



Container Control Programme to Help Curb Illegal Cross-Border Activities

The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) has taken another step towards strengthening security at its borders with the launch of the Container Control Programme (CCP) and the Cargo Targeting System (CTS.).

The milestone launch took place on Friday, 21 August 2020 at the FRCS Headquarters in Suva. CCP in Fiji has been funded by the Australian Border Force (ABF) as part of its commitment to work together with Pacific nations to strengthen regional borders. The ABF partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organisation (WCO) to implement the Container Control Programme and the Cargo Targeting System in Fiji – a system funded by Australia through the Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership.

This is a significant accomplishment for Fiji as FRCS is the first Customs Administration within the Oceania Region to administer the Container Control Programme and Cargo Targeting System.

Container Control Programme and Cargo Targeting System

The Container Control Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Customs Organisation was established in 2004. According to global statistics, some 90 per cent of international trade is represented by container flows and less than two per cent of these flows are inspected. This provides criminal syndicates with opportunity to organise transnational crimes. In response to this threat, the UNODC and WCO launched the CCP to assist Governments in establishing effective container selections and controls to prevent drug trafficking and other illicit cross-border activities.

The mission of the CCP is to build capacity in countries seeking to improve risk management, supply chain security and trade facilitation in sea, land and air in order to prevent the cross-border movement of illicit trade. CCP aims to assist Governments in participating countries to establish and maintain effective container controls that will serve not only to prevent trafficking in drugs and other illicit goods, but also to facilitate legitimate trade and protect border revenue.

The Cargo Targeting System (CTS) is an IT (information technology) application developed by WCO that provides risk assessment and targeting of import, export and transshipment cargo across the full range of customs risks.

Acknowledging Assistance

Speaking at the launch, the FRCS Acting Chief Executive Officer Ms. Fane W. Vave acknowledged the valuable support and collaboration with the World Customs Organisation, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Australian Government through the Australian Border Force in the establishment of the

Container Control Programme in Fiji.

Chief guest and Australia's High Commissioner to Fiji, John Feakes, said Australia remains committed to working together with Fijian authorities to enhance regional border security and further strengthen the relationship.

"Every day Fiji and Australia are working together to combat shared border security challenges in the Pacific region. This program is another step to strengthen this longstanding relationship, and will protect Fiji and Fijian trade."

How the Container Control Programme Works?

Under the CPP, a dedicated National Border Targeting Centre has been formed consisting of risk analysts and physical inspection teams from different law enforcement agencies (e.g. Customs, Police and other law enforcement agencies), who are trained and equipped in the framework of the CCP to work together to systematically target high-risk goods for professional law enforcement scrutiny, using risk analysis and other proactive techniques with minimum disruption to the free flow of legitimate trade.

They will work in close cooperation with each other to prevent cargo containers from being used for unlawful activities such as illicit drug trafficking, smuggling of goods, tax evasion, intellectual property related acts and possible terrorist acts.

CCP also promotes closer cooperation between national law enforcement agencies and encourages the development of effective information sharing mechanisms between countries participating in CCP on a regional and international level, and with the wider customs and border policing community.

The WCO and ABF teams facilitated and delivered various stages of CCP training including classroom and practical training, mentoring, work study tours and advanced specialised training.

FRCS will be equipped with the Cargo Targeting System. The CTS tiers the manifest and declaration data in order of high, medium, and low risk scores. This facilitates the triage of the data by an officer or analyst. Presenting the data in this manner allows Customs to ensure its officers are focused on the highest risk trade while pre-approved and/or low risk trade can be facilitated. The officers have the ability to work manually through an analytical workflow and refer high risk shipments for appropriate treatments and results are recorded for historical query and future analytical usage.

Benefits

Since the implementation of the CCP, established Units around the world have recorded impressive seizures. It allows NBCTC to target of high-risk cargo in a planned, efficient and effective manner capability to detect high-risk goods which will lead to reduced illicit trade. The CCP aims to assist governments to establish effective container controls that will serve not only to prevent drug trafficking and other illicit trade, but also to facilitate legitimate trade and raise state revenues. CCP will minimize the cost of storage, facilitates legitimate trade, reduces cost of doing business and assist in combatting illegal activities-at the border.

Coordinated Border Management

The Service is committed to ensure a Coordinated Border Management (CBM) Strategy to enhance national security, in line with international standards and collaboration". CCP will assist FRCS in meeting this goal through active inter-agency coordination with other national border and law enforcement agencies, introducing new mechanisms to reduce risks of entry of illicit and undesirable goods in Fiji and ensuring a secure trade platform to enable traders to comply with standards and the efficient movement of legitimate goods

For more information, please email us on info@frcs.org.fj.

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