Ali Al Kaabi inspects the new K9 unit building in Umm Al Quwain

5 federal agencies collaborate to organize light air sports

UAE Non-Oil General Trade Volume Recorded AED 1.612 Trillion in 2017

THE UAE TO FACE CHALLENGES
A UNIFIED CUSTOMS STRATEGY

K9 Unit - Happiness of Achievement
E - Commerce... Customs challenges
E-Commerce.. Customs challenges

The e-commerce market in the Middle East and the world is witnessing a remarkable increase in volume as competition accelerates. Current predictions show that the Middle East market is expected to grow by 16.4 percent in the next three and a half years to reach $48.6 billion in 2022. This represents an increase of $26.9 billion over the current year, according to a report produced by BMI Research.

The report predicted that the UAE and Saudi Arabia would remain the largest and fastest-growing e-commerce markets in the region in the coming years, encouraged by the rapid developments witnessed by the two markets recently. Notably the launch of Noon.com, the signing of an agreement with the “eBay” China, the acquisition by Amazon of Souq.com, and the establishment of the e-commerce board headed by the Saudi Minister of Commerce.

So e-commerce expansion is a powerful wave sweeping the countries of the region and the world, at a time when traditional trade is suffering from the consequences of the slowdown in growth of traditional trade due to the crises and economic challenges experienced by many economies, both major and micro.

This growth in the e-commerce sector, whether in the Middle East or the world, faces a number of challenges; the most important of which is the lack of governmental preparation in many countries for the rapid growth of e-trade. Particularly with regard to the legislative and regulatory system required to govern electronic commerce. The system currently has many weaknesses that have a negative impact on the legal rights and the required litigation procedures between the parties to the commercial process.

Other factors to be considered are the sharp slowdown in the growth of e-retail banking, especially debit and credit cards, the low levels of electronic security, increased piracy, and uneven levels of innovation in electronic advances in the region. Moreover, there has been an increase in customs duties in light of the increase in the volume of individual trade, and a reduced level of customs control over this type of trade.

While customs are active in controlling physical goods within the e-commerce sector, they are more restricted in their ability to control virtual goods such as software applications and electronic games purchased directly online without crossing customs borders or ports.

It is difficult to provide full consumer protection in this new retail sector. The product may not meet the safety and security needs of the consumer though making it unrealistic to monitor its production as can be done with traditional trade. These and other challenges can not hide the fact that e-commerce has become an important part of our lives, that future generations will not be able to live without it, or that in the coming decades it will become a significantly important arena for doing business and meeting the daily needs of the individual. These challenges must be dealt with wisely and innovatively, especially at the level of the customs sector in the countries of the region and the world.

It is now time for the international customs sector to cooperate in the development of an international legislative framework that regulates the movement of goods and commodities (in kind and electronic) within the e-commerce sector, ensures their control, and collection of duties, and fees. It should also cooperate in the imposition of more stringent control mechanisms to ensure the compliance of the shipping and transport sector, especially maritime and air, which remain heavily used in e-commerce. In addition, there is a need for co-operation with other tax authorities for the optimal and facilitative collection of value-added tax on such goods to provide support for national economies.

Mohamed Juma Buosaiba
In May 2018, in the presence of Dr. Anwar bin Mohammed Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (UAE) and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Makei (Republic of Belarus), HE Ali bin Sabih Al Kaabi, Customs Commissioner and Chairman of the Federal Customs Authority (FCA), and Yury Senko, Chairman of the State Customs Committee of Belarus signed a Customs Cooperation Agreement at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Abu Dhabi.

His Excellency the Commissioner Ali Al-Kaabi said in a press statement that the agreement aims at enhancing the economic partnership and trade between the two countries through facilitating customs procedures and raising customs efficiency through exchange of experience, visits, and participation in joint customs workshops. Moreover, the exchange of information on the routing and customs valuation of goods will enable close cooperation to combat smuggling, and detect counterfeit and fraudulent goods.

In addition, the agreement will create a joint customs committee and appoint direct liaison officers in customs administrations of both parties to address any obstacles to trade and any customs issues between the two countries.

HE Ali Al Kaabi said, “The signing of the agreement comes within the framework of the Authority’s efforts to achieve its strategic objectives, to protect the security of UAE society, enhance cooperation with the outside world, facilitate trade and meet the objectives of the UAE Vision 2021.”

The agreement will enhance the exchange of experience, promote economic cooperation and increase trade between the two countries. It will protect the community against illicit trade practices through the exchange of information and mutual customs operations between the two countries. It also contributes to the reduction of customs offences, which disrupt the economic, commercial, financial, social and cultural interests of the two countries.

In a meeting held on Sunday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Abu Dhabi, Ali bin Sabih Al Kaabi discussed with Yury Sinko, practical methods to enhance cooperation and exchange experience of joint customs work, increase the movement of trade between the two countries and adopt mutual recognition of the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme.

The meeting was attended by HE Ahmed Al-Tuniji, State Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, Mona Al-Maeeni, Deputy Director of the Economic and Commercial Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, HE Ahmed bin Lahej, Executive Director of Customs Affairs Sector; Ahmed Al Khaili, Director of the Office of the Commissioner of Customs. In addition to Vladimir Flynn, from the Embassy of Belarus to the UAE.
Saif bin Zayed and Nahyan bin Mubarak attend the signing ceremony of the MoU

5 federal agencies collaborate to organize light air sports

The Memorandum of Understanding, between the General Civil Aviation Authority by HE Omar bin Ghalib, Deputy Director General of the General Authority for Civil Aviation, for the FCA by HE Mohammed Juma Buosaiba , the director General for the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology by the General Manager HE Abdulla Abdul Qadir Al Mu’aini, Director General for the Emirates Authority of Civil Aviation, and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, to promote technological and institutional cooperation in the regulation of the practice of air sports.

The memorandum aims to enhance cooperation and coordination between the signatories in relation to their efforts, in the public interest, for the implementation, and activation of the rules of light sports in the UAE initiated by the decision of the General Authority of Civil Aviation Authority No. 2 of 2015.

It also aims to enhance cooperation and coordination between the concerned parties in light air sports to implement laws and regulations and limit illegal practitioners of these sports; it will also permit an exchange of experiences and opinions on related topics.

The memorandum sets forth the areas of cooperation include review of legislation, rules, regulations and publications related to light air sports. Areas of cooperation include review of legislation, rules, regulations and publications related to light air sports. The memorandum reflects the commitment of these strategic partners to improve the regulation, control the air sports sector, and provide the necessary institutional and technical cooperation.

His Excellency said that the Authority aims to bring these sports to the appropriate level in the UAE, and to ensure that the equipment and machines for these sports are not used for purposes other than those assigned to them.

The role of the Federal Customs Authority includes monitoring the import and export of relevant components and equipment to ensure the compliance of commercial exporters and importers. It also includes private importation by passengers. All will have to meet the conditions, specifications, and procedures issued by the Ministry of the Interior to strengthen it is partnerships to achieve the desired goals.

The memorandum sets forth the areas of cooperation include review of legislation, rules, regulations, and publication relative to light air sports. To review the legislation, laws, rules, regulations and publications related to light air sports, To create a mechanism for an electronic link between the parties for the exchange of information on violations of the law, To conduct joint workshops and training to empower staff in this area. Co-operation in the field of accident investigation, Coordination of market survey/information campaigns to ensure the exclusion of products that do not meet safety requirements. During the signing ceremony, the second phase of the Unified Pilot Products and Systems (UAV) Unified Platform was launched. This is an electronic system for the registration of those involved in the manufacture of aircraft, the importation and exportation and the circulation of these products in the UAE. The project was implemented in two phases. During the first phase, the Emirates Authority developed the platform services for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA) with the General Authority of Civil Aviation and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. The second phase is to extend this to include the other partners in the project.

His Excellency Ali Mohammed Bin Soubih Al Kaabi, Customs Commissioner, Chairman of the FCA, expressed his pleasure to sign the memorandum of understanding with these strategic partners to improve the regulation, control the air sports sector, and provide the necessary institutional and technical cooperation.

Launch of the second phase of the unified electronic platform for the registration of products and systems for UAVs and those involved in the manufacture of aircraft imports.

Abu Dhabi (Emirates Customs) HH Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior witnessed today, in Abu Dhabi, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with regard to the implementation of the strategic plans and instructions of the leadership.
HE Mohammed Juma Buosaiba, Director General of the Authority, said that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to regulate the practice of light air sports between the five partners represents a model for institutional and technical cooperation between the UAE government institutions. The light air sport market in the UAE is developing rapidly in the past years. In light of this technical acceleration in the industry, there is a strong requirement to cooperate in monitoring the market and regulating the processes and exchanging information to meet the trade and public security challenges related to them.

He pointed out that the Federal Customs Authority is fully prepared to provide all necessary facilities to regulate the light air sports sector and to play an effective role in monitoring the import and export of related devices through customs ports to ensure their compliance with the specifications and standards adopted in this field.

He added that the MoU aims at monitoring these sports and exchanging information and experiences among the relevant authorities in the UAE through an electronic link. He pointed out that the Authority will play an important role in raising the awareness of customs inspectors of the specific import and export rules through organizing Training courses in cooperation with strategic partners. The FCA will also be an active participant in efforts aimed at increasing the awareness of the participants in these sports, especially young people, with the criteria and rules for the importation of the equipment and the controls on their usage.

On his part, Abdullah Abdulqader Al Meini, Director General of the Emirates Standardization and Metrology Authority (ESMA), said that the unified platform for registering UAV products and systems in the UAE was the result of a fruitful cooperation between the UAE and other countries, with regard to safety and privacy. He explained, “Specialists in EMSA have noticed an increased development in the manufacture and trade of UAVs, and the multiplicity of methods of their use. This has developed randomly in a manner that may pose a risk to the public safety, prompting us to respond quickly to this matter. We have conducted specialized technical studies to develop the technical regulation to control how these products are traded in the UAE.”

He explained, “Traders, suppliers, individuals and business operators within the field are now required to register their products through the unified platform. This will enable the EMSA team to overcome the challenges, which caused the uncontrolled spread of type of air vehicle in the UAE. This spread posed a threat to air navigation systems, the safety of individuals, and public and private property. The first challenge was the need to develop a risk management system to identify all necessary control mechanisms on the life-cycle requirements of these products in the country’s markets in order to ensure that they provided safety and security requirements for individuals and property. They indent clear product characteristics, which took into account the controls, procedures and regulations of the UAE, with regard to safety and privacy.”

The second challenge was that these drones and air vehicles posed a real threat to air traffic, the safety of passengers traveling through airports and the resulting losses in travel time, as monitored through scientific studies. All products must, therefore, comply with a set of requirements before they are imported, sold, assembled or operated within UAE airspace, and must contain a certificate of conformity from the Emirates Standards and Metrology Authority (ESMA).

The third challenge was that such aircraft were sold at cheap prices, and available to all social classes.

The fourth challenge was the lack of awareness by the operators of these aircraft on how to use them safely, and the consequences of using them in prohibited places, representing a navigational challenge in the airspace management environment, which threatened a number of commercial flights. He noted that the Authority has worked within the Federal Government team to develop the unified electronic platform for registering UAV products and systems used in the UAE for recreational, service, and commercial purposes. Under the name “My Drone”, the system is in line with the UAE Government’s commitment to provide a safe aviation environment, and a safe society, and provide these activities with a legal umbrella, and practices, without threatening the environment or harming the interests of society, or even encroaching on the privacy of members of society.

AL Maini added: “The unified platform will allow all regulators in the UAE, such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, the General Authority for Civil Aviation and the Economic Development Department, to identify all necessary information about unmanned aircraft such as the factory, distributor, point of sale, individuals owners of the drones. This will contribute to regulating the circulation of these products in the market, identifying their end user and facilitating action against their use in incorrect or unsafe ways.”
HE Ali Al Kaabi, Custom Commissioner, Chairman of the Federal Customs Authority, discussed with a Japanese delegation how to enhance joint customs cooperation and prepare to sign an agreement for technical and administrative customs cooperation. Additionally, the mutual recognition of the authorized economic operator system (AEO) was proposed alongside exchange of experiences and best practices with them to improve the efficiency of the customs sector in both countries. The meeting also enabled preparations to be made for the upcoming 12th International Conference of Law Enforcement Agencies to Combat Intellectual Property Crime, co-hosted by INTERPOL and the Emirate of Dubai on 25 and 26 September.

HE Ali Al Kaabi, Customs Commissioner and Chairman of the FCA chaired the meeting, in the presence of HE Ali bin Lahej, Executive Director of Customs Affairs Sector, Ahmad Al Khaili, Director of the Office of the Chairman, Dr. Ahmed Al-Bakr, legal Advisor to the Authority, HE Yasuhisa Nako, Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs Sector, Ahmad Al Khaili, Commissioner’s office manager, and Suoud Al Agroobi, Director of the Office of the Commissioner, underling the importance of Japan as a strategic trading partner of the UAE based on the historical relationship of cooperation and partnership between the two countries. He pointed out that the experience of Japan in the development of the customs role and the management of customs risks is one of the most comprehensive in the world. It is, therefore, important to exchange experiences and best practices with them to improve the efficiency of the customs sector in both countries. Japan is one of the top 10 trading partners of the UAE. The FCA’s data shows that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries amounted to 281.6 billion dirhams ($77.2 billion dollars) during the period from 2013 until the end of 2017. The total volume of imports to the UAE from Japan and the UAE’s exports to Japan were 107.7 billion dirhams ($29 billion). Additionally re-exports amounted to 8 billion dirhams ($2.2 billion).

The Federal Customs Authority met with the Dubai Police, during the first week of June at the Authority’s headquarters in Abu Dhabi, to discuss ways to improve cooperation in the field of protection of intellectual property rights and combating counterfeit and fake goods. The meeting also enabled preparations to be made for the upcoming 12th International Conference of Law Enforcement Agencies to Combat Intellectual Property Crime, co-hosted by INTERPOL and the Emirate of Dubai on 25 and 26 September.

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The meeting reviewed a number of important topics, including enhancing the country’s capacity in the field of intellectual property rights protection, it highlighted the role of the customs sector in this field, and how FCA employees have benefited from the services provided by Dubai Police academic institutions. The meeting also discussed the achievements of the Dubai Police, and the Society for the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights in the field of counterfeit and falsified goods, the structure of partnerships inside and outside the country and the memorandums of understanding that have been signed with them. His Excellency Ali Al Kaabi said that the country’s customs sector plays an important role in protecting intellectual property rights and combating counterfeit and fake goods in the UAE. His aligns with the framework of the UAE Vision 2021 and the key indicators of the national agenda; contributing to building a diversified and knowledge-based competitive economy. He explained that the strategy of the customs sector in the fight against fraud, counterfeiting, and protection of intellectual property rights includes the application of the latest systems and techniques in the prevention and detection... He emphasized the cooperation and coordination between the customs administrations and relevant governmental departments, private sector institutions and international trademark owners, and the development of risk management systems to enhance the efficiency of customs inspectors in the detection of counterfeit and fake goods.

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During the eighth coordination meeting with local administrations

**“FCA” discusses the unification of customs clearance systems at the state level**

□ Dubai (Emirates Customs)

The Federal Customs Authority (FCA) held its eighth joint meeting with the local Customs Administrations in the UAE on Sunday, May 13 at its headquarters in Dubai.

The meeting dealt with a number of issues on the agenda of joint customs work, most notably the latest developments of the AEO system, the customs professional diploma, the results of the implementation of the first phase of the international road transport agreement (TIR), the K9 customs unit, and the international road transport agreement (TIR).

A number of administrations directors were represented by Rashid Al Kindi, Deputy General Manager of the Customs Affairs Sector, General Manager of Customs and Free Zone Corporation in Umm Al Quwain, Rashid Al Kindi, Deputy General Manager of Fujairah Customs, and a number of department directors, heads of departments from the Federal Customs Authority and local Customs Administrations.

**Ali AlKaabi:**

Need to unify visions and plans on developments in customs work to achieve the goals of Vision 2021

Director General of Dubai Customs, Mr. Mohammed Mir Rahman, General Manager of Sharjah Customs, Sultan Saed Al Ali, Executive Director of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation, Umm Al Quwain, Rashid Mohammed Saif Hamad, Director General of Fujairah Customs, Marwan Durbini, representing the Director General of Ras Al Khaimah Customs.

A number of administrations directors also attended the meeting. A number of important topics, foremost of which is activating the role of customs in the face of drug trafficking and protecting society from its negative impact. Other major topics covered were:

- The preparations of the Authority and customs administrations to organize the second UAE Customs Week scheduled to be held in Fujairah in January 2019.
- The minimum tariff for tobacco and its derivatives,
- The mechanism for collection of anti-dumping duties in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, the fees for ratifications of invoices and certificates of origin.
- The preparation of a unified customs valuation system at the state level prepared by the FCA to assist Customs officials in determining customs duties on goods and commodities imported into the UAE.
- The preparation of a National customs database within the FCA for use by all local Customs Administrations,
- Product classification of IQOS heated tobacco coil.

HE Ali Al Kaabi said that the Authority is keen to organize regular meetings with the directors of the local Customs Administrations to unify visions and plans for future customs work and to improve the level of cooperation in achieving the goals of the Vision 2021. This must meet, the aspirations of the wise leadership in light of the increasing challenges facing the customs sector in the country in the areas of security and trade.

**HE Ahmed Abdullah bin Lahej, Executive Director of the Customs Affairs Sector at the Authority, with participation of HE Brigadier Saed Al Suwaidy, Director General of the General Directorate of Narcotics Control, Mr. Saleh Al Mutawa, Director of Policies and Standards management, Mr. Mohammed Al Razzi, Head of Strategic Management, Mr. Mubarak Matar Al Mansoori, Chief Operating Officer of Abu Dhabi Customs, Mr. Abdullah Al Khaja, Managing Director of Dubai Customs Department, Mohammed Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, Director of Customs Affairs at Ajman Port and Customs Department, Marwan Durbins, Director of Customs Affairs at Ras Al Khaimah Customs, Habib Al Ali of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation in Umm Al Quwain, Rashid Al Kindi, Deputy General Manager of Fujairah Customs, and a number of department directors, heads of departments from the Federal Customs Authority and local Customs Administrations.**

The meeting discussed methods of cooperation between the FCA, the local Customs Administrations and the General Directorate of Narcotics Control in the Ministry of Interior, to enhance the role of the customs sector in combating narcotics, reduce smuggling operations and prevent the entry of narcotics into the state. This will protect society in general and youth in particular. It also reviewed the General Directorate of Narcotics Control efforts in the field of narcotics control. It stressed the importance of periodic meetings and exchange of information, expertise and training on the latest methods of narcotics smuggling and how to combat them. This will enhance the capabilities of all parties to combat narcotics smuggling and reduce their availability in line with the specific objectives of each party.

HE Saed Al Suwaidy also stressed the importance of holding periodic meetings between all of the parties involved in narcotics and the need for prior coordination. He praised the role of the FCA and the local Customs Administrations in raising the index of narcotics seizures for the first quarter of the current year, 2018. HE Ahmed Abdullah bin Lahej pointed out that protecting society from the negative effects of narcotics trafficking is one of the strategic objectives of the Authority and the local Customs Administrations. This is based on the principles of UAE Vision 2021, the indicators of the national agenda and the guidance of the wise leadership. He stressed that the Authority and the local Customs Administrations put the fight against narcotics trafficking through border crossings as a top priority because of its serious effects on youth and the security and stability of society.
During the participation of the delegation of the State in the meeting of The 132nd Session of the World Customs Organization (WCO)

Emirates looking to strengthen customs cooperation with five countries

Buosaiba: “Participation in the meeting reflects the UAE’s determination to play its full part in global trade”

The UAE participated in the 132nd session of the WCO Council held at the headquarters in Brussels during June 2018. HE Mohammed Juma Buosaiba, Director General of the Federal Customs Authority, headed the delegation, which included Mohammed Mir Al Sarrah, Director of the Department of Marine Ports and Customs in Sharjah, Saud Salem Al Agroobi, Director of International Relations (FCA), and Fatima Mohammed Aqeel Al Abbasi, Executive Director of International Relations in Sharjah.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral customs relations, the opportunities for exchanging customs expertise and information, and methods of enhancing cooperation between the UAE and partner countries through the signing of customs technical cooperation agreements.

HE Mohammed Buosaiba said that the meeting represents an important opportunity to look at the latest developments and issues effecting the global economic and customs areas. He pointed out that the participation of the UAE in the meeting reflects the commitment of the UAE to play its active role in global trade management, and participation in its development. In addition, he emphasized the need to adapt and strengthen customs work globally to achieve fair trade and a safe society.

He explained that the meeting of the 132nd Session discussed several important issues on the international customs agenda. He pointed out that the 48th Regional Meeting of Directors of Customs in North Africa, Near and Middle East, held on the sidelines of the meetings, discussed several key issues: The most important of these are the developments related to the implementation of the WTO Agreement, cooperation between customs and tax authorities worldwide and the role of customs in combating illegal financial flows. They also discussed measuring performance, the review of the Revised Kyoto Convention and the WCO strategy for the coming years.

The 132nd session agenda addressed a range of issues, including the report of the Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization on the measurement of performance, the strategy and work of the Organization, and cooperation with other international organizations. It also accepted the reports of the latest technical committees on Harmonized System, Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin.

HE called on Member States to pay more attention to e-commerce, develop customs tools to keep up with advances in digital development. In addition, he advocated the adoption of a framework of e-commerce standards by the Customs Cooperation Council.

At the end of the meeting, the Japanese candidate and current Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Kunio Mikuriya, was re-elected for five years and Enrique Cannon, Chairman of the CCC, re-appointed as Chair of the Council for another term by acclamation.

HE expressed sincere congratulations to the Secretary General of the Organization and the Chairman of the Customs Cooperation Council on the renewal of confidence in them by Member States. He stressed the aspiration of the UAE for further cooperation with the World Customs Organization during the coming period to enhance and develop the role of customs in the security of countries and communities and to facilitate trade in light of the increasing customs risks globally.

A total of 1.75m passengers travelled through the Hatta border crossing in 2017, and more than 152,000 declarations were carried out, and 3904 seizures. Mohammed Al Muaini, Director of Land Customs Centers Management at Dubai Customs, said that Hatta border crossing plays a major role in enhancing trade and passenger movement between Dubai and Oman and has become a main point for land transport.

Al Muaini said that Hatta’s border is important due to the services and facilities it offers to passengers and traders, goods and trucks. “Hatta Border Post has become one of the most important border crossings linking UAE with Oman and Oman with the rest of the GCC region. Thanks to the most advanced services and the great facilities provided to passengers, dealing with this heavy traffic of passengers and goods is smooth and streamlined” he added.

At Dubai Customs, the Hatta's efforts are an integral part of Dubai Customs vision to be the leading customs in the world supporting legitimate trade through innovation in service delivery whilst protecting society from the perils of restricted and prohibited goods.

An advanced electronic clearance system is in place and the center uses the latest container scanning systems in cooperation with the Technical Support Department in Dubai Customs.

90’s Day of Customs

Dubai (Emirates Customs)

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Ali Al Kaabi inspects the new K9 unit building in Umm Al Quwain

The FCA continues to strengthen the control of ports to minimize customs risks

Accompanied by a number of Directors General from local Customs Administrations

HE Ali Al Kaabi, Customs Commissioner, Chairman of the Federal Customs Authority, inspected the new premises for the Customs K9 unit on Sunday morning, 2 July 2018. The premises have been equipped by the Authority with the support of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs as the first federal unit of Customs K9 in the UAE. The inspection was in preparation for the full official inauguration of the building, which will take place shortly. During the visit, HE was accompanied by Jassem Hamad Al Zaabi, Director General of the General Authority for the Security of Ports, Borders and Free Zones, Rashed Lahej Al Mansoori, the Director General of the General Administration of Customs – Abu Dhabi, Ahmad Mahboob Musaibh, Director of Dubai Customs, Rashid Hamad, Director General of Fujairah Customs, Sultan Al Ali, executive director, Umm al Quwain Ports, Customs & Free Zone Corporation, Ahmed Abdallah bin Lahej Al Falasi, Executive Director of the Customs Affairs Sector, and Ahmed Al-Khali, Director of the Office of the Chairman of the FCA.

This is based on his conviction of the importance of Customs through its role in protecting the security of society and strengthening control over customs ports to combat smuggling. During the visit, HE and his accompanying delegation witnessed the training of customs dogs for the detection of drugs and explosives. They also inspected the training areas, the accommodation for trainers, the dog kennels and the modern vehicles specially adapted for the transport of the dogs between customs ports. HE Ali Al Kaabi and his accompanying delegation praised the efforts of the customs affairs sector and the customs dogs unit K9 in order to equip the building in accordance with the best international standards and a manner that ensures the provision of an ideal work environment for training of handlers and customs dogs. HE Ahmed bin Lahej and Abdul Salam Al Shamsi, Director of the Canine Unit, explained the most important measures taken by the Authority in order to equip the building within a short period.

The FCA continues to strengthen the control of ports to minimize customs risks

As part of its procedures to equip the building, the Authority has recently imported a first batch of 25 dogs to be trained in the detection of drugs and explosives in the UAE. The second batch of 25 dogs is scheduled to arrive in the coming months.
UAE Non-Oil General Trade Volume

Recorded AED 1.612 Trillion in 2017

The Federal Customs Authority revealed the preliminary statistical data of the UAE General Trade volume during year 2017 amounted to AED 1.612 trillion, compared to 1.599 trillion during the same period of 2016, with 1% growth.

H.E. Commissioner Ali Al Kaabi, head of the Federal Customs Authority, said in a press statement yesterday, that UAE non-oil foreign trade during the year was 1.075 Trillion Dirhams (AED), forming 67% of total volume of general trade.

UAE direct non-oil foreign trade formed 67% of total volume of general trade.

Concerning the best commodities handled during the year, the preliminary statistics of the Federal Customs Authority revealed that native and semi-proced gold came on top of the imported goods with 13% of with AED 124.2 billion.

Followed by telephone equipment with AED 113.3 billion and 11%, cars with AED 58 billion and 6%, non-compounded diamonds amounted AED 51.3 billion and 5% and Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals amounted AED 35.7 billion and 4% of total imports.

Gold exports came on top at a value of AED 51.4 billion, representing 27% of the UAE total exports, followed by the raw aluminium with a value of AED 20.1 billion with 11%, precious stones and jewelry with a value of AED 16.5 billion, i.e. 9%, cigarettes & Cigars with a value of 11.5 billion dirhams representing 5% then, ethylene polymers in primary forms with a value of AED 9.1 billion dirhams forming 5%.

Exports reached AED 189.8 billion during the previous year. Reflecting the improvement in the country’s trade balance and its ability to strengthen its position in global re-export markets.

Regional Trade Portal

H.E. Ali Al Kaabi added that the growth rates achieved in the country’s foreign trade during 2017 underline the importance of the UAE as a major regional and international trade gateway. He pointed out that the development of infrastructure and logistics services in the field of communications, hotels, land, air, and sea has contributed to the development of trade movement significantly during the past year.

In this regard, H.E. Ali Al Kaabi praised the efforts exerted by customs personnel and local authorities in the field of customs clearance, shortening the average time for the release of goods and commodities to only 15 minutes, under the advanced methods of inspection, and scanning by the local customs administrations.

GCC Countries

H.E. Ali Al Kaabi said that the GCC countries are a trading partner of the UAE, pointing out that the share of these countries in the total trade of the country amounted to 10% during 2017.

The value of the country’s trade with the Arab countries reached AED 215 billion, representing 27% of the UAE total exports, followed by the raw aluminium with a value of AED 51.3 billion and 5% and Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals amounted AED 35.7 billion and 4% of total imports.

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With regard to the UAE non-oil trade with the GCC countries, the FCA stated that the share of the UAE non-oil general trade with the GCC countries in 2017 constituted of the total non-oil trade with the world, amounting to AED 167.2 billion.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came on top of the Gulf countries in terms of the value of the UAE non-oil trade with a value of AED 79.2 billion with 47% of the total non-oil trade with the GCC countries, followed by Oman with a value of AED 36 billion with 21%, and Kuwait 25.4 billion at 15% of the total non-oil trade with the GCC countries.

H.E. Ali Al Kaabi highlighted the position of the developed Arab countries in the map of the UAE’s non-oil foreign trade. He pointed out that the Arab countries share in 2017 amounted to 18% of the total non-oil trade in the UAE.

The value of the country’s trade with the Arab countries reached 287 billion dirhams during the year, of which 83.2 billion dirhams were the value of imports, 65.7 billion dirhams were the value of exports, while the value of re-exports amounted to 138 billion dirhams.

Best products and goods handled during the year included cars, mobile phones, computers, consumer electronics, and pharmaceuticals.

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The share of free zone trade was 31%, and the value of trade from customs warehouses is AED 39.4 billion.
The concept of working on the Unified Customs Strategy at UAE level originated in 2017, when the directives of His Excellency Ali bin Sabih al-Kaabi, Customs Minister, ordered the Federal Customs Authority (FCA) to draft a strategy to address the challenges in the customs sector in UAE, and to develop Customs in the UAE, and raise its performance to the highest international standards.

In accordance with the directives of the Minister, the FCA issued a directive to prepare a Unified Customs Strategy at UAE level to meet the requirements of the law of the FCA Authority and the increasing security and customs challenges.

A strategic committee was then formed under the chairmanship of the Customs Commissioner, Chairman of the FCA, with the membership including the Directors of the local Customs Administrations. A working group was also formed for the preparation of the strategy. The Federal Customs Authority, under the chairmanship of Mr. Ahmed Abdullah bin Lahej, Executive Director of the Customs Affairs Sector at the FCA, and 10 members representing the local Customs Administrations and the Federal Customs Authority.

From April 2017, the team members carried out their work diligently and with perseverance until the required strategy was achieved. It was very much a team-work environment, characterized by constructive cooperation for the completion as scheduled in the first quarter of 2018. The Unified Customs Strategy was submitted to the Supreme Committee for approval and adoption by the Council of Ministers as stipulated by the FCA law.

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The strategy targets unifying systems and procedures and achieving customs integration within 5 years. Its implementation after approval by the Council of Ministers.

The Unified Customs Strategy is in line with two of the objectives and principles of the UAE Vision 2021: the first principle is establishing a secure society and an effective judiciary. Customs is one of the tools for maintaining security in society and provides the secure oversight of the border. The strategy is also derived from the principle of being “united and integrated” as stipulated by the FCA law. This strategy builds a knowledge-based competitive economy within which the Customs sector is considered one of the main pillars of the State’s financial, economic and trade policy.

A Vision and a Well-balanced Message

The strategy included a unified customs vision for the UAE, characterized by the balance between the pillars of customs work and realization in the formulation of objectives in the light of the real working environment and the practical possibilities. In this way, it reflects a smart vision and realistic anticipation of the future. The vision aimed to establish a pioneering customs system to protect society and facilitate trade, thus achieving the two main parameters of the customs core function: achieving customs security and providing trade facilitation.

The vision specifications also apply to the unified message contained in the strategy. The letter states the unification of customs work in the State through partnership to provide excellent services that contribute to the sustainability of the society security and trade prosperity. It appears from the letter text that it has manipulated the unified the regulations and procedures followed in clearance and inspection as a means to develop the State’s customs sector, eliminate disparities in the performance of customs duties, thus providing customs security stability and commercial prosperity and supporting the policy of economic diversification and competitive advantage of the State. The objectives and initiatives of the Unified Customs Strategy are in line with the objectives of the UAE Economic Vision 2021, according to best practices, international standards and the fourth objective is to ensure that all administrative services are provided in accordance with quality, responsibility and transparency. This will be achieved through the implementation of the following initiatives:

1. Corporate Risk Management and International Standards
2. Legal Issues Management
3. Training and Staff Development
4. Media, Institutional and Community Relations Enhancement
5. Strategic Plan follow up and Institutional Excellence
6. Relationship enhancement, contract and suppliers management in accordance with best practices
8. Quality and Institutional Excellence
9. Internal controls and application
10. Operations Management of financial resources efficiently and effectively, contract and suppliers management in accordance with best practices,

The FCA will implement the fourth and fifth objectives through the implementation of seven initiatives within five years, namely the development and standardization of policies and procedures, the unification and integration of customs regulations to support trade facilitation, the qualification and training of national staff to improve customs performance, the development and implementation of benchmarking studies, the provision of electronic intelligent services, the provision of statistical information and data, and providing customs training. For the second objective: In third objective, the strategy aimed to achieve these pillars through five strategic objectives, which concern the implementation of best practices in the field of information technology.

Entrepreneurship, integrity, empowerment, innovation and happiness are unified institutional values until the end of 2021.
The customs sector in the UAE and in the world faces a number of foreseeable changes and challenges in the security, economic and commercial fields, as a result of the security and economic developments in the region. In addition to the high pace of competition among the countries of the world to gain international top positions in the competitive indices related to the work of customs. There is no doubt that building the capacity of the State’s customs sector, enabling it to meet these growing challenges, and realizing the achievements of the wise leadership to maintain the society security and facilitate trade, requires more cooperation and joint strategic planning among all components of the customs sector in the State, in accordance with a joint strategy and vision that has an outlook for the future features, identifying its tools and objectives and how best to achieve them. Therefore, the work done by the unified customs strategy team that consists of the FDA and the local customs administrations is an important step towards unifying and integrating plans at the level of the customs sector in the State in order to build the future. As far as I know, this is the first time in the State that a unified strategic plan is launched at the federal and local levels, which is a major achievement for the FDA and the local customs administrations. It also reflects the support of the Government of the future risks and challenges facing the customs sector and the importance of cooperation and partnership in the face of these risks and challenges. On this occasion, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all the directors of the local customs administrations for their sincere cooperation in realizing this achievement, and I also thank them for their efforts in raising the level of customs performance, thus contributing to the protection of society and maintenance of security, along with facilitating trade and fostering the State’s status in the global competitive indices. I also thank the Working Group for preparing the unified customs strategy of the FDA and the local customs administrations for their constructive and fruitful cooperation and their efforts in realising the unified customs strategy.

Ali Bin Subaih AlKaabi

Achievement that Fosters Customs Integration

The State’s customs sector is entering a new phase of growth and development driven by the unified strategic planning and the collective work to achieve unified goals and initiatives. The joint efforts of the Federal Customs Authority and the local customs administrations have succeeded in achieving a historic achievement at the level of the customs sector in the State, if not at the level of the economic and social sectors. This achievement is the launch of the unified customs strategy, in order to achieve the objectives and principles of the UAE Vision 2021 and the UAE 2071. From the beginning, the vision was clear, in the light of the directives of His Excellency the Commissioner, the Chairman of the FDA, that the upgrading of local and federal customs work, the establishment of an integrated security system at the State level, the efficient management of customs risks and the support of the Government’s approaches in the field of competitiveness, innovation, the future outlook and the building of national abilities and competencies are the most important objectives to be achieved by 2021. Therefore, the Working Group has succeeded in formulating plans and initiatives that lead to achieving these objectives in the light of the realistic reading of the capacities and possibilities available at the FDA and the local customs departments. What makes us feel proud is that the strategy was prepared by national competencies with long experiences in customs work and who have a vision for the future that will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the customs work in the State.

At the personal level, I have been privileged to chair the team work of strategy and to contribute to its preparation. In this regard, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to His Excellency the Commissioner and the Chairman of the FDA for his directives to the Working Group and for his continuous follow-up. I would also like to thank the working group for their efforts and for providing the proposals and experiences that have played an important role in achieving the strategy as required.

Ahmad Abdulla Bin Lahej

More Efficiency in the Field of Co-operation and Partnership

The unified customs strategy is a high-level customs achievement in many ways, most notably harmonization and integration of visions and objectives at the level of the customs sector components in the State from federal and local institutions, which will lead in the future to more consolidation of efforts and saving expenses and costs. The most important feature of the unified customs strategy is that it will contribute to unifying the FDA and the local customs administrations at both the near and long term, after creating a consensus on the challenges and risks facing the customs sector in the State.

Personally, I believe that this strategy will contribute to achieving more effective cooperation and partnership between the local customs departments, which will have a positive impact on the level of work and customs performance in the State, which will enhance the competitiveness of the state. There is no doubt that formulating goals and identifying the strategic initiatives at the federal and local levels is an important achievement, but the important achievement from my point of view is to turn those goals and initiatives into facts on the ground. The greatest achievement is that the customers of the customs institutions in the State as well as the citizen and resident feel the positive impact of this unified strategy at the level of accomplishing transactions, security, cooperation and trade exchange with the countries of the world.

Certainly, the challenges are great to reach this goal, but the guidance of our wise leadership, the hopes of the people of the State and the aspirations of the employees of the customs sector in the State, the level of cooperation and the spirit of the team all confirm that the FDA and the local customs administrations are able to overcome these challenges. From the depth of our hearts, we thank the Commissioner of the FDA for his directions to prepare this strategy and follow up the work team for several months. We also thank the local customs administrations for their cooperation and the team that worked to realize this achievement.

Mohamed Juma Buysaiba

Co-operation is the Fuel of Achievement

The launch of the unified customs strategy for the UAE is considered one of the most important achievements of the FDA in 2018. The plan is considered the first unified strategy between the federal government and the local government at the state level. It is distinguished by achieving compatibility between the strategic plan of the Federal Customs Authority and the strategic plans of the local customs departments.

The main objective of the unified customs strategy is to regulate customs work at the State level and to ensure that all customs administrations participate in the implementation of joint projects and initiatives with a single level of quality of work. What pleased us during the preparation and planning of the strategy is the spirit of the team we have seen in the team (preparation of the unified customs strategy), and we were pleased with the cooperation and commitment we found in the team members and the support we received from the senior management, thus, we thank all the participants and tell them (You did your best). We have gradually begun implementing some joint projects and initiatives and we are looking forward to achieving results and achievements in the coming period.

Maryam Hassan Amer
A great feeling of Happiness dominated the atmosphere during my last Inspection visit, accompanied with number of Representatives and General Managers of local customs departments and General Authority of Ports, Borders and Free Zones Security, to K9 Unit established in emirate of Umm Al Qwain. Our Happiness referred to the volume and the quality of achievements in developing of buildings and equipment of the Unit, and organizing, planning and attracting Trainers and exporting and training dogs in this summer where heat degrees reach standard rates. The thing that leads us in customs sector to feel all this happiness and pride for this achievements.

The First Credit after God is refer to His Highness / Sheik Mansoor Bin Zayed Al Nahian - Deputy Vise Minster of Ministers counsel – Minister of Presidential Affairs, who donate the buildings of the unit and issued his Supreme instructions to provide financial support needed and all facilitations required for the unit to see the light. This support deserve customs sector to stand, respect, thanks and appreciation.

The main Target of establishing “K9 unit” is to support secure stability to face the increasing customs and security threats and to build capacity of Customs Sector in the area of inspection and control, so as to fight smuggling of drugs and dangerous substances, by using new tools and equipment that assist the achievement of the goal customs sector to serve the state and support the fulfillment of the leading role of UAE regionally and internationally.

UAE is a hub of trade and travel movement, it is an important regional trade center, and a passage to great part of international trade known as transit trade the thing that required more effort to strengthen customs control and apply the international best practice in the area.

Added to that UAE is the one of the advanced countries in security and customs, it seeks to top international ranks in all areas. UAE always seeks to accompany the progress and application of best experiments and practice. As all studies of FCA assure that most of customs admirations has K9 Units and that these dogs contribute to limit crime and smuggling by high rates within the comprehensive security system of the community.

This achievement which will be announce sooner was not easy affordable, it faced a lot of challenges under the specialized local experiences in this area, and weather circumstances that exist during the establishment of the Unit and training of the dogs and providing trainers. In this circumstance and others, the team assigned to establish the Unit continued his efforts day and night to beat all challenges and accomplish the establishment of the unit (Buildings, trainers, dogs) in the required level.

We hope this Unit will succeed after its official beginning to achieve its goals and objectives that assigned before. We hope it manage to build and refine local experiences in training and qualifying area.

We also hope that Emirati woman will enter this field. We in Federal Customs Authority and the customs sector are all ready to give the required support to her as our Wise leadership directions and from our believing in the importance of the role of women in the sustainable development.