UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

POSTAL OPERATIONS COUNCIL

Committee 1 (Supply Chain Integration)

Customs Group

WCO–UPU Contact Committee

Matters relating to electronic advance data requirements – Preliminary outcomes of the pilot on the Customs Declaration System and ASYCUDA interface

Memorandum by the UPU International Bureau
(Agenda item 5h)

1 Subject	References/paragraphs
Preliminary outcomes of the pilot on the Customs Declaration System and ASYCUDA interface.	§§ 1 to 11
2 Decision expected	
The WCO–UPU Contact Committee is asked to take note of this report and provide guidance on the way forward.	§§ 1 to 11

I.   Introduction

1   The UPU and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) signed a cooperation agreement on 10 December 2015 aimed at establishing and facilitating the exchange of electronic customs declaration information between designated postal operators and customs administrations. More specifically, the objective is to develop a standardized interface between the UPU software (Customs Declaration System – CDS) and UNCTAD's Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), which will enable designated postal operators to exchange electronic advance data (EAD) on merchandise with customs administrations that are using ASYCUDA.

2   Since 1981, UNCTAD has provided customs administrations with ASYCUDA for the electronic processing of cargo and goods declarations. Different versions of ASYCUDA are being used by over 95 customs administrations; however, prior to the UPU agreement, ASYCUDA did not allow for the processing of postal customs declarations. Creating an interface between CDS and ASYCUDA will promote strong synergies and EAD adoption among countries/jurisdictions where the Post uses CDS and Customs uses ASYCUDA.

3   The cooperation agreement between the UPU and UNCTAD foresaw the use of the joint WCO–UPU EDI messaging standards (M43 – CUSITM and M44 – CUSRSP), as well as the need for the organizations to cooperate during the development, piloting and implementation of the interface for the electronic pre-arrival notification from designated postal operators, and the reporting back of postal shipment clearance information by customs administrations using ASYCUDA.

4   A project agreement was signed on 15 July 2017. In November 2017, the UPU Quality of Service Fund SECUREX global pilot project was launched, with the main objective of enabling the exchange of EAD between designated postal operators and customs administrations of 13 UPU member countries from all regions. One of the key elements of this project is to contribute to the design of the EAD interface between designated operators and their national customs administrations. The development and piloting of the CDS–ASYCUDA interface was included in the scope of the project: first in the safe testing environment of a small-volume designated operator, and then extending to the larger scale reality of a SECUREX participant.

5   UNCTAD proposed that Gibraltar be selected for the pilot because of the presence of one of its Centres of Excellence, and the UPU agreed to pursue this option. The development of a postal customs module in ASYCUDA was complete in time to start processing information in CUSITM/CUSRSP format during Q3 2018. The postal customs module allows customs administrations using ASYCUDA to process the postal customs declarations and carry out the associated assessment and clearance process. The following is a screenshot of this module.

6   On 17 August 2018, a preliminary interface pilot review meeting took place in Gibraltar, involving UNCTAD, the UPU, the Royal Gibraltar Post Office (RGPO), and H.M. Customs Gibraltar. The main goal of this meeting was to reflect on the status of the ASYCUDA World–CDS interface pilot, the lessons learned, and the next steps related to the deployment and roll-out of the interface.

7   The main activities of this pilot project are the following:

–   Enhancement of the latest ASYCUDA World (AW) version to directly integrate the standard CUSITM and CUSRSP XML messages;

–   Testing of enhanced AW version with the UPU's CDS;

–   Installation of enhanced AW version in the operational environment of Gibraltar Customs and the Royal Gibraltar Post Office;

–   Provision of adequate technical and functional training to Gibraltar Customs and RGPO staff.

8   Declarations from Gibraltar Post to Customs: CUSITM messages were exported from CDS.post and correctly imported into ASYCUDA World for review by Gibraltar Customs. The following is a screenshot of ASYCUDA's "eCustoms finder" screen showing a list of imported declarations.
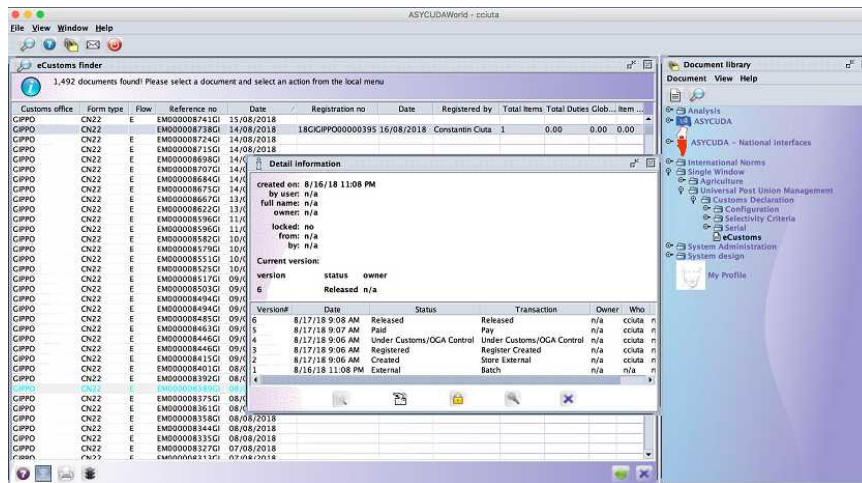
9   Responses: standard (CUSRSP) and channel (SFTP) are defined and available. The scope of responses and their operational implications are under analysis. At the time of writing this document, responses from Gibraltar Customs to the Post had been successfully routed from ASYCUDA World to the UPU's CDS. The following screenshot shows a CUSRSP message being received in CDS for an EMS export item.
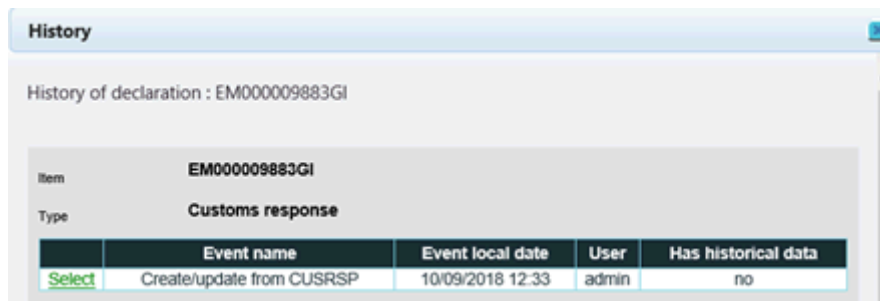
10   Pilot status: ongoing. Customs can review the CN 22/CN 23 electronic declaration data in ASYCUDA World. Operationally, an improvement would need to be introduced in CDS, to be able to mark items with a warning (rather than a blocking message) in the case of restrictions on exported goods (e.g. check licence). Comprehensive risk management through the use of selectivity criteria, on the basis of postal customs declaration data, has been identified as a next step, once the technical feasibility has been confirmed.
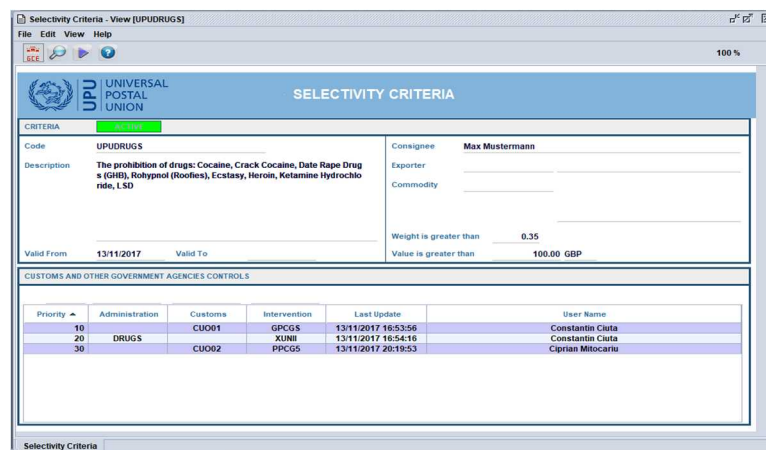
11   The key conclusion of this work is that the CUSITM/CUSRSP-based AW–CDS interface is ready to be deployed in other countries. The way forward will be to deploy the interface in other countries ready to engage in the exchange of EAD. El Salvador, Georgia, Moldova and the Solomon Islands, among others, have expressed an interest in the interface. The customs administrations in these and other interested countries will need to formally request the implementation of the AW–UPU CDS interfacing module through their UNCTAD ASYCUDA project manager/regional coordinator. To further assist member countries, a standard technical project document could be jointly developed by the UPU, the WCO and UNCTAD.