

Interview With Mr Jorge Oliveira, Honourable Customs Broker in Angola

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1. Please describe your experience in customs, taking into account your professional experience within AGT (Angolan fiscal Administration (Administração Geral Tributária)) and Angolan customs authority.

I am a customs broker in Angola. I was only twenty-four years old when I was first appointed as a customs broker. Between 1981 and 1993, I performed customs brokerage activities in Portugal and I returned to Angola afterwards. With the new establishment of the Câmara dos Despachantes Oficiais de Angola (Angola Customs Brokers Chamber) in 1997, I was elected as chairman of the board, a position that I held for ten years. In 2003, I was elected as the president of the International Federation of Customs Brokers Associations (IFCBA) for three years. In 2015, I was appointed as an expert to the Conselho Superior Técnico Aduaneiro (CSTA, Customs Technical High Council), as a representative of the Customs Brokers Chamber.

2. What are the major challenges that Angolan customs authorities face today in terms of international trade in the context of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic?

It is a concern of the Angolan customs authorities to facilitate international trade, fundamentally by using information technology, in order to make all the processes of moving imported and exported goods less bureaucratic. In addition, another challenge is to exempt or reduce import duties on the importation of goods used in the prevention and treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. What expectations does Angola have within the framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional integration process?

The SADC integration process has suffered from some delays, motivated by several essential strategic and economic factors. The benefits of regional integration do not always protect Angola's interests.

4. Fifteen years have passed since Decreto-Lei No. 5/06 of 4 October, which sets out the Customs Code. What is your assessment on its implementation in general?

The Customs Code approved by Decreto-Lei No. 5/06 should have been approved as a regulation within six months after its publication. This regulation would have clarified certain customs procedures. However, it has not been published until now, so it is necessary to resort to separate legislation in some situations. It has a very developed and arduous fiscal component, while the customs component shows several deficiencies and is not properly developed.

5. How do special customs procedures (provided under Article 51, n. 4, of the Customs Code) work in Angola's commercial and customs policy, particularly concerning the granting of customs and tax advantages applicable to the import of raw materials and components for the processing and manufacture of goods that are subsequently exported (inward processing)?

The customs procedures in place facilitate the import of raw materials and the inward processing procedure. However, the value-added tax (VAT) regime and its application do not always accompany the facilitations.

6. What are the contributions that the Customs Brokers Chamber can bring to the development and application of commercial and customs policies in Angola?

Notes

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The Customs Brokers Chamber can contribute to the development and application of trade and customs policies in Angola based on the knowledge of its members and the information and complaints from its members' customers, having in various situations a different view of government and AGT (Angolan fiscal Administration) policies'. However, situations in which the Customs Brokers Chamber is consulted and its views are considered, are scarce.

7. The significant effort that Angolan customs authorities have been making in recent years with regard to the implementation of new information and communication technologies is well known. What relevant projects does AGT (Angolan fiscal Administration) have in the coming years to pursue this objective?

AGT intends to develop the implementation of new information technologies, but communication has proved to be problematic in some situations or during some periods. There have been several efforts to improve the technologies.

8. Do you consider that post-clearance audits may become increasingly important in customs controls, replacing traditional documentary and physical inspections? What plans does AGT (Angolan fiscal Administration) has in this area?

Post-clearance audits are important in customs controls, but they must consider deadlines, physical evidence and legal basis of the cases.

9. What is the impact, in percentage, resulting from the collection of customs duties and other charges due for the importation of goods in the context of the total of tax revenues collected annually by AGT? What expectations do you have regarding the evolution of this percentage in the coming years (tendency to increase or decrease)?

The concrete information on the tax revenues collected annually by AGT show a trend of increase, thanks to the greater control currently in place.

10. How do you assess Angola's participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and also in the World Customs Organization (WCO), as a full member of those two organizations?

There have been some complaints about non-tariff barriers not allowed by the WTO. Participation in the WCO has been productive. However, there has been some delay with the publication of the updated import tariff, which takes every five years, due to circumstantial reasons.

11. What impact and to what extent can the African continent benefit from the recent election of Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as Secretary General of the WTO?

Considering that the WTO is run based on mandatory laws and regulations applicable to all member countries, the newly elected Secretary General will have a lot of works ahead of her to encourage some members to cooperate with other members on sensitive issues.