

Commissioner of Customs and Excise Leads delegation to attend World Customs Organization Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference (with photos)

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho, from May 28 to 31, led a delegation to attend the 24th World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference in Perth, Australia.

Hosted by Australian Customs, heads of Customs and senior officials from over 20 administrations in the Asia-Pacific region, the Secretary-General of the WCO, as well as delegates from the Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building and Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific, gathered at the conference with an aim to facilitate and deepen regional co-operation and exchanges.

In the conference, Ms Ho outlined the vision and aspiration of Hong Kong Customs, in the name of Hong Kong, China, as the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region. Unanimous nomination from members of the Asia/Pacific Region to Hong Kong, China, as the next Vice-Chairperson (i.e. from 2024 to 2026) was received.

In her speech, Ms Ho said that this is the first time since 2000 that Hong Kong, China, had served as the Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region, which not only underscored the enduring contribution of Hong Kong Customs to regional customs affairs, but also consolidated its leadership role in the WCO. Ms Ho also expressed her sincerest gratitude for the support of all Asia/Pacific Region members and pledged that Hong Kong Customs will spare no efforts in fostering sustainable and prosperous development of the Asia-Pacific region.

The Vice-Chairperson of the Asia/Pacific Region takes on the mantle of promoting development and co-ordinating affairs in the region, while leading the members in navigating through challenges and contributing to the creation of a safe and prosperous society. Among other key issues such as promotion of green Customs, strengthening of Customs-industry resilience, etc, Ms Ho accentuated the significance of illustrating the Customs' duties to the public and industry stakeholders through media and publicity campaigns, and stressed the efforts made by Customs Administrations in bolstering economic development, especially the post-pandemic recovery.

Furthermore, Hong Kong Customs motioned to establish a WCO Regional Dog Training Centre in order to provide professional training and support for members of the Asia/Pacific Region, enhance crime investigation capacity, and safeguard regional security. This motion also received unanimous endorsement from the Asia/Pacific Region members, marking a significant milestone in the development of regional canine training.

During her visit, Ms Ho also took the opportunity to meet with the Director General of the General Department of Customs and Excise of Cambodia, Dr Kun Nhem, and the Deputy Director General of the General Department of Vietnam Customs, Mr Nguyen Van Tho, respectively, to discuss closer co-operation between the two sides and explore future development opportunities.

Subject to confirmation at the Customs Co-operation Council Sessions held in June next year, Hong Kong, China, will officially succeed Australia as the Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region of the WCO in July 2024 for a term of two years until June 2026. Hong Kong Customs will continue to collaborate and establish a closer and more comprehensive partnership with members in the region.



