

Information Note –

Border Meeting on Monitoring and Controlling Trade in ODS held in Pokhara, Nepal

Nepal, 29 October 2010 – As part of the ongoing Nepal dialogue process between ozone and customs officers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, the two day Pokhara workshop including one-day training and one-day consultation between border enforcement officers concluded successfully on 29 October.

The illegal trans-boundary movements of prohibited ODS exist with complex causes, including lucrative incentives, loophole in the control and inspection of import and export, lack of exchange of information and intelligence at operational level, shortage of expertise and knowledge for frontier officers in inspecting and handling ODS gas, etc. To address these issues, UNEP has been promoting and facilitating border dialogues between neighboring countries, which have assisted in raising awareness, enhancing enforcement capacity and optimizing mechanism for coordination at borders.

The workshop was attended by more than 30 Customs Officers from border check-posts and customs Headquarters of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Representatives from National Ozone Units of Bangladesh and Bhutan and Nepal, the National Crime Bureau, India's focal point for Interpol, the Special Director General of SSB (India's Border Force), RILO Asia and Pacific, the Regional Office of Interpol, the Refrigeration Association President and 10 members from Pokhara and Kathmandu Refrigeration Associations, Customs offices from the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and Borgunj border post and three communication experts were also invited to the border workshop.

Mr. Pratap Kumar Pathak, Nepal's Secretary of Department of Industries and Mr. Atul Bagai, Senior Regional Coordinator of UNEP CAP ROAP inaugurated the workshop.

After intensive discussion among border enforcement officers and Ozone officers, besides agreeing to strengthen cross border cooperation to suppress illegal trans-boundary movement of ODS, the Customs administrations of India and Nepal agreed to launch a joint operation which would last for 6 months using similar mechanism of Sky Hole Patching. UNEP, in coordination with regional enforcement organizations, would provide technical assistance and facilitate exchange of information.

Since border control agencies such as SSB and BSF of India are also qualified to enforce Customs Code, who is playing an important role in control of cross border movement of goods, participation of the Special Director General of India's Department of Border Management was a significant hallmark for ODS control in the sub region. It was also agreed that co-financed by SSB, UNEP would organize a Green Customs workshop for Border Forces of India.

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