environment; logistics; compliance management; domestic and international laws; technical matters such

as valuation and origin; and how to negotiate the pathways of their own government framework. He added that managers need to be capable in managing a regulatory environment, financial and human resources, and change and project management.

5. He asked the Conference to consider the scope for international standards of recognition for professional and vocational knowledge and skills in the field of Customs. He also delegates to look at common standards; how to create avenues for Customs and private sector officials to have their knowledge and expertise developed and recognised; and to set standards for administrations to use in recruitment and development.

6. *Mr. Jan Janson*, chairperson of the conference, explained the programme and outlined the goals of the Conference :

- To provide a forum for the constructive exchange of ideas that will advance academic research and professionalism in the Customs domain.
- To bring together and emphasize the link between Customs and academic research institutions.
- To guide future WCO policy on its engagement in the field of academic research and the professionalism of Customs.
- To further formalize the partnership between the WCO and the academic research world.
- To facilitate the establishment of a global network of academic research establishments that support Customs.

7. The Conference was divided into two themes. The first was to examine existing and current research in the field of Customs and to explore how the institutions and the WCO could play a role in further development. The second was to examine the need for professionalisation in Customs, in particular, how the field of Customs could be developed as a specialized area of study and how course recognition and accreditation could be standardized and accepted internationally.

Research

8. The first speaker, *Mr. Juha Hintsa*, of the Cross-Border Research Association & HEC University of Lausanne (CBRA), presented the research being done by CBRA about supply chain, border and port security. His presentation included CBRA analysis work completed on comparing supply chain security management programs and standards. He presented a summary of recent scientific papers, whitepapers and technical reports and the result of an international survey of Customs, other Government agencies, traders, shippers, logistics operators, Customs brokers and academic research institutions. He also presented a list of 10 suggested research topics for consideration.

9. On the subject of the creation of a Customs Research Journal, *Mr. Hintsa* presented issues and parameters for discussion around two possibilities, a Customs practitioner journal, marketed through the WCO, and a scientific journal aimed at academia and published electronically.

10. *Ms. Julia Maren*, of the Münster University in Germany, spoke about her research done in the area of legislation. She raised three questions about Authorised Economic Operator concept in the EU. The first was about common criteria and harmonised requirements; the second was about cooperation between Customs authorities; and thirdly, was the AEO contribution to international supply chain security.
11. *Mr. Rey Koslowski*, of the University at Albany and State University of New York (SUNY), made a presentation on securing global flows of cargo and people. He mentioned that the 9/11 attacks have painfully revealed the growing risk of terrorist attacks using global transportation networks. He said that US graduate educational programs in engineering and business are yet to systematically include security topics in their curricula. He then described the IGERT program, which supports regional, national and international participants (both academic and industrial) to conduct multi-disciplinary research and fund the education and training of PhD students in the area of Homeland Security. The program focusses on two key themes : securing cargo flows and securing people flows. It is intended to deliver research and education in the three components of the Homeland Security framework : public security policy, science & technology, and modeling & evaluation of field operations, to provide feedback to both policy makers and technologists.
12. *Dr. Kenneth Wilson*, of the Zayed University, UAE, on behalf of himself and *Dr. Donald Feaver*, of the Queensland University of Technology, Australia, presented a topic entitled “If institutions matter what is the economic benefit of Customs ? ”
13. The presentation covered deregulation and market integration; the future of the World Customs Organization; and the drivers of income growth and economic prosperity. *Dr. Wilson* reported on the research done on linking trade openness, trade policy openness, social infrastructure and income growth together with the role of Customs. He said that Customs authorities are positioned at the point where domestic and international markets intersect and have an important role in trade policy openness and trade facilitation as well as managing the regulatory environment and maintaining market integrity. He said that there was a need for a subtle but powerful shift from trade facilitation to market facilitation and integrity. Regulatory failure may contribute to economic suffocation under circumstances where ineffectual regulation or more frequently, over-regulation, functions as a disincentive to economic activity, innovation and entrepreneurial risk-taking.
14. He said that the WCO has the potential to make a crucial contribution towards fostering and supporting global network stability by :
- Avoiding regulatory failure
 - Helping to create regulatory harmonization between domestic commercial policy and international trade openness policy.

15. In summary *Dr. Wilson* said that there are two important channels of income growth : openness-income growth; and social infrastructure-income growth and that they provide the best theoretical framework and empirical methodology for the 'new' economic case for Customs Authorities and the WCO. He said that Customs Authorities have a role to play as part of the trade openness policy process and the regulatory environment of any individual country, and that the WCO has a role to play in maintaining global standards and realizing network benefits. Together, Customs Authorities and the WCO have a role to play in integrating and harmonizing competition and trade policy.
16. *Dr. David Widdowson*, of the University of Canberra, Australia, presented research activities based on the risk-management concept and some emerging issues. He asserted that in a rapidly changing world of new and emerging technologies, heightened commercial imperatives, and changing social expectations, governments are committed to providing the international trading community with increased levels of trade facilitation.
17. Achievement of the international trade facilitation agenda is heavily dependent upon the ability of Customs to raise "the portcullis", as the traditional symbol of Customs, to the extent that an appropriate balance is achieved between trade facilitation and regulatory intervention. Whilst in most cases the ability to do so is directly within the control of Customs, in other cases it is not. It is therefore incumbent upon Customs administrations and the WCO to lobby for international agreements which support global trade facilitation through the ongoing harmonisation and simplification of regulatory procedures.
18. *Mr. Paul Brenton*, of the International Trade Department of the World Bank, explained the Bank's interests and activities in the field of Customs. He said that the World Bank was occupied in research, advocacy, advice and lending. The Bank's interest in Customs and trade facilitation related to key trends in trade that will shape their work and the work of Customs. A key theme in his presentation related to Regional Trade Agreements, which, he said, are proliferating very fast. He said that they could offer a mechanism to deal with cross-border issues, like Customs simplifications and trade cooperation. He concluded that there would be an increasing emphasis on Customs as a border management institution, to facilitate timely and secure trade, and that trade facilitation would remain an essential element of World Bank's agenda.
19. *Dr. Donald Feaver*, of the Queensland University of Technology, on behalf of himself and *Dr. Kenneth Wilson*, presented an overview of the "Regulatory Implications of Trade Agreement Obligations". He said that whilst the effects of trade agreements are usually estimated using general equilibrium analyses to determine the economic effects, the regulatory impact of trade agreements upon regulatory authorities that administer TA terms is rarely undertaken.
20. He concluded that there is little research available about the impact of trade instruments. In the research agenda he showed the participants of the

conference some ideas about analysing the institutional impacts of trade instruments :

- Trade flow effects : growth, trade facilitation, secure trade
- Institutional impacts : organizational frameworks, adjustment demands
- Regulatory demands : harmonization, mutual recognition, legislative frameworks
- Administrative requirements : organizational adjustments, human resource requirements, physical infrastructure.

21. *Mr. Joe Kelly*, of the Capacity Building Directorate, presented the results of a WCO survey of members and interested parties on the topics for a research agenda. The survey included the views of 37 Member Customs administrations representing all of the six WCO regions, as well as those expressed by trade representatives at meetings with the WCO and the commercial development sector. The high priority subjects identified were research on supply chain security, costs of compliance, measuring Customs performance and successful integrity management.

22. From the survey results and the research presented by earlier speakers, the following list of research topics has been identified :

- The social and economic value of Customs
- Measuring Customs Performance
- Impact on economies of Customs instruments
- The role of Customs in trade related negotiation
- Trade policies
- The global trade agenda
- Analyzing the institutional impacts of trade instruments
 - Trade flow effects : growth, trade facilitation, trade security
 - Institutional impacts : organizational frameworks, adjustment demands
 - Regulatory demands : harmonization, mutual recognition, legislative frameworks
 - Administrative requirements : organizational adjustments, human resource requirements, physical infrastructure.
- Regionalism
- Structures and benefits of regional bodies
- Benefits weaknesses and challenges of Regional trade agreements
- Trade developments in the next 10-25 Years
- Supply Chain Security - What is it ? Why develop it ?
- Costs of Compliance with the Security Agenda
- Identifying efficient security measures and standards
- Security legal systems
- Finding the right balance between security and facilitation
- Identifying benefits of security measures and standards
- Defining common security standards
- Developing and testing new security technologies
- Developing business – customs relationships
- Compliance management

- Risk reduction/prevention
- Capacity Building strategies
- Successful integrity management and development strategies
- Integration of Customs services comparative strategies
- E-Customs
- Intellectual Property Rights

23. These topics as an ideal starting point for WCO and the institutions to identify priorities for meeting the needs of Customs practioners as well as academic researchers.
24. The chairperson introduced the agenda item on the potential need of an academic journal. Discussion was led by a panel consisting of *Dr. Kenneth Wilson, Dr. Juha Hintsa* and *Dr. Michael Wolfgang*.
25. The key issues made during the presentations are summarised as follows :
- There is no international academic journal so far that fundamentally deals with customs topics
 - There are some customs topics found in different journals; but they are marginal topics
 - There is lack of a scientific platform
 - Customs Topics are multi-dimensional
 - Politics
 - Law
 - Economics
 - Organization
 - Administration
 - Every country is involved in customs topics
 - Budget
 - Security and Safety
 - Free Trade v. Protectionism
 - Trade Facilitation
26. In all presentations the need of a common journal were expressed. Conseqently issues as how to get there (based on an academic level with a scientific investigation approach) were :
- Independence and peer review
 - How to distribute it (electronically or on paper or both),
 - Language, frequency of publication,
 - How to finance it (by subsription or free access by advertismnt)
 - the role of WCO was also touched upon.
27. Some concerns were expressed regarding the term “Academic” journal and the impact that might have in respect of readers and the need to further investigate the potential interest a journal would have in terms of readers.

28. Based on all the presentations on Customs research, the delegates were split up into three groups to discuss the way forward and identify the respective roles for the WCO and the universities roles; and mechanisms that would be needed.

Role for WCO

- Facilitator
- Location for knowledge sharing
- Promotion of the importance of research
- Add value through members' experience/research

Role of University/Institutions

- Manage the Customs Research Journal
- Add academic rigor to the experiences and lessons learned

Mechanisms

- Formalised knowledge sharing forum (events like the PICARD Conference)
- Information Base – consolidation of existing material
- Use of the WCO website/magazine to provide a customs-centric viewpoint on the research

Professionalization

29. *Mr. Lars Karlsson*, Director Capacity Building for the WCO, introduced the topic in which he underscored the need for a professional customs with multi-skilled officers in conjunction with common standards.
30. Presentations were made by *Ms. Jennifer McGlennon* of the Zayed University, UAE, *Dr. David Widdowson* of the University of Canberra, Australia, and *Dr. Ivars Krastins* of the Riga Technical University, Latvia.
31. The presentations identified the need for multi-skilled capability and expertise of customs officers with the perception ability to see their role in the national, regional and international context. Discussion was centered on setting professional rather than academic standards.
32. *Ms. McGlennon* suggested that the WCO and the Customs sector generally should pursue a professional standing by :
- Actively engaging the interest and attention of all international stakeholders
 - Demonstrating business relevance and value added to all stakeholders
 - Bringing global best practice frameworks and initiatives into the organization and promoting reform and change internationally

- Developing and maintaining advice and support mechanisms at the International, Regional and Country level with Ministries of Trade, Finance, Economy, etc.
 - Legitimizing, validating and promoting Professional Standards at an international level
 - Developing Customs staff via education and professional development
33. She also suggested that this goal could be supported by high quality independent research findings, statistical modeling, consulting and business services and especially through strong University partnerships.
34. *Dr. Widdowson* presented detailed information about educational curriculum development in Kenya Revenue Authority, and *Dr. Krastins* reported on professionalization of the Latvian Customs through the Riga Technical University programmes.
35. *Mr. Marc Declunder* of the WCO Secretariat presented the WCO's E-Learning Programme. Delegates showed great interest in both the coverage and the quality of the programme material. Universities expressed an desire to explore ways in which the E-Learning Programme could be further exploited in conjunction with their existing curricula.
36. Based on all the presentations on Customs professionalization, the delegates were again split up into three groups to discuss the way forward and identify the respective roles for the WCO and the universities; and mechanisms that would be needed.

Role for WCO

- Set standards and competencies
- Provide WCO recognition and status
- Enable an International/Regional/National approach
- Act as a facilitator and knowledge sharing center

Role of University/Institutions

- Assist with assessment/delivery
- Promote co-operation and inclusive, open dialogue
- Research the expectations of business community
- Research customs officer competencies.

Mechanisms

- Formalised through high level forum leading to strategy development
- A plan and schedule of activities as a product of the Conference
- A bench-marking/analysis exercise

Next Steps

- Formalise roles and publicise to stakeholders
- Regular meeting of forum
- Consolidation of current information
- Dedicated section on website/magazine

Conclusions

37. The academic world recognized that there is a large gap in the market for research into Customs and border management, and will now organize themselves to look at this work and its broader economic implications.
38. The group was keen to establish a research journal for Customs matters and to increase access to Customs for research purposes. Universities agreed to initiate a journal through their newly established network. The WCO was encouraged to use media such as the WCO Website and the WCO News to publish research material.
39. A number of universities took the opportunity to explain their own development programmes. This information will help in the development of generic curriculum standards.
40. The Conference concluded that co-operation was vital and that the WCO should continue its activities in this respect. All felt that the Conference had been a positive opportunity to get together and address an important new area of development. There was general consensus by delegates that another conference should be held next year in Brussels.
41. Conference delegates are looking to the WCO to play a central role in setting standards for professional development in Customs and devising mechanisms for validation and evaluation.

The Way Forward

42. A full report of the Conference will be circulated to all WCO members and presented at the High-Level Working Group in May 2006.
43. A paper will be developed for the WCO Council in June reporting on work so far and seeking approval to establish a research programme, develop professional standards, and promote WCO e-learning as a composite part of accredited Customs education. Recommendations will include :
- Development of a detailed work plan
 - Creating an area on website where academics and practitioners can post and access research results and materials; how to engage in research; areas for research; and how to get involved with existing research projects.
 - Further development of the PICARD programme using both Customs and academic networks to inform people what we are doing

- Setting up a body which would recognize professional standards
44. A follow-up Conference in 2006/2007 would be considered in the light of these developments.

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Agenda

Conference
on Partnership in Customs Academic Research
and Development

1 – 3 March 2006

DAY 1

Opening by Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, Deputy Secretary General, WCO

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The PICARD Programme in the context of Customs Capacity Building by Lars Karlsson, Director, Capacity Building Directorate

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Day One of the Conference provides an opportunity to identify the research opportunities in the Customs environment. Though a series of presentations and group discussions the Conference will examine the current research available in 5 key Customs areas, identify gaps and make proposals for future research projects.

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Speakers on the current scope and status of research projects are :

1. Security :

- Impact on the supply chain
- Border security
- Ports

Juha Hintsu

*HEC University of Lausanne,
Switzerland & Cross-Border
Research Association*

2. The value of Customs

- Economic benefits
- Social benefits
- Security

Kenneth Wilson

Zayed University

3. Compliance management

- Regulatory control : the balance
between facilitation and intervention

David Widdowson

University of Canberra

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| 4. Trade development in the next 10-25 years
- What is the environment in which border management must operate ?
- How must Customs adapt ? | Paul Brenton
<i>World Bank</i> |
| 5. International trade agreements | Donald Feaver
<i>Queenstand Univerisity of Technology</i> |
| 6. WCO Member survey on research needs | Joe Kelly
<i>WCO Secretariat</i> |

DAY 2

Research (continued)

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| 7. Setting the research agenda and the establishment of an academic journal | Kenneth Wilson
<i>Zayed University</i>
Juha Hintsa
<i>HEC University of Lausanne, Switzerland & Cross-border Research Association</i>
Michael Wolfgang
<i>University of Münster</i> |
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Breakout Groups and Group Discussion

The Professionalization of Customs

Through a series of presentations and group discussions the Conference will look at the developing professionalism of Customs and the setting of common standards for Customs development. The day should provide clarity regarding the roles of the WCO and the Universities, as well as the opportunities for collaboration and the promotion of academic engagement with Customs administrations.

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| 8. Why a professional Customs ?
The WCO view | Lars Karlsson
<i>WCO Secretariat</i> |
| 9. Regional Perspectives on the role and development of a professional Customs | Jennifer Mc Glennon
<i>Zayed University</i>
Aivars Krastins
<i>Riga Technical University</i>
David Widdowson
<i>University of Canberra</i> |

10. E-learning in development

Christopher Dallimore
University of Münster
Marc Declunder
WCO Secretariat

11. Co-operation mechanisms

- Networking
- Customs
- Bilateral

Aivars Krastins
Riga Technical University

Jan Janson
Riga Technical University

DAY 3

12. Professionalism : the way forward

Breakout Groups and Group Discussion

13. Future development and the role of WCO

Joe Kelly
WCO Secretariat

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