

Concluding Remarks

**Ms. Noy Siackhachanh
Director, Governance, Finance, and Trade Division
East and Central Asia Department
Asian Development Bank**

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Distinguished Members of the Customs Cooperation Committee,
Country Delegates,
Honored Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Fist of all, let me thank you for all your excellent presentations, valuable discussions, and active participation at each session. I am grateful to our co-host, the Customs General Administration of Mongolia, for their superb organization and warm hospitality to the participants at this meeting as well as for providing a magnificent dinner and presentation of Mongolian music and dance. My special thanks also to Director General Baatar for co-chairing this session and for sharing Mongolia's trade facilitation experience in the consultation forum yesterday. I would also like to commend the Delegation Heads for their excellent chairmanship of the sessions. I am grateful to the Honorable Norov Altankhuyag, Finance Minister of Mongolia for opening the meeting with a clear and inspiring talk.

I would also like to thank our eminent speakers, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, Deputy Secretary General of the WCO and Dr. Sathit Limpongpan, Director-General of the Thai Customs Department for their willingness to share their knowledge and experiences with us. The information that you have provided is extremely helpful to the Program. I would like to thank our development partner, Mr. Michel Zarnowiecki from the World Bank who traveled so far to be with us in this meeting. My thanks also to all the hard-working and dedicated secretariat, local and Manila-based, most specially to Mr. Jeffrey Liang, for making these meetings possible. I also express thanks to the ADB Mongolia

Resident Mission headed by Mr. Barry Hitchcock, for excellent support in organizing this meeting.

As I said in detail in my opening remarks, the Program has achieved a great deal in laying the groundwork for positive actions in the future. Through all the sessions, the need to collaborate with strong resolution has been emphasized. We saw in the deliberations last Wednesday the fundamental need for closer coordination in order to successfully harmonize customs documents and establish joint border control, one stop service, and a unified automated information space. We saw in the presentations of Mr. Mikuriya and Dr. Limpongpan that new perspectives on the role of Customs require new ways to overcome the challenges. A bilateral approach is the best way to move forward and address the issues in the most efficient manner, particularly the legal and commercial issues in establishing single electronic window. In all these efforts, strengthening human resource capacity is crucial.

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

The Program has done a lot of substantial work which could provide the basis for future actions. We have witnessed the widespread support provided by the participating countries for the current proposals to broaden the Program's trade facilitation efforts. Close cooperation, action and implementation of the following initiatives are strongly encouraged:

- i. PRC and Kazakhstan Customs' harmonization of cargo manifest and mutual recognition of customs seals
- ii. Uzbekistan's proposal for data exchange and pilot testing with Kyrgyz
- iii. Kyrgyz and Tajikistan's initiative to create a single information space
- iv. Expansion of joint customs control in the borders of Kyrgyz and Kazakhstan; and Mongolia and PRC

ADB, your Secretariat stands ready to support your initiatives and cooperation efforts. We believe that bilateral initiatives can catalyze your closer integration

into the multilateral trading system; allowing you to benefit from the advantages that this would bring.

I look forward to the participating countries' making progress on these bilateral initiatives.

Thank you very much.