

## TRACIT and Panama Customs (ANA) expand collaboration to stop illicit trade through Panama

**Panama City, 12 July 2023** – The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) and the Panama Customs Authority (La Autoridad Nacional de Aduanas, ANA) concluded a two-day working meeting to deepen tactics to mitigate illicit trade through maritime container traffic and air cargo transport of small parcels. The meeting was part of the follow up activities deriving from the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) both organizations signed last year to strengthen cooperation to stop illicit trade through Panama.

In addition to TRACIT Director General Jeffrey Hardy and ANA Director General Tayra Ivonne Barsallo, the meeting featured officials from the National Customs Authority, National Postal Service (Correos Panamá), the UNODC's Container Control Program, and United Cargo Panama.

*"We took the essential step today, bringing together the key players in Panama Customs, Correos and maritime container inspections," said Mr. Hardy. "This is the most effective way to improve risk profiling and the sharing of information required to uncover and stop illicit product hidden in parcels and containers going through Panama."*

Panelists addressed the need to improve training and capacity building, and to deploy better detection technologies and software. A major theme was that stopping illicit trade in Panama will require a whole of government approach, where ministries of trade, economics, environment, health and international affairs support the efforts of ANA. Panelists also emphasized the need for Panama's government to supplement budget allocations for Customs and to modernize legislation that would improve the efficacy of ANA's enforcement efforts.

ANA Director General Barsallo revealed her plans to introduce a new Customs strategy, entitled Invisible Shield, which is based on greater deployment of detection scanners, and to significantly increase the use of RFID technologies to improve the traceability of shipments in Panama.

*"These new programs will significantly strengthen our capacity to identify and interdict illicit shipments," said Ms. Barsallo. "These programs will transform theory into measurable results."*

The meeting featured representatives from the private sector—both TRACIT member companies and local Panama-based businesses. Parties agreed to develop a tangible work plan, concentrating on improving risk profiling and increasing interdiction of illicit cargoes and parcels. The work program will include regular follow up meetings to support implementation and measure successes.

*"I was pleased that ANA appreciated the value of the private sector expertise and data sharing capabilities," said Mr. Hardy. "We are committed to work in partnership with ANA and the other key government agencies in Panama. Together we will stop illicit trafficking through Panama, to the benefit of Panama and the many destination countries."*

### **About TRACIT**

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade ([TRACIT](https://www.TRACIT.org)) is an independent, private sector initiative to mitigate the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across sectors most impacted by illicit trade.

**For further information**

<https://www.tracit.org/panama.html>

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