

PRESS RELEASE

UGANDA REVENUE AUTHORITY

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CUSTOMS BUSINESS CENTRE(CBC) – NAKAWA

In a ceremony hosted by the Acting Commissioner General, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) today officially opened the Customs Business Centre (CBC) in Nakawa. Progressive implementation of customs transactions at this new facility started some time ago, but a commissioning ceremony was targeted to coincide with URA's 13th Anniversary celebrations this September.

The CBC concept was developed by the URA Modernization Project as a one stop shop for customs clients, so it could house a faster and fully electronic clearance process, a more efficient configuration of the **Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA++)**, on site banking facilities linked to this system and a modern office environment for staff, computer equipment and clients. This concept represents a landmark in the way URA does business with its clients and is a shift from an environment of 100% verification of all declarations regardless of their nature.

The acting CG recognized the efforts of the ASYCUDA++ Implementation team and the Project's Customs Adviser in developing and implementing this concept and indicated that it would soon be rolled out to most Customs stations.

The ASYCUDA++ configuration at the new site allows traders to create electronic import and export declarations from their offices, self assess the taxes to be paid, legally register these declarations, and to prepay self assessed taxes at the authorized banks at the Nakawa site before presenting the declarations to Customs. By using risk management techniques through ASYCUDA++ automated selectivity, Customs can quickly release (Green lane) those declarations which are complete, correct and compliant with all Customs requirements. On the other hand, if declarations contain errors, omissions or misrepresented quantities, values or claims, they are subject to a more intensive documentary check (Yellow lane) or physical examination (Red lane), so that any additional revenue that is due is duly assessed and collected.

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mrs Allen Kagina, indicated that compliant traders would reap the benefits of the simpler and faster clearance process which has already resulted in the majority of the entries (around 58%) being directed to the Green lane and released within a few hours after lodgement. Costs to business have been reduced due to a shorter process time, less trips to Customs and banks to complete transactions, less paper forms being required, less demand for personnel and, in general, due to a more predictable business environment.

Mrs Kagina said that the new clearance process at the CBC complies with international standards included in the Kyoto Convention and recommendations of the World Customs Organization (WCO) that favour trade facilitation and client service while exercising customs controls. She announced to the trading community that to mark this momentous occasion, URA was releasing today the first of many **"Customs Client Service Standards"**.

This initial set of standards reflects Customs commitment to provide specific services to clients, in a particular manner and within published timeframes, provided certain conditions are met. One these standards aims to release import declarations **within 3 hours of lodgement at the CBC**, provided self assessed taxes have been paid, entry data are complete and correct, all support documentation is present, and there are no other impediments. Details of the standards were being distributed to traders and interested parties in a separate hand out, and posted in the URA website (www.ugrevenue.com).

NAKAWA, 25 September 2004