

CUSTOMS GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Bureau of Customs



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BOC Celebrates International Customs Day 2024, Affirms Commitment to Forge New Alliances



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The Commissioner highlighted achievements under the 5-point priority program, emphasizing the successful digitalization of 96.99% of customs processes. The BOC also achieved a record-breaking collection of PHP 883.624 billion, marking a 2.46% increase—PHP 21.205 billion more than the previous year. This underscores the BOC's commitment to technological advancement and fiscal responsibility.

Trade facilitation efforts thrived through strategic agreements, strengthened regional ties, and successful international engagements. Commissioner Rubio mentioned ongoing efforts to implement innovative systems for monitoring agricultural imports, showcasing the BOC's proactive stance in adapting to evolving trade dynamics.

Emphasizing the commitment to border protection, the BOC reported seizing smuggled commodities worth PHP 43.295 billion through 980 operations. The fuel marking program, marking 71.95 billion liters, significantly contributed, generating a value of PHP 234.18 billion in duties and taxes.

Commissioner Rubio celebrated the success of hiring and promoting 605 individuals and announced the forthcoming release of the long-awaited 2018 employee rewards in the first quarter of 2024.

In concluding his address, Commissioner Rubio urged the men and women of the bureau to maintain the momentum, stating, "Starting off is one thing, but maintaining momentum is another. We work diligently, pouring our time and energy into pursuits. And then time passes, and obstacles begin to take shape and come into view. Maintaining momentum is about pushing through these challenging moments. And I am counting on your unwavering support to carry on with our plans."

BOC Marks 122nd Anniversary With New Programs, Collective Action

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has unveiled significant programs for this year, reflecting and reinforcing its commitment to achieve a world-class service on the back of sterling revenue collection performance and dynamic digitalization efforts.

In celebrating the agency's 122nd founding anniversary, BOC Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio turned the spotlight on his new 5-Point Priority Programs, built upon last year's initiative that helped the Bureau reach unparalleled accomplishments.

These programs include the Digitalization of customs processes, surpassing collection targets, streamlining procedures to facilitate secure trade, combatting smuggling in all forms, and enhancing employee welfare and development. He also unwrapped forthcoming activities and projects aimed at realizing BOC's goals for the year.



The BOC commemorated its 122nd founding anniversary on February 13, 2024, at the Rizal Park Hotel, Manila, with Secretary Ralph G. Recto of the Department of Finance as Guest of honor and speaker.

In line with BOC's commitment to combating smuggling, the event started with the ceremonial condemnation of forfeited vape products discovered in Valenzuela in October 2023. It was followed by a donation of assorted goods to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) from the BOC-Ninoy Aquino International Airport, in support of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s advocacy for social responsibility.

Embracing the World Customs Organization's (WCO) 2024 theme "Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose," the BOC recognized its trade partners for their invaluable contribution to the bureau's success by having Secretary Recto and Commissioner Rubio personally hand out awards to top importers and exporters for their important role.

The event coincides with the launching of Customs Industry Consultative and Advisory Council (CICAC), a consultative body between the BOC and the business sector, addressing existing and potential Customs and industry issues, promoting mutual understanding, and strengthening the BOC's harmonious relationship with its industry partners.

"Your ready support and active participation will be very crucial in ensuring that our stakeholders are well-presented in every decision-making process we will undertake." Commissioner Rubio said in his speech.

Secretary Recto acknowledged the BOC for its exceptional dedication and valuable contributions to its mission. He highlighted the Bureau's commitment and emphasized the value of its function in upholding the integrity of international trade and safeguarding national interest. Secretary Recto's recognition underscored the importance of the agency's role in promoting economic growth and stability.

Secretary Recto relayed President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive and stated, "The President himself has specifically emphasized that we must ensure a future where the BOC remains a symbol of trust, honesty, and efficiency — principles that will nurture a thriving economic environment and form the bedrock of every Filipino's aspiration."

Moreover, a joint flag-raising ceremony was conducted at the OCOM Grounds on February 12 to honor retirees with service awards and granted loyalty awards to those who had dedicated more than 40 years in service.

Founded in 1902, the country's second largest revenue generating agency has successfully expanded its programs and services and ride the wave of digitalization to propel the agency's performance.

"We look back to over a century of accomplishments and values which have changed the course of our institution for the better, and we look forward to a concrete sense of future fueled by our passion to serve our stakeholders and fully modernize our customs administration." said Commissioner Rubio.



BOC Celebrates International Customs Day 2024, Affirms Commitment to Forge New Alliances



Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio reaffirmed the Bureau of Customs' (BOC) commitment in cultivating new alliances and fostering enhanced stakeholders' engagement for a more responsive, adaptive, and resilient customs administration during the commemoration of International Customs Day on January 29, 2024.

In the previous year, the BOC has established strong connections not just with stakeholders but also with other agencies, organizations, and customs counterparts.

To cite a few examples, all 10 Customs Administrations of ASEAN Member States, including the Philippines, signed the Mutual Recognition Arrangement for their Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programs to establish a transparent trading environment.

Additionally, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development's ASEAN Policy Implementation (API), the Bureau participated in training sessions to capacitate its personnel in the implementation of the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document, which aims to enhance customs practices and develop synergies with other ASEAN member countries.

Likewise, the Bureau joined and hosted numerous events, discussions and assemblies last year, which include: the 34th Meeting of the ASEAN Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group, the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area Trade Facilitation Cluster, the 31st Meeting of the ASEAN

Single Window Steering Committee, to further boost international relations, broaden networks, and enhance customs management through knowledge and best practice sharing.

To enhance inter-agency coordination and optimize operational efficiency, the Bureau signed several agreements with other government agencies in 2023, namely: the collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry-Strategic Trade Management Office, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, Philippine Postal Corporation, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, and Department of Information and Communication Technology.

One of the core projects of the Bureau to be carried out in 2024 is the publication of an operations manual on Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Program and other initiatives to increase the participation of stakeholders to support the WCO's key calls to action.

In line with this, Commissioner Bienvenido Yapo Rubio pledged to remain resolute in advancing BOC's initiatives in amplifying robust collaborations, saying: "the BOC stands at the forefront of championing economic growth and securing the sustainability of the supply chain. With this, we recognize our immense responsibility to consistently develop and formulate new means in which we can build stronger alliances for a more progressive customs management."

BOC Commissioner Rubio Outlines Plans to Achieve P959 Billion Collection Target and Combat Smuggling in 2024



Bureau of Customs (BOC) Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio affirmed the bureau's commitment of reaching its P959 billion collection target for the calendar year 2024 and intensifying efforts against smuggling during Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto's visit in BOC on January 24, 2024.

Commissioner Rubio outlined the bureau's strategy to increase collections by 15 to 20% in 2024 through vigilant monitoring and continuous improvement of modernization projects. Key among these initiatives is

the Enhanced Value Reference Information System (e-VRIS), which is a critical risk assessment tool for safeguarding government revenues and facilitating trade. The BOC is also working on implementing an ICT-enabled clearance system for express shipments and drafting Customs Administrative Orders (CAO) and Customs Memorandum Orders (CMO) for e-Commerce to prevent revenue leakages.

Addressing the issue of smuggling, Commissioner Rubio reported that the BOC will strengthen border control by engaging and collaborating with other law enforcement agencies for seamless coordination and information sharing against the entry of illicit goods, contraband, drugs, and high-value commodities that pose significant threat against the agency's revenue collection performance. Additionally, the BOC will fully implement the National Customs Intelligence System (NCIS) to enhance actionable intelligence, support case build-up, and conduct risk profiling and analysis to curb smuggling effectively.

In facilitating trade, the bureau plans to continue streamlining and digitizing customs processes. The Commissioner also emphasized the importance of the Customs Customer Care Portal in reducing face-to-face transactions and promoting transparency.

Highlighting the successful outcomes of 2023, Commissioner Rubio reported that the BOC surpassed its revenue collection target with actual aggregate cash collection of PhP883 billion, resulting in a surplus of PhP9.49 billion. In addition, the bureau gained global recognition for enhancing trade facilitation, while successfully intensifying its anti-smuggling campaign with a record-breaking seizure of P43.295 billion worth of illegally imported and illicit goods. Likewise, the BOC achieved an impressive 96.99% digitalization rate of its customs processes.

Finance Secretary Ralph Recto commended the BOC for its remarkable achievements in 2023, emphasizing the commitment of DOF to closely collaborate with BOC and other agencies to contribute to overall government efficiency.



Revolutionizing Customs Operations, Commissioner Rubio and other BOC Officials Launch a Book on Customs Disposal Processes



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) proudly announced the launch of a landmark publication, the “Compendium on Customs Disposal Processes.” This definitive guide, authored by BOC Commissioner, Bienvenido Y. Rubio, Chief-of-Staff of the Office of the Commissioner, Atty. Marlon Agaceta, and Legal Service Director, Atty. Tristan Langcay, aims of simplifying the complexities of customs disposal procedures.

This publication is the result of years of collective expertise and dedication from highly trained and experienced officials within the BOC. With over a decade of hands-on experience in handling, investigating, and resolving customs disposal issues, the authors have crafted a definitive reference that is both informative and accessible.

Commissioner Rubio emphasized that the Compendium is a valuable resource material for both seasoned customs officers and newcomers, stating, “Whether you’re a veteran or new to the field, this is a tool you can use to navigate Customs Disposal Processes”. The book offers clear explanations and practical insights,

making it easily understandable for policymakers, customs officials, stakeholders, and scholars alike.

In addition to offering practical guidance, the Compendium also consolidates relevant provisions from various laws and regulations, including the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act, Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, Customs Administration Orders, and Customs Memorandum Orders. It also incorporates recent Supreme Court rulings on customs disposal processes and activities, making it a comprehensive reference tool for anyone involved in customs operations.

Commissioner Rubio expressed his gratitude to all those who contributed in drafting the Compendium, emphasizing the collaborative effort behind its development.

Dr. Girlie Jacala, Vice President of Central Books has expressed her support, “Commissioner Rubio, brings with him a wealth of experience and insight that will undoubtedly elevate the quality of our legal community. His commitment to scholarship and intellectual rigor aligns perfectly with the values that Central Book holds dear.”



BOC Achieves Remarkable Revenue Performance, Exceeding Targets in January and February 2024

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has surpassed its revenue targets for two consecutive months in the current year—January and February. This accomplishment reflects the effective leadership of Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio to enhance the bureau's collection performance.

The initial reports reveal that in January, the BOC collected PhP73.329 billion in revenue, exceeding the target collection of P71.779 billion by 2.16%, amounting to a surplus of PhP1.550 billion.

In February, the bureau achieved a total revenue collection of P70.601 billion, surpassing its monthly target by 6.64%, equivalent to P4.393 billion over the goal of P66.207 billion, according to preliminary data.

Year-to-date, the BOC's collection grew by an impressive P10.444 billion, or 7.82%, compared to the 2023 collection for the same period. This notable increase highlights the BOC's commitment to further enhance its collection performance.

Several factors have contributed to the growth in revenue collection, including the agency's higher assessment rate resulting from improvements in determining the customs value of imported goods. Through enhanced strategies and technological advancements, the BOC has streamlined its procedures and trade facilitation efforts.

The success in revenue collection during the first two months of 2024 sets a positive tone for the year ahead, demonstrating the BOC's commitment to contributing to the country's economic prosperity, aligned with the Bagong Pilipinas campaign of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio emphasized the BOC's pivotal role in revenue generation, stating, "We remain steadfast in our mission of excellence, fiscal responsibility, and service to the Filipino people. As we continue to innovate and adapt to evolving challenges, the BOC aims to achieve even greater milestones in the future."

January 2024

P73.329 B (↑2.16%)

P71.779 Billion - Target Collection | **P1.550 Billion - Surplus**

February 2024

P70.601 B (↑6.64%)

P66.207 Billion - Target Collection | **P4.393 Billion - Surplus**

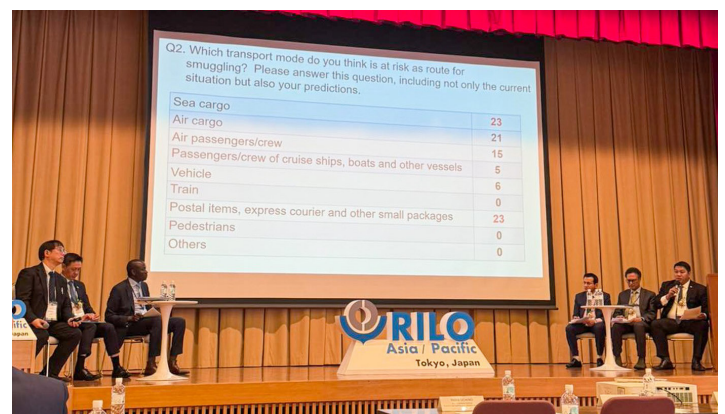
BOC Participated in the Opening Ceremony of the WCO RILO Asia Pacific to Further Bolster Intelligence and Enforcement Networks

Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio, along with Deputy Commissioner Juvymax R. Uy of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) Intelligence Group, Deputy Commissioner Teddy S. Raval of the BOC Enforcement Group, and key officials of the bureau, led the Philippine delegation in the opening ceremony of the World Customs Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (WCO RILO A/P) that took place in Tokyo, Japan, from February 6 to 8, 2024.

RILO was formed with the goal of forming a Global Intelligence Network that aims to enhance operational capabilities by providing members with timely and accurate intelligence support through its extensive network and database, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of intelligence and enforcement operations.

The three-day assembly is comprised of various sessions that convene officials from various nations in the A/P. The opening ceremony also received remarks from principal officials of the WCO and the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Fumio Kishida.

A pivotal moment also occurred when BOC Commissioner Rubio not only successfully arranged a bilateral meeting with the Director General of the Japan Customs Tariff Bureau but was also invited to serve as a



panelist for Session 5 on "Expectations for RILOs as WCO regional bodies."

During the said session, the Commissioner shared how their cooperation with RILO A/P has led them to achieve favorable outcomes in the BOC's anti-smuggling drive and expressed commitment to supporting RILO A/P's initiatives to reinforce information gathering and exchange within the A/P region.

The establishment of RILO A/P as a Fusion Center and central repository for customs-related activities, operations, and intelligence is envisioned to facilitate seamless collaboration among member states. The shared database is crafted to enhance the Fusion Center's ability to process, analyze, and assess data, facilitating the generation of thorough evaluations.

Ultimately, RILO A/P is expected to increase collaboration through joint operations based on actionable intelligence information, along with the initiation of regular summits and meetings among its members.

BOC Zamboanga Intercepts P27.6 Million Worth of Smuggled Cigarettes



The Bureau of Customs – Port of Zamboanga (BOC-POZ) seized a motorized wooden craft worth P400,000.00 carrying illegally imported 482 master cases of cigarettes with an estimated market value of P27.6 million in Brgy. Baliwasan, Zamboanga City, on January 26, 2024.

The BOC Water Patrol Division (WPD), together with Enforcement and Security Service-Customs Police Division and Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service, led a maritime patrol operation which resulted in the apprehension and seizure of a motor boat marked “FB JFM 2.” Upon inspection, the watercraft, also known as “jungkong,” was found to be loaded with afore-identified contraband.

Upon demand, the arrested nine (9) crew members failed to present pertinent documents to prove the legality of subject importation.

Thereafter, 2nd Zamboanga City Mobile Force Company assisted the Bureau in maneuvering the Jungkong and its cargo to their office address in Brgy. Baliwasan, where proper inventory was conducted.

Acting District Collector Arthur G. Sevilla Jr. commended the WPD for the successful maritime security in the area, contributing to the Bureau’s efforts to deter

smugglers and prevent the entry of contraband as mandated by Commissioner Bienvenido Y. Rubio.

The seized vessel and the master cases of cigarettes are now under the custody of the Bureau pending seizure and forfeiture proceedings for violation of Section 1113(a) of Republic Act 10863, otherwise known as the “Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA) of 2016, in relation to Section 117 and the Tobacco Exportation and Importation Rules and Regulations.

Likewise, the Bureau filed a smuggling case against the nine (9) crew members for violation of Section 1401 of the CMTA. They are presently detained at the Zamboanga City Police Station 11.

Commissioner Rubio acknowledged the diligence of the Port of Zamboanga headed by Acting District Collector Sevilla, customs operatives, and other patrol groups in the area, saying, “Your robust maritime security efforts reflect your firm commitment to your duties, and this apprehension is a demonstration of the vigilance you bring in safeguarding our coastal borders and protecting the nation from the hazards of smuggled tobacco products.”



BOC-Clark Uncovers P103.1-M Worth of Shabu in Three Parcels Disguised as “Brochures”

The Bureau of Customs – Port of Clark successfully busted three parcels containing 14,944 grams of Shabu, with an estimated street value of P103,113,600.00.

Marked “suspicious” by the port’s X-ray Inspection Project, three parcels declared as “brochures” originating from Texas, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, USA arrived on December 18, 2023, and underwent K9 sniffing. After conducting physical inspection, these were found to contain plastic pouches containing white crystalline materials suspected to be Shabu.

PDEA chemical laboratory analysis confirmed that the substances were indeed Methamphetamine Hydrochloride, commonly known as “Shabu”, a dangerous drug under R.A. No. 9165.

District Collector Erastus Sandino Austria issued Warrants of Seizure and Detention against the subject shipments for violation of R.A. No. 10863 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA) in relation to R.A. No. 9165. The Port of Clark, led by District Collector Austria, remains committed in dismantling different modus

operandi of drug smugglers to prevent the entry and distribution of illicit substances.

“Though there is still much work to do in the Bureau of Customs to achieve greatness in our efforts to stop any illegal attempts to import controlled substances into the country, we will continue to strengthen our coordination with our partner law enforcement agencies in protecting our nation from the damaging effects of drug trafficking,” Commissioner Bienvenido Rubio stated.



DID YOU KNOW THAT CERTAIN "SKINCARE PRODUCTS CAN BE IMPORTED INTO THE PHILIPPINES WITHOUT FDA CLEARANCE?

Personal use items such as lotion, soap and sunscreen can be imported without FDA clearance, as long as the quantity is below 1 kilogram. However, exceeding this limit may result in seizure and forfeiture in favor of the government.

For additional inquiries, you can reach out to the FDA via email at info@fda.gov.ph or through the hotline at (02) 8857-1900.



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