



The Maputo Declaration

A Commitment to Integrity in Customs

WE, the participants at the international conference on 'Integrity in Customs: The African Response' held in Maputo, Mozambique from 20 to 22 March 2002, and organised by the World Customs Organization and the Government of Mozambique:

RE-COMMITTING ourselves to the World Customs Organization's Arusha Declaration on Integrity in Customs adopted in 1993;

RECOGNIZING that corruption exists in all countries, in the public and the private sectors, and that strong political commitment is necessary to combat corruption;

RECOGNIZING that Customs and revenue administrations perform a wide range of vitally important fiscal, economic and social functions. These have a significant impact on a nation's capacity to benefit from the expansion and development of world trade and its capacity to meet legitimate social, economic and national development goals;

ACKNOWLEDGING the wide range of positive and constructive steps that have already been taken by many Customs and revenue administrations in Africa to acknowledge the problem of corruption and to address it in practical and effective ways;

AFFIRMING that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is the programme for sustainable development of Africa, and that Customs and revenue administrations have a significant contribution to make to realise its objectives;

NOTING that integrity in Customs increases public trust and confidence in government institutions; prevents significant revenue leakage; contributes to voluntary compliance with laws, regulations and directions; removes unnecessary barriers to international trade, foreign investment and economic development; and increases the level of national security and community protection;

RECALLING the key themes and outcomes that were articulated in the final Declaration of the Customs Workshop at the 2nd Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity held in The Hague (the Netherlands) in May 2001;

INVITING the private sector to build integrity amongst businesses and citizens and to work with Governments to create Customs and revenue administrations inspired by integrity and service; and

CALLING UPON developed countries to support the promotion of integrity through a genuine commitment to technical assistance and capacity building and practical co-operation, including the sharing of information;

DECLARE that the Customs and revenue administrations of the African continent are committed to an action plan to:

- Urgently take comprehensive and practical steps to implement all the key elements and provisions of the World Customs Organisation's Arusha Declaration on Integrity in Customs adopted in 1993 and, in particular, to reform and modernise systems and procedures by promoting the application of new technologies to eliminate opportunities for corruption and to reduce the incentives for officials and members of the business community to act in unethical ways; and to develop and implement appropriate human resource management strategies, including training and motivation, that acknowledge the unique operating environment of Customs and revenue administrations and reinforce the highest standards of professional and ethical behaviour;
- Develop and implement regional mechanisms to enable Customs and revenue administrations to identify and implement policies and pragmatic measures to increase integrity and combat corruption and to share information on integrity strategies and best practice approaches;
- Develop a positive and effective partnership with all sections of the business community to identify areas of high risk and to implement practical steps to address the problem of corruption in Customs and revenue administrations;
- Develop and implement appropriate Codes of Conduct in Customs and revenue administrations, the private sector and other stakeholders which clearly set out in very practical and unambiguous terms the behaviour of all Customs and revenue officials, the private sector and other stakeholders; and
- Establish national integrity development plans that strike an appropriate balance between pre-emptive strategies such as education and corruption prevention and traditional approaches such as corruption detection, investigation and prosecution.

WE therefore draw the attention of the international community to:

- The fundamentally important role played by national Customs and revenue administrations in collecting national revenue, facilitating trade, protecting society and safeguarding national security and the need to regard effective, efficient and corruption-free Customs and revenue administration as a critically important national assets;
- The absolute importance of ensuring effective and sustained commitment to combat corruption at the highest political and administrative levels; and
- The need to place the reform and modernisation of Customs and revenue administrations as well as other public institutions, high on the development assistance and capacity building agendas of international and multilateral institutions and development partners.

Made at Maputo, Mozambique on 22nd day of March, 2002.