

RECORDER REPORT

APCAA urges Customs to revise criteria of examination

KARACHI: All Pakistan Customs Agents Association (APCAA) has urged Pakistan Customs to revise the criteria of examination with suitable amendments as per international standards to facilitate business community.

In a letter sent to chief collector Appraisement South Suriya Butt, chairman APCAA Arshad Jamal said that as per international standards, the purpose of 5 percent examination of the total imports was nothing but to create deterrence and to facilitate trade by clearing goods through green channel.

Similarly, the Risk Management System (RMS) is also aimed for ease of doing business as harmonization and simplification of procedures are necessary to safe guarded government revenue.

However, the recent modification in the system by customs department is against the spirit of the clearance of goods through green channel as consignments, which were supposed to be cleared through green channel and customs are only allowed 5 percent physical examination of the containers in order to keep a check and avoid any malpractices, are being diverted to yellow channel under the umbrella of RMS.

He described the same as against the spirit of the rules, which causing to disturb the entire supply chain; saying that RMS was selecting containers beyond its prescribed limit for yellow channel with the rationale of intelligence based information.

Arshad said that terminals were presently operating over its capacity as the department was selecting containers more than its limit of 5 percent for examination, creating space shortage.

He said the customs department should develop a mechanism, especially for segregated containers of single item on HS code basis for speedy clearance through green channel; adding that shipping lines should be restricted for correct declaration and in case of violation, punitive measures would be taken against them.

He said that if HS code from VIR or IGM were linked with system then WeBoC software would automatically select containers immediately after submitting VIR/IGM and the terminals only grounded containers in accordance with the auto generated message through WeBOC, which would facilitate customs examination staff for examining containers and upload its reports from the spot; no matter GD was filed or not.

Presently, in yellow channel, the appraising officer is authorised to forward the single item commodity to the terminal operator for physical examination or directly process, whereas single item containers may be substituted by the scanner instead of marking for physical examination, he said and added that those containers carrying any product which required mandatory physical examination or certification such as "Fit for human consumption" or

“Expiry date verification” or any ambiguity in “Classification/sampling necessary for test”, should be examined.

He proposed to have two shifts for the grounding and examination of containers through proper distribution of work through WeBOC and efficiency of the customs examining staff must be monitored.

Furthermore, Ashraf said that if examination marking was done through software efficiently under RMS criteria and as per international best practices, there was no need to have any additional time at night for examination and added that this was a need an hour to handle huge volume of business expected in near future.

Although the auction process is defined under the rules, it has, so far, not been implemented in its true spirit due to litigation or any other reasons hence a policy should be evolved to transfer all those consignments, stuck at port for any reason to off dock terminals through WeBOC and fix time limit for its disposal in order to make sufficient space at terminals, which are presently occupied by these containers, he said added that in case of delay in the clearance for any reasons that attracted demurrage detention charges, which were unreasonably high and exceeded beyond the value of the goods then the consignee was allowed to leave the goods or claim it and such consignments may be allowed on case-to-case basis by the collector to CPF or public bonded warehouse irrespective of home consumption, transshipment/ transit cargo.