

Samson BILANGNA

A new vision
for new challenges



Candidate for the WCO's Deputy Secretary General position



A NEW VISION FOR NEW CHALLENGES

New challenges...

Customs have always sought a balance between trade facilitation and control. Today, this balance has evolved. There are new perspectives since the entry into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) that will be implemented with special and differential treatment to support developing and least developed countries. And we face new challenges in global security with the emergence of violent transnational terrorist activities. The safety of the global supply chain and at borders is a major issue. Furthermore, societies evolve towards an open and transparent governance.

... require a new vision

We need to adapt, deploy new approaches based on a better use of technologies and data, based on the recognition of the diversity of national and regional environments, even if Customs administrations have common goals. My experience – at first local in Cameroun, a developing country, then at international level

within the WCO – helps me to fully understand these issues and challenges and to cope with them with precision and in an innovative way. Customs are the main actor in the governance of global trade and deserve an ambitious, concrete and pragmatic vision.

The World Customs Organization (WCO) has rightly placed the year 2016 under the theme 'Digital Customs', to ensure greater efficiency of our interventions at the borders. Good governance practices are increasingly based on intelligent data collection and analysis. My technical profile and experience as a Director of the IT department (equivalent Deputy Director General) give me the necessary competence to advise the Secretary General and Members on these issues and associated six priority areas identified by the WCO: Trade facilitation; E-Commerce; Security; Customs-Tax cooperation; illicit financial flows (IFFs); and Performance measurement.



A PROFILE ADAPTED TO TOMORROW'S STAKES

During my 18 years in Cameroon Customs, I have acquired a comprehensive, wide-ranging experience: operational, in the sea ports and airports; strategic, in policy and strategic issues at Customs Headquarters, leading to my appointment as the Director of IT department. My concrete field experience, both technical and practical, appeared to be the key to successfully leading the highly strategic IT department. While implementing our reforms with international partners (World Bank and WCO), I have measured the importance of data analysis capacity as a crucial governance tool, equally supporting fight against corruption, improving the performance of administrations and optimizing the use of resources.

During this journey, I equally gathered experience in the management and successful implementation of reform processes, in partnership with businesses, donors and other stakeholders. These successful reforms have been acknowledged as fruitful in the fight against corruption and have inspired several Customs administrations that are currently benefitting from WCO and World Bank support in this area.

As a deputy Secretary General, my role will not be to promote one model or another, but to encourage Customs, particularly in so-called developing countries, to acquire their own autonomy and expertise, and to develop their internal capacities in data analysis. I will assist the Secretary General in developing the means to support the Members of our Organization.

A wide strategic, operational and political expertise

Since May 2012, I have actively driven and contributed to several key priority areas of the WCO Secretariat, notably on issues relating to trade facilitation, and specifically with regard to the accession to and implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) which is the blueprint for efficient and modern Customs procedures.

With wealth of experience in both policy and operational areas, I have been able to advise at the political and strategic levels in the promotion and successful implementation of several instruments and tools developed by the Organization to support the reform and modernization programmes and projects of various Customs administrations and partner



government agencies. The five years I have spent at the Secretariat have also been precious to deepen my awareness of the variety of Members specificities, of their differences, of the importance of each Member's national context. But also of their similarities, and of their common will and need to improve Customs governance and to find the right balance between control and facilitation, adapted to each country's situation. We need to serve individuality and globality altogether. Through sustained work in all the six regions of the WCO, I have extensive and intensive understanding of the issues and challenges in each of these regions and associated needs and requirements for reform and modernization.

A COHERENT VISION, A CONCERTED APPROACH

The role of the Deputy Secretary General (DSG) is extremely important in the WCO's overarching approach. My vision of this position is that of a strategic advisor with a practical and operational approach who can dynamically advise the Secretary General (SG) and drive various working bodies to carry out work within the overall policy orientations set out by the Policy Commission (PC) and the Council.

With the entry into force of the TFA, intensive and dedicated work in a cohesive manner will have to be carried out over next few years, with a focused support to developing and least developed countries under MERCATOR Programme. I, therefore, look forward to put myself at the center of the MERCATOR programme for the political and strategic guidance with tailor-made operational programmes for Customs administrations in cooperation with all stakeholders.

Under the overall guidance of the Secretary General, I will work towards enhancing the work of various WCO bodies, by providing them with the policy and strategic perspectives on Member's national and regional priorities. My efforts will be directed towards a better preparation of the global Customs community to anticipate, participate in, and leverage the emerging economic, political and social paradigms that will define the Customs of the Future.

Defining the Customs of the Future

With the support of the SG and Members, I will endeavor to ensure that national and regional specificities are better understood and taken into account in WCO's work programmes. The standards produced by the WCO and the WTO are indeed good for standardization and harmonization as they bring coherence and convergence, thus improving the efficiency of the international supply chain. They benefit governments and businesses alike. However, going forward, we need to devote more attention to how WCO instruments and tools are applied in a scalable manner, linking with the overall performance measurement and continued improvement.

There is only one standard for Customs: that developed by the WCO. But there are a thousand ways to implement these standards. As such, I would like to encourage a dialogue between and among Members having different developmental needs, so that they benefit from each other in terms of, not only, successes but also experiences, difficulties, obstacles and how they have been overcome. Basically, it is the path that is interesting. Thus, I would like to promote and ensure a pragmatic and human approach to

"I intend to listen to you and to be at your service, next to the Secretary General, while working for a common vision."



the implementation of WCO standards closely working with Directors within the framework of the SG's vision. This is the challenge. And this will be my everyday commitment.

Finally, coming from a country whose two official languages are English and French, I will especially ensure that WCO expertise should be available, at least, in both the official languages of the Organization while exploring all possibilities to have it translated into other languages.

By ensuring the coordination internally and externally, I wish to ensure the practical cohesion and progression of the WCO institution keeping pace with new responsibilities and Member's expectations to deal with the challenges in terms of governance, promote standards as well as a clever and open attitude, produce legal instruments as well as sound analysis, help all our Members in their way to autonomy, define their needs and assess their efficiency.

I believe in standards. But I also believe in diversity. I believe in enforcing the Law. But I also believe in the power of data. I believe in the authority of the State. But I also believe in its duty of transparency to serve the common good. I am and will be at the service of Customs of the Future. I am and will be at the service of our Members.



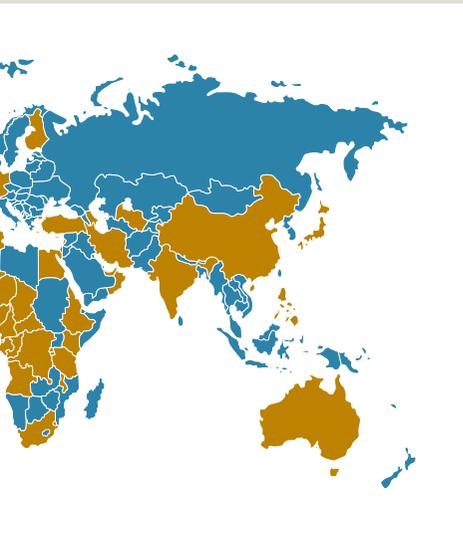
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Samson Bilangna exercised for 18 years at the Directorate General of Customs of Cameroon, where he was Director of Information and Communication Technology (equivalent Deputy DG) between 2009 and 2012, Customs Modernisation Advisor (CMA) accredited by the WCO and WCO Expert on the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and the Time Release Study (TRS). Since 2012 (5 years), he works as a Senior Technical Officer at the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels.

Samson Bilangna is 52 years, married and father of five children. He is Commander of the Order of Merit and Knight of the Order of Valour of Cameroon and is bilingual (English and French).

> 18 years in Cameroon Customs
> More than 5 years at the World Customs Organization (WCO)



Samson BILANGNA

*IT Director in Cameroon Customs
(2009–2012)*

*Senior Technical Officer at the World Customs
Organization (WCO) since 2012*

He is a Senior Customs Officer, and has a Master's Degree in International Economics and Stakeholder Strategies (Governance of International Development Organizations) – Université Pierre Mendès France, Grenoble, France. He is completing a PhD thesis on 'Trade Facilitation and the performance of stakeholders of transit to landlocked countries in the CEMAC Zone'.

He was a teacher at the University of Douala (Introduction to Customs Law, Applied Border Taxation) and at the Customs section of ENAM, in Yaoundé. As a Director of Information and Communication Technology, he worked on countless projects, implemented databases and statistical data analysis instruments to fight against corruption and measure day-to-day Customs performance.



One of the letters sent to all WCO Regions' Vice-chairs



The candidacy benefits from the support of the Government of Cameroon,
the African Union and of more Customs administrations worldwide

