ASYCUDAWorld is a web-based IT customs management system developed by UNCTAD that allows Customs, cross-border agencies and traders to electronically submit and exchange data and documentation with each other. This system, which is adopted by many Customs in Africa, enables the expediting of the clearance of imports, exports, transit trade and other trade transactions, thereby greatly reducing the need for face-to-face interaction.

Adopted in 1981, initially, only for compiling foreign trade statistics, the system has evolved in 1985 toward a new version (Asycuda V2), based on the local area network (LAN) technology, with new functionalities that allow to fully automate the customs clearance process, including the transmission of customs declarations, manifests and other documents required for the purposes of customs operations. The third version (Asycuda ++), is based on a client-server architecture, includes additional modules and functionalities, such as direct trader input, risk management, transit monitoring, and submissions of declarations by customs brokers via the Internet. This version is still used today by many developing countries in the world.

ASYCUDAWorld (AW) is the latest edition of the system and supports paperless declaration processing through the use of scanned or electronic documents. Introduced in March 2002, this version uses extensible mark-up language (XML), which permits, at the national level, the exchange of any documents between the customs administration, other government agencies and traders, and, at the international level, between different customs administrations via the Internet.

Differently from the ASYCUDA++, which is accessible only from specific client workstations where computers are equipped with client software organising connection with a system server, ASYCUDAWorld allows external users to access it via internet, without any need of installing a specific software on their computers.

The [ASYCUDA COVID-19 Customs Administration Survey](#) is a report launched by UNCTAD assessing to what extent Customs administrations adopting AW have implemented a paperless environment aimed at reducing direct manual handling of paper documents, as well as human interactions, as possible vehicles for the transmission of COVID-19.

The report, based on a survey conducted on respondents from customs administrations that have adopted the last version of Asycuda, shows that a high percentage of Customs still

require, in addition to the electronic customs declaration, paper copies of the latter to be submitted by traders or their customs representatives. More frequently, the supporting documentation to customs declaration can be submitted only in paper format.

Moreover, a significant share (55%) of respondents do not use electronic signature for certification of customs declarations, despite the availability of this feature on AW. Indeed, most of Customs are delaying the implementation of the e-signature due to absence of supporting legal framework in their country or because they deem that the username on the customs declaration form is sufficient.
Concerning the transmission of scanned documents, this is mostly used for Commercial Import and Export regimes and, more rarely, for excise declarations. Also in this case, hard copies of such documents are in most cases required in addition to the electronically transmitted scanned documents.

The survey also reveals that only 52% of Customs use barcode readers for scanning customs documents, while interfaces for electronic payment and deferred payment in AW are little used, with most Customs still requesting traditional payment methods in cash or checks. Ultimately, those countries that have implemented an Asycuda-based Single Window environment allowing the electronic issuing of licenses, permits or certificates by Government Agencies other than Customs on a single platform, in the majority of cases do not use a function that automatically writes-off such titles once released.

African countries using the Asycuda system (in its various versions)

AFRICA

- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cabo Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Comoros
- Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- D.R. Congo
- Djibouti
- Equatorial Guinea

- Eritrea
- Eswatini (former Swaziland)
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Mozambique

- Namibia
- Niger
- Rwanda
- Saint Helena
- Sao Tome and P
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Sudan
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe