Mr. Jonathan T. Soriano, OIC-Director, MISTG, Philippine Bureau of Customs

Philippine’s Experience in Trade Digitalization

• The Philippines’ journey towards digital transformation and success factors

• Accession to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

• Importance of Implementing the Technical and Legal Readiness Assessments

• Challenges in moving towards cross-border paperless trade (based on the readiness assessment)

• Key findings and ways forward

• Recommendation for other countries to conduct readiness assessments using the "ESCAP legal and technical readiness checklists", the "readiness assessment guide" and the "cross-border paperless trade toolkit"
Silvia Sorescu, Policy Analyst / Project lead Trade facilitation, OECD

- OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators (TFIs) 2022 highlight improvements made by the Asia-Pacific region since 2019 are particularly in transparency, automating and streamlining trade documents and border processes, as well as enhancing border agency co-operation

- These improvements are driven by progress in the establishment of regulatory frameworks for trade facilitation

- Progress in border agency co-operation has been supported by domestic and cross-border co-operation mechanisms to address bottlenecks throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

- Challenges exist in closing the gap between the establishment of regulatory frameworks and implementation in practice

- Further efforts to improve implementation in practice are key for reaping the benefits from trade facilitation in the digital era (boosting trade in parcels) and in enhancing inclusiveness (MSMEs and women-led businesses participation in trade)

- Further efforts also needed to better understand sectoral specificities in trade facilitation – e.g., agro-food
Regional cooperation and trade facilitation are mutually reinforcing initiatives.

- Regional cooperation enables and strengthens trade facilitation.
- Regional cooperation is enhanced and strengthened by trade facilitation.
- Digital trade facilitation will require, and contribute to, closer regional cooperation. It is more challenging, but more rewarding as well.
Young-hwan CHA, President and CEO of Korea Trade Network

• The improvement of trade facilitation in Asia and the Pacific in 2021 seems to be due to an increase in contactless transactions caused by COVID-19.

• In order to further promote trade facilitation, the development of ICT and human resources, and the government’s strong commitment to trade facilitation are essential.

• It is estimated that paperless trade in Korea reduced trade-related costs by $9.4 billion in 2021 through cost savings from labor hours, transportation, warehousing, and document processing.

• KTNET introduced a blockchain-based imported cargo carry-out service in November 2021, which shares relevant cargo information with forwarders, warehouses, and carriers.

• Online FTA origin management service contributes to trade facilitation by assisting Korean trading companies in verifying the country of origin of goods for tariff concessions under Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

• In an effort to promote cross-border trade, the Korean government concluded the Digital Partnership Agreement with the Singaporean government in December 2021.