

SPEECH FOR COMMISSIONER MOYANE

At the opening of the WCO East and Southern Africa (ESA) Regional Workshop on the Strategic Initiatives for Trade Facilitation and the Implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in, Johannesburg, South Africa

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Esteemed Guests ,

Ladies, gentlemen and friends

I am truly honoured and delighted to be the welcoming all of you here
today. .

A special and fraternal welcome to our colleagues from the WTO and
representatives from the Ministries of Trade within the ESA region
whose cooperation we value highly. The intersection between trade

policy and customs is pivotal in creating a favourable and positive environment for the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement. There is a unanimous agreement that trade is the engine of growth that lays firm basis for economic prosperity of nations. Accordingly we must come out of this workshop with a better understanding of what needs to be done to facilitate trade within our region and globally.

As history would have us know Mercator, born *Gerard de Kremer*, a popular philosopher, Mathematician and cartographer by trade is credited as the first person to use an Atlas as a collection of maps. The Mercator projection enabled mariners to plot straight courses and take correct compass readings, and this became paramount in supporting trade movements.

This man provided the fundamental tools that led to a vivid understanding of the world and created the channels for connectivity. As we come together today under the Mercator programme I can only hope that we can plot the way to global connectivity or at the least regional interconnectivity, actively contribute to expanding trade volumes and enhance economic competitiveness by implementing robust trade facilitation measures.

In the words of Warren Bennis I quote - "*Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality*". This is the crux of why were are gathered here, to collectively translate the vision of the TFA into reality, and that

reality must translate into actions that move us closer to meeting our respective mandates and that is to collect tax, protect our economies and facilitate legitimate trade.

At the core of all our challenges is always the conundrum of balancing trade facilitation with security and George Patton tells us that and I quote. *“Accept the challenges, so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory”*. I find this particularly moving because the organisation I work for is very good at accepting challenges, meeting them head on and realising massive rewards out of its victories. I believe this should be the spirit of this gathering. Meet the challenges head on.

The Mercator programme’s strategic initiatives are aimed at trade facilitation including providing support to WCO members in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). Out of this Workshop we must carve a path that will speak to how we collectively find ways of supporting each other in order to implement such tools. This should be complemented by the role of different organisations that support trade facilitation initiatives and of course all the contributions that can be made by development partners in supporting reforms.

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen,

Our first strategic objective as East and Southern African (ESA) region of the WCO consonant with our strategic plan is to promote trade facilitation. One key activity linked to that is the accession and implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) by ESA Member States (MS). The RKC is at the core of the Economic Competitiveness Package (ECP) and by extension the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The Economic Competitive Package provides practical implementation guidance for the Trade Facilitation Agreement. The Economic Competitive Package also enables Members to promote regional integration. Referring to global standards defined by the Revised Kyoto Convention and other Economic Competitive Package tools and instruments, Customs administrations may harmonise various regulations and procedures in their regional or bilateral frameworks,

This meeting has therefore come at an opportune time and speaks directly to our strategic direction. The Trade Facilitation Agreement was also concluded at the time when we had begun the process of reviewing our strategy. This necessitated that the review takes into account the Trade Facilitation Agreement and its implications for implementation by customs administrations. It is for this reason that the strategy implementation plan now includes Trade Facilitation Agreement Awareness Raising Workshops as well as assistance in establishing National Trade Facilitation Committees (NCTF). To date 10 members of the ESA region are yet to accede to the Revised Kyoto Convention and it is incumbent upon all of us to give the necessary support to these Member States. Meetings like these will go a long way towards raising awareness on the Trade Facilitation Agreement, mobilising donor

support and ensure coordination in the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement by the ESA region and the Continent.

There are potential benefits to trade facilitation, particularly in respect of achieving efficiencies in customs and border procedures. The TFA may also help to boost intra-Africa trade, provided it is implemented in a manner that supports regional integration in Africa and that adequate financial and technical support is indeed provided for its implementation. I need to emphasize that for their part, African countries including South Africa have made strides in pursuing programmes for trade facilitation across our various regional integration programmes by including our own countries.

Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation remains high on the WCO agenda. Emphasis continues to be placed on the critical need for harmonised implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement using WCO instruments such as the TFA Implementation Guidelines and other tools that continue to be developed; the Mercator Programme and the assistance it provides; the use of the WCO TFA Working Group (TFAWG) as a forum for enhancing cooperation between Customs and other stakeholders like the private sector and other government agencies (OGAs); Customs is encouraged to play a leading role in the National Committees on Trade Facilitation (NCTF). The ball is in our courts to take full advantage of the support from the WCO and use it for the benefit of our customs administration and our economies at large. The OECD has already conducted a study showing the link between TFA implementation and economic growth.

The TFA requires that two-thirds of the Members ratify for it to enter into force. To date 20 countries have ratified, with one (Botswana) from the ESA region. This is unsatisfactory situation, thus, as countries of the region we must act with speed to ratify this game changing programme.

SARS has already submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry (Dti) their readiness regarding implementation on Category A and B commitments. SARS only listed two Category B commitments i.e. single window and advance rulings. It is expected that the other affected departments would be able to do so as soon as possible. Once all departments have determined their readiness the dti will submit to cabinet for a decision on the Category A notifications and a decision to take the TFA to Parliament for ratification. Upon ratification, the notification of our Category A commitments to the WTO will be informed accordingly.

It is no longer an option but an imperative for the region to coordinate and align its implementation of the TFA for better leverage on the WCO support and Development Partners support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The WCO is providing assistance to its Members to set up NCTFs, ensuring that these Committees are productive and maintained. In

recognition of the need for further engagement with other border agencies and the private sector, the WCO chose Coordinated Border Management as its 2015 theme. In order to support Members, the WCO has created a Web page under the TFA section on its website to share Members' experiences; it contains Members' case studies regarding NCTFs which assists other Members in designing their own NCTFs.

Colleagues, let me emphasize the value of networking and collaborative cooperation. In this world of information overload and the speed at which things happen and change, one cannot succeed alone and SARS is no different. SARS successfully took part in the early conception and development stages (Phase1) of this programme. Just to mention a few, countries such as Seychelles, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, and Lesotho benefited immensely from the technical support. As a result the practical recommendations highlighted the urgent need that lay the foundations for the 2nd phase of this project in the region.

SARS like all of the revenue authorities herein present is committed to playing a catalytic role in fostering collaborative cooperation and providing direct support to the development of skills and capacity across the continent with resources permitting of course, but most importantly that we as SARS in the process learn from each and every one of you.

If you pause for a moment and think, SACU was established in 1910, making it the world's oldest surviving customs union and some 40 years senior to Europe's trade bloc. But despite this head start, intra-African

trade links are pitifully weak. The bulk of the region's trade is with Europe and America: only 12% is with other African countries, this is according to research by Ecobank, a Togo-based bank. By comparison 60% of Europe's trade is with its own continent. The same is true in Asia. In North America the figure is 40%. Colleagues this is really a sad state of affairs. As if this is not enough the research further reports paltry trade amongst African countries at less than 20%.

If this depressing picture is juxtaposed with the African Union Agenda 2063 for continental free trade area, there must be a push to act decisively to foster smooth and faster movement of goods within our borders, thereby facilitate trade. As you are all aware, regional integration remains at the core of the African Union based on the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, which envisages the creation of African Economic Community anchored by SADC/COMESA/EAC.

I wish to mention with pride that the East African Community is making laudable progress as evidenced by legislating for Common Customs policy for the region, which makes the movement of goods seamless within the region. As agents charged with facilitation of legitimate trade, we must act with alacrity to our mandate, and it is my hope that during the next few days we will wrestle with this subject with greater focus and attention.

Over, the next few days you will have an opportunity to engage your senses, explore opportunities, consider the utilisation of global Customs

Standards, tools and technical assistance support that is provided for, and formulate your own strategies that will lead you to the speedy implementation of the TFA. You all know and I am quite sure that you will agree with me when I say *“The Human spirit lives on creativity and dies in conformity and routine”*. PS, I borrowed these words from Vilayat Inayat Khan, but I think they resonate, would you not agree? So as we deliberate, I urge you to exercise creativity and break out of routine.

As you tackle many of the issues at hand, I urge you to look at concrete, tangible and practical follow up actions that can be immediately taken following this event. Particularly look at actions that will require the least effort but can bring you quick results

It will be remiss of me if I were not to express our sincere thanks to our developmental partners for their inestimable support in the implementation of trade facilitation. It is critically important that in providing this valued cooperation that the Regional Office on Capacity Building (ROCB) in Nairobi is intimately involved together with the WCO in these regional projects so that they shape the form and scope of these capacity building activities. As we embark on future initiatives, let us ensure that we make a paradigm shift in engaging in mutually beneficial partnerships that lead global development efforts in the Customs space.

On behalf of SARS may you have fruitful and enlightened discussions and I hope that even in your busy schedules that you will at the very

least take the time to enjoy the beautiful diverse offerings of our beautiful south.

With that, I officially declare this gathering open.

Thank you