

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE COMMISSIONER OF  
CUSTOMS, MR. ISAAC CRENTSIL, AT THE  
CONFERENCE ON “SINGLE WINDOW AND WTO  
TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT – KEY TOOLS  
FOR TRADE DEVELOPMENT” ON 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017,  
KEMPINSKI HOTEL – ACCRA, GHANA.

Mr. Chairman (Chairperson)

The Honourable Minister .....

Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce,

Ghana

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Heads of organisations

Distinguished Guest

The Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

I must first of all thank the Ghana International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), organisers of this programme, for the prompt initiative taken in organizing this conference. I refer to it as a prompt initiative because as soon as I took over as Commissioner of Customs, I considered among my priorities of action, the organization of fora with stakeholders not only on this Single Window System but on all issues of trade facilitation in line with the requirements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). These include businesses accessing the Authorised Economic Operators status, Post Clearance Audit, Customs Advance Rulings, Appeals, etc.

From the contents of your invitation letter, it is evident that members of your organization are actually abreast with the requisite tools of trade facilitation, including the Single

Window System and also Ghana's ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. I do not therefore intend to over elaborate on these issues.

Moreover, I am aware that West Blue Consulting, are also in attendance here and may do some elaboration on the subject matter of the Ghana National Single Window project and its ultimate product, that is the System.

However, Mr. Chairman, permit me to summarise that the National Single Window System is the product of efforts initiated by the Government of Ghana to bring this country in line with international best practices as recommended by various conventions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and World Customs Organisation (WCO) and set down as required standards to be met or attained by member countries in promoting and facilitating trade within member states.

Article 10.4.1 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement provides as follows.

“4.1 Members shall endeavour to establish or maintain a single window, enabling traders to submit documentation and/or data requirements for importation, exportation, or transit of goods through a single entry point to the participating authorities or agencies. After the examination by the participating authorities or agencies of the documentation and/or data, the results shall be notified to the applicants through the single window in a timely manner”.

In September 2015, therefore, preparatory work was initiated on the National Single Window System. These preparatory works were actually undertaken by a combined team of Customs officers and officials of West Blue Consulting. That project gave birth to the product we refer to today as the National Single Window System.

Mr. Chairman, although provision had been made in the Customs Act 2015, Act 891, for the operation of a National Single Window System, the Customs Division, with support from the Attorney-General's Department, initiated an amendment to the law to provide legal emphasis to the system. Specifically, the Customs Act 2015, Act 891, was amended by the Customs (Amendment) Act 2016, Act 923, to provide for the establishment of a National Single Window System and the effective management of the system.

For the effective management of the National Single Window System, the amendment included provisions for bodies to formulate policies and procedures on risk management and to implement such policies and procedures appropriately.

Provisions have therefore been made in the law for a National Risk Management Team and a National Risk Management Committee with their respective compositions and functions outlined.

The National Risk Management Team shall be responsible among others for the implementation of the National Single Window risk management policies and procedures.

The National Risk Management Committee shall formulate risk management policies and procedures for the operation of the National Single Window System and supervise the work of the National Risk Management Team.

Mr. Chairman, the Customs Act 2015, Act 891 had also introduced the concepts of Customs Advance Valuation and Classification Rulings, Appeals, Authorised Economic Operators, Post Clearance Auditing, electronic

transactions and processing of declarations and record keeping, all in line with trade facilitation and international best practices. These are all aimed at simplifying and harmonizing international trading procedures, which we refer to as trade facilitation.

These concepts were all unknown and unprovided for, under the repealed PNDC Law 330 of 1993 which hitherto governed Customs operations.

Generally, Mr. Chairman, this is thus ample evidence of the unrelenting efforts by Customs and the Government to ensure full compliance with the requirements and recommendations of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Mr. Chairman, the benefits that come to a country with an internationally recognized trade facilitating regime are so enormous and we in Ghana cannot take things for granted.

And I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that although the provision of an enabling environment for facilitated international trade is normally perceived to be in the interest of the international trading community or the business man, that cannot be the whole truth. The truth is that it is equally very beneficial to the Customs authorities and their respective economies or countries.

This is so because, an enabling international trading environment leads to increase in the volume of international trade and investment; this leads to increases in revenue mobilization and collection. The Customs authorities thus achieve their given targets and their national governments succeed in prosecuting their developmental agenda.



It is therefore a gain-gain situation to the international trading community and the economies of the countries concerned.

With this understanding, I wish to take this opportunity to call on all other border and port agencies or authorities to let us unite and cooperate as required under Article 8 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement which calls for “Border Agency Cooperation” to facilitate international trade. For avoidance of doubt, Article 8 states, among others, as follows.

“1. Each Member shall ensure that its authorities and agencies responsible for border controls and procedures dealing with the importation, exportation, and transit of goods cooperate with one another and coordinate their activities in order to facilitate trade”.

Mr. Chairman, permit me to conclude that in addition to today’s main focus on the National Single Window, the

Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority wishes to assure the international trade community that Customs on our part shall discharge our duties effectively and efficiently. We shall facilitate trade by adopting international best practices. We shall ensure a reduction in the time and cost of doing business with Customs and provide value for money services. Finally, we shall ensure that there is trust and confidence in doing business in Ghana.

Thank you very much for making me part of this programme and for the opportunity to contribute.

God bless us all

God bless Ghana.