
Editorial

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The topics addressed in this edition of the Journal are very broad. Some analyse technical aspects of border management such as tariff classification, valuation, and Authorized Economic Operator verification, while others address more strategic issues relating to the design of excise regimes, the use of automation to mitigate corruption risks, the role played by Customs in free trade zones, and the ability of administrations to effectively manage new and emerging cross-border regulatory requirements. In many ways the wide variety of topics that we receive is reflective of the scope of responsibilities that fall to Customs and other border management agencies.

One area of responsibility that has again emerged at the time of publication is that of cross-border disaster relief, this time triggered by the devastating earthquake that struck Morocco, shortly followed by the flooding in Libya. It is in times of crisis that a country's customs authority is required to respond in the most radical of ways – whether the crisis is caused by natural disasters such as the devastation of an earthquake or flood, the impact of a global pandemic, the horror of a terrorist attack, or the carnage of war. It is at such times that the rule book is often cast aside due to its inability to provide an adequate response to the crisis at hand, and established policies, processes and procedures generally become meaningless.

Recognising the key role played by customs authorities in mitigating the effects of such emergencies, the World Customs Organization has developed a range of tools and guidelines to support the critical cross-border activities of its members. These are designed to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid and secure distribution channels, while at the same time combatting potential abuse of international relief - something that is becoming far too common.

So, as we offer solace to those who have been affected by disasters of all kinds, we also acknowledge the valuable support provided by the customs community during these challenging times.

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