

Customs Talk – 2016 International World Customs Day

International Customs Day is celebrated around the world is celebrated by the custom organizations every year on 26th of January. It is celebrated to commemorate the very first official conference of the Customs Co-operation Council which is now known as the World Customs Organization, WCO.

World Customs Organization, having over 177 custom administration members, is called as the only intergovernmental organization which solely highlights on the customs matters. World Customs Organization was established in the year 1952 as an independent body to enhance the efficacy and effectiveness of the customs administrations all across the world.

FS: When and what is the theme for this year's International Customs Day?

ACEO: We will be celebrating the International Customs Day on Tuesday, January 26 at our various ports with the main event being held in Suva where the Attorney General and Minister for Finance - Honorable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum will be our Chief Guest. This year's theme is "Digital Customs: Progressive Engagement". The theme is not only important for Customs but the strategic positioning of FRCA in its leadership role in Fiji, the Region and the globe – our world class journey! FRCA launched the ASYCUDA World for our maritime port in Savusavu on 22nd of this month.

FS: Please elaborate more on the theme?

ACEO: Digitalization of data and information sharing is crucial as we work towards efficient trade and travel facilitation for better yields in revenues and border security. Across the customs supply chain, traders, agents, freight forwarders, carriers and border agencies are embracing new digital technologies. Also new waves of innovation are driving an urgent need for a common digital platform across the customs supply chain. Using well-defined architectures, governance and services, new digital platforms are accessible by the entire trade ecosystem, as well as third party service providers.

FS: What does the theme entail for FRCA?

ACEO: At FRCA we need to be smarter. To remain attractive destinations for trade, we must personalize our services and provide more engaging user experiences—making life easier for the trading community, other border agencies and FRCA. By mastering our data, we will be able to provide actionable insights to prevent and tackle fraud and risks. It will also promote legitimate trade and also create more personalized experiences for our users.

FS: How do you intend to celebrate this year's International Customs Day?

ACEO: We will have guest speakers and invited guests at our respective ports to celebrate the event. A number of customs officers will be also receiving Certificates of Merit from the World Customs Organization for their outstanding performance and contributions in 2015. We have also organized a two day - public awareness at the Government Referral Center on 25th and 26th January which will also feature our key stakeholders like Immigration, Environment, Health and Bio-Security Authority of Fiji.