

Overview of the CARICOM Opportunities and Obligations arising out of the Customs Harmonized Bill

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Background

- **Member States used outdated laws dating as far back as 1967;**
- **Customs laws needed to capture modern trade practices;**
- **The importance of inclusion of Chief Parliamentary Counsel;**
- **Nine Joint Meetings of Customs Officials and Regional Chief Parliamentary Counsel were held between 2002 and 2016;**
- **Harmonized Customs Bill and Regulations were finally approved by the Legal Affairs Committee in September 2016;**
- **Technical Assistance was received from CARTAC and ACP Business Climate Facility (BizClim).**

Requirements of the CSME

- **There is an urgent need to strengthen the environment that facilitates greater intra-regional trade in the CSME;**
- **A greater role for customs authorities to govern the movement of goods, people and conveyances across borders;**
- **CSME now completing ‘Customs Union’ milestone with approval of Harmonized Customs Legislation;**
- **CARICOM Customs Procedure Manual completed.**

Member States' Obligations

- **Under Article 95 of the RTC, Member States to co-operate in customs administration;**
- **Also under Article 95, Member States undertake to establish harmonized customs legislation and procedures;**
- **Under Article 82 of the RTC, CARICOM Member States have an obligation to establish and maintain an common external tariff;**
- **As members of the WTO, CARICOM Member States have an obligation to adopt the procedures set out by that body;**
- **All CARICOM Member States have a collective obligation to contribute to the development of the CSME.**

Opportunities

- **Increased predictability of customs procedures at ports of entry in Member States;**
- **Reduced clearance times for goods at ports of entry;**
- **Implementation of trusted trader programmes (Authorized Economic Operators) based on a 80/20 Principle;**
- **Increased attractiveness of the Caribbean Community as a destination for foreign direct investment;**
- **Improved rankings in the World Bank's Doing Business Index.**

Secretariat's expectations

- **Passing the Customs Bill and Regulations into domestic law;**
- **Facilitates expansion of operations of regional companies to other territories in the Region;**
- **Participation in the Comprehensive Review of the Common External Tariff and Rules of Origin;**
- **Establish National Trade Facilitation Committees as agreed by COTED;**
- **Work with Customs Committee of COTED to implement decisions of COTED.**

Thank you

Any Questions?