

## **Opening Remarks**

### **Trade Facilitation and E-Governance Seminar 5-8 December 2005, Republic of Korea**

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Commissioner for the warm welcome.  
Distinguished Country Delegates,  
Resource Persons,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to join Deputy Commissioner Park Chin Heon in welcoming you to Daejeon and opening this Seminar on Trade Facilitation and E-Governance. On behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and distinguished delegates, I would like to thank the Korea Custom Services (KCS) for cohosting this event, and for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements that they have provided us. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to KCS for their invaluable contribution to the seminar program.

We are pleased to see once again the heads and deputy heads of customs administrations leading the country delegations. This high-level participation highlights your continued commitment to learning from, and sharing experiences with your counterparts in neighboring countries. As you know, training and knowledge sharing is a priority area of our regional trade facilitation program, which has helped to strengthen capacity, and build trust and confidence among participating countries.

The objectives of this Seminar are two-fold: (i) to share the Republic of Korea's trade facilitation solutions and e-governance products, and (ii) to promote cooperation between customs and tax administration agencies through information and communication technology (ICT). These are in line with the objectives of the East and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program's Trade Facilitation initiative which are to: (i) promote concerted customs reforms and modernization and serving as a regional forum to address issues of common interest, in the short- to medium-term, and (ii) to support an integrated trade facilitation approach through interagency cooperation and partnership with the private sector, in the long-term.

First and foremost, I hope you will be able to gain useful insights from the expertise of KCS. In particular, KCS has diligently pursued (i) the establishment of an accurate and efficient clearance system, (ii) reduction of the time and cost required for customs clearance logistics, (iii) information transparency in customs administration, and (iv) a comprehensive strategy for e-governance through a holistic adaptation of information technology. KCS has been a leader in customs automation for the past 30 years, and be it in technology, execution or operations, there is a lot to be learned from KCS especially with respect to the application of e-governance in the promotion and implementation of trade facilitation.

E-governance is a comprehensive approach to leverage ICT for public sector modernization and enhancing private sector

competitiveness. Distilling lessons learned from early e-governance implementers could help avoid common mistakes and maximize returns on investment. As you embark on formulating and implementing your respective customs reforms and modernization master plan, KCS' experience could serve as a useful reference or blueprint for development.

The inclusion of a program on tax administration in the second half of this Seminar underscores the holistic and multi-agency approach of CAREC's Trade Facilitation Program. This Seminar will support some CAREC participating countries' long-term goal of integrating customs and tax services through institutional reforms and ICT. Interagency coordination and partnership with private sector stakeholders will facilitate the participating countries' move toward "one-stop" and "single electronic window" services for traders and the business community.

Distinguished delegates, I hope this seminar will equip you with appropriate tools, valuable knowledge and useful recommendations to design and implement comprehensive e-governance strategies, programs and projects for trade facilitation.

Successful e-governance would lead to a new way of doing business with a more integrated delivery of information and services by the Government. This promotes changes in government processes that would be more client-oriented, transparent, and

efficient, which are essential elements to support an enabling trading environment and private sector development.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will enjoy your stay in Korea, the Land of the Morning Calm. This is also one of the better places to learn e-governance solutions and best practices.

I wish you success in your deliberations.