

[Hong Kong Customs signs Authorized Economic Operator Mutual Recognition Arrangement with New Zealand and Action Plan with Canada \(with photos\)](#)

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang, signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) with the Acting Comptroller of the New Zealand Customs Service, Ms Christine Stevenson, in Brussels, Belgium, yesterday (June 28, Brussels time) during the 132nd Council Session of the World Customs Organization.

Under the MRA, the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator (HKAE0) Programme and the New Zealand Secure Exports Scheme are mutually recognised, by which Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) of both economies enjoy mutual customs clearance benefits, including reduced examination and prioritised clearance.

This is the ninth MRA that the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has concluded with other Customs administrations after those with the Mainland, India, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and Australia. Apart from demonstrating the two Customs administrations' efforts in strengthening international cargo security, the signing of the MRA with New Zealand also enables accredited Hong Kong traders to better explore the market there by leveraging their edge of certified status under the Belt and Road Initiative.

MRA negotiation is now extending to North America. During the same Council Session today (June 29, Brussels time), the Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam, signed an MRA Action Plan with the Vice President of the Canada Border Services Agency, Mr Martin Bolduc, to mark the commencement of formal negotiation for mutual recognition of the HKAE0 Programme and the Partners in Protection programme in Canada.

Participation in the HKAE0 Programme is free, open and voluntary. Any company engaging in business principally related to the international supply chain is welcome to apply for AEO status. Since the formal launch of the HKAE0 Programme in April 2012, the C&ED has accredited 47 companies as AEOs, including multinational companies and small and medium-sized local enterprises.

