

Media Update-2

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PRESS RELEASE

Inauguration of 3rd Air Control Unit (ACCU) at Islamabad International Airport UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme

Islamabad – 23 September 2020: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Country Office Pakistan – the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the UNODC Container Control Program (CCP), in partnership with national counterparts Anti-Narcotics Force, Civil Aviation Authorities, and Pakistan Customs inaugurated its 3rd Air Cargo Control Unit (ACCU) at Islamabad Airport today. The Unit is tasked to profile inbound and outbound air consignments and identify and stop those that may carry illicit substances.

Smugglers have long been using legitimate cargo to cover their illegal shipments. The high volume of global trade consignment movements makes it particularly hard for Customs and law enforcement officers to spot illicit loads tactfully concealed in an apparently legitimate consignment. To address this challenge, UNODC and World Customs Organization (WCO) developed the Container Control Programme concept and methodology which invests on human resource development and training profiling experts. The aim of the Programme is to bring the best of counterpart agencies together and streamline the focus of the Unit on risk analysis, joint profiling and targeting in an inter-agency setup.

The UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme was initiated in 2004 and Pakistan was among the first countries to join the initiative, with the first unit being established in Karachi seaport. With promising results of the Karachi Port Control Unit, Pakistan volunteered to be the host of the very first CCP Air Cargo Control Unit at Karachi International Airport. Thanks to contributions by the Government of Denmark, Karachi ACCU was established in 2016. Lahore ACCU followed in 2018 with Japan and United States of America being its major donors.

The inauguration of Islamabad ACCU marks the 3rd operational Air Cargo Control Unit in Pakistan after Karachi and Lahore, expanding the initiative to all three major airports of the country. The investments by both Pakistan, international donors, UNODC and WCO in setting up ACCUs started to payoff and show excellent results. In 2019, the Units in Pakistan stopped 40 attempts of narcotics trafficking resulting in seizures of total 128 kg Heroin, 25 kg Cocaine, 303 kg Ketamine and 9 kg Methamphetamines. Most frequent destination of these seizures were United Kingdoms (19 cases), Canada (5 cases) and Malaysia (3 cases).

“The success of the Container Control Programme in Pakistan is a result of the great commitment from national counterparts” said Mr. Jeremy Milsom, UNODC Representative for the Country Office in Pakistan during his opening remarks. “This is a great example where the joint initiative of UNODC and WCO flourishes through national counterparts’ reception, collaboration and appreciation” Mr. Milsom continued.

The event was also a venue to pay a sincere gratitude to the Governments of Japan and the United States of America, the major donors to the establishment of Islamabad ACCU.

H.E Mr. SHINDO Yusuke, Charge d’ Affaires ad interim of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in his speech mentioned, “strengthening aviation security to prevent trafficking of illegal items is one of the major challenges not only for Pakistan but other countries as well. Here, I would also like to mention that stability and peace is one of the important pillars of the foreign policy of Japan. The Government of Japan continues to contribute to the stability based on laws and regulations in various countries.”

Other major donors of the Global Container Control Programme include Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, and United Kingdoms.

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