

Joint Press Release

The First Tripartite (Japan, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea) Customs Heads' Meeting

Tokyo, Japan, April 11th, 2007

The Customs Heads of Japan, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea held the first Tripartite Meeting in Tokyo, Japan on April 11th, 2007. Mr. Yukiyasu Aoyama, Director General, Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance, Japan led the Japanese delegation and chaired the meeting. Mr. Mu Xinsheng, Minister, General Administration of Customs, the People's Republic of China, led the Chinese delegation. Mr. Yun-Kap Seong, Commissioner, Korea Customs Service, the Republic of Korea, led the Korean delegation.

The followings are highlights of the discussion of the meeting.

- The three Customs Heads confirmed that, Customs administrations and procedures, as well as cooperation among Customs should play a significant role in materializing seamless and efficient trade flows in the region.
- The three Customs Heads shared the views that sophisticated risk management using Information Communication Technology is necessary for furthering secure trade flows and, a study on data exchange through ICT for trade facilitation should be explored. They also confirmed that national Single Windows should be strengthened, taking into consideration its effectiveness for trade facilitation. The three Customs Heads recognized regional Single Window such as the ASEAN Single Window and the APEC Single Window has a great potential to facilitate regional trade. They also reconfirmed to cooperate further in this field.
- The three Customs Heads confirmed that enhanced transparency, predictability and impartiality for trade regulations should also be secured through trade facilitation. In this regard, they welcomed the progress in trade facilitation negotiations in the WTO. They also confirmed their continuous cooperation in this area and expressed their readiness to make every efforts towards an early conclusion of the negotiations.
- Effective enforcement against illicit trafficking should be ensured through better cooperation and information exchange between Customs. The three Customs Heads recognized that, with the Japan-China Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) signed last year, a triangle of CMAA among the three Customs has been completed, which leads to better information exchange between them.
- Japan and Korea Customs appreciated China's contribution as the host of Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices in the Asian Pacific Region (RILO A/P) and confirmed to further cooperate with and support China Customs which will strengthen the role of RILO A/P in the field of the enforcement against illicit trafficking of drugs and goods infringing IPR, as well as commercial fraud. Japan and Korea Customs welcomed

China Customs' intention to keep hosting RILO A/P for the next term.

- On IPR, the three Customs Heads shared the view that a proper protection of IPR is indispensable for sound economic developments. The three Customs Heads continue their own efforts on this front and cooperate for better border measures. As one of the future collaborations, the three Customs Heads confirmed the necessity to set up a tripartite working group to conduct a joint study on measures against goods infringing IPR at borders, and exchanged views about its potential topics.
- On smuggling and commercial fraud, the three Customs Heads noted the progress of bilateral cooperation at an expert level and encouraged their further work.
- As for security issues, including effective enforcement against illicit trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, the three Customs Heads reconfirmed that the WCO Framework of Standards (FOS) is a useful tool and that each Customs is making every efforts to implement the FOS.
- The three Customs Heads underscored the importance of partnership with the private sector and the merits of developing Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programs in line with the WCO AEO Guidelines. They will conduct a study on possible directions of AEO programs starting on bilateral basis and expanding to a tripartite study.
- For the purpose of enhancing Customs capacities in the region, the three Customs Heads discussed how best capacity building activities can be provided and evaluated, and how to collaborate and coordinate these activities in the region. They also appreciated the activities of the WCO Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building to which three Customs have made contributions. These cooperative efforts will also contribute to the development of Customs administrations of the three countries.
- Since various regional groupings have been established such as ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit, APEC and ASEM, all of which include the three countries, the three Customs Heads recognized the progress of cooperative activities of these forums, and reaffirmed their continued active participation. Japan Customs proposed to host the 7th ASEM Customs DG-Commissioner meeting this autumn in Japan. China and Korea Customs welcomed this proposal, offering their assistance and cooperation.

The three Customs Heads confirmed that the Tripartite Customs Head's Meeting will be held in principle once a year. Korea Customs will host the next Tripartite Meeting in Korea.