

Editorial



The 2010 PICARD conference which was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, marked a significant milestone in the partnership between the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the academic world. We covered a great deal of ground during the two and a half days of the conference, and in doing so a number of key issues emerged, the details of which are set out in our Special Report in Section 3. The conference concluded that we have achieved much of what we originally set out to achieve, that is, to raise the academic standing of the customs profession. The implementation phase is completed, and it's now time to take things forward by acting on the possibilities that have been identified. This can best be achieved through ongoing collaboration among and between academic institutions and customs administrations.

On 26 January this year – World Customs Day – Dr Kunio Mikuriya, the Secretary General of the WCO, announced this year's theme for the organisation: *Knowledge, a Catalyst for Customs Excellence*. The chosen theme further reinforces the value of maintaining a partnership approach – working together to identify sound policy and practical operational solutions based on scientific enquiry and empirical evidence. The articles published in the following pages help to build the knowledge base required to identify such solutions, and for this I thank the contributors.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish Mr Erich Kieck every success in his new role of Director, WCO Capacity Building Directorate. Erich has been a strong supporter of the PICARD program since its inception. One of his first duties will be to oversee the 2nd Session of the Capacity Building Meeting in May this year which will discuss, among other things, the development of a strategic roadmap to ensure the sustainability, relevance and responsiveness of WCO Capacity Building. We look forward to working with Erich on this and other important initiatives during his term in office, including this year's PICARD conference. While the final details of the conference are yet to be settled, the research themes will be: coordinated border management, performance measurement, economic security and poverty reduction, and integrity. The call for papers will be released in early May and, as in previous years, all conference papers will be considered for publication in the next edition of the *World Customs Journal*.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'.

David Widdowson
Editor-in-Chief