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“Promoting good governance at border crossing, improving the security of land
transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region”
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**Plenary Session III – Panel Discussion on the role of the OSCE in promoting good
governance in international transportation and at border crossings**

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Since its creation, the World Customs Organization has recognized the importance of addressing integrity issues. The lack of integrity in the Customs environment has a significant impact on international trade and security, as well as on the ability of Customs administration to meet their objectives in terms of revenue collection, trade facilitation and enforcement. Like the OSCE, the WCO has an important role to play in setting standards and assisting its members in their further development.

For many years, the issue of integrity was considered a human resources management matter. However, in 1999, members of the WCO adopted the Revised Arusha Declaration outlining a way forward to enhance integrity in the Customs environment. This declaration identifies 10 elements of organizational development that have an effect on the administration's capacity to fight corruption and promote an ethical and professional environment. Customs modernization remains an ideal way to implement change that will reduce the incidence of corruption. The strong leadership and commitment at the most senior levels, automation of customs clearance processes, transparency in policy and decision-making, as well as adequate training and remuneration of staff, are among some of the critical aspects to address in the fight against corruption.

The WCO integrity development strategy that has evolved over time, encourages Customs administrations to tackle corruption through a holistic approach, in parallel with other modernization efforts, and in close collaboration with private and public sector stakeholders. Integrity is the basis on which Customs reform and modernization must rely to achieve sustainable development. In concrete terms, Customs administrations are encouraged to develop a national integrity action plan that outlines a wide range of initiatives that will impact on corruption and that will foster an ethical organizational climate. Through its capacity building programmes, the WCO assists its members in the development and implementation of these action plans.

Since 2001, the WCO Integrity Sub-committee has been established and tasked with guiding the work of the organization in the area of integrity. It has also developed a number of tools and fostered cooperation between the Customs community, international organizations and the private sector in the area of integrity. The committee also serves as a forum to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices in the promotion of integrity and the fight against corruption.

The WCO reaffirms that the fight against corruption is not the sole responsibility of Customs administrations but that all partners in the international trade supply chain have a role to play in finding solutions. Given the cultural, political and economic factors that lead to corruption, Customs administrations alone cannot solve the problem. It is therefore recommended that a

whole-of-government approach and the active participation of the private sector be assured to tackle corruption decisively.

More information on the WCO and its integrity development programmes is available at: www.wcoomd.org