TRACIT and UNCTAD Explore Pathways for Mitigating Illicit Trade

UN Member States call for work program and greater coordination

Geneva, 4 February 2020 – Today, the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) collaborated to host the UNCTAD Illicit Trade Forum. The 2-day event was attended by more than 50 representatives from UN member states, eight intergovernmental organizations with responsibility for mitigating illicit trade and 200 stakeholders from civil society and the business community.

The forum was intended to raise awareness on illicit trade among member states, the family of UN and intergovernmental agencies and the Geneva-based trade community. The discussions focused on the negative impact of illicit trade on development and specifically how progress on the SDGs is inhibited by illicit trade in some of the world's most important economic sectors.

 "Agenda 2030 cannot be achieved without addressing illicit trade and without a shared agenda," said UNCTAD Secretary General Mukhisa Kituyi. **"The impacts are too overwhelming to be ignored."**

The intergovernmental meeting was designed to help governments understand the challenge of illicit trade and to explore pathways for mitigating it, through international collaboration and by strengthening capabilities at the national level.

"There is an enduring need for Member States to strengthen their defense against illicit trade," said TRACIT Director General Jeff Hardy. **"The sweeping, negative impacts of illicit trade call for institutional leadership to address the overlapping problems relating to multiple forms of illicit trade, link existing initiatives available across the UN and streamline the guidance and capacity support to Member States."**

Representatives from African Group, Morocco, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Myanmar, Colombia and Tunisia called for UNCTAD to take up work on illicit trade and to include illicit trade as a priority work area when Ministers meet to renew UNCTAD's mandate at the UNCTAD 15 Ministerial in October 2020.

"We have heard and welcome calls from our member States for UNCTAD to develop our work programme on illicit trade and to contribute to cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary solutions, said Pamela Coke-Hamilton, UNCTAD Director for International Trade. "UNCTAD is seeking to create synergies and we will be involved in work countering illicit trade only in a way that is complimentary to existing efforts. We will reach out to all of the 20 or so organisations working in this area and create the synergies that are necessary to tackle a problem so large in both scope and magnitude."

Frequent references were made to the TRACIT report, *Mapping the Impact on the Sustainable Development Goals of Illicit Trade*, which maps the 17 UN SDGs against the following sectors: agri-foods, alcohol, fisheries, forestry, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, precious metals and gemstones, pesticides, tobacco, wildlife and all forms of counterfeiting and piracy.

For photos, video, presentations and other materials associated with the Forum, please visit:

https://www.tracit.org/illicit-trade-forum.html

https://unctad.org/en/Pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=2281

The report: *Mapping the Impact on the Sustainable Development Goals of Illicit Trade* may be found here: https://www.tracit.org/publications_illicit-trade-and-the-unsdgs.html.

About TRACIT – The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) is an independent, private sector initiative to drive change to mitigate the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across industry sectors most impacted by illicit trade.

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