

WCO PICARD CONFERENCE 2008

The World Customs Organization (WCO) 2008 PICARD (Partnership in Customs Academic Research and Development) Conference was held in Shanghai, People's Republic of China, 14-16 May 2008.

The main aim of the International Network of Customs Universities (INCU) is to promote the academic standing of the Customs profession. The WCO PICARD program provided an ideal opportunity to interact with members of the WCO and the donor community, and to make significant progress towards the achievement of that objective.

The Conference addressed the following themes, aimed at assisting WCO members to achieve their strategic and policy objectives:

- pilot projects for the PICARD Professional Standards
- current and planned Customs-specific academic educational programs
- research needs, activities and capabilities
- ways in which identified research needs can be progressed between the WCO and INCU with the support of the donor community.

The following needs, current activities and future actions were identified:

- global strategies for Customs capacity building in response to developing countries' overwhelming call for assistance in relation political and strategic advice, and fundamental reform
- the future development of Customs managers to enable them to lead and manage in our constantly changing global environment
- empirical research to support decision making within the WCO and among its members, and more importantly, to support policy decision-making within national governments
- initiatives for providing a single forum for the numerous training academies and institutes of Customs administrations, and how such a forum would provide an opportunity for the INCU to interact with its partners in the WCO
- options to proactively advance empirical research in areas that have been highlighted by the WCO as being critical to supporting the strategic decisions that are confronting its members.

In addition, significant progress was made in relation to the PICARD Professional Standards, including the development of a set of draft guidelines that establish a process by which universities meeting the requirements of the Standards may attain WCO recognition of their academic programs.

Full details of the conference and its outcomes can be found at: http://www.wcoomd.org/home_wco_topics_cboverviewboxes_cbnews_cbpicardnews.htm.

