



# Final Report

## Intra-Regional Relations

*VII Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting of Foreign Trade Single Windows: Single Windows as tools for trade facilitation and commercial integration*

*Montevideo, Uruguay*

*15 and 16 October 2015*

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## I. RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

The VII Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows: Single Windows as Tools for Trade Facilitation and Commercial Integration, was held on 15 and 16 October 2015 in Montevideo, Eastern Republic of Uruguay, and organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), together with the Institute for Investment Promotion and Export, Uruguay XXI, and VUCE Uruguay. The conduction of this event responded to the mandate that the Latin American Council gave to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in its XL Regular Meeting (Caracas, Venezuela, 26 to 28 November 2014), as reflected in *Project I.3. Development of Foreign Trade Single Windows within the framework of International Trade Facilitation and Cross-Border Paperless Trade*, of the [Work Programme for 2015](#) of the organization.

The purpose of this event was to continue the dialogue initiated with the First Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows (Bogota, 25 and 26 March 2010), through the exchange of successful experiences and relevant information on strategic issues and the progress achieved in Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of Single Windows, with the intention of contributing to their development and consolidation within the framework of the digital and regional integration processes.

Specifically, the objective of the VII Regional Meeting was to review the role played by the Single Windows, both within the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the corresponding mechanisms and agreements for trade integration.

As is customary, participating at this yearly event were managers and experts responsible for Single Window projects and cross-border trade, from both the public and private sector, from the following Member States of SELA: Argentina, Bolivia, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic; Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. Also present were representatives from the Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN/CEFACT (United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business).

At the opening session, speeches were made by the following persons, successively: Engineer Lorena Veiga, Coordinator of Single Window Uruguay; Dr. Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Network of Information and Knowledge, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the organization, Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri; Economist Álvaro Ons, President of the Uruguayan National Economic Development Agency (ANDE), and Accountant Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs of Uruguay. The full texts of the speeches are included, respectively, in Annexes II to V.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEETING

The event was carried out according to the scheduled agenda (Annex I). To access the speeches delivered at the opening session, the lectures given, the presentations, the conclusions from the discussions, closing remarks and this report, click [here](#) or visit the Past Events section at [www.sela.org](http://www.sela.org).

To access the audio of the various presentations, as well as the subsequent debates, click [here](#).

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**Wednesday, 15 October 2015**

### Lectures

[Importance of Intra-Regional Trade for International Competitiveness](#), by Tania García Millán, International Trade and Integration Division, ECLAC.

[Strategic Function of Single Windows: Aiming at Trade Facilitation and an Increase in Intra-Regional Trade](#), given by Alicia Jiménez, Consultant and expert in international trade.

### **Thematic Area I. Single Windows and other provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in subregional trade integration mechanisms**

The moderator in this area was Mr. Juan Juncal, Director of Technologies for Foreign Trade Single Windows, from the Export and Import Promotion Institute of Uruguay XXI.

Belquise Pimentel, Head of the Physical and Digital Integration Department of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), spoke on ["Single Windows and other provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO in subregional trade integration mechanisms: ALADI case"](#).

Álvaro Palmigiano, Director of Processes of the National Customs Direction of Uruguay, spoke on the [Single Windows, the TFA and MERCOSUR](#).

Emmanuel Abraham Ortega Aguilar, Director of Design and Implementation of International Trade Operations, General Direction for International Trade of the Secretariat of Economy, Mexico, spoke on the topic ["Interoperability and the Pacific Alliance"](#).

### **General debate**

Moderator. With regard to digital certification of origin, he asked if it was intended to be done through Single Windows or through third-party systems of ALADI. He then asked if ALADI will serve as general certifier as it is today for the paper process, or if consideration has been given to achieving bilateral agreements to simplify and accelerate the acceptance of documentation among countries. Finally, he wanted to know in which countries of the Pacific Alliance, or elsewhere, are they already considering having the aforementioned pilot projects and how long did it take to have a definite date for the first semester, starting with interoperability and, in that same period, have the first pilot projects.

Belquise Pimentel. Regarding the development of the digital certificate of origin, she informed that work is being done with an operating system in which most countries are participating. She added that the signature is consigned in an information repository, which all countries sending or receiving information will have their cryptographic credentials and that such information will have to be together, in accordance with the information that is being received and sent. She illustrated the process with an analogy in which a paper was torn into two parts, so that a part will have to match with the information being received and that all keys will have to be together and perfectly adjusted in order to know that the person who is making the certificate of origin is the same person who has been identified by a certifying authority. So, she explained, there are two keys; one public, used by the certifying entity and the other owned by the person. If the person has

forgotten the token and another person used it, the responsibility lies with the owner who, recognizing that it was used, should inform the authorities so it can be invalidated.

Moderator. He referred to the possible problems associated with the acceptance of the keys among countries and, in this regard, asked how these problems would be overcome and how the acceptance of the keys for a country is being handled at government level in respect to that of another, noting that surely, and understandably, there would be certain laws in some countries that are not totally coincident, to which Belquise Pimentel responded that the keys are made in each country by a certification authority and must match with the keys of the other countries.

Emmanuel Abraham. In answer to the question concerning the pilots to be implemented by the Pacific Alliance and the countries that would initially have them, he said that surely, given his experience in the work of single windows, they would be Mexico, Colombia, and Chile. He then said that, regardless of how advanced the available technology may be, what matters most is the willingness of the countries to interoperate, as shown by the experience of Mexico and Colombia who have been working together for six years, with certificates of origin without electronic signature, having exceeded some 100,000 certificates of origin issued. Finally, he said that if any country wanted to have this interaction with Mexico, the Aztec country is more than willing to do so.

Belquise Pimentel. She commented that ALADI is working on an agreement project for digital signature in order to promote confidence among countries and that, for now, they are considering participation from 13, but the goal is that the digital signature is accepted by all countries of the region.

Álvaro Palmigiani. He explained that in Uruguay, the model proposed by ALADI is called advanced electronic signature and, he said, that from the technological point of view, having a digital signature does not pose too many problems. What generates some difficulty, he added, is to harmonize the ease of the electronic world with the legal world because, eventually, what will be at stake is the payment or not of certain rights, fines, all of which require, from a legal point of view, that there is a solid foundation. He commented that he considered the solution found by Mexico and Colombia to be very interesting and that, if these countries are interoperating years ago, it means that, from a legal point of view, they have found a good solution. He added that certainly this, and that of Chile, are two cases to be observed by the other countries.

Gloria Cañas. She asked whether the use of international standards, such as those from UN/CEFACT, is also contemplated in the Pack Interoperability, to which Belquise Pimentel responded that it was not contemplated. Subsequently, Gloria Cañas asked whether ALADI and MERCOSUR or the Pacific Alliance contemplate, have contemplated or promoted the use of governance that exists in these integration agreements to generate the potential for coordinated implementation contemplated in Section III of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), as well as the coordination of National Facilitation Committees and the possibility of creating a Regional or Subregional Committee.

To that last question, Alvaro Palmigiani responded that creation of the National Committee for the implementation of the Agreement was recently decided in Uruguay, but there was greater delay in MERCOSUR with regard to this issue. Meanwhile, Belquise Pimentel pointed out that ALADI has a Trade Facilitation Group that works on all issues, including DCO and also there is an Ad Hoc group for that issue. He added that all issues are being jointly worked by the members. Finally, Emmanuel Abraham commented that it is an issue of governance, that it was taken literally from the

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Agreement and that all new treaties of which Mexico is a part contemplate that legislation to facilitate electronic trade.

### **Continuation Area I. Single Windows and other provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in subregional trade integration mechanisms**

Christian Márquez, Specialist in Single Electronic Window (SEW) from the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investment and Communications of Trinidad and Tobago, spoke on the ["TTBizLink and the case of CARICOM"](#).

Adriana Alvarado, Information System Office from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia, spoke on ["Single Windows and other provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement; the case of the Andean Community \(CAN\)"](#).

José Cornelio Deras, Head of the CIEX Department, El Salvador, spoke on ["Single Windows and other Provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in Subregional Trade Integration Mechanisms: Case of SICA"](#).

### **General debate**

Moderator. Christian Marquez was asked what were the main visualization data indicators used for the implementation of *Business Intelligence*. In addition, he was asked how the problem of user log in Single Windows was solved and how could the registration process be simplified. He was requested to expand on the issue related to the Colombia-Bolivia cooperation and, finally, he was asked in how many places had Single Window El Salvador been replicated and what has been the impact, in terms of costs, of such replication.

José Cornelio Deras. He explained that the budgetary impact of the replication of Single Windows in El Salvador is minimal and, moreover, the authorities have suggested as a challenge to replicate the site in the USA thereby maintaining, in times of a disaster, the capacity to provide the service from that country in a transparent manner for customers.

Adriana Alvarado. As for the registration of users, she explained that, initially, the process was done manually and required much time but that it is now being done online and can be done from anywhere, 7/24, in much less time. As for the interaction Colombia-Bolivia, she explained that, in 2012, representatives from Bolivia were doing an internship at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia reviewing all documentation related to the Digital Certificate of Origin and Affidavit of Origin and a Colombian counterpart did the same in Bolivia. She explained that the Government of Colombia ceded to that of Bolivia the applicative rights whose transfer is in process and, finally, she informed that Certificates of Origin matters are currently being handled by the Directorate of National Taxes and Customs of Colombia (DIAN).

Christian Marquez. With regard to the implementation of *Business Intelligence*, he reiterated the need for a tool to analyse and derive the maximum benefit possible from the vast amount of information available through the single window so as to facilitate the process of decision making, and carry out commercial transactions for both the Ministry of Commerce and other government entities, as well as for the importers and exporters who are linked to the single window, and believed that the *Business Intelligence* model would facilitate them with visualization and analysis of the information. Regarding the interest of Guyana, Suriname and Belize in foreign trade single windows, he informed that these countries have not initiated the process of designing their



respective single windows and that, at a CARICOM meeting held in April 2015 on this matter, representatives from the three countries participated in a discussion to consider the possibility of whether it would be more convenient for everyone to have a regional window instead of each one having its own national single window. Finally, he stressed on the disposition and technical capacity of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to support this process.

Adriana Alvarado. She explained that all Single Window operations require digital signatures and that, presently, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia bears the cost involved to provide citizens with the process.

Gloria Cañas. She asked what difference is seen in Colombia and how the Digital Certificate of Origin (DCO) is progressing in the Pacific Alliance and CAN, specifically with regard to the development that was done to initiate this exchange with Ecuador, and what differences or similarities or what use of practices are carried out between integration mechanisms, given that Colombia is linked to the two and, finally, if these good practices are transmitted from one side to the other.

Adriana Alvarado. She said that the experience of digital certificates of origin, in terms of the technological platform, is the same for both mechanisms. She commented that there was a profit since 2012 and, with that learnt from the experience of Colombia, Mexico and Chile, everything concerning exchanges is already structured.

## **Thematic area II. Application of the Trade Facilitation Agreement**

Edna Ramírez, UNCTAD Consultant and Expert on Trade, spoke on the [“Trade Facilitation Agreement: Challenges and solutions for its implementation”](#).

Juan Acuña, SELA’s Consultant, spoke on the [“Review and Analysis of the Application of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in the countries of the region”](#).

Tania García Millán, from the International Trade and Integration Division of ECLAC, explained the results of the [“Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Implementation of Paperless Trade: Main results for Latin America and the Caribbean”](#).

### **PANEL: Positioning of Foreign Trade Single Windows within the framework of the national policies to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement**

On this occasion, acting as moderator was Mr. Rafael Quintero, Head of the Process Optimization Department of the Government Innovation Management from the Panamanian Authority for Government Innovation.

Janaina Batista, Coordinator of Trade Facilitation of Brazil, made and exposition on [“Foreign Trade Single Window: Implementation of TFA/WTO in Brazil”](#).

Rubén Montesdeoca, Director of Continuous Improvement and Regulations of the National Equalization and Admission System of Ecuador, spoke on [“Ecuapass and Ecuadorian Single Window Achievements and Challenges at 2015”](#).

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Katty E. Chávarri Rubio, from the Foreign Trade Single Window of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) of Peru, gave the lecture [“Positioning of FTSWs within the framework of the national policies to implement the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation”](#).

### General debate

Moderator. He pointed out that, in the three cases shown, a coincidence could be seen in what relates to reengineering of processes and asked the panel members what was the most difficult work to accomplish with the provisions that the agreements on trade facilitation require from the countries for the implementation of Single Windows.

Rubén Montesdeoca. He explained that, since in Ecuador there are 19 entities involved in the Single Window, it has been difficult to obtain timely answers but work is being done to improve the response time.

Janaina Batista. As an aspect to be mastered, she pointed out the resistance of some of the actors involved in the process, in which each participant visualizes himself/herself as a very important component.

Katty E. Rubio Chavarri. She spoke of the resistance of some entities, not very willing to accept that they need reengineering of processes, but that the good thing has been the involvement of the authorities, which has allowed the work to flow much better.

Unknown. He asked what governance or structure in this process has been developed and which authorities, besides the ministry, participated in it.

Janaina Batista listed the three entities in Brazil that participate in the Single Window, namely: the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Finance, Industry and Foreign Trade, and the Civil House, ascribed to the Presidency. Ruben Montesdeoca explained that, of the 19 entities involved in the process in Ecuador, not all are ascribed to a ministry and, even so, they participate in the process; entities such as the Chancellery and the Armed Forces. Finally, Katty E. Chavarri Rubio informed that in MINCETUR (Peru), the Single Window has become a Directorate of Foreign Trade Single Window and Technology Platforms, ascribed to the Directorate General of Trade Facilitation, thus allowing for a better work flow.

### Friday 16 October 2015

#### Thematic area III. Interoperability to facilitate intra-regional trade

The moderator of this area was Alvaro Palmigiani, Director of Processes of the National Customs Directorate of Uruguay.

Luca G. Castellani, Legal Officer of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Secretariat, spoke on [“Mutual legal recognition of electronic communications and electronic signatures and paperless trade facilitation: challenges and opportunities”](#).

Paloma Bernal, Expert from the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), spoke on [“Interoperability of Single Windows – UN/CEFACT”](#).

Luis Ascencio Carreño, SELA's Consultant, summarized the ["Programme Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports of Latin America and the Caribbean 2014/2015/2016"](#).

Jean-Edouard Nicolet, from the company SOGET (France) presented the ["Port Single Windows, benefits from their integration with Foreign Trade Single Windows"](#).

Rinaldi, Alejandro, from the company Genexus Consulting, spoke on the issue ["Technologies at the service of integration"](#).

### **General debate**

Luca G. Castellani. He explained that, with respect to the Public Key Infrastructure technology (PKI) which is being used in some countries in the region for border exchange of information, this may be the best solution presently, but that the law should be technologically neutral and based on several notions, such as a substantially necessary level of reliability because a communication media without certificate can be agreed, given that what matters is the ability to validate an agreement that would not be valid otherwise. With regard to the identity management model for electronic transactions, he said that currently there is a model of electronic signature that is being used by 30 countries, but that this year UNCITRAL is working on a proposal for European countries.

Paloma Bernal. She explained that Recommendation 36 defines interoperability as the ability with which two or more systems or components exchange information and use that information across borders, without implying any additional effort for the user. She added that what is being sought with this Recommendation is to highlight that it is not only about processing information, but what is desired is a single delivery, a single data query, a single decision process, a single process of the data itself and also of the information itself in this interoperability, i.e., when an export or import operation is made, that documentation is delivered at a single point and serve to export or import in all countries that are in that interoperated single window.

### **Thematic area IV. Foreign Trade Single Windows. Achievements and challenges**

Lannier Sosa, Coordinator of Single Window Projects from the Foreign Trade Promoter (PROCOMER) of Costa Rica, gave the lecture ["Foreign Trade Single Window of Costa Rica"](#).

Bárbara Matamala, Director of the Foreign Trade Integrated System (SICEX) of Chile, spoke on the ["Case of Chile: Integrating processes to strengthen international trade"](#).

Lorena Veiga, Coordinator of Foreign Trade Single Windows Uruguay. She delivered the presentation ["Foreign Trade Single Window. Case of Uruguay: Achievements and Challenges"](#).

Santiago Losada, General Director of Customs of Argentina, presented the lecture ["Foreign Trade Single Window: Argentina: Case of Argentina"](#)

Jorge Medrano, from the Foreign Trade Single Window of the Dominican Republic, spoke on the ["Foreign Trade Single Window of the Dominican Republic"](#).

### **General debate**

Viviana Gonzalez (Foreign Trade Single Window Uruguay). She questioned whether there is some sort of fee in Foreign Trade Single Windows and at what time the collection is made. According to

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the responses of the panellists, in Costa Rica US\$ 3 is charged for each procedure; in the Dominican Republic nothing is currently being charged, but it is expected to be done; in Argentina US\$ 10 is charged per declaration; in Uruguay, the law contemplates a price for services rendered, but collection has not yet began, thereby hoping to steer the Single Window towards self-sustainability.

Unknown. He asked that, given the resistance to change experienced in some cases, how this circumstance was handled. Chile informed that, in the public sector, incentive meetings were held with directors and working groups from the agencies involved in the process; besides, provisions related to Foreign Trade Single Windows from the Executive were used as pressure elements. Additionally, door to door visits were made to the associations of interest to the project. In Uruguay, the use of a specific plan was proposed that, in addition to the known tools used in these cases, includes analysis of the groups involved, their composition and their expectations. They also appealed to political mandates with good results, thereby proving that political support can be very effective in the process of designing and implementing a Foreign Trade Single Window.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the concepts and the ideas expressed during the development of the lectures and the presentations, as well as the discussions held in this regard, conclusions are as follows:

1. A look at the panorama of Latin American and Caribbean integration in world trade allows appreciation of the following: i) the participation of Latin America and the Caribbean in world exports of goods is the same as it was 35 years ago; ii) progressive intensification of dependence on exports of raw materials; iii) stagnation of exports (2014) and a projected drop of over 10% in 2015 due mainly to the sharp decline in commodity prices since 2012; iv) reduced number of exporting companies and v) concentration of exports in a few large companies.
2. Compared with that of other regions, intra-regional trade in LAC is very low. It is considered to be due to, among others, the following factors: i) the abundance of raw materials in South America which are directed mainly to extra-regional markets; ii) severe deficiencies in transport infrastructure and logistics; iii) high market fragmentation that is reflected in the existence of multiple integration schemes, each with its own rules for trade of goods and services; the presence of regulatory barriers; iv) absence of plurinational industrial policies; v) strong protectionism and vi) the persistence of barriers to intra-group trade and trade among groups.
3. While the rest of the world moves towards integrated macroregions (North America, Asia and Europe), Latin America and the Caribbean remain fragmented. So, for example, Mexico and Central America have low productive integration with South America where primary export specialization predominates, aimed at extraregional markets, and the Caribbean has low integration with itself and with Central and South America. To promote productive integration in LAC, it is necessary to i) resolve the lack of infrastructure (transport, telecommunications and energy, among other sectors); ii) address regulatory barriers through actions such as the harmonization of technical, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, have a regional accumulation of origin so that products receive preferential treatment within the region; iii) promote coordinated positions on trade facilitation and

promote development tools as the only Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSW) and the Port Single Windows (PSW) and iv) promote plurinational policies.

4. In Latin America and the Caribbean it is imperative to move from a national or subregional vision of the integration process to an authentically regional vision which, in turn, demands that, at the level of each country, this process is approached as a State policy aimed at overcoming the great differences that still exist among countries with regard to the objectives, characteristics and instruments of the regional integration being sought. For Latin America and the Caribbean, economic integration is essential because the regional market: i) guarantees export diversification and is the most important for the countries of the region; ii) is the natural niche for the exporting SMEs; iii) is the natural place for the development of productive chains; iv) facilitates the management of common challenges (infrastructure, energy, management of shared natural resources, among others) and iv) promotes the region as a major actor on the international scene, which is very important because, currently, competitiveness is a fact that is more regional than national.
5. In order to achieve economic integration, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have formed trading blocs through which more than 60 preferential agreements have been signed as a result of which today more than 80% of bilateral trade enjoys preferential tariffs. However, the region has not managed to build value chains to strengthen their comparative advantages, nor does it stand out for its aperture in the global context. Regarding the latter, the conviction is that the region should create strategic policies to counteract the big "factories" (North America, Asia and Europe) outside the continent.
6. With regard to the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), so far only 49 member countries of the World Trade Organization have ratified it. Among the countries that have not ratified it, there are 19 that belong to Latin America and the Caribbean. Among the reasons alluded to explain the non-ratification of the FTA and of the measures related to it, are: i) unawareness of the Agreement and the measures; ii) lack of legal framework; iii) lack of resources; iv) aspects related to ICT and infrastructure; v) lack of government cooperation and vi) lack of institutional framework.
7. According to the results of the "Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Implementation of Paperless Trade 2015" (ECLAC) presented at the meeting, among the main challenges being faced by FTSW for its development in the region are, successively: i) lack of coordination among government organizations; ii) the limited capacity of human resources, financial limitations, the absence of a leading entity in the process; iii) the lack of political will and iv) limitations in the infrastructures of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). Another significant limiting factor is the resistance to greater transparency through an adequate and systematic accountability.
8. For LAC it is very important to make progress in the field of trade facilitation because it needs: i) to stimulate the low intra-regional trade; ii) to promote intra-regional and extra-regional productive chains; iii) incentivize the internationalization of SMEs; iv) promote transparency and coordination among State institutions and v) fight corruption more efficiently. The progress achieved in this area will have a greater impact once the efforts made in this direction are coordinated regionally.
9. Increasingly aware of the growing importance of trade facilitation, Latin American and Caribbean countries are converging in designing strategies that, essentially, aim at accessing

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a greater supply of goods at competitive prices, and rationalizing and simplifying foreign trade procedures to allow the smooth flow of goods, both nationally and internationally. Hence the interest in developing the Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSW) as a tool to promote development and economic growth that is reflected in the increasing number of Single Windows operating in the region, which increased from eight in 2011, to 16 in 2015. In fact, there is the conviction that this tool not only has to do with standardization and processes, but also involves economic development, job creation and improvements in the lifestyle of the population.

10. Participants in this VII Regional Meeting on Single Windows had the opportunity to learn how the mechanisms and agreements for trade integration are adopting the provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and, therein, that related to Single Windows and its potential interoperability, evidencing that, as there are provisions already adopted within the framework of customs processes for ongoing improvement, there is ample room to begin, improve and consolidate the effective implementation of the Agreement and of the tools that, as FTSW, may imply specific actions in terms of integration, showing how some agreements such as the Pacific Alliance, are aligned with the goals and approaches of trade facilitation, while others decide not to enter this stream as yet or they do so timidly. Also evident was the positioning of the FTSWs in the context of the implementation of the TFA and how the leading authorities of Single Window can contribute, on the basis of the experience gained, especially in terms of the governance needed to ensure proper coordination and observance of interests by the various parties involved in these processes.
11. Likewise, the reflection remains that the time has come for the authorities of single windows in the region to take the lead in conforming and directing the National Committees for Trade Facilitation, as well as evaluating the possibility of using regional integration mechanisms pursuant to the provisions of Article 24.5 of the TFA ("Members of a customs union or a regional economic arrangement may adopt regional approaches to facilitate the implementation of the corresponding obligations under this Agreement, even by the establishment of regional organizations and their use"). In this way the national authorities of FTSW could act as leading authorities to build scenarios in which it is possible to confront and channel the challenges of implementing the provisions of the TFA in order to be successful and sustainable, allowing the conjugation of a variety of key factors, which include elements of public policy, institutional capacities, management of expectations and perceptions from the various interested groups, strategies of public-private collaboration, business models and viable architectures, among others.
12. On this occasion, the participants highlighted the strategic significance of the FTSW as a mechanism that not only allows the information and standardized documents of a commercial nature to be presented only once and at a single point, improving availability and processing of information, but also, in particular, the fact that, consubstantial to this are: the need to address the harmonization of data and business documents with internationally accepted standards, the simplification of trade and customs procedures, and enabling legislations and ICT infrastructure for the implementation of electronic signatures and payments, among the most important elements. This view of FTSW highlights its importance throughout the International Supply Chain and, at the same time, makes emphasis on the importance of the use of ICT for a more efficient international trade, contributing in a special way to the instruments identified by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as the greatest impact on reducing trade costs.

13. In order to achieve real integration among the various FTSWs operating in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is necessary to promote in a more intense manner the use of common standards that allow celerity of transfers of the information required as an essential condition for achieving the desired interoperability. Furthermore, it is equally necessary to promote new generation methodologies based on experience that enable assessment of the progress and evaluation of the impact of existing FTSWs, uniformly and systematically.
14. In addition to the standards, interoperability is a fundamental aspect for developing the FTSW. In its four dimensions, namely: Process Dimension, Semantic Dimension, Technological Dimension, and Governance Dimension, interoperability remains one of the biggest challenges to be faced in the consolidation of FTSW in countries that have implemented it and, especially, among others, across their borders. In countries with advanced economies, trade relies on highly specialized information systems, which have become of crucial importance in terms of cross-border trade.
15. The impact of the paradigm change is still an important factor in the resistance evidenced by the staff that, for the first time, is involved in the process of designing and implementing a FTSW. The participants associated this difficulty with a cultural problem that deserves the attention of those responsible for the process, both in the public and private sector, emphasizing that it should be addressed systematically. It was made clear that, especially in the case of the public sector, an open and consistent political support has been a determining factor to achieve active and enthusiastic participation.
16. The objective of interoperability should be the exchange of accurate information (datasets) safely, quickly and without problems, with a view to achieving the greatest possible benefit for operators and users. That exchange may be bilateral, multilateral (subregional, regional) or international through a central "hub", or a network of interconnected facilities, or network of networks such as the Value Added Networks.
17. Recommendation No. 36 of the UN/CEFACT addresses the core issues of interoperability which, in the context of this recommendation, is defined as the ability of two or more systems or components to exchange and use information across borders without additional effort by the businessman. Although most national single window facilities is related to international trade, there is a difference between the information and the documents used within a country and the data exchanged among trading partner countries or economies.
18. Recommendation 36 focuses on information flows managed through cross-border exchanges, and the interoperability and reuse in another single window service. Basically, its purpose is to provide details of the preparations and models required to share information prior to the implementation of bilateral single windows. It aims at providing options for establishing interoperability of single windows whether the service is operated by the public or private sector.
19. In line with regional interests and international trends, SELA has developed a systematic management aimed at strengthening issues on international trade and Information Communication Technologies (ICT), building intra-regional dialogues and achieving concerted action. As part of that effort, in the framework of its program for Trade Facilitation, the organization has led efforts to strengthen FTSW through its integration with the Port Single Window (PSW), a tool that, in fact, incorporates concepts of a FTSW to be

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applied at a local level and, in that sense, become the single window so that a particular port community can manage its supply chain and make its processes transparent to all network users. Digital port refers to the application of ICT to community type port processes, in the context of logistic-port chains involving both maritime and terrestrial interfaces, thereby seeking to print greater efficiencies to the different links through digital connection services and interoperability with national systems of FTSW. On the other hand, the concept of collaborative ports refers to the new governance required in order to implement the digital modernization of the ports, with emphasis on public-private partnership (PPP) and provides the framework for inter-institutional work being adopted by the ports and that has been the key to success in countries that, structurally, have advanced logistic systems.

20. The importance of the role played by the port logistics communities of LAC countries in improving the competitiveness of foreign trade in the region raises the need to integrate efforts made with regard to FTSW with the efforts aimed at optimizing the functioning of the ports in the region.
21. The "Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports Programme" (NDCP Programme) which SELA began in 2014, with support from the CAF-Development Bank of Latin America, focuses on identifying and promoting the best collaborative and institutional practices, characterized by the use of new forms of inter-organizational work, ICT for electronic data interchange, efficient logistics processes, and implementation of new and better standards of service to load and transport, with the conviction that, insofar as more countries and their port communities conform real networks of trade facilitation and transport, with emphasis on the Reference Model for the competitiveness of the port logistics chain designed and proposed in the NDCP programme, advancement can begin in the mitigation of structural faults in the region.
22. Single Windows have a great challenge in the port logistics area because they are crucial for the improvement of the critical port processes. For this purpose, they should select logistics communities in which there is a certain minimum governance that facilitates mobilization of the actors in terms of a project; form a technical inter-institutional team for the purpose of addressing this challenge; identify critical processes; apply techniques such as, for example, the *Business Process Analysis* (BPA); assign resources for pilot projects that, for example, link FTSW and PSW and, finally, reach a nationwide standardization so that all ports operate on that scale and respond to a national public policy.
23. Latin America has grown in terms of infrastructure, but not at the pace as in other regions. There has been growth in foreign trade, there are *World Class* operators but there is still a lot to be done in the functional improvement of customs, timely response, and service quality. It is the task of each ministry of trade and transport, of each logistic cabinet, of each public policy, to define the situation of each country. The idea is that the region grows in a balanced manner, thereby requiring the convergence of the public view and the private view on aspects such as visualization and good use of opportunities, reference frameworks and the identification of areas that foster joint development.
24. Improvement of the logistics systems of a country hinges on a public-private effort and the alignment of individual and collective strategies. While the private sector focuses more on the daily foreign trade, in the logistic elements, the public sector should focus primarily on promoting the design of effective public policies, good logistics plans, efficient transport



systems and an adequate public-private governance that enables the development of a participatory and collaborative work that achieves consensus to accomplish these purposes.

### **III. CLOSING SESSION**

During the closure of the *VII Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on International Trade Single Windows: Single Windows as Tools for Trade Facilitation and Commercial Integration*, the audience was addressed by, successively, Dr. Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Network of Information and Knowledge, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the organization; Accountant Alvaro Inchauspe, General Manager of the Uruguay XXI Investment and Export Promotion Institute, and Economist Danilo Astori, Minister of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uruguay. The corresponding texts are featured in Annexes VI, VII and VIII, respectively.



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**AGENDA**



**Thursday, 15 October 2015****8:00 – 9:00****REGISTRATION****9:00– 9:30****OPENING SESSION**

- Speech by Engineer Lorena Veiga, Technical Coordinator of Foreign Trade Single Windows Uruguay
- Speech by Ms Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Network of Information and Knowledge, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)
- Speech by Economist Alvaro Ons, Executive Secretary of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Foreign Trade Affairs. Eastern Republic of Uruguay
- Speech by Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs. Eastern Republic of Uruguay

**9:30 – 10:00****LECTURES**

One of the main characteristics of the current organization of production around global value chains is its regional dimension, which highlights the importance of trade integration with the purpose of achieving higher levels of competitiveness on the international arena. Within this context, the strategic role of Single Windows and other provisions of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation has gained great relevance.

Tania García Millán. Division of International Trade and Integration of the ECLAC. [Importance of Intra-Regional Trade for International Competitiveness](#)

Alicia Jiménez, Consultant and expert in international trade. [Strategic Function of Single Windows: Aiming at Trade Facilitation and an increase in Intra-Regional Trade](#)

**10:30 – 11:00****COFFEE BREAK****11:0A0 – 12:00*****THEMATIC AREA I. SINGLE WINDOWS AND OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT IN SUBREGIONAL TRADE INTEGRATION MECHANISMS***

Within the regional context, trade integration takes on renewed importance in guiding, in a well-coordinated way, the implementation of provisions of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, thus creating favourable conditions to increase intra-regional trade, as well as the competitiveness of countries and of the region as a whole. This thematic area will provide knowledge about the progresses of subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean in this matter.

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Moderator: Mr Juan Juncal, Director of Technologies for Foreign Trade Single Windows, from the Export and Import Promotion Institute of Uruguay XXI

Belquise Pimentel, Head of the Physical and Digital Integration Department of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). ["Single Windows and other provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO in subregional trade integration mechanisms: ALADI case"](#)

Álvaro Palmigiani, Director of Processes of the National Customs Direction of Uruguay. [Single Windows, the TFA and MERCOSUR](#)

Emmanuel Abraham Ortega Aguilar, Director of Design and Implementation of International Trade Operations, General Direction for International Trade of the Secretariat of Economy, Mexico. ["Interoperability and the Pacific Alliance"](#)

**12:00 – 12:30****GENERAL DEBATE****12:30 – 14:00****FREE TIME FOR LUNCH****14:00 – 15:30**

***THEMATIC AREA I (CONTINUATION). SINGLE WINDOWS AND OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT IN SUBREGIONAL TRADE INTEGRATION MECHANISMS***

Christian Márquez, Specialist in Single Electronic Window (SEW) from the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investment and Communications of Trinidad and Tobago. ["TTBizLink and the case of CARICOM"](#)

Adriana Alvarado, Information System Office from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia. ["Single Windows and other provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement; the case of the Andean Community \(CAN\)"](#)

José Cornelio Deras, Head of the CIEX Department, El Salvador. ["Single Windows and other Provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in Subregional Trade Integration Mechanisms: Case of SICA"](#)

**15:30 – 16:00****COFFEE BREAK****16:00 – 18:00**

***THEMATIC AREA II. APPLICATION OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT***

The application of the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation is proposed, in principle, as a commitment that the countries must take on individually, which, in fact, they have been addressing within the framework of the implementation of various integration mechanisms and free trade agreements, as well as some Articles of the GATT. Learning

how this process has evolved and knowing the support mechanisms developed by organizations such as UNCTAD for this purpose provides officials in charge of executing foreign trade policies with elements to face the challenges that may arise in this connection, and allows national Single Window authorities to assume a position within this context.

**16:00 – 16:30**

Edna Ramírez, UNCTAD Consultant. [“Trade Facilitation Agreement: Challenges and Solutions for its Implementation”](#)

**16:30 – 17:00**

Juan Acuña, SELA’s Consultant. [“Review and Analysis of the Application of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in the countries of the region”](#)

Tania García Millán, International Trade and Integration Division of ECLAC. [“Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Implementation of Paperless Trade: Main results for Latin America and the Caribbean”](#).

**17:00 – 18:00**

PANEL: Positioning of Foreign Trade Single Windows within the framework of the national policies to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

Moderator: Mr Rafael Quintero, Head of the Process Optimization Department of the Government Innovation Management of the Panamanian Authority for Government Innovation

Janaina Batista, Coordinator of Trade Facilitation of Brazil. [“Foreign Trade Single Window: Implementation of TFA/WTO in Brazil”](#)

Rubén Montesdeoca, Director of Continuous Improvement and Regulations of the National Equalization and Admission System of Ecuador. [“EcuPass and Ecuadorian Single Window Achievements and Challenges at 2015”](#)

Katty E. Chávarri Rubio, from the Foreign Trade Single Window of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) of Peru. [“Positioning of FTSWs within the framework of the national policies to implement the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation”](#)

**18:00 – 18:30**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**20:00**

**WELCOME CEREMONY**

**20****Friday 16 October 2015****9:00 – 12:30*****THEMATIC AREA III. INTEROPERABILITY TO FACILITATE INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE***

The electronic exchange of data and business documents at the regional level and with other systems within the international supply chain, in accordance with internationally accepted standards, is a necessary condition for a proper and efficient integration of economies in current world trade. For the authorities in charge of Foreign Trade Single Windows it is crucial to monitor and learn about new developments regarding these matters, which can help them to make decisions as part of the policy of permanent improvement of these tools.

Moderator: Álvaro Palmigiani, Director of Processes of the National Customs Direction of Uruguay

**9:00 – 9:30**

Luca G. Castellani, Legal Officer of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Secretariat. ["Mutual legal recognition of electronic communications and electronic signatures and paperless trade facilitation: challenges and opportunities"](#)

**9:30 – 10:00**

Paloma Bernal, Expert from the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). ["Interoperability of Single Windows – UN/CEFACT"](#)

**10:00 – 10:30****GENERAL DEBATE****10:30 – 11:00****COFFEE BREAK****11:00 - 11:20**

Interoperability between FTSW and PSW (Foreign Trade Single Window and Port Single Window) – Problems posed by the G2B Dimension

Luis Ascencio Carreño, SELA's Consultant. ["Programme Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports of Latin America and the Caribbean 2014/2015/2016"](#)

**11:20 - 11:35**

Jean-Edouard Nicolet, SOGET (France). ["Port Single Windows, benefits from their integration with Foreign Trade Single Windows"](#)

**11:35 – 11:50**

Rinaldi, Alejandro, Genexus Consulting. ["Technologies at the service of integration"](#)

**11:50 – 12:15****GENERAL DEBATE****12:15 – 14:00****FREE TIME FOR LUNCH**



**14:00 – 17:00*****THEMATIC AREA IV. FOREIGN TRADE SINGLE WINDOWS. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES***

One of the objectives of the various regional meetings on Single Windows, organized by SELA with relevant government counterparts of its member countries, is to gain knowledge about the achievements made by the national Single Windows in LAC countries, with the purpose of disseminating best practices and contributing to their development and consolidation within the framework of digital and regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Lannier Sosa, Coordinator of Single Window Projects from the Foreign Trade Promoter (PROCOMER) of Costa Rica. [“Foreign Trade Single Window of Costa Rica”](#)

Bárbara Matamala, Director of the Foreign Trade Integrated System (SICEX) of Chile. [“Case of Chile: Integrating processes to strengthen international trade”](#)

Lorena Veiga, Coordinator of Foreign Trade Single Windows Uruguay. [“Foreign Trade Single Window. Case of Uruguay: Achievements and Challenges”](#)

Santiago Losada, General Director of Customs of Argentina. [“Foreign Trade Single Window: Case of Argentina”](#)

Jorge Medrano, from the Foreign Trade Single Window of the Dominican Republic. [“Foreign Trade Single Window of the Dominican Republic”](#).

**17:00-17:45****COFEE BREAK****18:00****CLOSING CEREMONY**

Dr. Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Network of Information and Knowledge, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), on behalf of Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri, Permanent Secretary of SELA

Accountant Álvaro Inchauspe, General Manager of the Institute for Promotion of Investments and Exports, Uruguay XXI

Economist Danilo Astori, Minister of Economy and Finance of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay



**SPEECH BY ENGINEER LORENA VEIGA, SINGLE WINDOW COORDINATOR OF  
URUGUAY, AT THE OPENING SESSION**

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Dr Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Information and Knowledge Network of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Mr Álvaro Ons, President of the National Economic Development Agency (ANDE);

Mr Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to you and a special welcome to those who are visiting us from abroad to attend this Seventh Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows. It is a pleasure for the Investment and Export Promotion Institute, XXI Uruguay, and in particular, for the Foreign Trade Single Window Uruguay, to have you all here. Dr Antonio Carámbula, the executive director of the Institute, has specially requested that I offer you his apologies for not accompanying you here today, as he has previous commitments that prevent him from doing so.

A year ago now, many of us met in Trinidad and Tobago to hold the Sixth Meeting, where it was proposed by SELA that we be the hosts of this new encounter, and it is with pleasure that we accepted the challenge; we made the commitment and set out to promote and maintain these encounters that are so beneficial for us all.

During these two days we hope it will be possible to discuss and make progress in the construction of the Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSWs), generate collective knowledge, learn from international experts, and exchange experiences that everyone will find valuable. The proposal is, in particular, to reflect on the FTSW as a key tool for implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement and inasmuch as it is a generator of favourable conditions for regional integration schemes. In Uruguay there are manifold initiatives associated with facilitating international trade that are being undertaken. The economist Álvaro Ons and the accountant Enrique Canon will tell you a little more about the framework that regulates all these initiatives and, for that reason, we will be taking maximum advantage of this encounter to benefit from the knowledge and experiences, and we will also try at the same time to share our experiences and lessons learned. Before giving the floor to the remaining speakers, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work done by SELA's team in organizing this event and, in particular, the *VUCE Uruguay* and Investment and Export Promotion Institute, Uruguay XXI teams that have worked with such commitment so that this encounter might take place in the best possible manner.

Welcome once again and I hope you feel at home in our country and that this event exceeds your expectations.

Thank you very much.

**A N N E X I I I**

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**SPEECH BY DR. GLORIA CAÑAS, DIRECTOR OF THE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE NETWORK OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA), ON BEHALF OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, AMBASSADOR ROBERTO GUARNIERI, AT THE OPENING SESSION**



Mr Álvaro Ons, President of the National Economic Development Agency (ANDE), Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Ms Lorena Veiga, Technical Coordinator of *VUCE Uruguay*;

Mr Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Honourable Ambassadors and Representatives of SELA Member States and special guests:

Honourable Representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations;

Distinguished international delegates and speakers;

Ladies and gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to welcome you most warmly to the VII Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows, organized on this occasion by SELA's Permanent Secretariat together with the honourable Investment and Export Promotion Institute, Uruguay XXI, of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

On this occasion, we are focussing the presentations and subsequent discussions of the role played by Single Windows, both under the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement and under the trade integration schemes and agreements.

In this connection, we are opening the Seventh Encounter including a macroeconomic reflection regarding intra-regional trade and the linkage of economic structures in the so-called global value chains with the purpose of drawing attention to the important role that Single Windows can play in stimulating or discouraging trade between our countries by making the procedures and formalities involved in exportation, importation and transit operations simpler and more streamlined; something that, in terms of costs, today represents the biggest impact, even compared to customs tariffs, which were the leading element in the cost structure of trade until a few years ago.

From this point of view, it is convenient to view trade facilitation not as an abstract, general subject but as the possibility of orienting efforts consciously and responsibly towards boosting intra-regional trade as a matter of priority in order to effectively contribute to the generation and strengthening of value chains in the Latin American and Caribbean region, a matter that turns out to be decisive for achieving higher levels of growth in our economies and of well-being for our peoples, particularly in times such as these of low international prices for commodities, the main source of exports in the region.

In this context, Single Windows are called upon to play an important role, as the decisions that are taken for developing them are also going to determine the priorities that have to be set with regard to the markets and products that are of most interest for each country and for the Latin American and Caribbean region so that processes of simplification, orderly arrangement, automation, and interoperability that can facilitate trade between our countries – i.e. developments of Single Windows and operations that are clearly competitiveness-oriented, not only on the national but also on the regional level – are eventually adopted.

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It is clear that one way of appropriately orienting implementation of the provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, among them those referring to FTSWs, could be via institutional and governance spaces that have already been developed, such as those set up by the different regional and sub-regional integration schemes. For that reason, we will be devoting a session to the analysis of FTSWs AND OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT IN SUB-REGIONAL TRADE INTEGRATION SCHEMES, such as ALADI, MERCOSUR, the PACIFIC ALLIANCE, SICA, CARICOM, and CAN, which will provide us with an informative and analytical view of the intention of the integration schemes and their effective coordination with the different trade facilitation schemes, not only in terms of sharing the presence of government officials, which might be usual, but of aligning policy decisions that will achieve making the provisions contemplated in these two scenarios functional.

As we can see, all these elements are interlinked: integration, facilitation, and intraregional trade; and tools such as FTSWs apply across the board. On this matter, I wish to emphasize the fact that Single Windows should not only be seen as a provision that is included in Article 10, paragraph 4: "Formalities Connected with Importation, Exportation and Transit" of the WTO's Agreement, which urges members to try to maintain or establish this tool, but that it should be given its true strategic significance as a mechanism that not only allows information and standardized trade documents to be submitted just one time and in one place, improving the availability and processing of information, but also, in particular, with regard to the fact that, among its most relevant inherent elements are the need to address the harmonization of trade data and documents based on internationally accepted standards; the simplification of trade and customs procedures; and the development of enabling regulations and an information and communication technology infrastructure for implementing electronic signatures and payments. Thus, the scope of FTSWs goes beyond their own specific objectives, clearly showing their importance throughout the international supply chain, while at the same time making it possible to highlight the importance of using information and communication technologies for more efficient international trade, contributing especially with the instruments identified by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as having most impact on reducing trade costs.

As in previous Regional Meeting, at this one we are maintaining learning about and disseminating the achievements attained in the national FTSWs of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean accompanying us as the central objective, with the purpose of disseminating good practices and contributing to their development and consolidation.

So, our expectation is that this seventh round of the already traditional Regional Meetings on Foreign Trade Single Windows will provide information that is relevant and of interest to each of you and give rise to reflections that will contribute to intraregional trade and national and regional competitiveness, complying, as always, with our objective of being a platform of encounter and agreement that is conducive to regional dialog through the exchange of successful experiences and relevant information, the defining of strategic issues, and the dissemination of the progress that has been made in the region in this matter, within the context of digital and regional integration in Latin America.

Thank you very much.



**SPEECH BY ECONOMIST ALVARO ONS, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL AGENCY  
FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ANDE) OF THE EASTERN REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY,  
AT THE OPENING SESSION**



Dr Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Information and Knowledge Network of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Mr Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Ms Lorena Veiga, Technical Coordinator of *VUCE Uruguay*,

Ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you very much. A warm welcome to our country for all. Before anything else, we wish to thank SELA's Permanent Secretariat and the Investment and Export Promotion Institute, Uruguay XXI, in particular the FTSW Team, for organizing this event.

In the case of Uruguay's experience, the FTSW is an initiative that originated at the National Customs Division no more than five years ago and that was adopted relatively rapidly as a strategic initiative in the context of the country's international insertion. Since Uruguay's economy is a very small one and given its profile as an exporter of agricultural products, international insertion is an absolutely critical issue for its development and the FTSW is not an isolated initiative in this area but one that, first of all, is included in a complete modernization of the National Customs Division, which will also be mentioned by its director; however, it is also a broader process of improving conditions of international insertion. Given that Uruguay is a very small country, it is clearly a very difficult process where the possibilities of success through unilateral actions are very slim because we always tend to be dependent on negotiation processes regarding what other countries define; therefore, first of all, the FTSW is also the type of initiative that we can carry out unilaterally from our country.

The intention is to not waste or not fail to exploit those margins of unilateral action we small countries have, but also, clearly, the FTSW has a component of cooperation. We are at a stage where cooperation, not only through experiences with countries in the Latin American region, but also when it comes to the possibility of our FTSWs being interoperable, is an absolutely critical issue that is going to give the tool the potential that we have been aspiring to from the start.

So that we might effectively achieve that potential in practice, we understand it is very important that it be explored based on the actions of those who specialize in and are working permanently on the tool, and not only on the more political level of negotiations or exchanges between our governments; we also need to provide our governments with inputs that come from those who specialize in these matters so that policymakers are in a position to actually know which can be achieved via an FTSW. In this regard, we understand that these exchanges, joint actions of this type by technicians and the persons responsible for the different windows in the region are going to be very important for us to be able to realize, in practice, that potential we all perceive in the case of the Single Windows.

Finally, I thank all of you for being here and I wish you a very profitable working session.



**SPEECH BY ACCOUNTANT ENRIQUE CANON, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS  
OF THE EASTERN REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY, AT THE OPENING SESSION**



Dr Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Information and Knowledge Network of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Ms Lorena Veiga, Technical Coordinator of *VUCE Uruguay*;

Mr Álvaro Ons, President of the National Economic Development Agency (ANDE);

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all, panellists and Single Window representatives from sister countries; a warm welcome to Uruguay. You have some very good experiences behind you after the Encounter in Trinidad & Tobago, having had the support of Lorena as hostess. Believe me, we do have springtime in Uruguay; and while it won't be the same as springtime in Trinidad & Tobago, we have many beauty spots to offer. What does all this about the single window have to do with customs? In the case of Uruguay, as Mr Ons has said, the Single Window is a golden child of the National Customs Division, which we then gave in adoption to the Investment and Export Promotion Institute, Uruguay XXI. Between 2005 and 2010, we had a 19<sup>th</sup> century customs and a 19<sup>th</sup> century system of trade. We started a process of modernization with a forward-looking vision and a mission that had the task, among other things, of facilitating international trade and the circulation of passengers, promoting the country's international competitiveness.

This purpose led us to this initiative, among other things. Nineteenth century customs had gaps with regard to the customs service that was necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in terms of regulations, equipment, human resources and materials, and, basically, when it came to processes and procedures. We undertook this FTSW initiative that today is a success and has a variety of processes, a number of integrated state entities, as well as several users, which are also integrated. In Uruguay, the FTSW has a mirror unit in the National Customs Division that is developing this initiative in line with the best international practices and the Bali Ministerial Agreement, and also with the guidelines of the customs organization. We have, moreover, initiatives that are also in line with the best international trade practices, such as the qualified economic operator, which are substitutes for, parallel to, sisters of this initiative, the development of our system *Lucía*, an agreement on the mutual recognition of qualified economic operators with different countries – the United States, Korea and, probably in the not too distant future, China – and a system that has the risk that is adapted to the best international practices.

Echoing the words of Álvaro, Uruguay's economy is small but it has a big heart. The National Customs Division and *VUCE Uruguay* together put at your disposal whatever technical assistance you may wish to request from us with regard to the progress we have made in recent years, both in Foreign Trade Single Windows and in the other initiatives I have mentioned. So, from the exchange of information and this technical assistance and potential joint initiatives, the interoperability of the FTSW will be born, an interoperability that will be very useful in the area of international association and increasing their internal trade. It only remains for us to put ourselves at your disposal and wish you every success in your work in our country.

Thank you very much.





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**SPEECH BY DR. GLORIA CAÑAS, DIRECTOR OF THE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE  
NETWORK OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA),  
ON BEHALF OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, AMBASSADOR ROBERTO GUARNIERI,  
AT THE CLOSING SESSION**



Mr Danilo Astori, Minister of Economy and Finance of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Mr Alvaro Inchauspe, General Manager of the Investment and Export Institute, Uruguay XXI;

Ms Lorena Veiga, Technical Coordinator of *VUCE Uruguay*;

Mr Álvaro Ons, President of the National Economic Development Agency (ANDE);

Mr Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Honourable Ambassadors and Representatives of SELA Member States and special guests;

Honourable Representatives of regional and sub-regional organisations;

Distinguished international delegates and speakers;

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are concluding this VII Meeting satisfactorily, meeting the objectives proposed, confirming that the Meetings on Single Windows that SELA has been holding since 2010 are a privileged platform for providing relevant and strategic information and holding debates on the different aspects involved in developing Single Windows, such as the regulatory, technical, technological and governance aspects. So, at this seventh encounter we were able to discuss the strategic role of FTSWs, not only for facilitating trade in general, but in the sense of contributing to orienting it to the most convenient markets and products for the economies considered individually and, beyond this end, authentic in the individual sense, for aligning interests on the level of the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole.

We also had the opportunity to learn how trade integration schemes and agreements are incorporating the provisions of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and, among them, of course, the part having to do with Single Windows and their potential interoperability, it having been made clear that, just as there has been progress and even how provisions have already been adopted within the context of continuously improving customs processes, there is plenty of room for starting, improving, and consolidating the effective implementation of this Agreement of the WTO and the tools that, like the Single Windows, imply taking concrete action in terms of integration, proof of this being how some agreements such as the Pacific Alliance are aligned with the trade facilitation objectives and proposals, whereas others have still not decided to join this trend or are doing so timidly.

And organizations such as UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) itself presented topics of great importance for measuring the impact that the WTO Agreement, once ratified, might have and observing the progress made in implementing it in the region as well as the challenges posed and the solutions required and that have been designed by different multilateral organizations.

Also put forward were reflections on the positioning of Single Windows in the context of implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and on how leading Single Window authorities, many present at this Encounter, can contribute, based on the experience acquired in

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terms, above all, of the governance that is required to guarantee adequate coordination and observance of interests of the different parties that these processes involve.

Similarly, a motivation for these Single Window authorities has emerged from this Encounter for them to take the lead in setting up and chairing National Trade Facilitation Committees, as well as in evaluating the possibility of taking advantage of regional integration mechanisms for implementing the provision set forth in Article 24.5 of the WTO Agreement.

So, the national Single Window authorities will be able to act as leader authorities in building scenarios where it will be possible to address and channel the challenges posed by implementing the provisions of the TFA so that they are successful and sustainable, permitting the combining of a variety of key factors, including elements of public policy, institutional capacities, managing expectations and perceptions of the different stakeholders, public-private collaboration strategies, business models, and viable architectures, among others.

Among the technical and technological issues, first-hand information was provided on the upcoming UN/CEFACT Recommendation on the Interoperability of FTSWs, which brings us issues and standardized and innovative proposals, as well as guideline methodologies for moving ahead on the different fronts to that end. Likewise, we reported on the progress of the Programme for the Creation of the Network of Collaborative Digital Ports that SELA has been working on since 2014 with the cooperation of CAF-Latin America's development bank, a program that is linked to Foreign Trade Single Window developments by procuring their interoperability with the Port Single Window. For these and other developments, we also had presentations from supplier companies that showed us technological tools available in the market that comply with all the internationally approved provisions and standards for facilitating the design and implementation of these digital tools.

Last of all, but no less important, we have met the objective of learning about progress made in Single Windows in our countries over the past, making known good practices that contribute to their development and consolidation in the context of digital and regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, which we add to our credit as an achievement, attributable to some extent to the dissemination of relevant information and the debates held at these SELA Meetings.

Our thanks, then, to all the participants of this VII Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows and, especially, to the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, excellently represented by the Investment and Export Promotion Institute, Uruguay XXI, its Foreign Trade Single Window, and all the officials who received us and collaborated to make the holding of this event such a success.

As is customary, we announce that the conclusions and recommendations of this Seventh Encounter will be distributed in the next few days so that you can provide such feedback as you see fit, in order for them to be subsequently published as part of the Final Report, which you will be able to find on SELA's Web page: [www.sela.org](http://www.sela.org). Last of all, we will be announcing the country that is to host the VIII Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows in 2016 in due course.

Thank you very much.

*A N N E X V I I*

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**SPEECH BY ACCOUNTANT ALVARO INCHAUSPE, GENERAL MANAGER  
OF THE INSTITUTE FOR PROMOTION OF INVESTMENTS AND EXPORTS, URUGUAY XXI,  
AT THE CLOSING SESSION**



Honourable Mr Danilo Astori, Minister of Economy and Finance of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Dr Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Information and Knowledge Network of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Ms Lorena Veiga, Technical Coordinator of *VUCE Uruguay*;

Mr Álvaro Ons, President of the National Economic Development Agency (ANDE);

Mr Enrique Canon, National Director of Customs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good afternoon. I'm going to try to be brief in order to give the floor to the Minister. I only wish to sum up in one word what Gloria said and that is competitiveness; competitiveness in productivity. Being more productive means being more efficient, being more creative, more daring, and being open to change. Competitiveness based on these three pillars will take us to achieving access to more and better jobs for our societies. I think what is most difficult is not changing computer systems, but changing people's mind-set, and that is important when it comes to rethinking administrative processes with a service such as the one the Single Windows offer, a service that, the faster and easier it is, the more time it will leave the businessman to spend on his business, forgetting about sterile bureaucratic procedures that add no value.

Last of all, I would like to comment that our FTSW was conceived of on a virtual platform that aspires to coordinate all the administrative proceedings associated with international trade and that, as a virtual platform, has the great virtue of being dynamic and being capable of including new processes and new services. In this regard, it has a role that, more than interesting, is challenging.

To conclude, the Investment and Export Promotion Institute, Uruguay XXI is committed to being the home of the FTSW, to make it part of the national competitiveness system and to make every effort to support it so that it achieves better access to international trade that is so necessary for competitiveness.

Thank you everyone; thanks to the FTSW team led by Lorena Veiga and our congratulations.





**SPEECH BY ECONOMIST DANILO ASTORI, MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE  
OF THE EASTERN REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY, AT THE CLOSING SESSION**

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Dr Gloria Cañas Arias, Director of the Information and Knowledge Network of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Mr Alvaro Inchauspe, Manager of the Investment and Export Institute, Uruguay XXI;

Participants from the different countries of the region;

Ladies and gentlemen:

This is a very important topic for Uruguay in the context of the strategic guidelines of its national project that is currently being implemented and that implies a firm commitment to inclusive growth in the first place, i.e. growth that is not merely an exclusive objective of development but is at the service of improving the living conditions of societies' members, their agenda of rights and, particularly, of those who have been most distanced during their lives from those rights, an agenda of rights that we view, not as a by-product of growth but as a condition of the level of that growth and what it comprises.

As a geographically small country, Uruguay is also committed to opening up, an opening up that will allow it to realize its full potential, something that would be almost impossible if it were a country that was closed in on itself and did not open up to the world, following precisely the paths to the realization of that potential; and it is committed to excellence, a commitment that, in our opinion, every country should make that cannot express itself in terms of quantities owing to its size but that does have the potential to open up to the world in terms of quality. In that context, you will have already deduced that everything that has to do with trade integration, in particular, and the search for investment opportunities is, for Uruguay, a relevant and priority task.

It is in the light of those strategic guidelines that the country has set out, in the first place, to have at its disposal the necessary human capacities for that task, putting the emphasis on education, on knowledge, on innovation, concepts that, in turn, are very much linked to what Álvaro mentioned when he spoke of competitiveness, because those are the durable, structural factors of competitiveness. Obviously, this includes improving the country's physical potential, putting the infrastructural characteristics in the area of transport, telecommunications, port services, energy at the service of its development process.

Returning to the concepts of quality and excellence, management of public affairs that is characterized precisely by having these attributes of efficiency, rapidity, responsiveness, precisely a process in which Foreign Trade Single Windows are called upon to play a fundamental role. It is for that reason that Uruguay, within the framework of the WTO TFA and, in particular, of the reform of its Customs Division, has given crucial importance to creating international trade windows, which started to be set up in the country in 2011, precisely in the context of the two processes mentioned, in the light of which were conceived the opening strategy, improving the management of public affairs -a fundamental part of which, in practice, we are wont to call State reform-, facilitating trade, and the design of a Customs Division that coordinates its inspection function with its facilitator function, keeping them in balance, which is a prerequisite for developing the strategic guidelines we mentioned earlier.

As I told you earlier, Uruguay gives considerable importance to this transformation and is delighted to have the possibility of holding encounters such as the one you have been holding in these past few days, encounters that always permit a fruitful exchange of information for learning about the experiences in the matter that the different countries represented at this Regional

Meeting are able to offer, information that I am sure is the raw material for the Network that Dr Cañas manages at SELA and that is fundamental for continuing to make progress, not only nationally but also on the regional level.

We Uruguayans welcome these meetings, fully valuing their importance and giving them all our support- that allow each of the countries here sharing this experience to continue advancing along this path to the objectives you have been discussing during the working sessions over these past few days. I have followed the issues you have analysed closely. I have had the agenda you have drawn up right from the start. And I believe that the fundamental issues at stake have been addressed.

With the hope that this VII Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows constitutes a step forward along the path that has been mapped out, I reiterate our salutation and our congratulations for the work done.

Thank you very much.



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