

Message from the World Customs Organization



Dear colleagues,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the 7th annual PICARD Conference here in Marrakesh, Morocco. The host, Cadi Ayyad University, supported by the General Directorate of Customs and Indirect Taxes of Morocco, has done an outstanding job with their preparations, and we are now seeing the fruits of their efforts.

The WCO PICARD Programme was officially launched in 2006 to strengthen co-operation between the WCO, universities, and Customs human resources entities such as Customs Academies. The programme's objective is to provide a platform where stakeholders can co-operate, collaborate, and contribute to two main pillars: (1) Customs professionalism and (2) Customs-related research.

Key PICARD achievements include adopting the PICARD Professional Standards for operational and strategic Customs managers; holding six successful PICARD Conferences; and publishing many Customs-related research papers in the *World Customs Journal*. Moreover, a growing number of universities have obtained WCO recognition of their Customs-related academic curriculums.

The PICARD Conference has become an annual meeting place for Customs officers, Customs human resource professionals, and academics to network and exchange ideas on Customs professionalism and Customs-related research. It is an opportunity for Customs academies and the WCO Regional Training Centers to glean new ideas on human resource development. At each conference, research papers are presented; this year, papers will be presented on regional economic integration, emerging and evolving risks, and human resource management.

The conference this year will also consist of panels on Women in Leadership; IT developments and HRM challenges; and Customs Competence development and Professional Education recognition. The WCO and World Bank will present their new collective book, *Reform by Numbers: Measurement Applied to Customs and Tax Administrations in Developing Countries*. Finally, the WCO will present the PICARD 2020 strategic document which charts the way forward for the programme's future.

With this impressive agenda, there is no doubt that the event outcomes will greatly benefit the global Customs community.

I wish you a good meeting!

Warmest regards,

Kunio Mikuriya
Secretary General