

EXPOSING ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES

Bangkok, 17 November 2009, Environmental crime is a serious and growing international problem. Perceived as ‘victimless’, such crimes often fail to prompt the required response from governments, the enforcement community and the public. In collaboration with Bangkok’s Emporium Shopping Complex, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Asian Regional Partners Forum on Combating Environmental Crime (ARPEC) including ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), Freeland Foundation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Interpol, TRAFFIC, United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC), World Customs Organization (WCO) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are organizing an awareness event, “The Asian Regional Partners Forum on Combating Environmental Crime (ARPEC) Exhibition” from 17 – 23 November 2009 at the Motion Hall, G Floor, of the Emporium Shopping Complex.

The first of its kind, this exhibition aims to raise public awareness about environmental crimes that affect the people’s livelihood, the global economy as well as the world’s ecosystems. The exhibition includes photographic presentations with brief explanations of each issue to improve the public’s understanding of the matter. There will also be video presentations of five of the most prominent crimes committed against the environment and humanity i.e. illegal trade in wildlife, illegal trade in ozone depleting substances, dumping and illegal transport of hazardous waste, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and illegal logging and the associated timber trade. The exhibition will also include edutainment, which is learning through playing activities for school children and informal discussions with experts.

Dr. Young-Woo Park, Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, said “Tackling environmental crime should be considered as a fundamental responsibility which would help in reducing poverty, increasing food security and restoring the rule of law, good governance and ecological sustainability. The ARPEC members are pleased to be working with the Emporium, one of the leading shopping malls in Bangkok, to organize the ARPEC Awareness Event and raise public awareness of crimes against the environment.”

Speaking about the collaborating behind this exhibition Siriluck Maithai, management representative of The Emporium Shopping Complex said “As the first retail department store in Thailand who is a member of Climate Neutral Network, The Mall Group which includes The Emporium Shopping Complex, Siam Paragon and The Mall are proud to be able to contribute in helping ARPEC raise public awareness about environmental crime. This exhibition is the first of its kind in Bangkok and we would like to put in our level best to educate the public about the issues and its consequences. School children from several international schools have also been invited to join in the activities at the exhibition as it is of utmost importance to educate them and provoke a level of awareness about the environmental crimes of such a global scale.”

ARPEC has been to date a platform for organisations that work on environmental crime to improve and facilitate collaboration among each other. ARPEC also acts as a platform that creates possibilities for partners to take part in joint initiatives on particular issues. This forum has created numerous opportunities for partners to cooperate in capacity building, training and workshops and to share information in their respective fields of specialisation. It also crystallized regional enforcement operations like Project Sky Hole Patching, an Operation on Combating illegal trade in ODS and hazardous wastes.

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Asian Regional Partners Forum on Combating Environmental Crime (ARPEC)

The ARPEC was established in August 2005 in Bangkok. It comprises of:

Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network (AECEN),
ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN- WEN)
Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA),
Freeland Foundation,
The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),
Interpol Liaison Office (ICPO),
TRAFFIC,
United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia Pacific (UNEP ROAP),
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific (UNODC RCEAP),
VROM Inspectorate (in representation also of IMPEL –TFS),
World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P),
WCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P),
World Wildlife Fund Greater Mekong (WWF)

In addition, Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics (NACEN) of India, Royal Thai Customs, the Ministry of Industry Department Industrial Works (DIW) of Thailand, TVE/Earth Report, Interpol Thailand and the CITES Secretariat etc. also presented in ARPEC meetings.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP is the United Nations system's designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action.

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is an international treaty designated to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of a number of substances believed to be responsible for ozone depletion. The treaty was opened for signature on September 16, 1987 and entered into force on January 1, 1989. Since then, it has undergone five revisions, in 1990 (London), 1992 (Copenhagen), 1995 (Vienna), 1997 (Montreal), and 1999 (Beijing). The Montreal Protocol celebrated the UN's International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer on 16 September 2009. To add to the celebrations, Timor-Leste announced its ratification of the Protocol, making the Montreal Protocol the first environmental agreement to achieve universal participation by 196 parties. Due to its widespread adoption and implementation it has been hailed as an example of exceptional international cooperation, and one of the most successful international agreements.