Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC)
Government Issue Paper: International Engagement and Trade Facilitation

November 2017

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Background:

- During the 14th COAC session, the Trade Modernization Subcommittee established the International Engagement and Trade Facilitation Working Group (IETF) to identify barriers to effective and efficient trade with our most prominent trade partners and works to support the mission of CBP at the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- The IETF Working Group launched in October 2015. Current membership includes representatives from CBP (Office of Trade, Office of International Affairs, Office of Trade Relations and Office of Field Operations), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), and the various representatives of the trade community. The IETF's work has focused on five world regions: Africa/Middle East, Latin America, Asia, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Americas, and Europe.
- Through engagement with the WCO, IETF seeks to offer partner countries strategic approaches and practical solutions to encourage the adoption of best trade practices, and works to promote the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).
- The TFA was agreed to in Bali in December 2013 and creates binding commitments for its Members to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, improve cooperation among WTO Members on customs matters, and help developing countries fully implement the provisions of the TFA.
- The TFA entered into force on February 22, 2017, upon acceptance by two-thirds of WTO Members.

Issue:

- Identifying examples of best practices that U.S. businesses experience in the United States and abroad that facilitate trade and can be applied globally.
- Proposing methods to make customs controls and procedures more efficient and uniform globally.
- Collaborating with critical government offices (i.e. USTR, USAID, and the Department of Commerce) to enhance stakeholder engagement for trade.

Current Status:

- The IETF presented over 50 recommendations to the August 2017 COAC meeting, which were adopted, to promote the adoption of best practices in implementing the TFA.

Next Steps

- The IETF's next step is to identify key priorities from the recommendations that were adopted.

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