

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL
TO EXPEDITE THE FORWARDING OF RELIEF CONSIGNMENTS
IN THE EVENT OF DISASTERS**
(8th JUNE 1970, T2-423)

THE CUSTOMS CO-OPERATION COUNCIL,

DESIRING to contribute to the efforts made in the interest of humanity to assist victims of disasters;

CONSIDERING that the effectiveness of such assistance is dependent to a large extent on the speed with which it can be furnished;

CONSIDERING that the simplification and harmonization of Customs formalities, by facilitating the crossing of frontiers, would expedite the forwarding of relief consignments in the event of disasters;

RECOMMENDS that Members of the Council and members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies, and Customs or Economic Unions, should :

1. waive any economic export prohibitions or restrictions, and any export duties or taxes, in respect of goods contained in relief consignments destined to countries having suffered disasters;
2. accept at exportation, as a general rule, the written declarations made out by the exporters of relief consignments as evidence of the contents and of the intended use of such consignments;
3. take such steps as may be necessary in order that, on application being made by the persons concerned, the Customs authorities of the exporting country may be in a position

to :

(a) examine, where appropriate by random checks, against a detailed list, the contents of relief consignments, and certify the results of this examination on that list; and

(b) where possible place such consignments under Customs seals

where such action is likely to avoid delays in the forwarding of the goods at later stages in their journey;

4. facilitate as far as possible the carriage of relief consignments in Customs transit, with due regard to any action taken under paragraph 3 above;

5. allow admission free of import duties and taxes and free of economic import prohibitions or restrictions in respect of all relief consignments received as gifts by organizations approved by the competent authorities, for distribution free of charge by such organizations or under their control to the victims of a disaster in their territory, in particular where such consignments consist of foodstuffs, medicaments, clothing, blankets, tents, prefabricated houses, or other goods of prime necessity;

6. facilitate the temporary admission, with conditional relief from import duties and taxes, of any equipment loaned free of charge to organizations approved by the competent authorities to be used under the control of such organizations in action undertaken to alleviate the effects of a disaster; and wherever possible not require security but be content with an undertaking given by the approved organization to re-export such equipment;

7. authorize as far as possible, relief consignments to be cleared outside the hours and places normally prescribed, and, in such circumstances, waive, if possible, any charges for Customs attendance;

POINTS OUT that :

1. the term "disaster" shall be taken to cover both natural disasters and similar catastrophes;
2. the facilities provided for in this Recommendation shall not apply in respect of alcohol, alcoholic beverages or tobacco goods;
3. the provisions of this Recommendation shall not preclude the application of prohibitions or restrictions imposed under national laws and regulations on grounds of public morality or order, public security, public hygiene or health or based on veterinary or phytopathological considerations;
4. this Recommendation does not prevent the application of greater facilities which certain Members grant or may grant in future by unilateral provisions or by virtue of bilateral or multilateral;

INVITES Members of the Council and members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies, and Customs or Economic Unions :

1. to approve without delay the national organizations which under paragraphs 5 and 6 above would be responsible for the receipt and distribution of relief consignments; and
2. to issue as soon as possible to the competent Customs offices such instructions as may be necessary to ensure, should the case arise, the immediate implementation of the provisions of this Recommendation;

REQUESTS Members of the Council and members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies, and Customs or Economic Unions which accept this Recommendation to notify the Secretary General of the Council of the date from which they will apply the Recommendation and of the conditions of its application. The Secretary General will transmit this information to the Customs administrations of all Members of the Council. He will also transmit it to the Customs administrations of the members of the United Nations Organization or its specialized agencies and to Customs or Economic Unions which have accepted this Recommendation.
