



Message on the Occasion of International Customs Day 2026

**By Claude A Paul – Permanent Secretary
Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council**

Distinguished colleagues, partners, and friends,

On this International Customs Day 2026, we join the rest of the world in observing this important occasion under the theme: *“Customs Protecting Society Through Vigilance and Commitment.”* This theme advocates the World Customs Organization’s global vision and speaks directly to our Caribbean reality.

Our borders are unique, porous with open seas that welcome commerce, culture, and connection, yet also expose us to vulnerabilities. Caribbean Customs officers must stand at the frontline, ensuring that legitimate trade flows freely while illicit activity is intercepted. This balance between facilitation and vigilance is the essence of our mission to protect society.

We also recognize that our region does not operate in isolation. Recent developments and policy shifts on the global level remind us of our vulnerability and the delicate balance between sovereignty, security, and partnership. These developments highlight the importance of Caribbean Customs working closely together to strengthen our systems, while engaging constructively with international partners to safeguard our citizens and economies.

Protecting society through vigilance and commitment means more than enforcement. It means innovation, regional cooperation, and resilience. By embracing modern technologies, enhancing integration across our administrations, and building trust with global partners, we can transform these challenges into opportunities. We must continue to work to ensure that trade is secure, efficient, and a driver of growth for our people.

On this International Customs Day, let us celebrate the men and women whose vigilance and commitment ensure that our borders remain secure, our societies remain safe, and our economies remain strong. Caribbean Customs administrations are collectively protecting society through vigilance and commitment, safeguarding our future while opening doors to shared prosperity in our region.

Thank you.