

Technical Workshop on Environmental Crime: A New Priority Area of SOMTC 22-25 April 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

Environmental issues have been given increasing importance by governments worldwide, due to their wide-ranging impact on human security and sustainable long-term economic development. These issues are non-traditional security threats and are becoming more transnational in nature. With its rich natural resources, the ASEAN region is at risk of being a centre for transnational crime. There is, therefore, a fundamental need for a concerted, coordinated, and regional approach to prevent and reduce environmental crime in the ASEAN region.

ASEAN has also recognized the environmental impact of development which has also been supported by the ASEAN's Plan of Action to strengthen effective cooperation on non-traditional security issues under the ASEAN Political-Security Community. It is therefore important and timely that the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) take the necessary steps to further tackle environmental crime under the priorities of the ASEAN Framework on Transnational Crime.

The proposal on inclusion of environmental crime as a priority of ASEAN's Framework on transnational Crime was first introduced at the 11th SOMTC which was held in Singapore in 2011. Thailand continued its effort to propose a revised proposal to the 13th SOMTC in Da Nang, Viet Nam, on 20 June 2013. Thailand suggested that wildlife trafficking should be the focus. The meeting deliberated on Thailand's proposal and recommendation, and agreed that more time was needed to examine the proposal. It was agreed that the ASEAN Secretariat would consult with the relevant sectoral bodies as the SOMTC needs to be mindful of overall ASEAN efforts in dealing with environmental crime and the appropriate procedures to include a new area in the framework. The meeting recognized that environmental crime is a cross cutting issue involving a number of different line agencies as well as across the other eight areas of transnational crime.

Objective

The workshop's key objective is to facilitate a discussion among ASEAN Member States on the approach, scope of work and contribution of the SOMTC to tackle environmental crime. The workshop is expected to formulate recommendations for the SOMTC on Thailand's proposal to include environmental crime as a new priority. The workshop's outcome will also support article B.4.1 of APSC's Plan of Action to strengthen cooperation in addressing non-traditional security issues, particularly in combating transnational crimes and other transboundary challenges.

The workshop will cover the following key elements:

- Each ASEAN Member State's efforts in addressing environmental crime in their countries. This will help the Member States learn about each other's experience which can help identify the niche issue that SOMTC can address;

- Include officials from relevant sectoral bodies in the workshop to share experience and their scope of work pertaining to environmental crime;
- Identify the specific purview of SOMTC in order not to duplicate efforts, for example to focus on criminal justice response;
- Identify the cross-cutting issues from the other areas of transnational crime and examine how they will support SOMTC's efforts in combating transnational crime; and
- Look into the possible procedures on how to incorporate environmental crime appropriately into SOMTC and AMMTC.

Programme

The Workshop will be conducted in English. It will comprise (1) an open session which will be held in a seminar style. Panellists and participants will share information on efforts in addressing environmental crime, with wildlife trafficking as a focus. Representatives from relevant international organizations, academia, and non-governmental organizations are also invited to attend; (2) a closed session which will be held as an ASEAN meeting.

Representatives from ASEAN Member States will discuss and finalize recommendations to be presented to the SOMTC.

The workshop will be during 22-25 April 2014. 22 and 25 April will be the arrival and departure day. The open workshop, which intergovernmental and non government organization can access, will be on 23 April 2014 follow by the ASEAN close meeting on 24 April 2014.

Agenda

Annex 1

Participant

1. Representatives of ASEAN Member Countries from
 - a. National security agency
 - b. National environmental law enforcement agency
 - c.
2. Resource persons :

Intergovernmental organization

CITES

INTERPOL

UNODC

Other relevant agencies

Non-government Organization

TRAFFIC

Freeland Foundation

WWF

Venue of the workshop

To be confirmed

Expected outcome

1. Consolidated definition and scope of work of environmental crime under purview of SOMTC
2. Guidelines for potential work program and implementation arrangement of environmental crime program under purview of SOMTC
3. Guidelines for next step and further procedure of incorporating environmental crime into SOMTC