**WTO Trade Facilitation Committee meeting**

3 and 4 March 2021

- WCO intervention under item 2.A -

* At the TFC meeting in January, the WCO provided an update on the development of the WCO Guidelines for Disaster Management and Supply Chain Continuity, developed under the project funded by the Government of Japan. The WCO held a number of workshops from which the lessons learnt will contribute to the Guidelines. They will be available to the membership in a few weeks and submitted to the Permanent Technical Committee to be held in April and May.
* We also provided information on the adoption of the [Resolution on the Role of Customs in facilitating the cross-border movement of situationally critical medicines and vaccines](http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/about-us/legal-instruments/resolutions/resolution_e.pdf?la=en), adopted by the WCO Council in December 2020. The Resolution is available on the WCO web site in 7 languages (English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish). To enable Members to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in an agile and effective manner, the Secretariat has in the meantime developed a COVID-19 Action Plan, which will also be submitted to the Permanent Technical Committee in April.
* Following the adoption of the Resolution, the Secretariat created a new [section](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/natural-disaster/covid19-vaccines-distribution.aspx) on the WCO web-site to share information related to the cross-border movement of the COVID-19 vaccines. The web page includes, amongst other, 10 Members’ good practices on facilitating the movement of vaccines across borders.
* Last week, the WCO published a [Secretariat note](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2021/february/wco-issues-a-secretariat-note-on-practical-steps-to-facilitate-and-secure-the-cross-border-movement.aspx) on practical steps to facilitate and secure the cross-border movement of COVID-19 vaccines by Customs. It provides information on WCO instruments and tools that can support the implementation of the Resolution and contains examples of Members’ practices.
* The WCO also issued an [HS Classification reference for vaccines and related supplies and equipment](http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/natural-disaster/covid-19-list-for-vaccines/hs-classification-reference-vaccines-english.pdf?la=en) that was developed in cooperation with the WHO. The document aims to support Member Customs administrations and supply chain stakeholders in classifying vaccines and related supplies and equipment at the international level, i.e. 6 digits as per the HS. The related supplies and equipment include vials, syringes, needles, dry ice, freezers, etc.
* On 2 February 2021, the Secretaries General of ICAO and the WCO signed a [Joint Statement](http://www.wcoomd.org/-/media/wco/public/global/pdf/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/natural-disaster/covid_19_vaccine/t-on-the-global-transportation-and-distribution-of-covid_19-vaccines-and-associated-medical-supplies_en.pdf?la=en) on the global transportation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and associated medical supplies. The Joint Statement calls for open collaboration between the aviation and Customs communities, as well as those responsible for other transport modes and other relevant stakeholders, in order to ensure safe, secure and efficient transport of vaccines and associated equipment across borders.
* The Secretariat is also implementing activities aimed at preventing organized criminal organizations from exploiting the situation. It has developed a tool for Customs Risk Management during a pandemic, and announced the organization of operation STOP II.
* I would like to use this opportunity to once again invite the TFC delegates to the meeting of the TFA Working Group which will be held next week on Monday and Tuesday from 12h to 15h. We will, amongst other, discuss a number of aspects in the context of the pandemic, such as overall TFA implementation, partnerships with other agencies and the private sector, as well as the role of technologies.

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