

Media Update

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PRESS RELEASE

KARACHI HOSTS KEY WORKSHOP TO STRENGTHEN MARITIME LAW ENFORCEMENT: U.S. AND UNODC BACK PAKISTAN'S EFFORTS AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING

Karachi – August 22, 2024: A key Legal Workshop focused on enhancing interagency collaboration for maritime law enforcement has commenced in Karachi. Organized under the project 'Improved National Response against Drugs and Contraband Trafficking in the Maritime Domain (Phase II),' funded by the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Pakistan, the workshop supports Pakistan's counternarcotics and maritime law enforcement agencies, including the Anti-Narcotics Force, Pakistan Customs, Pakistan Coast Guards, and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. The event, which runs from August 19 to 23, was inaugurated by U.S. Deputy Consul General Amy Hood, UNODC Regional Program Coordinator David O'Connell, and PMSA Commander Zeshan Arif, focusing on legal frameworks to intercept vessels involved in drug and contraband smuggling.

Mr. David O'Connell, UNODC Global Maritime Crime Program's Regional Coordinator, welcomed participants and highlighted UNODC's close collaboration with the Government of Pakistan in designing and implementing the maritime security project (Phase I). He emphasized UNODC's holistic approach to supporting Pakistan in tackling drug and crime challenges, both domestically and through international partnerships. "Our efforts align with the Government's vision to enhance border management, reduce drug supply, and uphold the rule of law, creating a safer environment for the people of Pakistan," he stated.

Deputy Consul General Amy Hood highlighted the complexities and dynamic challenges of the maritime domain for law enforcement agencies worldwide. She reaffirmed the United States' commitment to supporting Pakistan in enhancing maritime security and combating transnational organized crime. "We are fortunate to have a range of agencies represented here, and I hope this workshop provides you with the essential tools to fight maritime crime

effectively," she said. Ms. Hood praised UNODC for organizing the workshop and thanked ANF, Pakistan Customs, PCG, PMSA, and relevant ministries for their dedication to maritime security.

Commander Zeshan Arif emphasized Pakistan's critical role as a frontline defense against the narcotic drug flow from Afghanistan, which poses a regional and global security threat. He noted that despite limited resources and technology, Pakistan is taking decisive policy and operational actions to address the issue. Commander Arif expressed gratitude for the support from UNODC and INL in enhancing the national response to drug and contraband trafficking in the maritime domain.

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