



**Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

Proceedings of the 14th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group

Improving Customs Transit Systems in Islamic Countries



**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
October 2019**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE
COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP
ON**

**Improving Customs Transit Systems
in Islamic Countries**

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COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

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For further information, please contact:

Mr. Mustafa Adil SAYAR
Expert

Mr. Fatih ARSLAN
Expert

COMCEC Coordination Office
Necatibey Caddesi No: 110/A
06100 Yücetepe
Ankara/TURKEY
Phone : 90 312 294 57 10
Fax : 90 312 294 57 77
Web : www.comcec.org
e-mail : comcec@comcec.org
trade@comcec.org
msayar@comcec.org
farslan@comcec.org

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Introduction

The 14th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group was held on October 24th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey, with the theme of “Improving Customs Transit Systems in Islamic Countries”. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 20 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Trade Working Group. Representatives of the COMCEC Coordination Office, SMIIC, UNESCAP, and Ankara Logistics Base have also attended the Meeting.¹

At the outset, the representative of the COMCEC Coordination Office informed the participants about the trade outlook of the Member Countries. Then the participants considered the Research Report titled “Improving Customs Transit Systems in Islamic Countries” prepared for the Meeting with a view to enriching the discussions.

Moreover, the Representatives of the Member States have shared their experiences, achievements and challenges regarding Customs Transit Systems in their respective countries. The participants had the chance to discuss the policy options for enhancing the cooperation in this important field. The Room Document based on the findings of the above-mentioned Research Report and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions were the main inputs for the discussions during the policy debate session.

¹ The list of participants is attached as Annex 4.



1. Opening Session

In line with the tradition of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, Mr. Deniz GÖLE, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office, introduced the COMCEC and its activities briefly.

Afterwards, Mr. Fabba JAMMEH, Director of Trade from Ministry of Trade in the Gambia, was elected as the Chairman of the Meeting. Mr. JAMMEH introduced himself and thanked all the participants for electing him as the Chairman of the Meeting.

2. The COMCEC Trade Outlook

Mr. Ercan SAKA, Consultant to the COMCEC Coordination Office, has presented some of the key findings of the COMCEC Trade Outlook 2019.

In his presentation, Mr. SAKA focused on the recent trends and main characteristics of the trade between the OIC Member States and the world, recent trends in intra-OIC trade and trade facilitation in the OIC Member States.

Concerning the trade between OIC Member states and the world, Mr. SAKA stated that total OIC exports increased by 22 percent to 2 trillion \$ in 2018. He mentioned that total OIC imports increased by 4 per cent and amounted to 1.77 trillion \$. Thus, he stated, the total OIC trade increased from 3.0 trillion \$ in 2017 to 3.77 trillion \$ in 2018.

Mr. SAKA pointed out that several factors accounted for the performance in total OIC exports in 2018 including the revival of global economic activity and rising commodity prices. Mr. SAKA also shared figures about total OIC trade, share of OIC trade in global trade and the breakdown of total OIC exports and imports by countries and sectors.

He stated that top performers in total OIC exports were Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Turkey with 60 percent of total OIC exports in 2018. Mineral fuels, oils, electrical machinery and equipment, pearls, precious stones, mechanical appliance and plastics represented 64 percent of the total OIC exports.

Mr. SAKA also stated that total OIC exports are highly concentrated. Accordingly, the share of mineral fuels, oils and distillation products in total OIC exports was 42 percent in 2018. This sector was followed by electrical machinery and equipment, pearls, precious stones, ores, slag and ash and machinery, mechanical appliances. These five sectors as a whole accounted for 61 per cent of total OIC exports in 2018.

He also shared the figures about intra-OIC trade and commodity composition of intra-OIC exports. He emphasized that although the intra-OIC trade remained weak in the last two years, it rebounded strongly in 2017. Accordingly, intra-OIC trade increased by 18 per cent and reached 323 billion dollars in 2017.

Mr. SAKA concluded his presentation by sharing figures on border compliance costs and times for exports in the OIC Member States. He stated that border compliance costs and times vary immensely across the member countries and reducing trade costs in the OIC member states is an important issue to be more competitive in international markets.

3. Customs Transit Systems: Conceptual Framework and Global Overview

Mr. Jaroslav ILLE, Director of Customs, Excise and Surveillance Division of the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic and Accredited Transit Expert of the World Customs Organization (WCO), delivered a presentation on the topic of “Customs Transit Systems: Conceptual Framework and Global Overview.”

The presentation has four parts, which are Objectives and Methodology of the Study, Conceptual Framework, Benchmark Criteria of the Study, and Non-OIC Case Studies.

Mr. ILLE started his presentation by giving a brief introduction to the Objectives and Methodology of the Study. He emphasized that objectives of Study are to improve awareness on the importance of efficient custom transit regimes, to share information on the good practices of well-functioning custom transit regimes globally, to explore comparatively the state of the play in the OIC countries and to provide policy options that may be useful for policymakers to consider in their efforts to develop/improve efficient customs transit regimes. The methodology of the Study has four parties – the desk research, the data collection, the data analysis, and the field visit case studies.

He stated that the Revised Kyoto Convention (WCO) is giving the basic definition of transit procedure with an explanation of types and phases of transit procedure, including the role of transit in the supply chain management.

Then, Mr. ILLE listed International agreements, standards, recommendations, and handbooks related to Customs Transit Regimes, highlighting tools made by the WCO, the UNECE, the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Almaty Programme of Action. He pays special attention to the Convention on International Transport TIR.

Mr. ILLE, introduced basic criteria for efficient Customs Transit Regime – the solid legal framework, the importance of ICT and efficient transit information management, the efficient management of guarantees for Customs Transit Regimes, the importance partnership with the business sector, the roles of an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) in the Customs Transit Regime, the use of risk management in the Customs Transit Regime, the forms and benefits of simplification of formalities in the Customs Transit Regime, the application of transit fees and charges in the Customs Transit Regime, the forms and types of security measures in the Customs Transit Regime, the benefits as the results of coordinated border management in the Customs Transit Regime and the criteria and results of performance measurement in the Customs Transit Regime. The same criteria for evaluation of efficient Customs Transit Regime were used by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) in the WCO Transit Guidelines introduced in 2016.

Then Mr. ILLE, listed benefits of efficient Customs Transit Regime for Customs Authorities, for the business sector and economic operators, for the transport industry and transporters, for the economy of the country and finally for the regional development. He also highlighted the role of transit facilitation in regional economic integration, especially in enhancing regional competitiveness, in supporting regional economic integration, having an important role in a regional production network, and finally being a stepping-stone to the harmonization of other trade facilitation measures in the region.

Mr. ILLE introduced good practices from three regional customs transit systems – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Computerized Transit System (ACTS), the International Transit of Goods (TIM) system used in Latin America and the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) used for the EU-EFTA Common transit procedure.

He emphasized the benefits coming from the use of ACTS, TIM, and NCTS:

- Speed up the procedures applied at all Customs offices involved in transit operations;
- Connected with the control of single transit customs declaration, the adequacy, and quality of guarantee, enclosed documents, and goods and with release or end of transit procedure;
- Eliminate barriers between customs brokers and Customs authorities;
- Reduce carriers' expenses resulting from delays, and repeated inspection of the cargo at each national frontier;
- The imposition of national security requirements (guarantee, bond, a deposit of duty, etc.);
- Reduce the Customs requirements deriving from national transit procedures;
- Use of Customs Risk Management to focus on high-risk consignments; and also
- Provide simplification for Customs authorities arising from the fact that the international transit operation is covered by a single transit document, which reduces the risk of presenting inaccurate information –or data discrepancies–to different Customs administrations.

In his closing remarks, Mr. ILLE focused on the lessons learned, success factors, and best practices connected with the use of ACTS, TIM, and NCTS.

Questions/Comments and Answers

1. What are the reasons for the low practical implementation of the TIR Convention, when the number of contracting parties of this convention is permanently increasing?

The practical implementation of the TIR Convention in a contracting party is conditioned by the existence and approval of an issuing and guaranteeing association in this particular country. In accordance with the Article 6 of the TIR Convention there are strict conditions to be fulfilled by the Associations to issue TIR Carnets and to act as guarantors, as long as the minimum conditions and requirements, as laid down in Annex 9, Part I of the TIR Convention, are complied with. An Association shall not be approved in any country unless its guarantee also covers the liabilities incurred in that country in connection with operations under cover of TIR Carnets issued by foreign associations affiliated to the same international organization as that to which it is itself affiliated.

The wider practical implementation of the TIR Convention in a contracting party is also conditioned by the approval of a person to have access to the TIR procedure. Authorization for access to the TIR procedure shall be granted only to persons who fulfill the minimum conditions



and requirements laid down in Annex 9, Part II, to the TIR Convention. Authorization for access to the TIR procedure shall be granted according to the procedure laid down in Annex 9, Part II, to the TIR Convention.

4. State of Customs Transit Systems in the OIC: Case Studies and Recommendations

Mr. Jaroslav ILLE,

in his second presentation, focused on 3 main topics: the OIC case studies; challenges and the policy options.

4.1. Analysis Results in the OIC Member States

The Analysis Results were based on the responses of 6 OIC Member States to the survey. In order to document and analyze the current status of the implementation of the Customs Transit Systems in the OIC members, an extensive amount of data was collected. Data collection included surveys distributed online and by e-mail as well as secondary source analyses (such as collecting information from relevant webpages and quantifying those).

Survey responses were analyzed by using a convergence matrix, which is frequently used for its straightforwardness. The comparator matrix used in this analysis, in essence, is a simple tool to compare different approaches to the Customs Transit Systems within a group of countries. The qualitative comparator matrix is composed of , which was divided into 11 areas - the solid legal framework, the importance of ICT and efficient transit information management, the efficient management of guarantees for Customs Transit Regimes (CTR), the importance partnership with the business sector, the roles of an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) in the Customs Transit Regime, the use of risk management in the Customs Transit Regime, the forms and benefits of simplification of formalities in the CTR, the application of transit fees and charges in the CTR, the forms and types of security measures in the CTR, the benefits as the results of coordinated border management in the CTR and the criteria and results of performance measurement in the CTR. The survey responses provide details on the characteristics of CTR in the countries - for operational Customs Transit Systems that are supported by 50 questions.

Among the OIC Member Countries' AEO programs, the solid legal framework is in place in OIC Member Countries. However, the efficiency in challenging regulations is still below what is required for an efficient CTR. The ICT systems in OIC Countries have issues related to the interconnected or shared computer systems and real-time availability of data among national agencies. However, fees and charges in OIC Countries are not periodically reviewed to ensure they are still appropriate and relevant. There is a need for simplification of the procedures to decrease the costs for traders and acceptance of copies of documents. It is necessary to improve risk management cooperation with OGAs and other neighboring countries. Still, the AEO concept is not fully utilized by the OIC Countries, where the low annual percentage of trade volume handled by AEOs and a low percentage of SMEs in the total number of AEOs were recognized. The implementation of the coordinated border management is still at the low level without systematic sharing of control results and where joint controls, sharing of common facilities, and alignment of procedures and formalities are not sufficient.

4.2. OIC Case Studies

Public and private sector interview questionnaires with open-ended questions were designed and implemented to complement the surveys for the case study countries (Kyrgyzstan and Senegal). For each of these countries, Mr. ILLE presented brief information on used Customs

Transit Systems, features of the Customs Transit Regimes, benefits provided, challenges, lessons learned, and needs for further improvement from the perspectives of government and public sector.

4.3 Comparison of used Customs Transit Systems in OIC with Best Practices

When 11 areas in the OIC Member Countries are considered, it is observed that

- There is a solid legal framework for the application of efficient Customs Transit Systems based on bilateral, regional and partially on international agreements;
- There is a solid ICT infrastructure, but lack of exchange of information is decreasing the level of transit information management;
- There is solid management of guarantees for Customs Transit Regimes, but discharging the guarantee is done manually;
- There is a regular evaluation of applied transit fees and charges in the Customs Transit Regime;
- The forms and benefits of simplification of formalities in the Customs Transit Regime in some OIC countries is at the promising level, but in other OIC countries the use of simplification of formalities in the CTR is still at the low level;
- The use of risk management in the CTR in some OIC countries is at the promising level, but in other OIC countries the use of risk management in the CTR is still at the low level;
- The importance of an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) in the CTR has been identified;
- There is a solid base for the application of security measures in the CTR;
- There is a promising level of application of coordinated border management in the CTR;
- There is a solid base for the application of the partnership with the business sector;
- There is a solid base for the application of performance measurement in the CTR.

4.4 Challenges and Recommendations

International instruments relating to CTR

(i) The OIC Member Countries can accede to the International Organisation to ensure transit facilitation and freedom of transit; (ii) they need to fully utilize the International instruments, standards and recommendation arising from International Organizations; (iii) Prior to sign new transit agreements, the existing regional agreements need to be checked by the Governments of OIC Member Countries.

National legislation related to Customs Transit Regime

(i) Customs legislation of OIC Member Countries should include transit provision according to International standards and recommendation; (ii) Appropriate legal and procedural framework and the formalities to be accomplished for Customs transit; (iii) Customs transit through the Customs territory may be authorized for goods which, under national legislation, are subject to prohibitions or restrictions at importation.

Exchange of information and data protection

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries can establish a common concept - interoperability standards for the electronic and automatic exchange of information; (ii) Information exchange between all agencies involved en route, including Customs, transport control, OGA's, police, and railways; (iii) Use of Single window as a mechanism / gateway for

exchange of information between CAs and OGAs is recommended; (iv) Pre-arrival information needs to be automatically disseminated to all customs offices.

Type of information exchanged

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should exchange guarantee data and information; (ii) Use and exchange of unique identification number among CAs for transit declaration are recommended.

ICT infrastructure

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should use Single Window gateway to exchange the information and data on a national and international level; (ii) Business Continuity concept to ensure interrupted access to ongoing transit operations is recommended.

Guarantee according to risk level and guarantee waiver

(i) The guarantee amount should be calculated according to the risk level of transit operators; (ii) Customs authorities of the OIC Member Countries should reduce the guarantee amount to AEO authorization holders; (iii) For the goods that are identified as high risk the guarantee waiver should not be applicable.

Calculation or estimation of the guaranteed amount

The guarantee should not exceed the highest rates of customs duties for import.

Comprehensive guarantees, comprehensive guarantee with a reduced amount of guarantee and guarantee waiver

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should develop a standard procedure for granting a comprehensive guarantee with calculated guarantee amount on the basis of the volume of transit operations; (ii) It is highly recommended for the customs administrations to monitor the use of the comprehensive guarantee to avoid exceeding the reference amount of the comprehensive guarantee; (iii) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries shall reduce the amount of the comprehensive guarantee taking into account sound finances and clear records for the transit operators.

Forms of Guarantee

Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should accept any form of guarantee

End of procedure and discharge of guarantee

(i) After termination of the customs transit procedure, the guarantee should be immediately released; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should set up the rule that in case of usage of the paper-based system, the discharge the guarantee should take a maximum of three days.

Use of Customs convoys and Customs escorts or usage of transit guarantees

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should set up the rule that in case when there is a no other form of guarantee, the customs escort shall be used; (ii) Only in instances of high-risk consignments, a customs escort may be considered for the use of active RFID (with GPS) seals to monitoring the transit in real-time.

International/regional guarantee management and monitoring systems

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should arrange that Guarantee management system should reduce the guarantee paper-based related documents; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC MS should integrate guarantee management systems in Customs Declaration Processing Systems to improve the efficiency of customs transit and automatic release of the guarantee.

Transit Fees and charges

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should not collect any fees or charges for transit except for charges for administrative expenses related to transit or charges for services rendered; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC MS in respect of transparency should publish the applicable fees for transit operations.

Simplification of documentary requirements

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries and OGAs should review the formalities and minimize the documentary requirements for transit; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should reduce the customs mandatory and additional documents for transit.

Simplification of procedures -pre-arrival transit declaration

(i) Customs authorities of OIC MS should introduce legal requirements for electronic pre-arrival information; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC MS should allow traders and transit operators to lodge in advance the documents in electronic format for pre-arrival processing.

Digitalization/automation of processes –Single Window

(i) To Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries it is highly recommended the exchange of information to take place on a national level (e.g., OGAs and CA) and on an international level (e.g., bilateral or multilateral agreements between Customs authorities); (ii) To Customs authorities of OIC MS it is highly recommended to establish the Single Window and to enable transit operators to submit transit customs declarations and documentation through a single entry point; (iii) To Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries it is highly recommended that transit declarations and other messages & communications are sent and processed electronically.

CTR risk management system

Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should develop and maintain a risk management system for Customs controls on transit in line with the WCO Risk Management Compendium.

Integrated risks management systems –Customs and border control agencies

Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should integrate the risks management systems for border control agencies - CA and OGAs.

Facilitation benefits under the AEO program and access to the simplified procedures

(i) To Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries , it is highly recommended to reduce the guarantee amount to AEO authorization holders; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC MS should simplify data requirements and submission for transit.

CTR in accordance with the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards

Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should establish a core set of internationally accepted trade facilitation benefits that could be provided to AEOs for transit.

Customs seals and electronic Customs seals

(i) Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should set up the rule that Customs seals transit should fulfill the minimum requirements described in the Appendix to Chapter 1, Specific Annex E to the Revised Kyoto Convention; (ii) Customs authorities of OIC MS are encouraged to exchange samples of seals; (iii) Customs seals and identification marks affixed by foreign Customs should be accepted for the transit.

Security measures for loading units

Governments are encouraged to promote the use of containers and other transport equipment that can be secured by Customs seals.

Prescribed time limit and itinerary

Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should set up the time limit defining the period after the consignment is released in transit procedure till the customs office of exit.

Customs escorts and convoys

Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries should set up the rule that if the Customs Authority applies customs escort and convoy due to the high level of risk, it should not charge fees.

Road checkpoints

Governments are encouraged to conduct all necessary controls on transit goods at the office of departure or border crossing points and may not establish any road checkpoints.

Institutional arrangements for coordination

(i) Mutual cooperation between Customs authorities of OIC Member Countries and OGAs responsible for border controls should be established for transit procedures; (ii) It is highly recommended for the Governments to cooperate with neighboring governments to coordinate procedures at border crossings and facilitate transit operations; (iii) Transit operation activities should be coordinated between border controls agencies, in particular through the national committee on trade facilitation; (iv) National transit coordinator should be appointed to coordinate the inquiries and proposals from other border control agencies.

Joint controls

Customs administrations and OGAs should plan joint controls considering resource and infrastructure sharing.

Alignment of working hours and days

(i) The working days and hours should align for all agencies responsible for border control and procedures related to transit; (ii) Agencies responsible for border controls should align the working days and hours with neighboring countries.

One-stop border post

It is highly recommended for the Governments to establish a one-stop border post for effective transit operations, using existing references such as the One-Stop Border Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings.

Infrastructure and equipment

(i) Governments are encouraged to plan and establish separate infrastructure for different types of traffic and ensure that transit goods are not prevented from flowing smoothly. (ii)

Governments are encouraged to establish separate infrastructure for different types of risks, and ensure separate lanes for green and red corridors.

Discussion

1. The use of electronic seals, especially by the AEO certificate holders, is connected with high expenses and misuse of data. Are there any solutions for the decreasing expenses and avoiding data misuse?

The issuing, management, and usage of electronic seals are usually based on the authorization granted by the Customs Administration or another governmental body. If a private company (having clear commercial and profit interest) is granted for the issuance and management of electronic seals, there is a risk that it could charge for the use of electronic seals the amount which is difficult to accept by economic operators (if this price is not regulated by the Customs Administration or another governmental body) and there is a risk that this company could misuse this authorization. The solution could be that a trade association (non-profit body), representing the interest of economic operators in customs clearance and in customs transit regime, would be granted for the issuance and management of electronic seals. By this way, the risk concerned could be minimized.

2. What are the options to combat smuggling and fraud in transit regimes?

According to the experiences from the EU, the implementation of online computerized customs transit system is a very efficient tool in combating smuggling and frauds in the customs transit regime. Fast recognition of smuggling and frauds in the customs transit regime will help the customs authorities take immediate and efficient actions against these activities and reduce the damages for all stakeholders – government, guarantor, and economic operators (transporters).

5. Policy Options for Public Availability of Customs Information in the OIC Member Countries

The session was moderated by Ms. Maria KAZI, Joint Secretary from Ministry of Commerce & Textile in Pakistan. At the outset, Ms. KAZI stated that “the Room Document for the Moderation Session of the 14th Meeting of the Trade Working Group”, prepared by the COMCEC Coordination Office in light of the findings of the analytical study prepared specifically for the Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions which have already been sent by the CCO.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director from the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a brief presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions on the customs transit systems sent to the Trade Working Group focal points by the CCO. Afterwards, Mr. Ercan SAKA, Consultant of the CCO, gave some information regarding the draft policy advices included in the Room Document.

Based on intensive deliberations, the participants agreed on the following policy advices which are also given in the attached room document to be submitted to the 35th Session of the COMCEC as an important outcome of the 14th Meeting of the Trade Working Group.

The policy recommendations highlighted by the participants are as follows:

1. Designing an appropriate legal and procedural framework for national customs administrations through, among others, utilizing international conventions on customs transit regimes
2. Establishing/Developing an efficient electronic exchange of information system among all relevant agencies, particularly among neighboring countries
3. Developing an efficient guarantee management and monitoring system for Customs Transit Regimes
4. Simplifying the formalities and documentary requirements for facilitating transit operations.
5. Developing integrated risk management systems to manage and facilitate transit customs procedures
6. Ensuring a well-coordinated border management through enhancing cooperation among different border control agencies and with the neighboring countries as well as assigning a national transit coordinator.
7. Developing necessary mechanisms (i.e. a Customs-Business Partnership programme) for promoting partnership with private sector while designing policies and procedures related to transit.

6. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Mr. Deniz GÖLE, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a presentation on the COMCEC Project Funding. At the outset, a short video on COMCEC Project Funding has been showed to the participants.

Mr. GÖLE informed the participants about the essentials of the COMCEC Project Funding. Mr. GÖLE continued his presentation by highlighting the timeline for the project submission. He stressed the importance of finding a project idea and informed the participants on how they can find project topics. He introduced the COMCEC Project Funding Webpage and invited the participants to check put the COMCEC Project Funding webpage.

Mr. GÖLE underlined the supported themes in trade area and shared brief information with participants regarding online project submission system. At the final part of his presentation, he informed the participants of the funded trade projects in 2019, namely:

- Empowering Halal Industry to Boost Intra-OIC Trade
- Supporting Cooperatives to Enhance Their Access to OIC Markets
- Introduction of Palestinian Export Products to Selected OIC countries
- Increasing Public Halal Awareness in OIC countries.

7. Success Stories of the Member States

7.1. Algeria

Mr. Ismail BENANTEUR, Division Inspector, Directorate General of Customs in Algeria, made an intervention regarding the situation of customs transit systems in Algeria.

At the outset, he informed participants regarding legal and regulatory framework in Algeria on customs transit. He briefly mentioned on Kyoto Convention and Convention on Temporary Admission then he shared brief information on articles regarding customs transit in Algerian Customs Code.

Moreover, Mr. BENANTEUR defined the customs transit procedures in accordance with the Algerian Customs Code. He pointed out that transit is the customs procedure under which goods transported under customs control within the area of competence of the same office or from one customs office to another customs office are placed, by land or air in suspension of duties and taxes and prohibitions of an economic nature.

Mr. BENANTEUR highlighted the economic role of the customs transit procedure is important for avoiding the interruptions in transport process at the border for entry or exit. Then he mentioned about the customs transit operations in Algeria.

He continued his presentation by informing participants on the prerequisites in Algerian Law. According to Algerian Customs Code, one of the most important benefits of customs transit is not to need for prior authorization. Then he shared information on submission process for customs transit. He remarked that the tenderer must subscribe an accounting declaration of the model laid down by the customs administration in order to benefit from customs transit.

Furthermore, Mr. BENANTEUR emphasized that the period of validity of the customs transit procedure shall be assessed by the customs authorities on the basis of specific circumstances of each operation in accordance with the distance of the route, the road conditions, the nature of goods and the nature of transportation.

In his closing remarks, Mr. BENANTEUR mentioned about the facilitation of customs transit. He informed the participants on the simplified transit declaration, summary declaration, export or re-export declaration. He highlighted the importance of the ATA carnet which is the document for transit declaration. He concluded his words by explaining authorized economic operator model for transit system.

7.2. Iran

On behalf of Iran, Mr. Mostafa AYATI, Director General of Transit Control Department from Customs Administration in Iran, made a presentation about Effect of Digitalization and Prospect in Iran Customs Administration.

Mr. AYATI started his speech with pointing out that “the transit is a base of trade and trade is base of development, then to achieve development in OIC countries we should pay attention to facilitate transit.” Then, he introduced briefly the customs procedures in Iran before 1997. He pointed out that there were 1.500.000 declarations in paper based system except TIR carnets in 140 customs offices. Also, he mentioned that average 30 documents were required for each declaration including various permits, authentication documents. He added that average annual consumption was around 45 million papers and the documents must be archived around 10 years.

Furthermore, Mr. AYATI highlighted that Iran Customs Administration has started the implementation of ASYCUDA system since 1997. He stated that due to some limitations in ASYCUDA, Iran Customs Administration decided to implement its own national system which is Integrated Customs System (ICS) in 2013 and by implementation of ICS data entry with pre-declaration is possible any time.

He continued his presentation with sharing information regarding the benefits of ICS. He mentioned that by running a single window, ICS has linked 29 relevant organizations thus there is not a risk for forging anymore. Also, he added that thanks to the fully paperless system, the charges have been reduced. He highlighted that the data exchange between departure and destination has expedited the discharge process in transit.

Mr. AYATI emphasized the e-TIR project which is a project initiated in 2014 with Turkey. He stated that the aim of the project is to bring the TIR procedure to be a computerized environment further enhancing the security and efficiency of the TIR system. He pointed out that fully digital version of the project is underway.

In his closing remarks, Mr. AYATI emphasized the importance of the digitalization in transit. He expressed that Iran extended its digital infrastructure by e-TIR project with neighbouring countries and highlighted the readiness to share Iran’s valuable experience in digitalization with the OIC member countries.

7.3. Malaysia

Ms. Ramlah MUKHTAR, Senior Assistant Director of Custom from Royal Customs Department in Malaysia, made a presentation regarding a pilot country case of ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS).

At the beginning of the presentation, Ms. MUKHTAR briefed the participants on ASEAN and its contracting parties which are Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Philippines and Brunei Darussalam.

Ms. MUKHTAR shared information regarding the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT). She stated the agreement was signed on 1998 in

Hanoi, Vietnam, during the occasion of the 6th ASEAN Summit and ratified in 1999 in order to hasten the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA).

She explained the main principles of the agreement are most favoured nation treatment, national treatment, simplicity, transparency, efficiency, appeals and mutual assistance. Furthermore, Ms. MUKHTAR highlighted the objectives of the agreement as follows;

1. Facilitating transportation of goods in transit and to support the implementation of the AFTA and to further integrate the region's economies
2. Simplifying and harmonize transport, trade and customs regulations and requirements for the purpose of facilitation of goods in transit
3. Establishing an effective, efficient, integrated and harmonized transit transport system in ASEAN.

Moreover, Ms. MUKHTAR informed participants on the key features of the ACTS which are single electronic customs declaration from departure to destination, single transit document for transit from departure to destination called Transit Accompanying Document (TAD), single guarantee valid for the international journey from departure to destination, secure and efficient system for to end operation, single means of transport, complete Customs to Customs and Customs to Business network. Then, she briefly explained the ACTS process and procedure in the pilot implementation.

In the last part of her presentation, Ms. MUKHTAR mentioned about the lessons learnt from the process. She briefly touched upon the following points;

- Customs and transport authorities have to ensure the readiness of traders and transporters with complete understanding on the ACTS procedure,
- Member States need to have the same spirit to have the ACTS fully realized for trade facilitation,
- Technical issues may be expected but they shall not be major failure of connectivity among the transit countries,
- Major functionalities for a smooth end to end transit operation should be thoroughly identified beforehand.

7.4. Sudan

Mr. Omer ALGAYLI, Expert from the Customs Authority in Sudan, delivered a presentation regarding facilitating the transit trade in Sudan.

Mr. ALGAYLI started his presentation by pointing out that Sudan has a geographical position to be a key player in the transit trade. He stated that Sudan has four land-lock neighbouring countries which are Ethiopia, Chad, Central Africa and South Sudan. He added that Sudan has allocated special ports to the imports and exports of some of these countries.

Furthermore, Mr. ALGAYLI has mentioned the difficulties facing the transit trade in Sudan. He remarked that these are briefly weak infrastructure, high costs of transportation, security concerns, smuggling activities etc.

He informed the participants regarding the legal framework in Sudan. He pointed out that, the Sudanese Customs Code of 1988, which has been amended in 2010, regulates the transit process in detail. He stated that other legal and administrative instruments on transit are customs transit policy, bilateral and regional agreements, transit administrative instructions and standard operational procedures.

Mr. ALGAYLI continued his presentation by highlighting that Sudanese customs have adapted an electronic linkage system with all stakeholders involved in the release of goods. Therefore, he added, data is entered electronically on a net basis. He pointed out that all customs transactions are collected electronically since 2015 in Sudan and insurance is also refunded electronically after the departure of goods.

In his closing remarks, Mr. ALGAYLI mentioned that Sudanese customs have adopted the electronic tracking system in controlling the transit trade. Also, he highlighted the benefits of the tracking system which are briefly reducing the costs, the total prohibition of any smuggling attempt, and cancellation of control and check points and reducing the time.

7.5. Turkey

Mr. Anil EVMEZ, EU Expert at the Ministry of Trade of Turkey, delivered a presentation and shared Turkish experiences and projections in transit systems.

At the outset of his presentation, Mr. EVMEZ briefed about the TIR and Common Transit Conventions in use for the international transportations in Turkey.

He stated that NCTS, comprising the computerized component of the Common Transit Convention, fully entered into force in Turkey on December 1st, 2012. As a regional one, the procedure is used for the movement of goods between the EU Member States, the EFTA countries, Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia. The implementation phases of the system were also explained.

Afterwards, Mr. EVMEZ stated that the TIR Convention, which has 76 Contracting Parties, is implemented worldwide and as the pioneering country and the major beneficiary of the TIR System, Turkey attaches great importance to the geographical expansion and computerization processes. In this regard, he mentioned that experts from countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman were trained in Turkish Customs Administrations. In addition to that, he pointed out the importance of e-TIR Pilot Projects run by Turkish Customs Administration.

In this context, he informed that Turkey-Iran e-TIR Pilot Project, which envisaged Customs to Business and Business to Customs (C2B2C) electronic (e-) data exchange, was launched in 2015

and successfully completed in 2017. He added that pilot transports are still ongoing and both sides are in touch to extend the scope of the pilot project.

In addition to this, he also mentioned about the transport operations within the scope of the Turkish-Georgian e-TIR Pilot Project aiming C2C e-data exchange, which started on May 18th, 2018.

Mr. EVMEZ stated that these two pilots constituted a significant part of e-TIR Reference Model by testing the real environment applications and new negotiations with different countries are also on the agenda for new pilot projects. Furthermore, he emphasized the advantages of e-TIR Pilot Projects for the entire TIR world. By eliminating paper-based TIR transactions, this model would play a leading role for the universal customs transit regime.

He informed that the aforementioned e-TIR Pilot Projects were already introduced as the best examples in the World Customs Organization (WCO) Transit Guidelines. Additionally, he highlighted the potential advantages and future prospects for including these transit schemes into the WCO Globally Networked Customs (GNC) as a Utility Block.

Mr. EVMEZ also added that, in addition to those initiatives, Turkey exchanges transit data information with Georgia and Azerbaijan, respectively and the negotiations for further implementations with Iran and Uzbekistan are still going on. He informed that, by doing so, preliminary information sharing in order to improve the cooperation with the neighboring countries is achieved.

He concluded his presentation by expressing that those steps will all contribute to the safe and expeditious e-customs and e-trade transactions in all over Turkey.

8. The Efforts of the International Institutions / Private Sector

8.1. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP)

“UNESCAP’s Perspective and Efforts on the Customs Transit Systems”

Mr. Sandeep Raj JAIN, Economic Affairs Officer of Transport Connectivity and Logistics Section from United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) made a presentation with the theme of UNESCAP’s Perspective and Efforts on the Customs Transit Systems with the emphasize of the developing an Automated Customs Transit Transport System.

Mr. JAIN briefly drew an outline for the presentation. He briefly shared information with participants regarding the UNESCAP and its cooperation areas. Then Mr. JAIN mentioned the emerging issues in transit transport facilitation by highlighting the importance of use of automatic transit transport systems. He stated that the freedom of transit was firstly recognized by the GATT In 1947. Then, he added, the TIR Convention in 1975 is the first international legal instrument providing for a robust guarantee system. He pointed out that due to the increasing level of integration and rising volume of transit transport and fraud coupled with the emergence of ICT’s led countries of EU to develop a computerized transit system.

He continued his presentation by emphasizing the benefits of the automated transit transport system. He mainly explained the benefits in two categories first for customs, then for private sector. He stated that there are many benefits of automated systems. Firstly, he continued, the automated systems improve the security of transit operations through more reliable and real time exchange of information. Secondly, these systems reduce time for processing transit documents and accelerated transit formalities through improved communication such as electronic exchange of messages. Lastly, they improve the capacity to deal with various types of fraud by better risk management to address security threats and revenue losses and automatic validation processes and reduced manual interventions.

Furthermore, Mr. JAIN explained the benefits for private sector which are flexible guarantees and their faster release reduce cost of transit transport, reduction of repeated data entry and accelerated customs transit formalities.

Mr. JAIN stated that application of electronic tracking system and using new technologies are also vital for the healthy customs transit processes. He pointed out that the tracking system is already in use in many countries such as China, Jordan, Hong Kong and many countries in Africa. He highlighted that UNESCAP developed a secure cross border transport model in 2012. Mr. JAIN draw attention to that there is a need for standardization of key components of tracking systems in order to contribute to transit transport facilitation in agreements.

In his final remarks, Mr. JAIN highlighted the rising importance of intermodal transit transport facilitation. He stated that uncoordinated growth among transport modes has led to unsustainable trends in development of transport, road transport contributes to three quarter

emissions. He pointed out that in order to reduce the carbon footprints of transport sector while meeting the increased demand for transport need to develop integrated intermodal transport system.

Mr. JAIN concluded his presentation by mentioning the implication for customs in facilitating automatic transit transport. He stated that it is important to enhance cooperation of customs with other border agencies and develop the capacity of customs officials to use new technologies to discharge their duties.

8.2. Ankara Logistics Base

“Private Sector Perspective on Customs Transit Systems”

Ms. Nurcan ÖZYAZICI SUNAY, Director of Operations and Bonded Area from Ankara Logistics Base, delivered a presentation with the theme of “Private Sector Perspective on Customs Transit Systems”.

At the beginning of her presentation, Ms. SUNAY shared brief information regarding the Ankara Logistics Base which is the Turkey’s first international logistics base.

Furthermore, Ms. SUNAY informed participants on transit procedure. She stated that transit procedure is the transportation of goods from the point to another under the customs control of the goods by securing the customs duties and other loads that may arise. Then, she briefly mentioned about the background of common transit procedure. She defined Common Transit Procedure as a transit system depending on Common Transit Convenience and carried out among the EU countries, EFTA Countries (Switzerland, Norway and Iceland), Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey.

She continued his presentation by explaining the forms of simplifications which are use of special type seals, authorized consignor, authorized consignee, comprehensive warranty or withdrawal of warranty and simplifications according to transport nodes (railroad, pipeline and airline).

Ms. SUNAY remarked the NCTS is a computerised transit system based on transformation of electronic messages and these messages take place of paper documents and some other formalities. She highlighted the advantages of the NCTS which are briefly; reducing the transport costs, time saving, providing competition, providing ease of guarantee and monitoring transit operations.

In her closing remarks, Ms. SUNAY mentioned the problems faced within the application and she some solutions to address them.

Problems Faced	Solution Offers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information on the common transit procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disproportionate and irrelevant punishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of criminal matters

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficult conditions for simplifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding the use of simplifications and facilitating the conditions of these permits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCTS system messages which will reduce the bureaucracy is not used	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring the effective use of NCTS system
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systemic problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redesign of the system in accordance with the current conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing all legislation related to transit and making them compatible

9. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. JAMMEH, Director from the Ministry of Trade in the Gambia and Chairperson of the Meeting and Mr. Deniz GÖLE, Director in the COMCEC Coordination Office.

In his remarks, Mr. JAMMEH, thanked all the Member Countries for giving him the opportunity to chair this session. He also thanked all the participants, presenters for their invaluable contributions, comments and ideas presented during the discussions.

Mr. GÖLE also thanked all the participants for their invaluable contributions. He underlined that the observations, comments and critiques of the participants on the research report prepared specifically for the Trade Working Group Meetings would be welcomed in order to improve its quality. He also stated feedbacks about the main output of the meeting, the draft policy recommendations which will be presented to the 35th Session of the COMCEC, would be very valuable. Mr. GÖLE also highlighted the importance of COMCEC Project Funding and invited the Member Country participants as well as the relevant OIC Institutions to submit project proposals to benefit from this important facility.

Mr. GÖLE informed the participants that the next (15th) Meeting of the Trade Working Group will be held with the theme of “*Guidelines for Effective National Trade Facilitation Committees in Islamic Countries*”. Before concluding, Mr. GÖLE thanked again all the participants and wished them a safe trip back home.

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting



14th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP (October 24th, 2019, Ankara)

“Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member Countries”

DRAFT AGENDA

Opening Remarks

1. The COMCEC Trade Outlook
2. Customs Transit Systems: Conceptual Framework and Global Overview
3. State of Customs Transit Systems in the OIC: Case Studies and Recommendations
4. Member States Presentations
5. Policy Options for Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member Countries
6. The Perspectives of the Private Sector and Efforts of the International Institutions
7. Utilizing COMCEC Project Funding

Annex 2: Program of the Meeting



DRAFT PROGRAMME

14th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP (October 24th, 2019/ Ankara)

“Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member Countries”

08.30-09.00 **Registration**

09.00-09.05 **Recitation from the Holy Quran**

09.05-09.15 **Opening Remarks**

COMCEC Trade Outlook

09.15-09.40 - *Presentation: Mr. Ercan SAKA*
Consultant
COMCEC Coordination Office

09.40-09.50 - *Discussion*

Customs Transit Systems: Conceptual Framework and Global Overview

09.50-10.30 - *Presentation: Mr. Jaroslav ILLE*
Consultant

10.30-10.45 - *Discussion*

10.45-11.00 *Coffee Break*

State of Customs Transit Systems in the OIC: Case Studies and Recommendations

11.00-11.40 - *Presentation: Mr. Jaroslav ILLE*
Consultant

11.40-12.30 - *Discussion*

12.30-14.00 *Lunch*

Policy Options for Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member States

There will be a moderation session under this agenda item. Participants will deliberate on the policy options/advice for improving customs transit systems in the OIC Member Countries. At the beginning of the session, the CCO will make a short presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions as well as the Room Document.

- 14.00-14.15 - *Presentation: “Responses of the Member Countries to the Policy Questions on Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member States”*
Mr. Selçuk KOÇ
Director
COMCEC Coordination Office

- 14.15-15.30 - *Discussion*

Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

- 15.30-15.45 - *Presentation: Mr. Deniz GÖLE*
Director
COMCEC Coordination Office

- 15.45-16.00 - *Discussion*

- 16.00-16.15 *Coffee Break*

16.15-17.15 Member Country Presentations

- *Presentation(s)*
- *Discussion*

The Perspectives of the Private Sector and Efforts of the International Institutions

- 17.15-17.30 - *Presentation: “UNESCAP’s Perspective and Efforts on the Customs Transit Systems”*
Mr. Sandeep Raj JAIN
Economic Affairs Officer
UNESCAP
- 17.30-17.45 - *Presentation: “Private Sector Perspective on Customs Transit Systems”*
Ms. Nurcan ÖZYAZICI SUNAY
Director
Ankara Logistics Base
- 17.30-17.45 - *Discussion*
- 17.45-18.00 *Closing Remarks*

Annex 3: The Policy Recommendations

DRAFT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY 14TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 14th Meeting on October 24th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member States.” During the Meeting, Trade Working Group, made deliberations for policy approximation among the Member Countries regarding customs transit systems. The room document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted specifically for the 14th Meeting of the TWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the TWG focal points by the COMCEC Coordination Office before the Meeting. During the Meeting, the participants agreed on the policy recommendations included in the Room Document. The existing document includes these policy recommendations highlighted during the Meeting.

The Member States of the TWG are kindly invited to communicate their observations on this document, if there are any, to the COMCEC Coordination Office by November 4th, 2019. The comments received before November 4th, 2019 will be able to be incorporated into the Document. After incorporating the Member States’ contributions, this document will be submitted to the 35th Ministerial Meeting of the COMCEC to be held on 25-28 November 2019 in İstanbul, as an outcome of the 14th TWG Meeting.

Policy Advice 1: Designing an appropriate legal and procedural framework for national customs administrations through, among others, utilizing international conventions on customs transit regimes

One of the preconditions for an efficient international transit application is to have an appropriate legal and procedural framework assigned to and enforced by the relevant national authorities, in particular national customs administrations. Besides national legal framework, the relevant international organizations (i.e. WTO and WCO), international conventions and standards (i.e. WCO Revised Kyoto Convention (RKS), WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and WCO SAFE Framework of Standards (SAFE FoS)) encourage governments to conclude and implement bilateral and regional agreements with other governments/customs administrations for cooperation on Customs Transit Regimes (CTR).

As long as these agreements in line with the relevant international instruments, standards and recommendations, they would facilitate international transit. This is particularly important due to;

- Low participation of OIC MS in international organizations related to CTR
- Lack of full implementation of the international instruments, standards and recommendation arising from international organizations;
- Inconsistency between national legislations, customs codes and regulations related to CTR with the International standards and recommendations;

- Most of the current bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements are not in line with the transit provisions identified in international instruments, standards, and recommendations.

Policy Advice 2: Establishing/Developing an efficient electronic exchange of information system among all relevant agencies, particularly among neighboring countries

The efficient exchange of information, without prejudice to national security, among all relevant agencies involved en route, including customs, transport control units, security authorities, particularly among neighboring countries, is a crucial element for management and monitoring of transit operations.

In order to maximize the positive impact of exchange of information among the national relevant authorities, in particular among the national customs authorities related to CTR, it is a must to establish of a common concept - standard for the electronic and automatic exchange of pre-arrival information in (near) “real-time” between CAs. This is particularly important due to:

- Existence of different ICT technological development level (some of the member countries having technologically obsolete IT Systems),
- Use of different Customs Declaration Processing Systems,
- Lack of national regulatory basis for exchange of information with other customs services.

Policy Advice 3: Developing an efficient guarantee management and monitoring system for Customs Transit Regimes

The amount of CTR guarantees should be as low as possible and not exceed the sum of the highest rates of customs duties that would be applicable to the transit Customs territory. Customs should be flexible in the form of security required by not insisting on cash deposits, or by accepting general security instruments covering single or multiple transit operations.

It is highly recommended for customs administrations to develop a standard procedure for granting a comprehensive guarantee, in which they calculate the guarantee amount on the basis of the volume of transit operations carried out by the applicant in the earlier period.

When calculating the guarantee amount, the followings should not be taken into account:

- Any potentially chargeable penalties;
- Any interest for delayed payment;
- Other concerns that would increase the guarantee amount or hinder transit operations unnecessarily.

According to the evaluation of the risk, the authorisation to use the comprehensive guarantee with full guarantee amount shall be granted only to a person who satisfies the conditions set up by the national authorities.

Additionally, according to the recognized risks level, governments can set up a list of high risky goods where the specific minimum rates for calculation of guarantee are published. Usually, on an annual basis, governments may regularly evaluate the actual risk level and the list of high risky goods.

One of the essential requirements of any transit system is a valid guarantee for a single or multiple transit operations, which covers the full amount of Customs duty and other charges applicable. To increase the security in the national or international/regional CTR, it is recommended to develop the Guarantee Management System (GMS), which could be used for CTR and for other customs procedures. The Guarantee Management System (GMS) shall be managed by the Customs office of Guarantee. The Guarantee Management System (GMS) checks and monitors whether the amount of guarantee or the reference amount of comprehensive guarantee or guarantee waiver is not exceeded when a new customs declaration is lodged.

Policy Advice 4: Simplifying the formalities and documentary requirements for facilitating transit operations.

Customs administrations (CA) and other government agencies (OGA) need to reduce the data required for the transit declaration and may request the data necessary to identify the goods and means of transport. In this respect they may review the formalities and documentary requirements for transit with a view to minimizing their complexity.

Customs administrations are also encouraged to provide enabling conditions and requirements, including submission of data, and simplified forms for transit operations, for all business enterprises. Customs administrations and OGAs may also review the formalities and documentary requirements for transit with a view to harmonizing them with the regional and international requirements.

Upon application, the customs authorities may authorize any of the following simplifications regarding the placing of goods under the CTR or the end of that procedure at the inland customs offices:

- a) The status of Authorised Consignor, allowing the holder of the authorization to place goods under the CTR without presenting them to customs at the customs office of departure;
- b) The status of Authorised Consignee, allowing the holder of the authorization to receive goods moved under the CTR at an authorized place, to end the procedure on behalf of the customs office of destination;
- c) The use of seals of a special type, where sealing is required to ensure the identification of the goods placed under the CTR;
- d) The use of a customs declaration with reduced data requirements to place goods under the CTR;
- e) The use of an electronic transport document as customs declaration to place goods under the CTR, provided it contains the particulars of such declaration and those particulars are available to the customs authorities at departure and at the destination to allow the customs supervision of the goods and the discharge of the procedure.

Policy Advice 5: Developing integrated risk management systems to manage and facilitate transit customs procedures

Governments need to set up integrated risks management systems between all border control agencies involved both within a country and between neighbouring countries who are parties to regional integration initiatives. This integrated risk assessment service would facilitate the decision-making procedures. The risk for each transit movement can be estimated with precision, and the decision would be dependent on this risk. This way, the exercise of discretionary powers by customs officers and agencies would be minimized. Furthermore, the transit operations need to be included in the Customs Risk Management framework.

Policy Advice 6: Ensuring a well-coordinated border management through enhancing cooperation among different border control agencies and with the neighboring countries as well as assigning a national transit coordinator.

There is a need to foster mutual cooperation between customs administrations and other relevant government agencies responsible for border controls and procedures related to the transit of goods. An adequate organizational scheme of the customs authorities at all levels is needed to ensure effective allocation of the necessary human and technical resources for the transit system.

Border agencies should also cooperate with neighbouring countries to coordinate procedures at border crossings and facilitate transit operations. Therefore, governments are encouraged to coordinate transit operation activities between different border control agencies.

Governments can also appoint a national transit coordinator to steer all inquiries and proposals from other countries related to the good functioning of transit operations.

Policy Advice 7: Developing necessary mechanisms (i.e. a Customs-Business Partnership programme) for promoting partnership with private sector while designing policies and procedures related to transit.

When governments design, modify and review policies and procedures on transit, they need to take into consideration to provide micro, small, medium-sized, or similar operators with enough opportunity to reflect their views on the policies and procedures. The private sector should have sufficient opportunity and time to comment on the proposed regulations related to the movement of goods in transit.

Therefore, Customs Administrations are encouraged to develop a Customs-Business Partnership programme to improve the effectiveness of transit in accordance with the WCO Customs-Business Partnership Guidance. It is also recommended for governments to develop mechanisms/procedures to review and appeal against administrative decisions related to transit.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- COMCEC Trade Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

- COMCEC Project Funding: Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be

financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas and their sub-areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects. The projects may include seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

Annex 4: List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 14TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP 24 OCTOBER 2019 Ankara

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Mr. TAREK ALLOUNE
Assistant Director, Ministry Of Trade
- Mr. ISMAIL BENANTEUR
Divisional Inspector, Directorate General of Customs

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

- Mr. RENE AKOWANOU
Expert, Ministry Of Industry and Commerce
- Mr. WILFRIED HERMANN AMOUSSOU
Programme Officer, Ministry of Planning and Development

REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

- Mr. GUIRREH DRIEH ALLALEH
Head of Taxation, Ministry of Finance

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Mr. HAYTHAM AHMED ABDELGHANY MOHAMED
Commercial Consul, the Consulate General of Arab Republic of Egypt Commercial Office In Istanbul
- Mr. AMR SELIM
Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Egypt in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA

- Mr. FABBA JAMMEH
Director of Trade, Ministry of Trade

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- Mr. MOSTAFA AYATI
Director General of Transit Bureau, I.R.Iran Customs Administration

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

- Ms. HANADI ALENEZI
Researcher, Ministry of Finance

LIBYA

- Mr. ESAM ALMALHOUF
Delegate, Ministry of Economy

MALAYSIA

- Mr. NAZRIQ LAMIEN
Assistant Director, Ministry of International Trade and Industry
- Ms. RAMLAH MUKHTAR
Senior Assistant Director of Customs, Royal Malaysian Customs Department
- Mr. YAHYA SULAIMAN
Senior Assistant Director of Customs, Royal Malaysian Customs Department

REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

- Mr. MOHAMED MASEEH
Customs Officer, Maldives Customs Service

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

- Mr. DRISS ETTAKI
Head of Division, Customs Administration of Morocco

SULTANATE OF OMAN

- Mr. YAZIN ALBUSAIDI
Trade Facilitation Lead, Oman Global Logistics Company (ASYAD)

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- Ms. MARIA KAZI
Joint Secretary, Ministry Of Commerce & Textile

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

- Mr. FADI ABUBAKER
Customs Statics Team Leader, Custom Administration

STATE OF QATAR

- Mr. HASSAN AL MOHANNADI
Economic Specialist, Ministry of Economy and Trade

REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

- Ms. KHADIDIATOU JOCELYNE FALL
Deputy Head of Office of Regional Trade Agreements, Ministry Of Trade and Smes

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

- Mr. ALGAYLI OMER
Expert, Sudan Customs Authority

REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

- Mr. DONAGHY MALONE
Head of Department, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism
- Mr. PAUL SOEBAL
Expert, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

- Mr. ABDURAHMON SOBIROV
Third Secretary, Embassy of Tajikistan in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- Ms. AYLİN BEBEKOĞLU

Head of Department, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. AYŞEGÜL DEMİR
Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. ANIL EVMEZ
Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. AKIN AK
Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Ms. PINAR VURGUN
Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. BURAK ERCAN ERDOĞAN
Expert, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- Mr. SERKAN S. KAYATÜRK
Expert, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. KUBİLAY ŞİMŞEK
Expert, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey

B. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

- Mr. DAVRON ISHNAZAROV
Data Registrar, SESRIC

C. AFFILIATED ORGANS OF THE OIC

STANDARDS AND METROLOGY INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SMIIC)

- Mr. İHSAN ÖVÜT
Secretary General, SMIIC

D. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

UNESCAP

- Mr. SANDEEP RAJ JAIN
Officer, UNESCAP

ANKARA LOGISTICS BASE

- Ms. NURCAN OZYAZICI SUNAY
Director

E. CONSULTANTS

- Mr. JAROSLAV ILLE
Consultant
- Mr. DRAGAN SHUTEVSKI
Consultant,
- Mr. ERCAN SAKA
Consultant, COMCEC

F. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. M. METİN EKER
Director General
- Mr. ERTAN TOSUN
Deputy Director General
- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ
Head of Department
- Mr. DENİZ GÖLE
Head of Department
- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN
Head of Department
- Mr. MUSTAFA ADİL SAYAR
Expert
- Mr. FATİH ARSLAN
Expert