

## **Specialty Session: National Customs Services**

**February 25, 1999**

**Moderator: William Keefer, Assistant Commissioner for Internal Affairs**

**Purpose:** To educate international delegates about Customs Service practices, internal integrity programs and other mechanisms in place to prevent global corruption.

**Findings:** Areas of common concern included the passage of new legislation, modernization of public administration and equipment upgrades, the hiring of inspectors and outside consultants, effective and committed leadership, and the periodic transfer of staff to avoid potential pockets of corruption at the source.

Michel Danet, Secretary General of the World Customs Organization opened the discussion by addressing the issue of global trade. The rapid growth of trade, the accelerating pace of development, and new information technology challenge the moral fabric and integrity under which Customs Services operate. The World Customs Organization and the international customs community are aware of the importance of integrity and their obligation to protect the public against illegal activity in law enforcement organizations.

Michael Roche, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Customs Service addressed the levels of corruption within a government system, and the vulnerabilities faced by Customs officials. Corruption is a pervasive problem, which needs to be seen in the context of the whole organization, rather than one level at a time. The development and implementation of client service charters, developing integrity strategies, the use of external accountants and a comprehensive performance management system all serve as a basis to prevent the presence of corruption within the public sector. Additionally, reforms in legislation, spot inspections, frequent discussions with international monetary organizations and modernization of enterprise can serve a useful purpose in developing and maintaining integrity in the workplace.

Finally, Enrique Fanta, the National Customs Director of Chile addressed the issue of progressive change, measures of effectiveness, a system of auditing, pre-employment background investigations, and a clear policy with regard to revenues and tax controls. Mr. Fanta first said that Chile appears just under the United States on "Transparency International's" global anti-corruption list. The elements of integrity in Chilean Customs include community service, newer technologies, a clear policy of integrity and accountability, a management by results system which has a bearing on salary, improving interoffice communication and reinventing or simplifying customs procedures which reduce paperwork.

**Panel Participants:** Michel Danet, France  
Michael Roche, Australia  
Enrique Fanta, Chile