



News



Key customs-related challenges, South-South cooperation opportunities discussed by customs leaders of Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas

4 – 5 April, 2013: Panama City, Panama

Customs heads and representatives of Asia and the Pacific and the Americas convened a partnership dialogue to exchange views and challenges faced by customs administrations, as well as future South-South cooperation opportunities. Representatives agreed

- To cooperate on four priority themes (trade facilitation, trade security, information exchange, and protection of society) through capacity building, experience sharing, and joint undertakings by customs administrations;
- To deepen dialogue between the two regions;
- To discuss follow-up actions and identify concrete joint undertakings that lead to tangible outcomes.

The event was held in cooperation with ADB, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Customs Organization.



SASEC Trade Facilitation Week
25-28 March 2013 - Bangkok, Thailand

SASEC Trade Facilitation Week

25 – 28 March, 2013: Bangkok, Thailand

Senior officials responsible for trade facilitation and customs from the SASEC countries were joined by representatives from the Maldives and Sri Lanka for a 3-day SASEC trade facilitation workshop, and the inception meeting of the SASEC Customs Subgroup. Proceedings and discussion focused on

- Findings and next steps in the ADB-UNESCAP Business Process Analysis study;
- Issues and challenges of trade facilitation in SASEC countries and development of SASEC regional trade facilitation road map;
- Information and experience sharing on customs standards; international best practice on customs administration; a national single electronic window;

SASEC Customs Subgroup terms of reference and Action Plan 2013–2015.



WCO Regional Workshop on Time Release Study
4-8 March 2013 - Tokyo, Japan

SASEC officials attend Time-Release Study Workshop

4 – 8 March, 2013: Tokyo, Japan

39 participants from 23 Asia Pacific region customs administrations attended this Time-Release Study (TRS) Workshop, organized by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and hosted by Japan Customs Cooperation Fund. Eight representatives attended from SASEC member countries. The workshop

- Introduced and discussed TRS concepts and application tools;
- Shared experience in TRS implementation;
- Drafted the process map; and
- Introduced WCO TRS software.

Participants from Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal presented their national customs procedures and process maps.



ADB and Government of Nepal sign SASEC Trade Facilitation Program Agreement

February 2013

Mr. Madhav Kumar Marasini, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance of Nepal, and Mr. Kenichi Yokohama, Country Director, ADB Nepal Resident Mission, signed the \$15 million grant agreement for the program, approved in December 2012. The program aims to increase trade, including intra-regional trade, of SASEC countries through assisting development of more efficient, transparent, secure and service-oriented processing of cross-border trade for Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal. Specific outputs include

- Modern and effective customs administration and/or management;
- Streamlined and transparent trade processes and procedures; and
- Improved services and information for private sector traders and investors.



Trade Facilitation in South Asia: Why, What, How?

26 February, 2013: Asian Development Bank, Manila

At the 115th South Asia Seminar Series held jointly with the ADB's Transport Community of Practice, Anthony Bayley, international trade facilitation expert, presented key issues hindering progress in effective trade facilitation in the SASEC region. Participants were informed about

- Current trade patterns between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal;
- The issues common to SASEC countries in implementing trade facilitation programs, and limited effectiveness of an institutional approach;
- The cost of not improving trade facilitation measures in the SASEC region; and

Potential areas for investment projects and supporting initiatives, including customs modernization, risk management, automation, and capacity building.



'Southern Silk Route Car Rally' revives connectivity: Kolkata to Kunming

22 February – 5 March 2013

After a 60-years hiatus and 7 years of preparation, this 3,000-kilometer rally once again followed the ancient trade routes of the south, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and supported by the Bangladesh - China - India - Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation. CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee noted the common need for improved connectivity in many of the areas the rally passes through, and the huge potential for increased trade in this largely under-developed region. 80 participants from all four countries participated in the rally, hoping to promote commercial land trade routes that have the potential to bring increased development through connectivity.

Recent Events

Date	Event
2013	
4-5 April	Asia-Pacific and Americas: Customs Leaders' Partnership Dialogue, Panama City, Panama
25-28 March	SASEC Trade Facilitation Week, Bangkok, Thailand
25 March	Business Process Analysis Finalization
26 March	Exchange of Experiences on Nonphysical and Non-tariff Barriers to Trade
27 March	Information Sharing on Customs and Standards
28 March	Inception of the Customs Subgroup (closed meeting)
4-8 March	Time Release Study Workshop, Tokyo, Japan
25 January	ADB-WCO ROCBP Planning Retreat, Bangkok, Thailand

2013 SASEC Indicative Calendar of Events

Date	Event
May	
3	SASEC Nodal Officials' Meeting, New Delhi, India
27-31	Regional Knowledge Sharing Workshop on SAFE Framework, Authorized Economic Operators and Authorized Trader Program, Singapore
June	
12	Finalization Workshop on the Asia Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum Report, Kathmandu, Nepal
13-15	Nepal National Trade Facilitation Workshop, Kathmandu, Nepal
August	
13	SASEC Customs Subgroup Meeting, Singapore
14	SASEC Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Groups Meeting, Singapore
15	Visit to Malaysia-Singapore Border Checkpoints and Singapore Port, Singapore
September	
10-11	Meeting of the SASEC Electricity Transmission Utility Forum, Kathmandu, Nepal
12-13	Inception Meeting of SASEC Network of National Energy Efficiency Institutions, Kathmandu, Nepal
16-17	Subregional Workshop on Formation of National Trade Facilitation Committees and Improved Public Private Partnership for Trade Facilitation, Bangkok, Thailand
November	
12	Meeting of the Customs Sub-group of the Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Groups Kathmandu, Nepal
13	Meeting of the Trade Facilitation and Transport Working Groups, Kathmandu, Nepal
14	Meeting of the Energy Working Group, Kathmandu, Nepal
15	Public-Private Sector Workshop on Hydropower Development in Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal
18-22	SASEC Week, ADB HQ, Manila

Publications



Addressing Hard and Soft Infrastructure
Barriers to Trade in South Asia
2013



Kunming Conference Report
2013

more publications <http://sasec.asia/web/index.php/en/knowledge-products/books>

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