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LRA/PR-026/18-19

LRA Seeks Modern Customs Operation To Boost Revenue Collection



(Monrovia, January 29, 2019): The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) has reaffirmed its commitment to modernized customs related activities to ease revenue payment.

Over the weekend the LRA joined 181 countries around the world to celebrate International Customs Day in Ganta, Nimba County the first ever to be hosted outside Monrovia.

The celebration which was held under the global theme “Smart Borders for Seamless Trade, Travel and Transport”, was in commemoration of the 67th Anniversary of International Customs Day.

The ‘SMART’ as used in this year’s theme represents Customs ensuring Secured, Measurable, Automated, Risk Management-based and Technology-driven processes in compliance, enforcement and facilitation efforts.



NEWS RELEASE

LRA/PR-026/18-19

During the program, LRA Commissioner General Thomas Doe Nah lauded customs officers for their level of performance in helping to collect the needed revenue for Liberia. CG Nah encouraged customs officers to work with diligence in ensuring a proactive standard to collect lawful revenue.

He cautioned LRA customs officers to desist from unlawful acts in the discharge of their duties, noting that such behavior will not be tolerated during his regime.

“We all have a responsibility to be ethical not only with our mouths, but with our actions. So let the message be made clear today that we do not practice corruption in any form or shape, and if anyone thinks that LRA or customs is a place to enrich themselves during my tenure, then you are not my friend,” he stated.

CG Nah further called for collaboration with other agencies of government including partners for smooth customs operations, revenue collection and border security. The LRA commissioner General warned against acts of smuggling and trafficking of harmful products and items in the country.

The LRA Boss encouraged staff to learn new skills in a bid to fully prepare themselves to adjust to the new trend of customs transformation.

For his part, the keynote speaker at this year’s celebration of International Customs Day, Ivan Tumbay, President of the National Customs Brokers Association of Liberia called for a collaborative effort involving all customs stakeholders for the advancement of customs operations in Liberia.

He challenged customs brokers to be more transparent and accountable in their dealings in helping the government increase its revenue collection.

Mr. Tumbay warned customs brokers to desist from acts that have the ability to undermine government’s revenue collection process.

“If you are a good broker, continue to be, but if you are a bad one you must change now or leave the system because we are prepare to join the LRA to weed you out,” he indicated.

He said the role of customs brokers in enhancing trade facilitation is vital and as such must be done in line with their requisite responsibilities in accordance with the Revenue Code of Liberia.



NEWS RELEASE

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Mr. Tumbay called on government to create a more vigorous customs environment for timely and smooth coordination.



Meanwhile, LRA Customs Commissioner Saa Saamoi disclosed that the Authority is well on course with its modernization plans with the aim to ensure a holistic transformation of customs operations and effective measures to promote trade facilitation and border security.

He announced that the LRA has embarked on programs leading to ensuring a full scale automation and integration of all land and sea borders including rural ports to the paperless platform and at the same time interfacing with all commercial banks in Liberia for the single payment of fees and taxes.

Commissioner Saamoi also indicated that there are plans underway to introduce simplified electronic declaration procedures for international passengers and small skills informal traders in Liberia to boost trade activities.

He said the LRA in collaboration with the ministries of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Commerce and Industry (MoC) are formulating plans to transition from pre shipment inspection (PSI) to designation inspection (DI) using state of the art cargo inspection facilities including non-intrusive technology.



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Over the year, the LRA has worked towards simplifying and modernizing customs procedures including the establishment of a Centralized Assessment Unit which has provided a platform for a paperless environment.

This year's celebration brought together the customs officers of the Liberia Revenue Authority, Liberia Immigration Service, the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency, the Liberia National Police, including a team from the Guinean customs among others.