ABBREVIATIONS

ABF Australian Border Force
ACCU Air Cargo Control Unit
AI Artificial Intelligence
AIRCOP Airport Communication Programme
API Advance Passenger Information
AVSEC Aviation Security
BCP Border Control Point
BMB Border Management Branch
BSGI Black Sea Grain Initiative
CBRNE Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive
CCCP Container Control Programme
CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CSI Container Security Initiative
CTS Cargo Targeting System
CTTP Countering Terrorist Travel Programme
CYCLOPS Cyprus Centre for Land Open Seas and Port Security
EAGLE Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement
EXBS Export Control and Related Border Security Program of the United States of America
FMP Falsified Medical Product
FRCS Fiji Revenue and Customs Service
FTF Foreign Terrorist Fighter
GMCP Global Maritime Crime Programme
IATA International Air Transport Association
ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
IMF International Maritime Organization
INL Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the United States of America
INTERPOL International Criminal Police Organization
IOM International Organization for Migration
IPR Intellectual Property Rights
IREN Inter-Regional Network of Customs Authorities and Port Control Units
JAITF Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force
MENA Middle East and North Africa
MoU Memorandum of Understanding
NCR National Central Bureau
NORAD Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTC National Targeting Center
PCCP Passenger and Cargo Control Programme
PCBT Passenger and Cargo Border Team
PCU Port Control Unit
PIU Passenger Information Unit
PNB Passenger Name Record
RILO Regional Intelligence Liaison Office
RMIT Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
ROP Royal Oman Police
RTC Regional Targeting Centre
SASTN South Asia Strategic Trade Network
SLC Sri Lanka Customs
STEC Strategic Trade and Export Control
TEU Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit
UN United Nations
UN-CTED Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
UNOCT United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNOICT United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOV United Nations Office in Vienna
WCO World Customs Organization
WHO World Health Organization
WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization
WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction
WSC World Shipping Council

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Welcome to the Annual Report of the Passenger and Cargo Border Team (PCBT) for 2023.

The mission of UNODC PCBT is to contribute to the safeguarding of the health, security, economic and environmental situation for people and countries around the world through the implementation of the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) and the Container Control Programme (CCP). We do this by strengthening passenger and trade supply chain security to prevent the trafficking of illicit goods, reduce organized crime and terrorism, and support trade and passenger facilitation. In 2023, the newly established PCBT continued to integrate the activities of AIRCOP and CCP and to expand into other areas of border management to ensure that we deliver a comprehensive and cohesive border management approach for passengers and cargo. The PCBT is now run from Istanbul, a major global hub for trade and a location that places PCBT adjacent to the world’s passenger and cargo flows. As a result, Türkiye has become a strategic partner to the PCBT.

The Programme has placed more staff in the field with coordination and technical roles where activities are undertaken and has encouraged Member States to play a bigger part in the development of curricula and methodology to improve sustainability. Linked to this is the push for more efficient targeting through the establishment of National and Regional Targeting Centers (NTCs/RTCs).

We have also continued to reinforce the need for gender equality in the customs and law enforcement sectors through the PCBT Women’s Network. In 2023, PCBT contributed to the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) by providing UN inspectors to conduct inspections of foodstuff departing from Ukraine to the international market. The BSGI achieved the 2023 UN Heroes Award.

In this same year, PCBT, in partnership with the Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), also received the UNOV/UNODC Gender Award 2023 for the “Blue Justice Initiative – Blue Enforcement”. The project enhances the knowledge and capacity of law enforcement, fisheries, and customs officers to address crimes in the fisheries sector through comprehensive training programmes and sea operations, all while applying tailored activities for women.

At the forefront of these endeavours, the inter-agency customs and law enforcement units established under the PCBT at ports and border points continued their important work to profile, inspect, arrest, and seize high-risk passengers and cargo. In countries where the units are an integral part of the national law enforcement system and offer additional support to established law enforcement infrastructure, they play a central role in maintaining their respective country’s security and contribute to overall international safety and stability.

Seizure statistics showed the tangible impact of the PCBT’s methodology and the hard work of participating countries – with a wide variety of results, including seizures of around 212 million pieces of cigarettes, 29 tonnes of CITES items, 250 tonnes of cocaine, 210 tonnes of hazardous waste, 19 million medicine items, 513,000 pieces of strategic goods, weapons, and explosives, and 21 million pieces related to tax and duty evasion. As such, the PCBT successfully contributed to improving the security, health, economies and environment of countries and people.

The PCBT is made possible through the joint and strategic operational partnership with the World Customs Organization (WCO) as well as the collaboration with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), through AIRCOP, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), through the CCP. The PCBT is grateful for the fruitful collaboration with a large number of Member States around the world that are making contributions either through implementing the Programmes, making direct financial contributions and/or via in-kind support. Moreover, UN sister agencies and programmes, international organizations, the private sector, donors and academia are key stakeholders in ensuring that PCBT delivers on its mandate.

As the Programme enters its 20th year of implementation in 2024, we look forward to further successes.
I. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

"Through the principle of interagency cooperation with which CCP [PCBT] is concerned, Lebanon is sending a clear message that it prioritizes the fight against corruption. Its commitment to improving border security and contributing to stability in the region will send a strong signal to the international community."

Mr. Najib Mikati, Caretaker Prime Minister, Republic of Lebanon

"Chile joining AIRCOP builds on the fruitful and ongoing cooperation with the CCP. Through this collaboration, Chile gets access to information from different parts of the world. Our law enforcement personnel receive training and are internationally linked on technological matters with professionals with similar functions in different ports around the world. This is very effective in the prevention of organized crime in Chile."

Mr. Manuel Monsalve, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Chile

Photo: Container inspection, Cat Lai Port, Viet Nam
I. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

GOAL AND MISSION

The UNODC Border Management Branch (BMB) PCBT implements CCP and AIRCOP in partnership with 86 countries around the world, the WCO, INTERPOL, ICAO, the private sector, UN agencies, international organizations, academia and donors.

The goal of the PCBT is to build capacity in countries seeking to strengthen risk management, passenger and trade supply chain security and border management in seaports, airports, dry ports, railway terminals and land border crossings to prevent the trafficking of illicit goods, organized crime and terrorism and support trade and passenger facilitation.

The mission of the PCBT is to safeguard the health, security, economic and environmental situation of people and countries around the world.

By mid-2024, the original programmes sitting under the PCBT umbrella, CCP and AIRCOP, will merge into one programme, called the Passenger and Cargo Control Programme (PCCP), to allow for a holistic and global approach to passenger and cargo security and facilitation.

“The PCBT/AIRCOP trainings enabled me to effectively lead my team, raise awareness on ethics and integrity, lead missions to intercept traffickers, encourage my team, and understand how to listen to them. Also, these training courses have enabled me to strengthen my professionalism as Head of JAITF, and to obtain a broader understanding of the different methods used by traffickers.”

Ms. Flavienne Yelome Hauitonon, Head of JAITF, Benin

MODUS OPERANDI

The PCBT takes a practical and technical solution-oriented approach. While AIRCOP and CCP are tailored to the specific needs of each country, the below steps explain the overall modus operandi of operationalization and implementation:

01 Country request
02 Cooperation scope development
03 Cooperation agreement signature
04 National steering committee establishment
05 Inter-agency unit formation at the selected location for risk profiling, targeting and inspection of cargo and/or passengers

06 Set-up of unit office with specialized equipment
07 Standard operating procedures (SOP) for the unit
08 Roll-out of training at the basic, advanced and specialized levels
09 Mentorships

10 Installation of the WCO CENcomm/ContainerCOMM/AirCargoCOMM and/or INTERPOL I-24/7 for international alerts and exchange of information
11 Criminal analysis by INTERPOL
12 International study/exchange visits
13 Cooperation with the private sector
14 Regional and international meetings, conferences and joint operations

Women in training on crimes in the fisheries sector, Malé, Maldives
I. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME PARTNERS

UNODC
Management – Administration
Coordination – Direction Development
Cooperation Development with Countries and Partners – Fundraising
Quality Assurance – Delivery of Training

World Customs Organization
Development, Facilitation and Delivery of Training
Customs Expertise
Provision of CENcomm/ContainerCOMM/
AirCargoCOMM – Data Visualization
Cooperation Development with Countries and Partners

INTERPOL
Criminal Analysis – Relationship with National Central Bureaus (NCBs) – Provision of I-24/7

“Seizures are the main indicator used to measure the success of the PCBT. Seizures contribute to the long-term safeguarding of countries’ security, health, economies and environment in the following way. For example:

- Enhancing airport, seaport, railway and land border security.
- Decreasing revenue to and capacity of trafficking, crime and terrorism actors.
- Deterring future trafficking, crime and terrorism operations.
- Interrupting the supply of strategic trade goods, CBRNE and arms to conflicts and undesirable actors.
- Curtailing the availability of chemicals used for manufacturing drugs, weapons and explosives.
- Reducing the number and amount of illicit drugs available in countries to improve health.
- Ensuring that safe and qualified products reach the consumers.
- Reducing the access to potentially dangerous medicines and falsified products affecting the health of consumers.

The impact of PCBT/AIRCOP has been a vital means for me to specialize in the transnational fight against drugs, but also to help me make progress across various positions of responsibility within the JAITF.”

Ms. Aissata Cissé. Head of JAITF, Mali

RESULTS & IMPACT

“Security is not something you buy, but it is something you do; and you need skilled, trained, and talented people to do it. Therefore, this regional training for the Middle East and North Africa on setting-up passenger information unit and processing API and PNR is of vital importance.”

Mr. Matt Friesen, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Canada in Egypt

Mr. Matt Friesen, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Canada in Egypt

X-ray training, Bamako International Airport, Mali

Wood identification training, Customs School, Hung Yen, Viet Nam

ECONOMY
Reducing costs for governments by stemming the socio-economic impact of illicit trafficking, organized crime and terrorism.
Increasing the revenue for countries.
Protecting and facilitating legal trade.
Maintaining the cultural artefacts of a country to safeguard cultural heritage and for tourism purposes.
Safeguarding research and development costs for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) holders.
Protecting livelihoods of communities and people.

HEALTH
Reducing the number and amount of illicit drugs available in countries to improve health.
Ensuring that safe and qualified products reach the consumers.
Reducing the access to potentially dangerous medicines and falsified products affecting the health of consumers.

ENVIRONMENT
Safeguarding the environment and protecting adjacent populations.
Protecting the maritime ecosystem through the prevention of crimes in the fisheries sector.
Decreasing deforestation by preventing illegal timber trafficking.
Safeguarding endangered flora and fauna through redList preservation efforts.
Protecting the environment, flora, and fauna by preventing trafficking in hazardous and plastic waste.

RESULTS & IMPACT

Development, Facilitation and Delivery of Training
Customs Expertise
Provision of CENcomm/ContainerCOMM/
AirCargoCOMM – Data Visualization
Cooperation Development with Countries and Partners

Cooperation Development with Countries and Partners – Fundraising
Quality Assurance – Delivery of Training

Management – Administration
Coordination – Direction Development
Cooperation Development with Countries and Partners – Fundraising

II. HIGHLIGHTS

“For the 3rd consecutive year, seizures from Omani PCUs have continued to increase as our knowledge and experience have grown. We are now ready to train our own staff and support UNODC training in other counties.”

Captain Mr. Yousuf Al Balushi, Head of Regional and International Cooperation, Directorate-General of Customs, Oman

“The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) has taken another step towards strengthening security at its borders with the launch of the CCP and the Cargo Targeting System (CTS). CCP in Fiji has been funded by the Australian Border Force (ABF) as part of its commitment to work together with Pacific nations to strengthen regional borders. The ABF partnered with the UNODC and the WCO to implement the CCP and the CTS in Fiji – a system funded by Australia through the Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership. This is a significant accomplishment for Fiji as FRCS is the first Customs Administration within the Oceania Region to administer the CCP and the CTS.”

Revenue and Customs Service, Fiji
II. HIGHLIGHTS

A case of transboundary movement of hazardous waste in Southeast Asia highlighted the complex nature of illegal waste trafficking – the use of misdeclaration to smuggle illicit goods, dumping and the challenging task to ensure that hazardous waste is returned to the country of origin and properly disposed of. Training activities in 2022-2023 under the plastic and hazardous waste project, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and implemented in Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, had a strong focus on the exchange of information between agencies and risk indicators of suspicious shipments such as low invoice values.

Thai Customs at Laem Chabang Port in Thailand intercepted a shipment of 130 tonnes of hazardous waste imported as paper scrap from Australia. Thai Customs cooperated with Thailand’s competent environmental authority, and the shipment was repatriated to Australia. It would appear the shipment was exported from Australia to Indonesia a few months later.

The detection by Thai Customs highlights PCBT/CCP’s effective strategy of training operational frontline officers in disrupting the trafficking of hazardous waste, which has contributed to the identification of over 100,000 tonnes of such waste since the project’s inception in 2020. PCBT/CCP promotes the importance of information exchange and presented this case to the Australian Border Force (ABF).

Open Roads IV – Cross-Regional and Responses to Trafficking of Falsified Medical Products

In 2023, PCBT expanded its work on preventing trafficking of falsified medical products (FMPs) and organized the Open Roads IV Regional Workshop on Border Management and Trafficking of FMPs in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. PCBT brought together PCLUs and JAITFs, health professionals, and experts from WHO and private sector actors to discuss cross-cutting regional trends related to the trafficking of FMPs and operational procedures related to the handling of these products. The event emphasized the need for enhanced cross-sectoral (between law enforcement and health officials) and regional cooperation to prevent the trafficking of FMPs.

Expanding the Partnership with ICAO

PCBT’s partnership with ICAO, through the CCP, is instrumental for passenger and trade air security. In 2023, four classroom training events covering insider risk management and air cargo and mail were conducted. A total of 45 participants from four countries benefited from this training.

Promoting Latin America – Africa Collaboration

Criminal networks use international air routes to traffic illicit goods across continents and take advantage of vulnerabilities at airports to evade apprehension. International airports in Eastern Africa, for example, are increasingly being targeted and used as transit points for the operations of international drug syndicates through the Brazil-West Africa narcotics route, as alerted by JAITFs through the WCO’s CENNoM platform. To address these threats, PCBT through AIRCOP collaborated with Brazil’s Federal Police’s INTERCOPS project and several West and Eastern African countries to enhance the exchange of information and expertise, in particular, in the areas of drug trafficking, irregular migration and travel document fraud to enhance trend analysis, interdiction and investigation techniques as well as international cooperation in controlled delivery action.
PASSENGER AND CARGO BORDER TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

II. HIGHLIGHTS

National Leadership by Oman
Oman has made significant in-kind contributions to the PCBT through the CCP by supporting unit infrastructure, assigning a Royal Oman Police (ROP) Customs National Focal Point and largely covering national travel costs of officers during programme activities. ROP Customs also provided the PCBT through the CCP with office premises at the Customs Training Centre in Muscat and, notably, formally included a Cargo Targeting Department within the new Customs organigram. These efforts show the strong and exemplary commitment, national ownership and leadership of Oman.

Supporting National Targeting Centres and Future Regional Targeting Centres
In the spirit of holistic and sustainable programming, the PCBT continued its ambition to contribute to the establishment of NTCs. This will allow for enhanced communication and activity between national border management agencies operating in a coordinated manner against common threats. A NTC was established in Fiji with support from the ABE. Moreover, a regional meeting on NTCs with the participation of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan as well as Turkey as the host country took place in 2023. Building on this important initiative and the ongoing collaboration with the Inter-Regional Network of Customs Authorities and Port Control Units (IREN) in Central Asia and the Cyprus Centre for Land Open Seas and Port Security (CYCLOPS), the PCBT took initial steps towards supporting the establishment of RTCs, e.g., in Central Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 2692 (2023) on Haiti
UN Security Council Resolution 2692 (2023) on Haiti “Reiterates the importance of the engagement of UNODC and other relevant UN agencies in support of efforts against armed gangs, to enhance port security, to improve and other relevant UN agencies in support of efforts against armed gangs, to enhance port security, to improve and other relevant UN agencies in support of efforts against armed gangs, to enhance port security, to improve and other relevant UN agencies in support of efforts against armed gangs, to enhance port security, to improve and other relevant UN agencies in support of efforts against armed gangs, to enhance port security, to improve and other relevant UN agencies in support of efforts against armed gangs, to enhance port security, to improve...” The activities in Haiti focus on strengthening the security situation in the country by enhancing law enforcement, revenue collection and trade facilitation capacities.

Paving the Way for Private Sector Cooperation in Pakistan
In Pakistan, PCBT through the CCP expanded its collaboration with the private sector. Areas of mutual interest between the national law enforcement and private sectors were explored. Efforts also focused on preventing trafficking in IPR items and cooperation was initiated with various brand owners.

Facilitating Regional Cooperation in South Asia
2023 was a big step forward for international cooperation between four South Asian countries - Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. An international agreement on the creation of a ‘South Asia Strategic Trade Network (SASTN)” was drafted. The core mission is to amplify the oversight and monitoring of goods possessing strategic or dual-use applications. It seeks to thwart the illicit movement of strategic goods, technologies and materials that may endanger national security, international peace, and non-proliferation endeavours. The envisioned SASTN aims to foster connectivity among customs and other law enforcement agencies in the region, thereby enhancing dialogue on strategic trade developments, fortifying cooperative mechanisms and enabling seamless exchange of critical information and intelligence. Central to this vision is the concept of SASTN serving as a robust platform for the exchange of information, intelligence, expertise, skills and capabilities.

The Importance of International Exchange Visits
International exchange visits provide customs and other law enforcement officers with the unique opportunity to learn first-hand from experienced frontline officers and exchange best practices, techniques and lessons learned. It enables them to acquire new skills and experiences which they can apply in their daily work practice in their home countries. These exchange visits are also an instrument to improve and intensify cross-border cooperation. In this spirit, several countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, namely Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia participated in exchanges, including to Canada, Estonia, Oman and Viet Nam.

Partnering with the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme
PCBT, through AIRCOP, is a partner in the all-of-UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP), implemented by UNOCT with UN-CTED, INTERPOL, ICAO, UNOICT, INTERPOL and IOM. Through AIRCOP, PCBT assists Member States to establish effective Passenger Information Units (PIUs). Embedded in their national law enforcement structure, these units have the capacity to undertake intelligence-led targeting, conduct risk assessments and implement appropriate targeting measures to identify, detect and intercept foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and other serious criminals, based on the systematic collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of passenger data as well as other relevant data, as needed as part of the intelligence cycle.

Preventing CITES Trafficking in Africa
CITES trafficking is the fourth most profitable criminal activity in the world, with an estimated value of up to US$20 billion annually. This transnational criminal activity is incredibly diverse, encompassing live animals, plants and a wide range of other flora and fauna products. PCBT works with several African countries to prevent these crimes. PCBT, through AIRCOP recently intensified efforts to prevent the trafficking of wildlife in West and Central Africa and conducted a series of activities with the participation of the non-governmental organization EAGLE. As a result, the JAITF of Lomé, Togo, seized 30 monkeys of various species that were transiting the country. Illegal deforestation brings around US$150 million each year for organized criminal groups. It causes forest degradation, loss of biodiversity, increased corruption, and human rights abuses. Forest loss ultimately accelerates climate change by contributing to an estimated 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The seizure of 22 containers of rosewood in Tanzania valued at US$12.8 million shows the magnitude of the illegal timber trade and clearly shows the capacity of the PCBT through the CCP to prevent this illicit trafficking and organized crime phenomenon.
2023 RESULTS AND SUCCESSES: ACTIVITIES

- **Total Training Activities Delivered**: 362
- **PCUs**: 113
- **Female**: 23%
- **Male**: 77%
- **Training Participants**: 5,109
- **Opening of New Units**: 50
- **JAITFs**: 36
- **ACCUs**: 23
- **Latin America and the Caribbean**: 50
- **Southeast Asia and the Pacific**: 47
- **Middle East and North Africa**: 43
- **Eastern and Southern Africa**: 41
- **South-Eastern Europe**: 35
- **Central Asia**: 29
- **West Africa**: 28
- **Oman**: 22
- **Pakistan**: 18
- **Black Sea**: 15
- **South Asia**: 14
- **National Joint Arrangements**: 13
- **Steering Committee Meetings**: 54
- **Pieces of Equipment Handed Over**: 1,101
- **Exchange/Study Visits**: 78
- **Private Sector Meetings**: 35
- **Assessments**: 13

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2023 RESULTS AND SUCCESSES: SEIZURES

223,189,243 pieces Cigarettes

513,957 pieces Strategic goods, weapons and explosives

$1,139,528 Currency

210 tonnes Hazardous waste

339.5 tonnes Precursor chemicals

2,238 Intercepted people

29 tonnes CITES

21,328,435 pieces Tax and duty evasion

19,437,082 pieces Medicine

250 tonnes Cocaine

61.2 tonnes Other opioids

732 pieces Hallucinogens

8 tonnes New psychoactive substances

4 tonnes Cannabis

905 kg Heroin

17 kg MDMA

107 kg Synthetics

4 tonnes MDMA

1.5 tonnes Amphetamine

2,238* 2013-2022 concerns CCP data only. 2023 includes both AIRCOP and CCP data.
REFLECTIONS

The time has come to retire and hand over the PCBT’s CCP and AIRCOP to my UNODC and WCO colleagues. I am certain that they will accomplish even more success in the future. The last 19 years as Head of the CCP have been an interesting journey and learning experience. Most recently, I have had the honour of leading the merging of AIRCOP and CCP into one programme.

Thanks to motivated colleagues in both UNODC and WCO, we have delivered quality technical assistance and capacity building in partnership with Member States, donors, and other partners since 2005!

Initial Phase

The development of the first project document, and the birth of the CCP, was a joint effort by senior colleagues in UNODC and WCO back in 2002. The initial idea of the CCP partly derived from the US Container Security Initiative (CSI). In addition, WCO was already running the “East African Seaports Project”, conducting regional activities. The novelty of the new CCP initiative was that it ambitiously aimed at improving the overall global containerized trade supply chain security.

In the initial phase, four pilot countries, Ecuador, Ghana, Pakistan, and Senegal, joined the CCP. A UNODC staff member based in Ecuador was the local driving force and initiated the implementation in Ecuador which took the lead in the pilot phase. We arranged the first CCP training event in Guayaquil in October 2005. Two months later, the trained officials identified a high-risk container, which resulted in their first seizure. The first CCP seizure of 5.5 tonnes of cocaine was a good start for the Programme!

Implementation and Activities

The activities in the original four countries developed rapidly. In the initial phase, we depended on trainers released by various customs administrations to deliver the training. In Europe, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands have strongly supported the CCP by releasing trainers to assist us. However, after a while, with more donor funds and more participating countries, we realized that we needed our own trainers working for the Programme, due to the workload.

The development during the last few years shows an increase in funding, but also in staff. Counting both UNODC and WCO, we have more than 90 staff working with AIRCOP and CCP.

To reach where we are now, we developed a standardized training curriculum, a standardized list of technical equipment that we provide, and added several topics to the specialized capacity-building part of the training curriculum. In addition, we put in place several tools for monitoring the impact of the activities, assessments and evaluation of training and performance of the established units.

The trainers are an important asset to the Programme and play a significant role in achieving results. The joint UNODC/WCO trainers group consists of 15 staff members and consultants equally divided between UNODC and WCO. They cover most of the relevant topics and challenges one faces when working at a border.

"In 2014, The PCU of Sri Lanka Customs (SLC) was established under the CCP of the UNODC and WCO based on a MoU between Sri Lanka and the United Nations to combat trans-border crimes such as commercial fraud, import, export and transhipment of narcotics, weapons, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in all kinds of cargo consignments, passenger baggage and parcels. The PCU was identified by UNODC and WCO to optimize preventive actions carried out by seaports in Sri Lanka on containers of lawful maritime and land cargo to reduce their use in illicit activities. In particular, “Illicit drug traffic, chemical precursors, possible terrorist acts”, thereby increasing effectiveness of current control and investigations in units. … This case (seizure of 16 kg of heroin made by the PCU in June 2023) has proved to be an exemplary case of how seamless coordination among both, national and international agencies would help curb trafficking of illicit drugs, chemical precursors, possible terrorist acts, the main objectives of establishing the PCU in the SLC.”

Sri Lanka Customs
From Seaports to Airports, Land Borders and Railways – Merging of AIRCOP and CCP

In the initial phase, CCP prioritized preventing drug trafficking at seaports. However, with the results we reported, the donors recommended that the CCP add other illicit commodities. As we explored and expanded to additional areas of intervention, we also looked at different border types we could cover. Today, we implement activities in seaports, airports, land borders and railways. In addition, with the merger of AIRCOP and CCP, the PCBT is broadening the scope of work from cargo to passenger profiling. The merger of AIRCOP and CCP is a logical step to work more holistically and effectively in the border management area, but also to represent passenger and cargo security with one voice when working with Member States, donors and partners.

AIRCOP is a multi-agency project implemented by UNODC in partnership with INTERPOL and the WCO. It aims at strengthening the capacities of international airports to target and intercept high-risk passengers, cargo, and mail, as a contribution to the prevention of illicit trafficking, terrorism-related threats (such as arms or potential FITFs), trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. It also aims to facilitate communication and coordination between origin, transit and destination countries to disrupt cross-border illicit flows and criminal networks. AIRCOP is currently operating at airports in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

Future Priorities

To continue to be relevant in the dynamic world in which we live, the new Programme needs to continue improving and developing new areas of work that are of interest to Member States and donors. Several areas and topics come to mind – the development of National Targeting Centers, customs intelligence and investigation, revenue collection, STEC, crimes that affect the environment (timber, waste, and fish), abandoned containers and Trade Based Money Laundering. Cooperation with INTERPOL beyond the joint activities through AIRCOP should be expanded considering the police’s pivotal role in cargo and passenger security and the organization’s expertise and global communication and law enforcement network. Moreover, the advancement of AI makes it imperative to add staff with IT capacity. These topics, combined with our current scope of work, will improve security in the supply chain and facilitate trade and passenger travel.

Member States and Donors

I want to thank the Member States that have trusted us by joining and implementing the PCBT’s AIRCOP and CCP. I am grateful to the donors that continue to support PCBT with monetary funding, but also through in-kind contributions. I am particularly thankful to the US State Department (INL and EXBS) for all the support from the early days along with Australia, Belgium, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Norway. Looking at the current funding situation, the Programme should be secure in 2024 and 2025, which is comforting for me as a retiree!

With this, my term as Head of PCBT is over. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all the staff and colleagues with whom I have worked- it has been an immense pleasure. I wish all staff and colleagues, Member States, donors and partners, and most importantly the PCBT, all the best for the future!

Sincerely, Mr. Ketil Ottersen, Head, PCBT, UNODC

"The regional training on gender mainstreaming for Central Asia resulted in a strengthened understanding that promoting gender equality is part of the mandate of security and justice sector institutions. Advancing gender equality through the work of the border security sector is part of the responsibility of governments to protect and promote the rights of all, in accordance with commitments made at the national and international levels."

Mr. Ergysh Pab, State Customs Service, Kyrgyzstan

II. HIGHLIGHTS
III. SPECIAL MENTIONS

"The mission against terrorism and organized crime in connection with illegal migration, human trafficking, and human and drug smuggling, is a priority in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, it is extremely important to further strengthen inter-agency, inter-institutional cooperation, and the capacities of the law enforcement agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as regionally. I want to thank UNODC for the exceptional efforts in all their activities, as well as for the successful cooperation with the Border Police in the implementation of activities implemented through CCP and AIRCOP."

Mr. Mirko Kuprešaković, Director of the Border Police, Bosnia and Herzegovina

"On behalf of the Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Director-General of Customs is honoured to present the WCO Certificate of Merit to UNODC CCP under the WCO International Customs Day theme Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose."

Mauritius Revenue Authority and Customs

Photo: Annual Inter-Regional Meeting, Baku, Azerbaijan
DONORS

The PCBT’s results and impact were made possible in 2023 through generous funding support from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Haiti, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the United States of America and the European Union.

Pivotal in-kind contributions through the release of technical experts for training activities and non-monetary resources were made in 2023 by Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Fiji, France, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Jordan, Lebanon, Maldives, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, and Uruguay. The PCBT is also grateful to all other donors and contributors that have provided financial and/or other support since the inception of activities.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Multi-national programmes such as the PCBT and businesses in the private sector need each other. The PCBT needs the private sector’s innovation, initiative and technological prowess. But these businesses also need a programme such as the PCBT. The work of the PCBT can be viewed as seeking to create the ideal enabling environment within which business can thrive. Cooperation with the private sector is of pivotal importance to the PCBT, including with air- and shipping lines, port and terminal operators. Information, documentation, security and facilitation from the private sector is key to ensure risk profiling to prevent illicit trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. Moreover, collaboration with the private sector enhances trade and passenger facilitation.

In 2023, the PCBT strengthened cooperation with the World Shipping Council, shipping lines and brand owners.

ACADEMIA

Academia is a valuable resource and knowledge base to understand the world in which we live, the ever-changing trade and trafficking patterns and possible solutions. This is critical to ensure that the PCBT’s work, and responses are well informed.

To this end, the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control and the Stimson Center have contributed to PCBT’s prevention of trafficking in strategic and dual use items. Moreover, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University is a partner in the implementation of the Women’s Network’s Women’s Professional Development Programme.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PCBT has developed several fruitful partnerships with international organizations and will continue to explore and expand such endeavours. This includes e.g. the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on maritime security; the WCO’s Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs) on information, intelligence, and seizures; and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on global standards for airline safety, security, efficiency, and sustainability.

Moreover, the PCBT has expanded efforts in the areas of IPR and FMPs. To prevent the significant monetary losses experienced by the private sector and the devastating health consequences inflicted upon consumers through IPR infringements and FMPs, the PCBT is collaborating with the World Intellectual Property Programme (WIPO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

“Through project AIRCOP INTERPOL facilitates an intelligence led approach by supporting member countries in disrupting transnational crime threats by air. The joint efforts by law enforcement contribute to the common goals reflected in the long-term cooperation between INTERPOL and UNODC.”

Ms. David Caunter, Assistant Director and Head of the Criminal Networks Sub-Directorate, INTERPOL

“UNODC has strategically established a stronger presence in Ukraine since November 2022 with the aim of supporting Ukraine’s sustainable development, recovery, and rule of law by making it safer from drugs, organized crime, and corruption. The PCBT programme has been immensely important in the process of expanding our work in Ukraine – in strengthening critical partnerships with government, donors and the international community as well as implementing a range of programmes. In addition to the technical assistance that PCBT has provided, a notable area of work in the last year has been the assessment of border control points (BCPs) – land, air, and sea - that the team has done jointly with Ukrainian counterparts, which was well received by counterparts and donors and will be crucial to our programme development efforts. The commitment and support of the PCBT team and the joint expertise of the CCP and AIRCOP programmes have been beneficial for UNODC in Ukraine. We have all worked with a unity of purpose in the last year – in Kyiv, Vienna, and Istanbul – to support Ukraine’s recovery and I am confident that this commitment will bear results for UNODC in the coming months and years.”

Ms. Harsheth Kaur Virk, Head of UNODC Office in Ukraine

“The successful collaboration between ICAO and UNODC exemplifies the power of positive cooperation and the significance of complementarity of our work. By joining forces, we take advantage of our unique strengths, ensure better use of our resources and create synergy towards a safe, secure and efficient civil aviation.”

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