

REGIONAL CUSTOMS COOPERATION MEETING
Statement
of
Customs Cooperation Committee
Urumqi
August 20-21, 2002

General Administration of China Customs and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) co-hosted the first Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC) Meeting from 20-21 August 2002 in the city of Urumqi which is the provincial capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The CCC was created in January 2002 and endorsed by the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation Program coordinated by Asian Development Bank (ADB). CCC has been provided the mandate of promoting cooperation among the customs administration of the East and Central Asian economies. CCC will strive to promote trade facilitation and customs modernization as a part of the Regional Economic Cooperation Program being promoted by ADB since 1997. CCC is a group of heads of Customs Organizations of eight economies including Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The CCC Meeting discussed and agreed unanimously on a comprehensive Common Action Plan and institutional arrangements for the implementation of customs reforms. The Common Action Plan focuses on seven areas including

- (i) Simplification and harmonization of customs documentation;
- (ii) Development of border posts and facilities;
- (iii) Development of simplified transit systems;
- (iv) Data consolidation/information sharing and ICT development for customs operations;
- (v) Development of risk management and post entry audit;
- (vi) Development of a Regional Intelligence System; and
- (vii) Capacity building for regional Customs organizations.

To implement this Common Action Plan, CCC has agreed to set up two working groups for Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures as well as Customs Control and Risk Management and ICT Development, and a special task force on the implementation of development of border posts and facilities. Work of the working groups and task force will be coordinated by the Heads of the Custom Organizations.

CCC participants confirmed the significance of and need for developing customs cooperation at a regional level to reduce non-trade barriers facing the flow of imports and exports between the countries in a collaborative way to nurture regional cooperation. This was perceived to be a timely initiative, and all economies noted the necessity of implementing the Common Action Plan and indicated their resolve to work together.

ADB plans to provide a regional technical assistance program (\$2 million) to implement this Common Action Plan over the next two years.