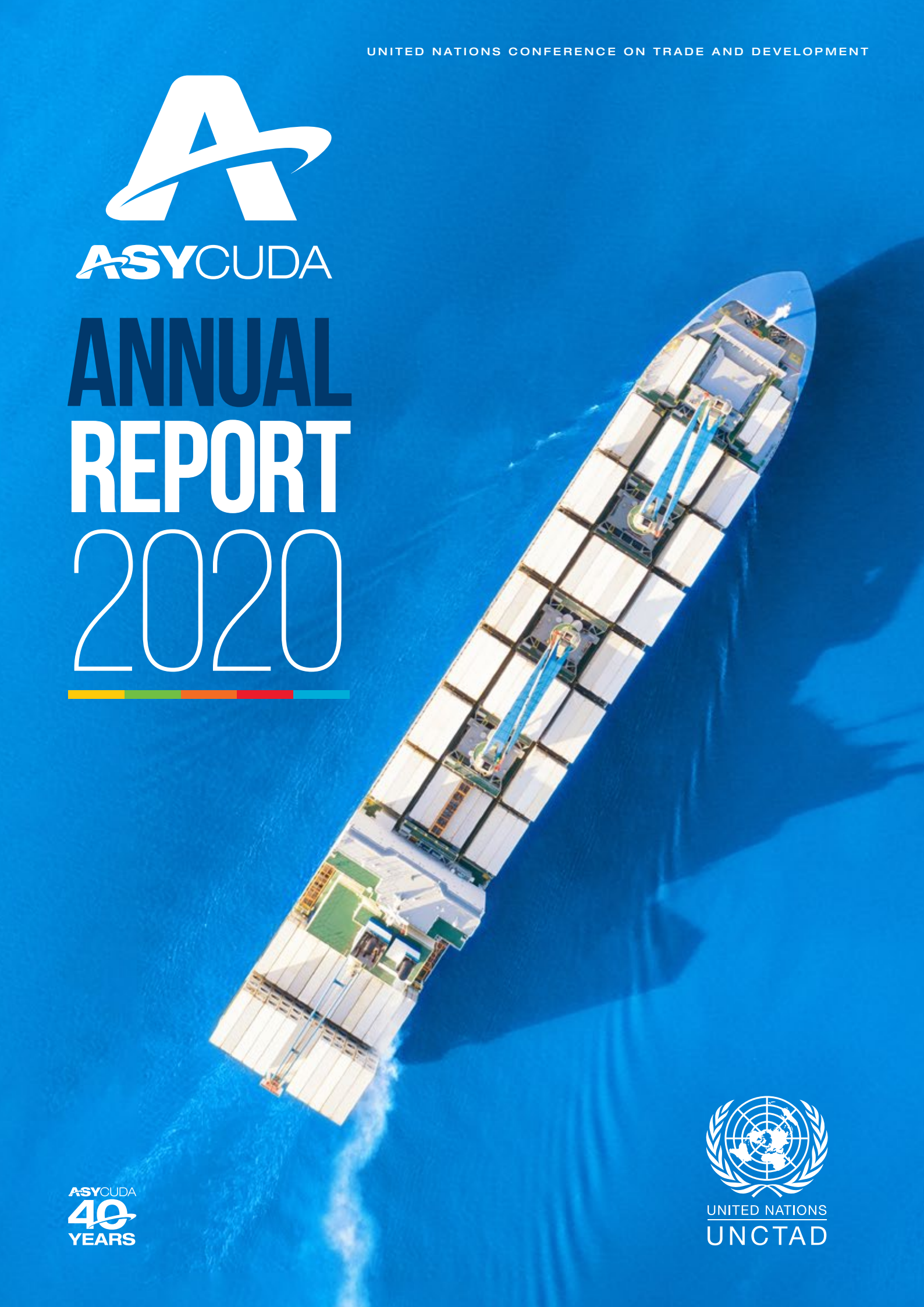
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

ASYCUDA

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



ASYCUDA 40 YEARS

UNITED NATIONS
UNCTAD

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FOREWORD

2021 marks the 40th anniversary of the ASYCUDA Programme. Today, ASYCUDA's flagship software, ASYCUDAWorld, is used in around 100 countries and territories, delivering the latest web-based technology. This annual report details progress made by the Programme in 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced physical contact and increased the urgency for the importation of medicines and essential goods. As for so many organizations, the pandemic changed how the ASYCUDA Programme operates – with a greater need for remote assistance and shift to virtual capacity building, increased paperless processing, and automation. ASYCUDA proactively supported user-countries, guiding customs administrations on adapting ASYCUDAWorld to COVID-19 enforced restrictions. It allowed user-countries to change their ways of doing business while generating the data required for risk-based decision-making.

The ASYCUDA COVID-19 Customs Administration Survey improved understanding of the challenges being faced by customs administrations and helped maximize the benefits of UNCTAD's guidelines for coping with COVID-19 measures. Recognizing ASYCUDA's real-world impact, initiatives such as the United Nations Development Account provided resources for the Programme to respond to the crisis.

To highlight some real-life examples from 2020: in Lebanon, since customs were running the cloud based ASYCUDAWorld, following the blast at the Port of Beirut, no data was lost, and 350 containers, including humanitarian and relief consignments, were imported the next day. Another example is the ASYCUDA Sanitary and Phytosanitary module, ASYSPS, rolled out to help Vanuatu Biosecurity to automate the process of applying, approving, and paying for SPS certificates – speeding up customs clearance while protecting the country's food, animal, and plant health. Finally, the ASYCUDA Programme with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), piloted in Sri Lanka a cloud-based electronic permit system, eCITES, that automates permit application, processing, issuance, and reporting.

In a challenging year, ASYCUDA demonstrated flexibility and innovation, providing excellent value to user-countries. As focus turns to UNCTAD 15 – and transitioning from inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all – at UNCTAD, we are proud of the achievements of ASYCUDA and the role it plays in facilitating trade to enable less advanced countries to prosper, thrive, and improve the livelihoods of their citizens – ultimately accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Shamika Sirimanne,
Director, Division on Technology
and Logistics (DTL), UNCTAD

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
AW	ASYCUDAWorld
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	Eurasian Economic Community
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IRU	International Road Transport Union
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
P-SIDS	Pacific Small Island Developing States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIGMAT	Regional Customs Network for Transit Trade [ECOWAS project]
SW	Single Window
UN/CEFACT	United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WCO	World Customs Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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