



**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHAIR**  
**WCO WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA REGION**  
Office of the WCO Vice-President for the  
West and Central Africa



**OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER-  
GENERAL**  
NIGERIA CUSTOMS SERVICE  
HEADQUARTERS

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**SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS  
OF THE 27<sup>th</sup> EXPERTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF  
THE CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS GENERAL  
OF CUSTOMS OF THE WTO REGION**

From 2 to 3 May 2023, the twenty-seventh Experts Committee meeting of the Conference of Directors General of Customs of the West and Central African Region of the World Customs Organisation was held at the Bakadaji Hotel in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia.

This important meeting, scheduled in the agenda of activities of the WCO-WCA Region, was aimed at preparing the ongoing issues, as well as the new themes that challenge the region, in order to present them to the Directors General of Customs during the 29<sup>th</sup> conference to be held in Banjul on 4 and 5 May 2023.

The regional structures and nineteen of the twenty-four member states of the WCO/WCA region attended the meeting.

### **Opening ceremony**

The opening ceremony was marked by three speeches delivered respectively by Mr Anyanwu BEDE, representative of the Regional Vice President; Mr Abdel Kader SANGO, Director of the Regional Office for Capacity Building; Mr NJEBI VINCENT KWALAR, Regional Coordinator, and Mr Yankuba DARBOE, Commissioner General of the Gambia Revenue Authority.

Firstly, in his introductory speech, the Vice President stressed the crucial role that Gambia plays in facilitating regional activities. He also mentioned the need for the experts to determine a clear roadmap for the region, while expressing the expectations of the region towards the future Secretary General of the WCO. He welcomed the importance of the theme of the meeting and concluded his speech by stressing the importance of securing regional borders.

The Director of the ROCB then highlighted the initiatives to transfer skills and underlined the inclusive approach of the 2023-2027 strategic plan, which will be submitted to the Directors General for consideration.

Finally, the Regional Coordinator stressed the importance of the role of customs in public management, in accordance with the strategic plan, and expressed the wish that the deliberations be of high quality while insisting on the importance of the transfer of competencies.

In the same perspective, the Commissioner General, host of this 29<sup>th</sup> conference, also stressed the importance of the involvement of all experts in achieving the objectives of

the region, as well as the need to take into account emerging technologies and technological innovation in our respective administrations.

### **Work schedule**

After the establishment of the bureau of the meeting and the team of rapporteurs, consisting of the RILO WA, the Republic of Senegal and the Central African Republic, Congo and Nigeria, the experts adopted the following agenda:

- ✓ The presentation of activity reports ;
- ✓ Policy issues ;
- ✓ Budgetary and financial issues ;
- ✓ Technical issues.

#### ○ **Presentation of activity reports**

The various speakers presented activity reports on the programmes and projects underway in the WCO/WCA region. During these presentations, they discussed the difficulties encountered and the prospects for the coming years.

#### ○ **Policy issues**

The experts discussed policy issues related to the implementation of the strategic plans of the WCO/WCA region. In particular, they discussed measures to strengthen regional cooperation in combating fraud and illicit trafficking and in protecting borders against transnational threats.

They also discussed the region's need for trade facilitation measures to boost intra-regional trade.

They also highlighted the region's vision for modernisation, the importance of the presence of Regional Capacity Building Centres, and the achievements in the fight against fraud and illicit trafficking. Furthermore, they highlighted the skills transfer initiatives and the inclusive approach of the 2023-2027 strategic plan.

#### ○ **Budgetary and financial issues**

Turning to budgetary and financial issues, the experts reviewed the reports of the regional fund manager, and the financial and audit committees.

- **Technical issues**

The experts discussed technical issues related to the implementation of the WCO/WCA region's 2023-2027 strategic plan and the WCO's tools for combating fraud. In this respect, the results of the **CRIPHARM 6** and **ALAMBA 3** operations were presented.

Looking at the activities of the regional structures, the experts suggested that a working group should be set up to develop a matrix for assessing the impact of the regional structures, taking into account the criteria developed by the WCO. This group will be composed of the following structures and countries

- The ROCB
- The ROCB WA
- Abuja RTC
- The Ivory Coast
- Cameroon
- The Republic of Central Africa
- Ghana.

The Committee mandated this group to develop this matrix and send it to the Member States of the region before 25 May 2023.

At the end of the two days of discussions, the 27<sup>th</sup> Experts Committee meeting of the Conference of Directors General made the following recommendations to the various actors:

#### **UNDER THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

- **To the Vice-Chair :**
  - Finalize and disseminate the new 2023-2027 Strategic Plan to the Customs Administrations.
- **To Customs administrations :**
  - Reactivate and/or consolidate the modernisation committees;
  - Establish mechanisms for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the modernisation process;
- **At ROCB :**
  - Pooling efforts and promoting mutual aid at the regional level;

## **CONCERNING THE FUNCTIONING AND STATUS OF REGIONAL STRUCTURES**

- **To the Vice-Chair :**

- Establish a matrix to assess the impact of regional structures on the activities of member administrations;
- Continue the process of obtaining BRRC-style status for regional structures;
- Update the regional guide

## **FOR CAPACITY BUILDING**

- **To the WCO Secretariat :**

- Finalise the accreditation process of pre-accredited experts in the region;

- **To the Vice-Chair :**

- Promoting the fight against corruption and integrity through the A-CIP project;
- Invite customs administrations to carry out the roadmap self-assessment exercise in order to evaluate their performance and highlight capacity-building needs;

- **To the ROCB :**

- Promote accredited experts from the region in capacity-building missions;
- Strengthen the dynamics of the HR modernisation of the region's customs administrations by implementing a competence-based HR strategy;

- **To Customs administrations :**

- participate in regional workshops organised in the region in collaboration with partners as part of capacity building.

- **To the RILO :**

- Strengthen training in the field of intelligence and the fight against fraud.

## **IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD**

- **To the Vice-Chair :**

- Helping the RILOs to build new partnerships in the organisation of anti-fraud operations (CRIPHARM et ALAMBA).
- **To Customs administrations :**
  - Strengthen the participation of national operational units in CRIPHARM and ALAMBA operations.
  - Promoting the sharing of experiences in anti-fraud operations

#### **UNDER THE REGIONAL FUND**

- **To the Vice-Chair :**
  - Seek alternative financing to improve the potential of the regional fund.
  - Continue efforts to sensitise debtor administrations to pay all outstanding dues;
  - Allocate a budget to the IT RWG to finance its activities.
- **To the Director General :**
  - Take ownership of the regional financial procedure manual to optimise the monitoring of their annual contributions and the settlement of disputes inherent to malfunctions in banking transactions
  - Ensure that each member is up to date on their annual contribution.

**Done in Kotu on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023**