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# **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION: TRADE FACILITATION ASSESSMENT PROJECT**

## **Report on Jamaica Trade Facilitation Self Assessment**

July 28-31, 2008  
Kingston, Jamaica

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**Contract Number: PCE-I-00-98-00013-00**

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**Submitted by:  
Booz Allen Hamilton**

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### **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

The WTO Trade Facilitation National Self Assessment of Jamaica's Needs and Priorities was held in Kingston July 28-31 at the Pegasus Hotel.

## **Background**

The WTO's Trade Facilitation Negotiating Group, operating under the auspices of the WTO Doha Round negotiations in Geneva, is implementing a *Trade Facilitation National Needs Assessment Project* under the auspices of the Trade Facilitation Trust Fund. These self assessments are intended to provide support to WTO members—particularly developing and least-developed countries—with respect to their trade facilitation needs and priorities, and to the cost implications of proposed measures being considered in the Trade Facilitation negotiations. The importance of carrying out a national self assessment of needs and priorities has been identified by members in several written proposals as a crucial step with respect to the negotiations and the implementation of any final result emanating from the Doha Round of negotiations.

The WTO has received a large number of requests from members for technical assistance under this proposed self assessment program. These demands significantly exceed the capacity of the WTO Secretariat. As a result, the WTO has sought, and has been receiving support from WTO developed country members in support of this initiative. The US Government (USTR/USAID) has offered in-kind support to this needs assessment project. USAID's Trade Facilitation and Capacity Building Project "FASTrade" has been identified as the vehicle through which this assistance is to be offered as FASTrade's mandate, from its inception in 2003, has been to improve trade facilitation efforts around the world. To date, FASTrade has already supported national self-assessments in Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, and Kenya. For the self assessment conducted in Jamaica, USAID's "Doha Project" for WTO Accession and Participation provided financial support.

## **The Self Assessment in Jamaica**

The USAID team supporting the WTO's effort in Jamaica was led by FASTrade's Chief of Party Paul Fekete, who served as lead facilitator. He was assisted by Mr. David Cowles (Trade Specialist I) and Regina Hehir (Trade Specialist I) from the FASTrade project and Christina Rahlén from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs who served as a customs specialist and additional facilitator for the self assessment.

## **Advance Meetings with Jamaican Officials**

In past WTO Trade Facilitation Self Assessments, advance meetings have been scheduled prior to the formal start of the self assessment to generate a better understanding of the process and assure a good turnout of representatives among stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. However, in Jamaica, the government did not feel that such meetings would be necessary, particularly given the extensive outreach that had already been conducted by both Jamaica Customs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT). In addition, a pre-workshop sensitization session with

stakeholders was held by MFAFT and Jamaica Customs on July 17<sup>th</sup> during which stakeholders were provided with information about the forthcoming national workshop as well as the documents that would be utilized at the workshop. These measures greatly assisted in preparing stakeholders for the WTO TF self assessment.

Because of the extensive preparations already in place, the team of facilitators did not need to arrive the prior week, as had been typical in past assessments. The team arrived on Sunday and met with a few officials of both MFAFT and Jamaica Customs after their arrival to review some logistical matters and to make sure that all of the necessary arrangements were in place for the workshop starting the following day. There were some expressions of concern by Ms. Marcia Thomas, Senior Director of the Department of Foreign Trade that the assessment should also focus on trade facilitation initiatives that had recently been conducted under the auspices of the EC and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The team acknowledged that there were areas where these various initiatives overlapped with each other, but indicated that the self assessment was primarily being driven by the WTO process in Geneva. Still, all agreed that, as possible, efforts would be made to relate the various trade facilitation initiatives to each other.

### **The Trade Facilitation Self Assessment**

The self assessment workshop commenced on Monday morning at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel (the schedule is attached in the Appendix). The opening ceremonies included introductory comments by Ambassador Lorne McDonnough, Under Secretary, Trade, MFAFT and Commissioner Walker Danville from Jamaica Customs. Additional opening remarks were also made by FASTrade's Chief of Party (COP) and Lead Facilitator, Mr. Paul Fekete.



**Ms. Allison Roofe, MFAFT, addressing the workshop**

Following the welcoming remarks, Ms Allison Roofe, Deputy Director of the Foreign Trade Department (MFAFT) gave a presentation focusing on the WTO, the status of the trade facilitation negotiations, their importance to Jamaica, and the link between the self

assessment and the ongoing negotiating process. It had been anticipated that Ms. Cheryl Spencer, Minister Counsellor at Jamaica's Mission in Geneva would be in attendance at the self assessment, but the WTO Mini-Ministerial that was being held in Geneva at approximately the same time precluded Ms. Spencer's attendance in Kingston. In her absence, Ms. Roofe commented on the ongoing negotiations and the need for greater input from stakeholders on trade facilitation issues in order to effectively represent Jamaica's national interests. She expressed hope that the workshop would improve coordination among stakeholders and between the capital and Geneva and that increased awareness about trade facilitation issues would result among participants.



**Ms. Christina Rahlén, facilitator from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

After the morning break, Paul Fekete provided training on the WTO's assessment methodology which would be used to carry out Jamaica's self assessment. After the lunch break, the self assessment commenced, with Jamaican participants divided into three working groups to begin the process of completing the assessment. Throughout the course of the week, there were approximately 25-35 attendees each day, with approximately eight individuals in each group.

Most Jamaican government ministries and agencies with border control or trade facilitation responsibilities were represented during the course of the week's discussions. These included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica Customs Department, the Jamaican Bureau of Standards, the Ministry of Health and Environment, and the Trade

Board. Officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture were also in attendance.

The private sector was represented intermittently throughout the workshop, with officials from the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, the Customs Brokers Associations of Jamaica,

the Jamaican Manufacturers Association, and the Shippers Association of Jamaica. (The complete list of participants can be found in the Appendix.)

Notwithstanding the excellent representation by major stakeholder organizations, participants of the workshop were disappointed by the fact that there were numerous other entities which should have been in attendance and which would have contributed to an even more comprehensive assessment of Jamaica's trade facilitation issues. Some even went as far as to express the view that attendance at the workshop should have been made mandatory for all relevant government entities.

As in other countries where assessments have been conducted, the process commenced slowly, but as participants developed a greater familiarity with the methodology, each of the three working groups was able to complete their initial assigned task. Each group proceeded through the issues in an orderly manner, with the facilitators guiding the discussions and offering assistance and insights, as warranted. Because recent WTO trade facilitation negotiations in Geneva have increasingly turned to issues related to the special and differential treatment of developing countries, the assessment in Jamaica also focused on Jamaica's needs and priorities for technical assistance and capacity building. As in the past, the selection of effective rapporteurs able to comprehensively document the discussions among the group's members played an extremely important role in contributing to the successful outcome of each group's work.



**Self Assessment participants at work.**

The preliminary review of issues in the self assessment was completed by Wednesday in each of the three individual working groups. Some groups moved more quickly, while others had more difficult issues with which to contend or engaged in more debate on various matters. When each group was finished with their tasks, all

participants reconvened later on Wednesday morning in plenary session to review the work of the individual groups and to confirm the current status of a number of issues in Jamaica. The session also allowed for additional input to be provided on issues where

one or another government ministry official or private sector representative had not been a part of the original working group.

There were a number of issues which caused extensive debate. In the area of customs cooperation, there was broad consensus that increased levels of cooperation in the region would be desirable but that WTO Member proposals did not go far enough in promoting increased levels of cooperation. With respect to the proposal to encourage the acceptance of commercially available information, Jamaica Customs officers expressed concern that any proposal that eliminated requirements for the submission of all relevant documents for the purposes of clearance might jeopardize the government's ability to collect all of the revenues due from trade. Also controversial was the proposal's language on translation, with most participants expressing the desire that traders be required, on an ongoing basis, to provide translation of all relevant documentation for clearance purposes so that no additional administrative burden would fall on Jamaican government officials. Last but not least, Jamaica Customs officials along with other government representatives were skeptical of the willingness of the government to move from fees and charges based on *ad valorem* values to flat fees based on the cost of services rendered as envisioned by one of the proposals. Most were of the view that expectations within government to maintain and increase revenues would constrain any willingness to adopt WTO Member proposals regarding disciplines on such fees and charges.



**Self Assessment participants discussing issues.**

Once the review process was completed, the plenary session turned, on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, to the preparation of a PowerPoint presentation to be made to senior officials who would be in attendance on Thursday afternoon. (The PowerPoint presentation is

included in the Appendix.) The presentation summarizes the work carried out by the participants in the assessment and identifies major constraints in the trade facilitation area. Recommendations on the way forward were also discussed and agreed upon by all participants.

During the preparation of the final report, there was discussion among participants with respect to the structures that have been in place to encourage dialog between the public and private sectors in Jamaica on trade facilitation issues. Most trade issues appear to be handled by the Jamaican Trade Adjustment Team (JTAT) which includes representatives from both the public and private sectors. There appeared to be general agreement that strengthening JTAT would be desirable, but some suggested the need for a national committee specifically to address trade facilitation issues. There was also some indication that the Ministry of Industry might revive an entity that had been charged with overseeing trade facilitation issues in the past. All participants agreed that stakeholders should give serious consideration to what mechanisms would be most useful for addressing ongoing trade facilitation issues in Jamaica.

In conclusion, both Jamaican government and private sector stakeholders agreed to continue the process started with the workshop so as to further refine Jamaica's understanding of trade facilitation barriers and to improve participation in the WTO Trade Facilitation process.

The closing ceremonies were held Thursday after lunch, with the summary presentation, made to the senior officials in attendance. Ms. Marcia Thomas, Senior Director of the Foreign Trade Department and Commissioner Danville Walker from Jamaica Customs briefly attended the closing sessions as did Mr. Omar Chedda from the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica.



### **Jamaica Workshop Participants**

The presentation, made by workshop participants themselves, detailed the various components of the self-assessment and the areas in which Jamaica would need to focus in order to implement potential WTO obligations and commitments. There was general agreement that Jamaica needed to continue the process of self assessment that had commenced with the workshop. There was also a consensus that the recommendations of the participants should be adopted. The recommendations included:

- *The coordination mechanism among stakeholders on TF issues should be reviewed and strengthened. Stakeholders should commit to the sharing of information on a timely basis.*
- *Periodic updates on the status of TF issues should be communicated among all stakeholders.*
- *MFAFT will send all stakeholders a copy of the TF self assessment. Recipients commit to providing feedback on these and other negotiating proposals on an ongoing basis and in a timely manner.*
- *Effort should be made for greater participation by relevant stakeholders in the WTO TF negotiations which should entail attendance at the Geneva discussions*

The self assessment ended with the distribution of certificates to all participants. In addition, each participant received a CD-ROM from the WTO with a library of

information related to the trade facilitation negotiations. A comprehensive list of participants with detailed contact information was also distributed—intended to promote ongoing dialog among all stakeholders. There were a few concluding remarks and expressions of appreciation for the successful conclusion of the workshop among all participants and facilitators.

## **Appendix**



## WTO Trade Facilitation National Self Assessment of Jamaica's Needs and Priorities

**July 28 - 31, 2008  
Pegasus Hotel  
Kingston, Jamaica**



### Agenda

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#### DAY 1: Monday, 28 July

9:00 – 9:30 Opening Ceremony

- *Ambassador Lorne McDonnough, Under- Secretary for Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade*
- *Mr. Danville Walker, Commissioner of Customs, Jamaica Customs Department*
- *Mr. Paul Fekete, Lead Facilitator, Booz Allen Hamilton/USAID*

9:30 – 9:45 Introductions of Participants and International Officials

9:45 – 10:45 Session 1: Introduction to the WTO trade facilitation negotiations

- Negotiation mandate
- GATT Articles
- Members' proposals

*Speaker: Ms. Allison Roofe, Deputy Director, Foreign Trade Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade*

10:45 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:00 Session 2: Introduction to the Needs Assessment Process and Tool

- Introduction to the self assessment tool

*Speaker: Mr. Paul Fekete, Booz Allen Hamilton/USAID*

12:00 – 12:30 Session 3: Self Assessment of Needs and Priorities

Participants will work in working groups that contain representatives of each ministry, agency and private sector organization for completion of the needs assessment using the Needs Assessment Guide and Tool (TN/TF/W/143). Each working group will be assigned certain trade facilitation proposals from the Guide.

*Facilitators: Mr. Paul Fekete, Booz Allen Hamilton/USAID; Mr. David Cowles, Booz Allen Hamilton/USAID; Ms. Christina Rahlén, Government of Sweden*

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 5:30 Session 4: Self Assessment of Needs and Priorities

**DAY 2: Tuesday, 29 July**

9:00 – 5:30 Self Assessment of Needs and Priorities

**DAY 3: Wednesday, 30 July**

9:00 – 5:30 Self Assessment of Needs and Priorities

**DAY 4: Thursday, 31 July**

9:00 – 12:30 Session 1: Report Preparation

Participants will review the results of the needs assessment and determine the conclusion of the results.

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 2:00 Session 1: Evaluation and Feedback on the workshop  
Group Photo Opportunity

2:00 – 4:00 Session 2: Reporting Session

- Report is made to high level officials.
  - Discussion and feedback on findings.
  - Distribution of certificates.
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**WTO Trade Facilitation  
National Self Assessment of Jamaica's Needs and Priorities**



**July 28-31, 2008  
Pegasus Hotel  
Kingston, Jamaica**

**OPENING STATEMENT**

**Paul Fekete  
Lead Facilitator**



**Honorable Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

- It is a great pleasure for me and my colleagues to be here today in Kingston as facilitators of the national trade facilitation needs assessment workshop for Jamaica. I am joined by Christina Rahlén from the Government of Sweden, and David Cowles and Regina Hehir, from USAID's Fastrade Project.
- Speaking on behalf of both the WTO and USAID, I want to express our thanks for being invited to participate in your self-assessment of needs and priorities in the WTO trade facilitation negotiations.
- Since trade facilitation became a part of the WTO Doha Negotiations in 2004, it has been witness to a very active participation from the wide WTO membership, now comprising 153 Members. This has included not only developed countries, but also developing countries and even LDCs who share the collective interest to lower transaction costs for their traders and help expedite the clearance and release of goods across borders.
- It is important to mention that any future legal commitments in the area of trade facilitation will be linked to each country's implementation capacity. LDCs in particular will only be required to undertake commitments to the extent consistent with their individual development, financial and institutional capabilities.
- As called for in the trade facilitation negotiating mandate, the self assessment of trade facilitation needs and priorities is a very important

- element in the trade facilitation negotiations, not only to help developing countries and LDCs identify their needs and priorities vis-à-vis the proposed trade facilitation measures, but also to enhance their participation in the trade facilitation negotiations in Geneva.
- Many Members have stressed the need for support in conducting their self assessment. For that reason, the WTO Secretariat has developed an extensive program of technical assistance that is funded by WTO Members through a special trust fund. We are here, with USAID's support this week to assist you by facilitating your work as you assess your needs.
  - The main objectives of this four day workshop are:
    - To help Jamaica identify its technical assistance and capacity building support needs and priorities to implement WTO Members' proposals on how to clarify and improve GATT Articles V, VIII, and X.
    - To help Jamaica determine its national negotiating position on each of the proposed measures.
    - To help maintain a national inter-agency dialogue among the stakeholders on trade facilitation.
  - This week, we bring together Jamaican officials from a variety of ministries and government entities as well as from the private sector to carry out the national self assessment. Let me stress that this is not a normal training seminar or diagnostic mission, but rather a workshop where all of you will be undertaking the actual assessment. I and my colleagues are here only as facilitators to guide the process. At the end, this will be a Jamaican product.
  - For those senior officials who will be unable to stay with us throughout the week, let me invite you to return on Thursday, at 2pm, when the results of the self assessment will be reported out and next steps will be considered.
  - It is our hope that after this week, you will continue to work regularly with each other in order to provide the necessary support for your negotiators in Geneva as the negotiations progress.

- We are confident that with your active participation and cooperation, we will bring this week's efforts to a success.

Thank you.

**WTO Trade Facilitation  
National Self Assessment of Jamaica's Needs and Priorities**



**July 28-31, 2008  
Pegasus Hotel  
Kingston, Jamaica**

**CLOSING STATEMENT**

**Paul Fekete  
Lead Facilitator**



**Honorable Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

- It has been a great pleasure for us to be here this week as facilitators of the national trade facilitation needs assessment workshop for Jamaica. Speaking on behalf of both the WTO and USAID, I'd like to thank my colleagues, Christina Rahlén, David Cowles, and Regina Hehir for their support throughout the workshop. In particular I would like to thank the Foreign Trade Department for its support of the workshop. I would like to single out and thank Allison Roofoe, Symone Betton and Sean Taylor for all the work they have done in support of this effort.
- We have appreciated your warm hospitality, your hard work, and your commitment to making this assessment a success. At the opening session, we cautioned you that this would be a workshop of a different nature, and you have all met and exceeded the challenge through your commitment and wholehearted participation in the assessment.
- When we started the assessment, we indicated that the main objectives would be to:
  - Help Jamaica identify its technical assistance and capacity building needs and priorities in relation to implementation of WTO Members' proposals on how to clarify and improve GATT Articles V, VIII, and X.
  - Help Jamaica determine its national negotiating position on each of the proposed measures.
  - Help maintain a national inter-agency dialogue among the stakeholders on trade facilitation.

In each of these areas, the participants of the assessment have met or exceeded the objectives that were laid out at the commencement of the effort.

- Our short visit here is coming to an end, and soon we will be leaving Jamaica. However, the ongoing responsibility for continuing the national dialog on trade facilitation issues falls to all of you. We hope that the decisions reached during this workshop with respect to the way forward will guide you and will serve to provide the necessary support for your negotiators in Geneva.

Thank you.



## National Self-Assessment of Trade Facilitation Negotiation Needs and Priorities for Jamaica

Integrated Registration List  
July 31, 2008



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# WTO Trade Facilitation Self Assessment of Needs – Jamaica

Needs and Priorities  
in the WTO  
Trade Facilitation  
Negotiations

*Workshop  
Kingston, Jamaica  
July 28–31, 2008*



# THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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National Self-Assessment of Trade Facilitation Negotiation Needs and Priorities  
for Jamaica



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Kingston, Jamaica  
July 28-31, 2008



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