

SEMINAR ON TRADE FACILITATION AND ONE-STOP SERVICE
Jointly organized by the Asian Development Bank, World Customs
Organization, and Thailand Customs Department
27-29 July 2005, Bangkok Thailand

Opening Remarks
Noy Siackhachanh
Director
Governance, Finance and Trade Division
Asian Development Bank

Distinguished Participants, and Ladies and Gentlemen
Good morning!

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the seminar on “Trade Facilitation and One-Stop Service,” a topic of great importance to government agencies and the business community in an increasingly globalizing economy.

On behalf of our member country delegates, I would like to express our gratitude to the Thailand Customs Department, and particularly to you, Dr. Sathit Limpongpan, for cosponsoring the event and sharing Thailand’s experiences and lessons learned in trade facilitation and customs modernization. Sharing experiences and distilling lessons learned through regional forums and seminars are an important part of our regional trade facilitation program as they help avoid policy mistakes and accelerate customs modernization.

I would especially like to thank Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, the Deputy Secretary General of the WCO for accepting our invitation and joining us at this seminar as the Keynote Speaker. Mr. Mikuriya needs no introduction among the country delegates joining this seminar. He is a frequent visitor of the member countries’ capitals and the ADB headquarters in Manila, introducing WCO’s customs

modernization tools and instruments and promoting capacity building support for developing member countries' participation in Doha Round of negotiations on trade facilitation.

We are very honored to have both the Thai Customs and WCO as our cosponsors for this event that allow this seminar to provide both international best practices and country experiences.

The topics of the seminar: one-stop service, single electronic window, and joint border control, are at the heart of trade facilitation and are perhaps also the ultimate goal of a trade facilitation program. They provide the most efficient services for traders and enable the trading community to be more competitive internationally. But putting them in practice requires coordinated efforts of all trade-related agencies and private sector stakeholders. It also needs strong political will and a champion in trade facilitation. An important aspect of this seminar is to learn from Thai Customs how these issues and challenges have been tackled. I hope this seminar will be a source of inspiration for all of us to carry our cooperation program to a new level and to be a step closer to the "one stop" service demanded by the business community.

To support your trade facilitation program, ADB as your secretariat has recently launched a number of studies and programs that are relevant to the topic today.

First, we have recently launched a strategy study for our trade facilitation program which will serve as a tool for discussions and consultation on how we

can broaden and deepen our program in the coming years; a broad outline of the strategy study will be shared with you soon.

Second, a study on Trade Logistics Strategy for PRC's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was launched in early June to examine Xinjiang's regional transit role for the CAREC member countries. Logistics development is a natural extension of the cross-border trade facilitation initiative as it addresses "behind-the-border" impediments and constraints.

Third, an assessment study was also recently launched to assist the Mongolia Customs formulate an integrated trade facilitation strategy and implementation plan. The strategy aims to promote partnership among all the trade-related agencies and private sector stakeholders and develop the customs IT infrastructure essential for one-stop service for the business community. Similar studies will be launched for Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan in the coming months.

I hope these efforts will help enrich your trade facilitation and cooperation program and prepare for a productive Customs Cooperation Committee Meeting among the heads of customs administrations on 7-9 September in Ulaanbaatar.

Thank you very much.