

Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC)
Government Issue Paper:
International Engagement and Trade Facilitation

February 2018



**U.S. Customs and
Border Protection**

OT/Trade Policy and Programs

Textiles and Trade Agreements

February 8, 2018

Background:

- During the 14th COAC session, the Trade Modernization Subcommittee established the International Engagement and Trade Facilitation Working Group (IETF) to identify barriers to effective and efficient trade with our most significant trade partners and works to support the mission of CBP at the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- The IETF Working Group launched in October 2015. Current membership includes representatives from CBP (Office of Trade, Office of International Affairs, Office of Trade Relations and Office of Field Operations), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), and the various representatives of the trade community. The IETF's work has focused on five world regions: Africa/Middle East, Latin America, Asia, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Region, and Europe.
- Through engagement with the WCO, IETF seeks to offer partner countries strategic approaches and practical solutions to encourage the adoption of best trade practices, and works to promote the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).
- The TFA was agreed to in Bali in December 2013 and creates binding commitments for its Members to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, improve cooperation among WTO Members on customs matters, and help developing countries fully implement the provisions of the TFA.
- The TFA entered into force on February 22, 2017, upon acceptance by two-thirds of WTO Members, currently there are 130 TFA signatories.

Issue:

- Highlighting examples of U.S. and foreign best practices identified by U.S. businesses that facilitate trade and that could be applied globally.
- Proposing methods to make customs controls and procedures more efficient and uniform globally.
- Collaborating with critical government offices (*i.e.* USTR, USAID, and the Department of Commerce) to enhance stakeholder engagement for trade.

Current Status:

- The IETF presented over 50 recommendations to the August 2017 COAC meeting, which were adopted, to promote the adoption of best practices in implementing the TFA.
- Since the August meeting, the IETF has considered how they can best prioritize their recommendations so that the CBP can implement most effectively.

Next Steps:

- The IETF has identified 5 recommendations as its highest priorities and will present these at the February 2018 COAC meeting.

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