



INTRODUCTION

We are very glad to send you another newsflash of project REN.

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REN Newsflash, a monthly newsletter, covers REN activities and achievements, highlights of partners' activities and general news on combating illegal transboundary movements of waste and chemicals, and synergies and linkages on chemicals/waste related MEA's.

REN Activities

[Train the trainer workshop in India](#)

REN participated in the Train the Trainer workshop for customs and enforcement officers to combat illegal trade of HCFC trade and illegal trade in waste and chemicals. The

workshop was organised by UN Environment in cooperation with the national Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics in Faridabad, India. The meeting was held from 21- 23 December 2016. Trainers from Customs and other enforcement agencies from India, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh were instructed on topics like technical skills on identifying HCFC's, classification in the Harmonised System and on 'how to be a good trainer'.

[18th ARPEC meeting hosted by UN Environment](#)

On 15 February 2017 UN Environment hosted the 18th meeting of the Asian Regional Partners Forum on Environmental Crime (ARPEC) in the UN building in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme for this event was 'Human Rights and Gender in Environmental Crime'. Participants were representing Customs, Interpol, UNODC, the Thai Government, the Swedish Embassy, Traffic, Freeland, USAID Wildlife Asia, AECEN, BAN Toxics and UN Environment. Partners discussed working together on these issues to elevate their profile amongst our organizations, our partners, and to explore opportunities to increase knowledge and concrete actions in this area. Partners also had a rich dialogue among partners on our work, with valuable updates being shared as well an exchange of views, ideas, and areas and initiatives where we could increase collaboration. The Philippines based NGO BAN TOXICS presented their experiences on human rights and gender in environmental crime. They did research on these aspects in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining where mercury is being used and in the

informal electric and electronic wastes recycling sector.



Partners' Activities

[E-Waste in East and South-East Asia Jumps 63% in Five Years](#)

The volume of discarded electronics in East and South-East Asia jumped almost two-thirds between 2010 and 2015, and e-waste generation is growing fast in both total volume and per capita measures, new UNU research shows.

Driven by rising incomes and high demand for new gadgets and appliances, the average increase in e-waste across all 12 countries and areas analysed — Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Province of China, Thailand and Vietnam — was 63% in the five years ending in 2015 and totalled 12.3 million tonnes, a weight 2.4 times that of the Great Pyramid of Giza.

China alone more than doubled its generation of e-waste between 2010 and 2015 to 6.7 million tonnes, up 107%.

The first Regional E-waste Monitor: East and Southeast Asia, was compiled by the United Nations University through its Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) programme and funded by the Japanese Ministry of the Environment.

Read more:

https://unu.edu/media-relations/releases/e-waste-in-east-and-south-east-asia-jumps-63-percent-in-five-years.html?utm_source=home&utm_medium=top&utm_term=report&utm_content=regional-e-waste-monitor-east-asia&utm_campaign=unu%20vie

[National consultation in the Maldives](#)

Thirty participants from various ministries, including the Ministry of Environment and Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defence and National Security, customs; as well as from the ports authorities, private sector waste disposers; academia; inter-governmental organizations participated in two days of training and interactive exercises. These included an overview of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as well as the Indonesian-Swiss country-led initiative to improve the effectiveness of the Basel Convention. Participants were also introduced to linkages with the Minamata Convention on mercury. In addition to presentations and exchanges on the national experiences in implementing the Basel Convention in the Maldives, participants actively engaged in group discussions on challenges and barriers linked to transboundary movements of wastes and environmentally sound management in the Maldives, including linkages with the Ban Amendment. Looking also at the role of effective coordination mechanisms in the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, participants agreed a set of recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and support the process towards ratification of the Ban Amendment, which is in progress in the Maldives.

Source: <http://www.basel.int/?tabid=5490>

Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals

Waste plastics used for road construction

RAJKOT: In a major initiative to deal with non-degradable plastic waste, the Rajkot Municipal Corporation (RMC) has started recycling it to reuse the materials for making paver roads in the city.

The civic body has already started making paver roads and patchwork using plastic waste collected from different parts of the city. RMC officials said that it will help reduce the cost of constructing roads besides controlling the ever-increasing dangerous plastic which pollutes the environment.

"By using plastic waste to make paver roads, we will put a halt to contaminating the environment and air through effective use of this waste. This is one of the best ways to avoid accumulation of plastic and alternatively saves the quantity of sand and clay that has to be taken away from the precious riverbeds and mines. Plastic waste is available in surplus quantity. Hence, the cost factor also comes down. Also, in rainy season, these roads won't get damaged easily," Rajkot municipal commissioner Banchhanidhi Pani told TOI.

RMC has mostly used plastic waste seized from various shops across the city after a complete ban on use, sale and production was imposed. This waste is recycled and mixed with other materials at a plant on Kalavad Road. Recycling the plastic has advantages since it is widely used and has a long service life.

"We have started segregation of municipal solid waste into three parts in our daily door-to-door municipal solid waste collection. One is kitchen waste, second is plastic waste and third is hazardous waste. The segregation of plastic waste at source can help reuse them for making paver roads," Pani said.

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/Rajkot-to-get-more-durable-roads-thanks-to-plastic/articleshow/56276037.cms>

Fined for an illegal shipment of WEEE

An operator in Scotland has been fined for an illegal shipment of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) to Nigeria. Henry Chukwu, director of Glasgow-based firm Favour Limited, was fined £675 at Glasgow

Sheriff Court for the shipment of materials including TVs, monitors and PC desktop units in May 2014.

At the time, the Scottish Environmental Protection Association (Sepa) received notification, under the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations, that a container was being returned from Tilbury, Essex, because it was suspected of containing items of WEEE.

Once returned, the electrical appliances were determined by Sepa to be waste because they failed either the visual assessment or had incomplete or no safety testing records.

Under the regulations, it is illegal to export certain WEEE to countries where the Basle Convention does not apply.

Sepa reporting officer Matthew Pask said: "We have a responsibility to ensure waste exports are carried out legally and, as this case shows, will use all appropriate steps to ensure exporters comply with the law.

"Chukwu was given significant advice and guidance from Sepa to ensure exports from his site were compliant and this was not followed.

"Sepa is always available to provide advice and assistance, and I hope that this successful prosecution will result in all individuals and businesses involved in the export of waste from Scotland looking closely at their legal responsibilities to ensure that exports comply with the law."

Source: <https://www.mrw.co.uk/latest/fine-for-illegal-weee-shipment/10016222.article>

Hundreds of containers of waste abandoned at Saigon ports

From December 21, 2016 to January 3, 2017, at the Phuoc Long – Thu Duc Port, the police and customs agency examined 15 containers of scrap materials imported from Hong Kong and the US and discovered that the goods inside the containers were electronic waste banned from import. Old broken electronic circuit boards were found in three containers, while TV transceivers were found in the remaining.

The importer as shown on the customs agency's documents was CEM, a casting and moulding company in Binh Phuoc province. The company made customs declarations for six out of 15 containers at the Binh Phuoc province customs agency, saying that the imports were copper scrap materials.

However, the company's representative did not turn up after making the customs declarations. Only after examining the containers, did the police and customs agency find that the imports were e-waste.

Hundreds of unowned import containers of waste banned by Vietnam have been left at HCMC ports, causing problems for port authorities.

Since the six import containers were examined and seized, the company refused to receive the remaining nine containers.

A customs officer said that all the import e-waste was from the US. It is highly possible that the scraps had been disposed of and then collected by organizations to export to other countries.

The e-waste containers are just part of hundreds of containers of scrap materials left unowned at the Cat Lai Port. Most of the material contains used car tires and plastic scraps.

According to the HCMC Customs Agency, 480 containers of used tires have been left unowned for more than 90 days. These include 281 containers (6,744 tons) examined

for treatment steps, while 200 others have not been treated.

An official said the agency is in dilemma. As too many containers of used tires have been left at the port, they are feared to cause traffic congestion. Meanwhile, it will be very costly to ruin the products and the export companies refuse to get the exports back.

Customs agency also found tens of containers of plastic scraps. The owners of the imports would rather abandon the goods than receive them and face punishment for importing prohibited scraps.

In other cases, the owners of the imports have been gone bankrupt or no longer operate. No one has turned up to receive the imports.

The latest report of the General Department of Customs (GDC) showed that thousands of containers of unowned used tires have been left at many ports.

At Hai Phong Port, there are 3,026 containers of tires and scrap rubber.

Meanwhile, in many cases, the lack of cooperation among involved parties, including port developers and transport firms, has created problems for the treatment of scraps.

Source:

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment/171294/hundreds-of-containers-of-waste-abandoned-at-saigon-ports.html>

Electronic waste is piling up in Asia

Asia has become a dumping ground for the worlds used and discarded electronics. Electronic waste or 'e-waste' includes all types of electrical and electronic equipment discarded by consumers

without the intention of re-use. The problem of e-waste in Asia is growing amid concerns about the ability of pre-existing waste infrastructure to deal with the growing amount of e-waste, particularly as electronics include a variety of environmentally deleterious chemicals like mercury, lead, arsenic and beryllium. When these end up in the landfill, chemicals can leech into the soil, air, and nearby watersheds.

Read more: <http://csr-asia.com/csr-asia-weekly-news-detail.php?id=12653>

[Current dialogue on corruption, fraud and waste is extremely important](#)

President Maithripala Sirisena says a broad social dialogue has emerged within the country during the last two years after he assumed duties as the President, regarding corruption, fraud and waste.

The President further said that dialogue is very timely and he considered it as an initiative to prevent corruption, fraud and waste.

He made these remarks addressing an event to celebrate the International Customs Day, which fell yesterday (26th Jan), held at the auditorium of the Sri Lanka Customs. This year's "International Customs Day" theme is Data Analysis for Effective Border Management.

President Sirisena also said that the responsibilities and duties of the Sri Lanka Customs lie in a wider area in the process of building a better society as well as its contribution to the national economy of the country.

The President appreciated the assistance given by the department of Customs for the drug prevention program of the Government and further commended the service rendered by the department of Customs in conducting raids to control drugs being smuggled into the country.

President Sirisena further said that he believes that the department of Customs will provide their maximum

contribution in achieving the sustainable development goals of the country.

During the ceremony the President presented Certificates of Merit from World Customs Organization to the customs officials.

Source:

<http://www.news.lk/news/business/item/15718-current-dialogue-on-corruption-fraud-and-waste-is-extremely-important-president>

[French Customs seizes 15Tons of unauthorized automotive waste](#)

French customs seized 15 tons of automotive waste in Lyon, as it was about to be exported to Morocco.

Reportedly, the cargo impounded by the French Customs consisted of automobile parts, which were intended to be transported to Morocco illegally by a car broker. Other items confiscated included engines, dashboards and mirrors.

It is against Moroccan law to import unauthorized waste into Morocco, with a fine of MAD 50,000 to 2,000,000 and a penalty of three months to two years of imprisonment for anyone convicted of the crime.

In France, the export of this waste is punished with a fine of EUR 75,000 and up to two years of imprisonment.

[Johor town makes a business out of Singapore's used fridges](#)

Refrigerators of every size, model and age line the dusty streets of a town in Johor, Malaysia – discarded by those living in Singapore, a two-hour drive away.

Inside five of these old refrigerators lie a tracking device each, planted as part of Channel NewsAsia documentary The Trash Trail's investigation into what happens to electronic waste discarded by Singaporean households

Read more:

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/johor-town-makes-a-business-out-of-singapore-s-used-fridges/3477820.html>

IN ENDOSULFAN'S CRUEL WAKE

Almost 15 years after deadly Endosulfan sprayed its catastrophic impact on the unborn and the new-borns in parts of Karnataka and Kerala, the lack of rehabilitation for its victims continues to let them suffer in silence. Many others died from cancers and the horrible condition called hydrocephalus (brain swelling). There is also no proper mechanism to restrict dangerous pesticides.



Rajeevi's all three children were impacted by the deadly Endosulfan, being born deformed. Rajeevi with her children, Vidya (left) and twins Dinkar and Dinesh

Sanjeeva Kabaka has been fighting for the rights of the Endosulfan victims through RTI. He says, "We would soon be filing a petition in the High Court demanding better facilities (for the victims). In the final judgment in 2015, the government had assured to look after the victims. We want the government to conduct identification of the victims, provide free ration, mobile medical facilities, free medical treatment, water bed for those in need and other facilities for their well-being."

Read more:

<http://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/news/state/in-endosulfans-cruel-wake/articleshow/56990452.cms>

Customs probing import of 'e-waste' in Kochi

A Customs investigation is underway into a suspected import of e-waste from various countries in violation of the Customs Act and hazardous waste management rules. The consignment of photocopier machines shipped in around 80 containers was seized by Customs officers at Cochin port three months ago and is now detained here.

According to officers, the consignment was detained on suspicion it was brought to the country as e-waste. The Customs began investigation into the incident after officers noticed the shipment lacked the mandatory pre-shipment inspection and environmental clearance certificates.

A Kolkata-based agency had imported the consignment sourced from various countries, including England and Germany. Though the agency approached the High Court, it refused to intervene in the probe.

According to senior Customs officers, there is nothing unusual if the consignment was brought with the aim of selling the items in the domestic market. The agency was even willing to pay the 10 per cent fine and five per cent penalty of the total value of the consignment. However, the absence of some vital documents raised the suspicion it was a bid to dump the hazardous waste here, following which the investigation was ordered, said the officers.

The consignment will be examined by Customs officers with the help of one of the pre-shipment inspection agencies listed by the Director General

of Foreign Trade. The DGFT stipulates a licence for importing second hand photocopiers - classified as hazardous waste.

Source:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2017/feb/05/customs-probing-import-of-e-waste-in-kochi-1567107.html>

See also:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/make-importer-return-e-waste-pcb-tells-customs/articleshow/57102868.cms?>

Smuggled trash, coal targeted in customs crackdown

China's customs authorities will launch a year-long smuggling crackdown prioritizing in imported garbage and natural products.

Industrial waste, electronic scrap and plastics will be in the cross hairs of the watchdogs, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) said on Tuesday.

Those convicted of smuggling could face a maximum penalty of the death sentence, according to China's Criminal Law. The counter-smuggling efforts will target gangs and well-organized operations acting illegally, GAC said.

Customs investigated 2,633 smuggling cases in 2016, up 17 percent year on year, according to the GAC. In December 2016, Shanghai customs authorities seized 3.1 tonnes of pangolin scales in the biggest smuggling case of its kind to date.

The scales, worth over 10 million yuan (1.45 million U.S. dollars), were reportedly bought from Nigeria. The trade in pangolin is banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Source: http://china.org.cn/china/2017-02/07/content_40243968.htm

See also: <http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/chinese-customs-action-waste-imports-anticipated/>

Tons of trash from S-Korea ends up in Cebu

A shipload of 25,000 metric tons of waste from South Korea was uncovered by the Bureau of Customs (BoC) in the Port of Cebu.

The discovery was reminiscent of the shipment of waste products from Canada and Japan that were sent to the Philippines several years back.

Based on the alert order issued by Customs Commissioner Nicanor Faeldon, the waste shipment was misdeclared as "solid granular particles of wood chips and synthetic resin."

The trash was carried by the MV Christina from the Republic of Korea. It arrived at the Cebu port on January 21, 2017.

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) Director Neil Anthony Estrella said they learned about the waste shipment because of the foul smell emanating from the cargo vessel.

"It stinks. It's not good. It's a health hazard," Estrella told The Manila Times.

He said 100 metric tons have been unloaded from the vessel.

The Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is analyzing the waste determine if it is hazardous or not.

The consignee of the shipment was identified by Estrella as Moving Forward Global Trading Inc. with office address at Robinland Forward Global Trading Inc., Zuelleg, NRA, Cebu City, while the broker was a certain Romer F. Gastador of Blk. 2, Lot 3, F. Jaca St., Saint Michael Subd., Upper Inayawan, Cebu City.

An internal investigation is ongoing to determine if some customs personnel are in cahoots with the consignee and broker.

"The broker has already confessed to me. There were at least three customs personnel involved, including one who is occupying a supervisory level position," Estrella disclosed.

"Aside from filing charges, we are making sure that the accreditation of the company or companies

engaged in the importation of waste products are cancelled,” he said.

Charges of violation of Republic Act 10863 or the Customs Modernization Tariff Act of 2015, among others, will be filed against the consignee and broker while Customs officials involved will face criminal and administrative charges.

Estrella said the BoC will coordinate with other government agencies so that the waste materials will be returned to South Korea.

This is not the first time that waste materials were exported to the Philippines by South Korea. Officials in Mandaue City also earlier discovered imported waste materials from Korea dumped by a private company in a rented lot in the city.

“We are now tracing the paper trail and other documents pertaining to that,” Estrella said.

In 2013, 55 container vans of imported waste from Canada were uncovered by Customs authorities. They were declared as scrap plastic materials for recycling but were found to contain rotting household waste and soggy paper.

In 1999, 120 container vans of trash from Japan were also discovered by Customs authorities.

But unlike the Canadian government which refused to accept the return of its waste, Japan chartered a ship to take back the trash shipment.

Source:

<http://www.manilatimes.net/tons-trash-skorea-ends-cebu/311409/>

See also:

<http://www.philstar.com/cebu-news/2017/02/10/1670857/importation-violated-basel-convention-boc-sendingk-trash-back>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

<http://www.projectren.org/>

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