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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## IMF's AFRITACs in West Africa and ECOWAS Hold a Regional Customs Integrity Seminar

Between 24 and 28 March, the IMF's AFRITAC WEST and AFRITAC WEST2 Regional Technical Assistance Centers, together with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS) jointly organized a regional seminar in Accra, Ghana, to discuss the development of a customs integrity framework. The seminar was attended by customs experts from 15 countries, as well as participants from the EU, the USA and the UK.

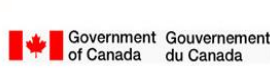
The event was opened by Mr. Emmanuel Kofi Nti, Commissioner-General of the Ghana Revenue Authority and opening presentations were also made by Mr. Salifou Tiemtore, Customs Director at the ECOWAS Commission, and by IMF and WCO representatives. All of the countries delivered presentations on the customs integrity regimes in their respective administrations.

The outcome of the seminar was a proposal, to the ECOWAS Commission, on the key elements to include in a customs integrity framework, which the Commission will use as the basis for developing a draft ECOWAS directive or regulation.

The proposal acknowledges the dangers of corruption within customs and society and the importance of customs administrations applying the principles of fairness, impartiality, honesty and professionalism in their work.

The experts' proposals cover the principles underpinning the drive to increase integrity; the policies and instruments needed to support those principles; the mechanisms and systems to implement the policies and monitor them; and the procedures to enforce policies and ensure that corruption and malpractice can be properly dealt with.

This is a challenging and complex issue and the group acknowledged that there are very few simple solutions. The seminar discussions have provided a sound basis for consideration by the ECOWAS Commission and for further discussion by the ECOWAS member states.



### *Background*

The AFRITAC West 2 Center is located in Accra, Ghana and works with Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The European Union, European Investment Bank, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Australia, UK and China support the center, alongside the IMF and member countries.

The IMF's [capacity development](#) efforts are part of its core mandate and help governments strengthen their economic institutions through technical assistance and training. A global network of [regional capacity development centers](#) help coordinate these efforts and is complemented by [global thematic funds](#) for capacity development. They are financed jointly by the IMF, external development partners, and member countries.

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