



World Customs Organization
Organisation Mondiale des Douanes



STATEMENT BY
HON. IIPUMBU SHIMI, MP,
MINISTER OF FINANCE

ON THE
OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF
INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS DAY 2021

AS DELIVERED BY

Sam SHIVUTE
COMMISSIONER: NamRA

25 JANUARY 2021

Director of Ceremonies

Mr. Marcel Ratsui, from the SACU SECRETARIAT

Ms. Jackie Gawanas – Acting Commissioner of DCE

Ministry of Finance Management and fellow Staff

All Stakeholders

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentleman

A very good morning to all!

1. Today, we are celebrating the **World International Customs Day**. And feel humbled to have been tasked to deliver the key note address on **behalf of the Minister of Finance**. The significance of this day is well ingrained in the Global Customs Family and domestically, we continue to use the occasion to celebrate and bring into focus the work of our own Namibia Customs and Excise Directorate (DCE).
2. Each year the WCO adopts a theme to be the key driver for customs activities in the year and to support WCO members to align their operations with the theme. The theme for 2021 is **“CUSTOMS BOLSTERING RECOVERY, RENEWAL AND RESILIENCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN”**. Last year, we were gripped by the most pressing challenge of our times. The unprecedented turmoil and peculiarities brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic have placed increased pressure on trade and investment opportunities, placing significant strain on our capacity to maximize on revenue.

3. This year's theme speaks to the domestic priorities we have set for ourselves, specifically the objective set by our President, H.E Dr. Hage G. Geingob for our focus to be on building resilience.
4. To this end, the sustenance and security of the supply chain plays a pivotal role in the movement of goods across borders and countries. At the onset of the Covid pandemic, the efficiency of our regional integration mechanisms was put to a test. Due to the capacity developed over the last few decades, we were able to seamlessly coordinate the movement of essential goods like medicine and food across the entire supply chain, despite the brunt of the pandemic.

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN

5. Within the context of the renewal of supply chains, Namibia is excited by the recent launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which is brim-full of opportunities to strengthen intra-Africa trade, regional and continental value chains and create access to new markets and revenue streams.
6. In this regard, Customs Administrations will be an integral part of such initiatives as they unlock and leverage our competitiveness and enhance both continental and global trade logistics. Moreover, Customs Administrations are expected to continuously adapt and display agility and dynamism.
7. Namibia is in the process of launching the Namibian Revenue Agency (NamRA) with a mandate to administer state revenue and the reform of

Customs and Excise which will contribute to a more enabling business environment. Among the envisaged programmes I am proud to share as part of the implementation of Customs Modernization Programmes, the Directorate of Customs is embarking upon:

- 7.1. New Clearing Agent and Risk Management Policies;
 - 7.2. Establishment of the Container Control Programme and
 - 7.3. Electronic Data Interchange Center;
 - 7.4. Unique Consignment Reference and Advance Ruling.
8. In operationalisation of these programmes, we are mindful of the advances in technology which if optimally used can streamline our process and improve efficiency. It is therefore incumbent upon the Namibia Customs and Excise Administration to pause and examine our economic and social projections and benchmark them against international best practices in order to remain relevant and attuned to the latest global developments
9. At a national level DCE has made considerable efforts to align its legislation and procedures to Trade Facilitation Agreement, Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and the WCO Framework of Standards. Compliant with the latter, DCE has acquired and deployed state of the art Non-Intrusive Inspection Equipment (Scanners) at all the major entry points and is the first Customs Administration in the WCO East and Southern Africa Region of the WCO and of course globally to implement National Customs Enforcement Network (nCEN) for which Namibia Customs and Excise equally received three awards. Namely;
- ✓ Regional award- Regional Intelligence Liaison office East and Southern Africa - The most effective Communicator.

- ✓ International - Her Majesty Revenue Customs: On Risk and Intelligence Services.
 - ✓ Globally - Global Montreal Protocol Award United Nations Environment Program -14 officials received awards, on combating ozone depleting substances.
10. Allow me to also emphasize the need on OUR part to uphold high levels of professionalism and integrity in all OUR interactions and dealings at all times. We are obligated to be patriotic and ethical to ensure that we uphold the Republic of Namibia's clear and firm stand on fighting corruption.

Director of Ceremonies, Ladies and gentleman,

11. I have only given an overview of our Customs' determination to safeguard the security of the business environment which is also conducive to the long-term economic development of the country. They are indeed a versatile and professional team that has proven to master a diverse portfolio as I mentioned at the start of my speech. I would like to take this opportunity to pay warmest tribute to the outstanding work of all our customs officers who contributed their efforts towards this course.
12. Indeed, these achievements resonate with the theme of the year which places emphasis on *recovery, renewal and resilience for a sustainable supply chain. With the accreditation customs programme in the DCE, the private sector can be assured of our commitment to secure the supply chain in line with the WCO SAFE framework of Standards. I wish to invite the private sector to partake in this programme in order that we collectively place Namibia as a safe and secure global player.*

13. In a moment, I will present the Certificates of Merit and a trophy of Excellence on behalf of the World Customs Organization to recognize the achievements made by officers in the theme of “security of the business environment”. Please join me in applauding them for demonstrating excellent diligent and steadfast commitment.

14. As I stated at the beginning of my address, we should remain committed to celebrating the International Customs Day whilst at the same time we are reminded of our global resolve to maintaining high degree of balance between trade facilitation and compliance. By upholding high standards of integrity and governance; and promoting precision in sharing information we accelerate collaboration with other Customs Administrations in eliminating trade barriers amongst Member States. Let us continue to communicate effectively to facilitate trade whilst making our Borders safe and securing our territorial integrity.

I thank you all for sparing time to join us in celebrating this year International Customs Day.

I thank you