

## **80<sup>th</sup> Policy Commission Session of WCO, Mumbai**

The 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the Policy Commission of World Customs Organization (WCO) is being hosted by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) at Mumbai, India from 03<sup>rd</sup> to 05<sup>th</sup> of December, 2018. Theme of the session is “Smart Borders, Seamless trade and travel”.

WCO with its membership of more than 180 countries is the only global organization which defines global standards and procedures for customs clearances at the border and their implementation. Established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), it is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations across the globe. India is a member and active participant of various activities of WCO since 1971. India is part of the Asia Pacific region having 33 countries, one of WCO's 6 regions. From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018, India has taken over as the Vice-Chair of the Asia Pacific region for two years.

The supreme body is the Council of WCO and its Council Session is held annually at Brussels which is attended by the Heads of Customs/Directors General of all the member administrations. The second highest body is the Policy Commission, which meets twice a year, once at the WCO headquarters at Brussels just before the Council Session and once in December, hosted by a member administration. The work being done by various Committees, Working Groups and Directorates in WCO is monitored and approved by the Policy Commission, which comprises countries from the six regions of WCO, which are nominated for two years.

The Secretary General of WCO, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya along with other top officials of WCO and customs heads from more than 34 countries along with their delegations will be participating in the three day long session on various matters related to customs.

In the opening session on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Hon'ble Finance Minister of India Shri. Arun Jaitley addressed the gathering through Live Video conference. The Revenue Secretary, Shri. Ajay Bhushan Pandey presented his opening remarks. The Indian delegation being headed by Chairman, CBIC Shri. S Ramesh along with Member Customs Shri. P K Das and their team of senior officers.

Some of the important topics to be discussed during the meeting include trade facilitation, controlling illicit financial flow, performance measurement, challenges of small island economies, etc.

Hosting of the Policy Commission session will give global presence and leadership role to the country in the area of Customs procedures and will also give a head start to India's thrust in trade facilitating and ease of doing business.