

Key Points for Mr. Ram Sharan Chimoria, DG, Customs for the opening speech in Inception Meeting on SASEC Customs Reform and Modernization for Trade Facilitation Program

Date: 25th September 2017 (Monday)

Time: 15:00 - 15:45 (for opening session)

Respected Shanta Raj Subedi, Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Respected Rajan Khanal, Secretary, The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority

Respected Chandra Kumar Chimire, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

Respected Sishir Kumar Dhungana, Revenue Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Mr. Ronald Antinio Butiong, Director, ADB

Joint Secretaries from MOF and MOC

Representative of the Embassy of Japan in Nepal.

Government officials,

Officials from Trade and Industry Organization (FNCCI?, CNI?)

Ladies and gentlemen

Good Afternoon.

1. Today is our celebrating day. This is the celebration for our releasing the fifth Customs Reform and Modernization Strategies and Action Plan for 2017-2021, a blue print of Customs reform, which is being implemented from 16th July 2017. This is also celebrating day for the completion our earlier Customs Trade Facilitation Program and associated Technical Assistance. And this is, most importantly, celebrating day for the launching of SASEC Customs Reform and Modernization for Trade Facilitation Program and associated Technical Assistance and compliance of 1st tranche policy actions. I am very pleased to celebrate for these Customs reform program a mid of four secretaries and dignitaries from ADB, Government of Japan and our colleagues and friends.
2. Customs is always in the forefront in reform for Trade Facilitation. The role of Customs in trade facilitation has emerges even prominent after the WTO TFA Agreement, which is now enter into force from 22 February 2017.
3. A national need assessment study shows that Customs has to play either lead or support role for as many as 33 WTO TFA measures. Nepal also acceded to Revised Kyoto Convention early this year and now preparing to revise its legislation in line with these international instruments.
4. It gives me immense pleasure that the Trade Facilitation Program rests on the provisions of Customs related WTO TFA and RKC Standards. There are 10 policy actions under the 2nd tranche aimed to build a legislative framework, automation and organization development to elevate Customs to international standard.
5. Department of Customs finds it challenging to achieve the success in the program implementation. We are pleased to share that we have already formed five Thematic Task Forces to work on the policy actions and will complete it by 2 years time. The Technical Assistance support from JFPR funding would be an indispensable factor in our implementation process.
6. We have strength also. We have respected Shanta Raj Subedi sir, who possess wealth of knowledge on Customs Reform and Modernization and have always been a driving force. We

have always an opportunity to avail inputs from respected Rajan Khanal sir, who himself is an expert on Customs Reform and Modernization. We have also Respected Sishir Dhungana sir as revenue secretary, who always guide us since the beginning of this program formulation. Ministry of Commerce is the focal in Trade Facilitation and we have respected Changra Ghimire sir leading the Trade Facilitation and showed his strong commitment in our reform program. Let me mention my colleague Mr. Baikuntha Aryal's support in concluding the Program and help complying the 1st tranche. And, no doubt, we have Director Mr. Ronald Butiong and Ms. Sonoko Sunayama to support us at every stage of program implementation with their technical and financial inputs. I extend my heartfelt thanks to respected secretaries, Mr. Butiong and all dignitaries and friends to present here and providing us guidance.

7. With all the above strengths, let me assure you all that Department of Customs will not leave any stone unturned to make this program a success. We will achieve this goal in collaboration with our private sector, FNCCI, CNI and others.
8. Our first and prominent step towards program implementation is the formulation of Work Plan. We have very extensive discussion on the work plan yesterday, and my colleague Mr. Shreekrishna Nepal will provide brief of our development, which will set a roadmap in program implementation. I am confident that the institutional arrangement set up for the program and the work plan would minimize the risk of implementation lag that may likely to pose due to change of leadership.
9. I look forward to be benefitted by Mr. Toya Narayan Gwawali, Mr. Butiong, Ms. Sonoko and Mr. Dahal presentation at latter stage of today's program. I request you all for your active participation in the session after tea break.
10. Last but not the least, I would like to express my thanks to Government of Japan for their continuous support by providing US\$1 million for this program support and channeling financial and technical support in Customs reform through WCO and other avenues.

Thank you,
25th September 2017