

# REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

August through October 2016

## SHIPPING

### MORE RESTRICTIVE RULES ON INSPECTION / CONTROL OF CONTAINERS

Order 7661 of 2 August 2016 introduced changes in the procedures for control/inspection of containers at the port of Pointe-Noire and at secondary ports. Order 12369 of 15 May 2015 started by setting forth new rules on the control and inspection of containers located at the Congolese ports, in terms consistent with the 1972 Convention for Safe Containers. Said rules are mainly aimed at insuring that the containers are in good general condition upon loading and unloading, with a view to improving the safety of maritime traffic and of the port operations. Order 7661 repealed Order 12369, so now the inspections may only be made by authorized public maritime agents appointed by the Merchant Navy. As a result, the alternative offered by Order 12369 of having these procedures carried out by an authorized private Congolese entity ceased to exist.

## CUSTOMS

### COLLECTION OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION TAX NOW REGULATED

For the implementation of the Additional Act 01/CEMAC-046-CCE on the restructuring of CEMAC's financing mechanism, Order 8498 of 9 September 2016 details the terms and conditions for collection of the Regional Integration Tax (*Taxe Communautaire d'Intégration*). The Regional Integration Tax is a special tax put in place to finance the integration process within the CEMAC, and applies to definitive importations from non-member states. The Regional Integration Tax corresponds to 1% of the customs value of the goods.

## GOVERNMENT

### STRUCTURE AND DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Decree 2016-238 of 20 August 2016 defines the scope of the authority assigned to the Office of the President of the Republic. The Office is charged with conceiving, supervising and promoting the advancement of the State and the Nation in the political, economic, social and cultural domains. For this purpose, the President's Office's duties include, amongst others, preparing the President's decisions by providing the President with regular information on the action of the Government and the situation of the country, monitoring the implementation of the decisions made by the President, and ensuring a proper liaison between the President and the other institutions of the Republic. Decree 2016-238 also structures the operation and personnel of the Office, which is headed by a State Minister charged with the duties of Chief of Staff, and includes military, civil, political and advisory officials.

## DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

### PROTOCOL ON COMPULSORY SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES RATIFIED

The 1961 Optional Protocol Concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes was ratified by means of Decree 2016-282 of 10 October 2016, as authorized by Law 26-2016 of even date. Pursuant to this Protocol, the settlement of disputes arising out of the interpretation or application of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is voluntarily placed by the signatory States under the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

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