Concluding Remarks by Kunio Mikuriya, Deputy Secretary General, WCO

UNECE/WCO Meeting “Facilitating trade in a Secure Environment”
13-14 November 2003

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear participants,

It has been my pleasure to listen to many useful contributions and the discussions during the last two days. We were able to get an overview of the development by different actors in this area.

As the title of this meeting indicates, many speakers mentioned and shared the importance of establishing a secure environment without compromising facilitation efforts that we have gained in the past. Facilitation and security are two sides of the same coin; both of them are aimed at efficient and effective Customs procedures. I have recently heard an interesting comment that if the coin drops on the ground the upper side could well be security. Well, as trade will never stop, I hope we have to continuously keep on tossing the coin.

Moreover, facilitation and security are mutually supportive, in that many security measures have been developed based on the existing international standards, initially developed to facilitate trade. I am happy to learn that all players have been developing their guidelines and standards in this specific area, based on the international standards that are already available or being developed, including the UNECE and WCO instruments.

Another important aspect that the participants unanimously agreed was the need for cooperative approach. We are already working together and this forum has provided a good opportunity to enhance the already existing cooperative ties. In order to further promote this, we need to continue extensive consultation with various stakeholders, including regulatory authorities and the business sector, in developing standards and guidelines to ensure their proper implementation.

As one participant from the private sector eloquently made it clear, partnership based on trust will be the best way forward in this area.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Ambassador Georgiev for his excellent chair, all of participants for your active participation, and once again the UNECE Secretariat for its hosting this very useful meeting.

Thank you very much for your participation.