



Green Customs at INTERPOL



INTERPOL has for the first time hosted the annual meeting of the UNEP-coordinated Green Customs Initiative, bringing together the enforcement community, international organisations and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to facilitate their cooperation to prevent illegal trade in environmentally sensitive commodities.

“Environmental crime is a serious global problem and one which is increasing. A significant proportion of wildlife and pollution crimes involve organized criminal networks and can have a harmful impact on the economies and security of nations. In order to combat such crimes international cooperation between enforcement agencies and those responsible for environmental protection and management is paramount. Green Customs promotes this kind of cooperation.” said David Higgins, Manager of the INTERPOL Environmental Crime Programme.

The 7th Green Customs Partners Meeting, which was attended by representatives of the secretariats of six MEAs with trade related provisions¹, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, INTERPOL, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Customs Organization, was held at INTERPOL’s General Secretariat in Lyon, France.

This two day meeting on 8th and 9th February enabled the partners of the initiative to agree on common activities for the coming year including the production of ground breaking e-learning modules to reach

out to customs and border enforcement officers in the far corners of the world. In addition the partners agreed to an ambitious series of integrated customs training workshops for developing countries and production of practical assistance tools.

Rajendra Shende head of the UNEP DTIEⁱⁱ OzonAction Branch said: *“This meeting sends a strong message that environmental crime is a serious threat that merits a coordinated international response. That the UN agencies, MEA secretariats and international organisations are joining hands at the INTERPOL HQ reaffirms the resolve of UN to act as ‘one’ to face challenges of the illegal trade in environmentally sensitive commodities”*. He continued: *“UNEP is shortly to release a Green Economy Report to encourage investment in the sustainable use of ‘Natural Capital’ for human wellbeing and social equity. This meeting should contribute to ensuring that the governance and sustainable use of ecological assets is promoted by preventing uncontrolled and illegal trade of environmentally sensitive commodities across the national boundaries.”*

The Green Customs Initiative is currently supported by funding from the United Nations Development Account.

For more details:

Green Customs Initiative

To find more about the Green Customs Initiative and its partner organisations please see the website:

<http://www.greencustoms.org>

Email: greencustoms@unep.org

INTERPOL

To find more about INTERPOL and its Environmental Crime Programme please see the website:

<http://www.interpol.int/Public/EnvironmentalCrime>

Email: environmentalcrime@interpol.int

ⁱ Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Convention on Biological Diversity), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and pesticides in International Trade & Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

ⁱⁱ United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry and Economics