

Head-notes to speeches by Mr. A.R. Karimov, Deputy Head of the Customs Control Department, Customs Service under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, at CAREC workshops on: (i) Joint customs control; (ii) Training needs assessment; and (iii) Corridor performance measurement and monitoring.

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Dear ladies and gentlemen, colleagues!

I would like to thank organizers of this meeting, Asian Development Bank and Chief Customs Administration of People's Republic of China for the invitation and opportunity to participate in the CAREC workshops on (i) Joint customs control; (ii) Training needs assessment; and (iii) Corridors performance measurement and monitoring.

The Republic of Tajikistan lays special emphasis on the economic and customs cooperation within the Central Asian region, as a factor of rapprochement and interaction of customs and information systems and their effective use for development of regional trade.

As a result of comprehensive measures on liberalization of foreign trade and minimization of non-tariff barriers foreign trade turnover of the Republic of Tajikistan is dynamically increasing from year to year.

It should be noted that trade with Central Asian countries make about two thirds of the total volume of foreign trade of the Republic of Tajikistan.

In order to develop trade in Tajikistan legislation on foreign trade, customs policy and technical standards is being actively harmonized with internationally accepted standards and rules.

All the above mentioned help towards our country's joining the world trade system, search of optimal ways of development of regional trade and cooperation.

There is good experience of multilateral and bilateral cooperation, including those on customs relations within the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation.

Thus, the Republic of Tajikistan signed bilateral inter-governmental agreements:

With the Republic of Azerbaijan

On cooperation and Mutual Aid in Customs Matters, of August 3, 2007,

With the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

- On the State Border Crossing Points, of April 27, 2005;

- On Transit Movement of Goods and Passengers, of April 27, 2005,

With Republic of Kazakhstan

-On Cooperation and Mutual Aid in Customs Matters, of December 16, 1999,

With People's Republic of China

- On the State Border Crossing Point and its Operating Regime;
- On International Road Transportation, of August 27, 2008,

With the Kyrgyz Republic

- On Transit Movement of Goods by Motor Vehicles, of July 22, 2005;
- On the State Border Crossing Points and their Operating Regime, of May 26, 2004,

With Republic of Uzbekistan

- On the State Border Crossing Points and their Operating Regime, of February 12, 2002.

Currently agreements on cooperation and mutual aid in customs matters with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and People's Republic of China are under the procedure of processing and approval.

To ensure integration into the international customs area on January 1, 2005 the new Customs Code was enacted in Tajikistan, based on principles of the updated Kiyoto Convention on Harmonization and Simplification of Customs Procedures. This Code was drafted with active participation of international organizations and financial institutions, such as Asian Development Bank and USAID, ministries and agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan, representatives of business structures.

The Customs Code of the Republic of Tajikistan stipulates maximum facilitation of trade through adoption of standard simplified customs rules and procedures, wide invention of information technologies, improvement of the customs control methods.

For a number of objective reasons the customs system of the Republic of Tajikistan has just started implementation of procedures, such as electronic declaration, post-customs control and risk management, application of the "single window" principle in customs registration of goods and vehicles and other.

Their implementation mainly depends on the appropriate customs and communications infrastructure which is now formed in our country.

Only properly developed customs infrastructure, in particular, its automation will allow to implement the main norms and standards on simplification and harmonization of customs procedures.

"Joint Customs Control" workshop.

In my opinion, the priority should be given to effective development of transport corridors and communications, freedom of transit and elimination of various obstacles on the way of goods, manpower and capital.

Achievement of this task is mainly dependent on interrelations and cooperation between customs authorities of the region.

Actually there is a need to develop and adopt clear and effective mechanisms and their practical implementation. In customs control of movement of goods and vehicles

through the customs border special regard should be given to harmonization and simplification of customs procedures and documentation.

For implementation of a long term component of the Trade Facilitation within the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation in part of arrangement of joint customs control with use of “one stop” principle, we think it is necessary for CAREC members to consider a stage-by-stage approach to this issue.

The acceptable solution is the experience of pilot projects on joint customs control that are being implemented by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and China.

We believe that based on the results of these pilot projects joint customs control should be split into three stages:

First stage: to prepare the institutional framework regulating legal aspects of joint customs control;

The second state: joint customs control should be held in one premise based in the importing country and separately for the exporting country in another premise located in the neighboring country;

Third stage: export and import operations in one specific customs control zone should be subject to joint customs control. This is because so far there is no single customs territory created within the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation, and there are differences in the existing foreign trade and customs legislations.

One of the factors hindering implementation of joint customs control in the Republic of Tajikistan is the uncompleted delimitation and demarcation of state boundaries between Tajikistan and neighboring country of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Currently it might be more efficient to have joint customs control carried out separately for import to the territory of one country and export from the territory of a neighboring country. Such pattern will settle the main disputable issue, i.e. jurisdiction of countries in detection of smuggling and breach of customs rules.

At the same time I would like to inform participants of the workshop on implementation of the “single window” principle in the Republic of Tajikistan. Thus, on December 31, 2008 the Concept of formation of “Single Window” on export and import and transit procedures in the Republic of Tajikistan was approved by Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, #659.

This Concept establishes the procedure of formation of a simplified system of export and import and transit procedures in the Republic of Tajikistan enabling the participants of foreign economic activity to provide the standardized information and documents to the appropriate authorized bodies of the Republic of Tajikistan with use of a single entry/exit channel to comply with all regulatory requirements relating to the export-import and transit procedures.

Achievement of these objectives will allow to improve business environment in the country, raise competitiveness of the country in world markets and accelerate accession of the Republic of Tajikistan to the World Trade Organization.

“Training Needs Assessment” workshop.

Another important aspect of our interaction and cooperation is the staff internship and training on a mutual basis.

It is well known that performance of customs authorities mainly depends on competence of customs staff.

Using the opportunity I would like to thank the Asian Development Bank for the support in this issue.

The Refresher Training Institute is currently functioning at Customs Authority under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the main objectives of which are as follows:

- Organization and holding the courses of primary, professional training of new employees;
- Organization and holding the refresher training for the existing staff;
- Organization and holding the refresher training for the middle managers.

It would be desirable that in development of specific activities and their prioritization in the trade facilitation training for employees of customs authorities of CAREC members the following topics are focused on:

- procedure to be followed by customs authorities in transition to a complex border management principle of “single window”;
- Principles of dialogue between customs and business and making joint decisions on issues related to the law enforcement practice and introduction of Framework standards of security and facilitation of the global trade of the World Customs Organization;
- Procedure of joint actions by the customs staff and other controlling services within the customs control zone in emergency cases,
- Legal bases for the system of analysis and risk management;
- Practical use of advanced technical means of customs and other types of control at the border crossing points;
- Procedure of examination and search of individuals and goods crossing the border, and airplanes, railway wagons and vehicles;
- Advanced method of detection of goods prohibited for import/export, particularly, drugs, including that with the help tasks dogs;
- Organization of activity of dog services.

“Corridors Performance Measurement and Monitoring” workshop clearly demonstrates the importance of joint activity aimed at improvement of economic and social development through enhancement and development of trade and transport in the region. Governments of all CAREC members target to provide all people in their respective countries with all benefits of the regional cooperation. As it was noted by President of the Republic of Tajikistan at the CAREC Ministerial Conference this year in Dushanbe “Cooperation and cooperation is the key imperative of the globalization epoch”.

The Republic of Tajikistan represents high interest as a potential source of natural resources, and due to its favorable geographical position it serves as a link between Europe and Asia. Further development of economy of the Republic of Tajikistan is closely connected with development of transport communications, both with neighboring countries, and with non-CIS countries.

Inclusion of Tajik roads into the international network of roads is of particular value since it would enable to resolve the main economic issues of the country at the current stage.

Considering importance of these regional international corridors going through Tajikistan, Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has allocated 500 mln. USD including investments and grants, for rehabilitation and construction of roads, bridges and tunnels, particularly, those that are at the final stage.

It should be noted that construction of the highway bridge across the Pyandj river connecting Tajikistan and Afghanistan will provide transit through Afghanistan to port of Karachi (Pakistan), Bandar Abbas, Bandari Imam, Chobakhar (Iran), and distance and time of transportation would decrease almost by half, it should also be noted that transit through Tajikistan is the shortest way connecting Asia and Europe.

The 672 m long and 11.5 wide bridge constructed in accordance with international standards of seismic resistance is connecting the city of Nizhnii Pyandj in Tajikistan and Shir Khan city in Kunduz province in North Afghanistan. This project with the cost of over 28 mln.. USD was completed with the financial support by the US Government.

Finally, may I say that implementation of the above proposals, and development of crucially new mechanisms of cooperation considering current requirements will help to improve the quality of our cooperation.

In conclusion I would like to wish you success in future and express my hope that we will be able to preserve and multiply mutually advantageous cooperation.

Thank for your attention.