

Border Clearance Management System Launched at Namanga



Holding up the signed documents are: (L to R) Mr. Masaharu Shimoya, JICA's Expert for the Customs Project, Chief Representatives of JICA Offices in Kenya and Tanzania, Mr. Hideo Eguchi and Mr. Yukihide Katsuta, TRA's Commissioner General, Mr. Harry Kitillya and KRA's Commissioner for Customs Services, Ms. Beatrice Memo.

Trade facilitation is key in promoting economic development and reducing poverty in the East African region. For this reason, JICA has been supporting infrastructure and energy development, trade and industry promotion, and private sector development under the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).

Top officials of the border agencies from the Governments of Kenya and Tanzania, the EAC Secretariat, community leaders, various private/public associations, development partners, the Embassy of Japan and JICA gathered at the Namanga border on Monday, 18th February 2013 to launch the One Stop Boarder Post (OSBP) Clearance Management System, Real Time Monitoring System/Cargo Control System (RTMS/CCS). The attendants also witnessed the hand-over of the related equipment e.g. high-

'Japan has been working with the regional governments of East Africa to introduce One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) as an instrument for economic development'



Mr. Yoichiro Yamada gives his remarks.

spec blade servers, computers, printers, software, converters and batteries, among others, from the Government of Japan to the Government of Kenya and Tanzania for the operations of the RTMS/CCS at Namanga. Total assistance to the project amounts to over 1.9 million dollars since the beginning of JICA's support in 2008.

The OSBP, under JICA's Customs Project, has been supported by the Government of Japan since 2007. RTMS/CCS with its various functions, is the ICT System for the OSBPs. It is expected to facilitate smooth and efficient cargo clearance processes by the border agencies and facilitate trade by reducing goods clearance time and the cost of business.

The JICA Customs Project will roll out the RTMS/CCS to the other borders posts among them Malaba (KE/UG), Busia (KE/UG), Taveta/Holili (KE/TZ), Isebania/Sirari (KE/TZ). But it will continue monitoring and following-up its operations at Namanga.

Other aspects of JICA's support include designing/prototyping the OSBP facility; constructing the OSBP facilities at Namanga (Tanzania side) and the

Rusumo (Rwanda/Tanzania) borders and developing the 'OSBP Source Book' in association with the EAC. The Source Book is now being used as a general reference tool in Africa when implementing OSBP.

JICA also assisted the development EAC OSBP Bill, which has passed the East African Legislative Assembly and is awaiting final signature by the respective EAC Presidents.

"Proper use of technology will improve efficiency and enhance integrity in the customs operations. It will remove cumbersome customs and other government agencies procedures hence stimulating economic growth and trade between our nations," said the Commissioner General of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), Mr. Harry Kitillya. He also noted that the system would reduce congestion as clearance will be done in just two hours.

The Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)'s Commissioner of Customs Services, Ms. Beatrice Memo, lauded the strong partnership between JICA and the two East African countries, noting that the RTMS/CCS would enable the sharing of cargo information in East Africa. "The joint verification of cargo at the borders will ensure faster clearance time," she added.

During the launching ceremony, the operations of the system were demonstrated by staff of the TRA. All present were taken through practical entries in the system and eventual clearance of goods.