

Customs News

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The Sword, the Key, the Laurel

The sword symbolizes vigorous law enforcement. The key symbolizes faithful gate-keeping of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The laurel symbolizes the will of the Department to carry out its mission successfully.



The Customs crest has symbolic meaning. Under the Bauhinia, the sword symbolizes vigorous law enforcement. The key symbolizes faithful gate-keeping of the frontiers of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The outer laurel symbolizes the will of the Department to carry out its mission successfully, thereby contributing to the well-being of the HKSAR. The above is the goal of all of us who wear the Customs badge. Hence the departmental motto: Commitment and Excellence.

To be committed and stay committed, we need to keep our sword sharpened and the key safe in our custody at all times. To excel, we have to stay in pace with an ever-changing world characterized by globalization and rapid technological development. To better serve the public, thus making ourselves worthy of the pursuit of the laurel, the Department has over the years transformed itself from primarily a law enforcement agency to a service oriented Customs force shouldering the dual role of law enforcement and trade facilitation.

Hong Kong is a world city. We take pride in the global values we embrace. We always meet and sometimes lead international standards, for example, on protection of intellectual property rights. To-day, it is the profound economic development in the Pan-Pearl River Delta that makes our dual role of enforcement and facilitation all the more challenging.

In 2004, Hong Kong Customs officers conducted clearance of a total of 21.9 million twenty-foot equivalent unit cargo containers, 14.5 million cross-boundary vehicles and 181 million passengers at our control points. These mean a formidable traffic daily of 6 000 containers, 39 800 vehicles, and close to half-a-million boundary-crossers. This means an irreversible growth at 7%, 10% and 19% respectively over the previous year. Over two-thirds of the containers we now handle come from Guangdong and southern China. With Mainland production and consumer markets both flourishing, continued growth in cargo traffic is only to be expected.

The Year 2004 also saw a strong performance of the tourism industry. Visitor arrivals at 22 million reached an all-time high – a 40% leap from 2003. With the extension of the Individual Visit Scheme to the whole of Guangdong Province and 11 other major cities in the Mainland a year ago, and the scheduled opening of Hong Kong Disneyland this September, our control points will face even greater pressure for speedy passenger clearance.

To meet the demands of escalating growth, the Department has upgraded its capabilities through implementing new intelligence strategies and risk management to prevent illicit trafficking, and is actively applying advanced technology and streamlined procedures at the boundary to speed up clearance.

In February 2005, I attended the Pan Pearl River Delta Region Customs Commissioners Joint Meeting in Guangzhou, joining Vice Minister Sun Song-pu of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, and 16 Customs Commissioners from the Pan Pearl River Delta. We discussed ways and means to strengthen co-operation between our respective Customs jurisdictions. We decided to apply mutual recognition of Customs seals and shared cargo examination results. We aim to develop, over time, a non-stop logistics pipeline between Hong Kong and all Mainland destinations based on electronic submission of data and linking the land, sea and air transport modes.

HK/Mainland Smuggling Cases in 2004

Number of cases:	351
Number of arrests:	443
Seizure Value (\$Million)	215.8

Number of cases (By route)

Land:	182
Sea:	169

Total: 351

Major Seizures by Categories:

Seizures	Value (\$Million)
Cigarettes	88.3
Electrical and Electronic Goods	50.4
Optical Discs	21
Meat and Poultry	13.1
Vehicles and Parts	12.6



The Hong Kong Customs and the Mainland Customs have since the beginning of 2005 adopted the use of a Green Customs Seal. The Green Seal indicates that those incoming goods vehicles affixed with the Seal have already been examined once. Customs authorities on the other side of the boundary therefore will unlikely re-examine. This measure speeds up customs clearance.

We will make every effort to convert customs clearance into a seamless process for the bona fide trader. Yet we fully realize that cross-boundary smuggling activities remain an ugly fact of life. In 2004, at land, sea and the airport, we detected a total of 351 smuggling cases occurring between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Our very busy control points have provided a volatile environment that criminal syndicates frequently attempt to exploit. Yet our seizure records show that our officers have successfully stopped them from their criminal endeavours. The Hong Kong Customs Force is effectively responding to the call of sword, the key and the laurel.

Colleagues, we wear the Customs badge on our uniform. Let us carry the Customs values at heart.



Timothy Tong
Commissioner

Customs Story

Many Customs stories reflect the dedication, professionalism and commitments of our officers at work. My choice for sharing with you this time is "Operation 9-25".

Inspector Lau is the leader of an investigation unit under the Marine Enforcement Group at Kwai Chung. In September 2004, after meticulous investigations, he intercepted at Cha Kwo Ling a suspicious consignment. Let's see how he handled the case.

Commissioner

Operation 9-25

Date : 23 September 2004

Time : Around midnight

Place : Cha Kwo Ling and Kwai
Chung Container Terminal

Parties Involved : Investigation Unit, Marine Enforcement Group/PMC

Significance : Referral of intelligence to Guangdong Customs which resulted in the smash of a highly organized smuggling ring, with the seizure of 26 tons of printing films and the arrest of 2 HK residents and 6 Mainlanders

"Calling Commander. A lorry has arrived. The boxes are loaded onto the lorry."

"Keep watching."

"Lorry is moving... [snap] Shall we follow? shall we follow?"

"Yes, follow, follow."

"Calling Commander. Boxes off-loaded at Cha Kwo Ling, a shipyard...and now being repacked on wooden pallets [snap]"

"Mount OP and keep watching."

It was a blazing summer afternoon on 22 September 2004. Crammed with shrubs at a steep hillside near Cha Kwo Ling, a team of the Investigation Unit officers (Port and Maritime Command) was mounting surveillance against a suspicious consignment removed from a target warehouse at Hung Hom. Inspector Lau, the head of the team, was at the same time watching out for clues with other team members at the warehouse inside a surveillance car. Under the throttling sunlight, the two teams of officers were all soaked in sweats and grease, from head to toes.

Despite the heat, officers were all in high spirits and had maintained unreserved vigilance at both locations for two long days.

"Calling Commander. The lorry stopped at Yaumatei Cargo Handling Basin, and the wooden pallets now being loaded onto a river trading vessel 'Dong Yun 012'. [snap]"...

"Keep watching."

A familiar radio voice broke the complete silence for two days. On 23 September, the team shadowed the target consignment to Yau Ma Tei and witnessed its loading onto a river trading vessel. The vessel was further tracked to the Kwai Chung Container Terminal, where it was berthed pending the next voyage. The operation remained covert. Little did the syndicate

know that they were being besieged step by step towards a strategic trap of the justice.

It was around midnight on 23 September when most people were in sweet dream or enjoying the nightlife in town, Inspector Lau and his team yet had a more important mission to fulfill, i.e. smash it or let go? Just before the vessel sailed on, Inspector Lau made a timely and decisive act. He ordered his team members to attend the vessel as a 'routine' clearance formality. They were tactically pushing the syndicate further to the verge of the trap.

On examination, the consignment, which was found to contain 20 pallets of PVC translucent thin plastic sheets, was in perfect match with the manifested information. However, in precise contemplation that the syndicate was deliberately doing the repacking in order to smuggle these high-value goods into the Mainland to evade the import tariff, Inspector Lau rightly instructed his team not to alert the crew. The full consignment documents had been obtained as normal Customs requirement, and the information was referred immediately to our Guangdong counterparts through the established Customs Liaison channel for action.

As anticipated, the syndicate fell squarely into the trap. The vessel was targeted by the Guangdong Customs for intensive monitoring and verification. Acting on our lead and upon their further investigation, the Guangdong Customs successfully smashed a highly organized smuggling ring, with record seizure of 26 tonnes of PVC translucent thin plastic sheets worth RMB 369.9 million and the arrest of 8 persons. To signify the significance of the case, the operation was codenamed "9-25".

After a lapse of six months, the suffocating summer vapour has gone, but the heat of satisfaction is still firmly inside each and every one of the investigation team, and the heat of cooperation has grown even higher between the two Customs administrations.

My Afterlight on an Operation

Inspector L C Lau said, "On 24 September last year, I led a team of Customs officers to carry out an anti-smuggling operation. The target was a lorry connected with a smuggling syndicate. After a series of tracking, we found the vehicle delivering a batch of goods to a workshop in the vicinity of Cha Kwo Ling for packaging anew. In order not to alert the suspects, our colleagues silently kept the workshop under close surveillance for more than ten hours in sweltering hot weather.

The re-packaged goods were finally delivered to a river trading vessel berthing in a cargo working area, after many changing hands and places. I assigned colleagues to board the vessel to continue the surveillance. But then the weather started to turn bad. The rain kept pitter-pattering on the body of our vehicle. I pondered in my mind: will bad weather pose a threat to the operation? How should I plan our next move?

Came the small hours. The rain started to slow down. The target vessel eventually set sail. Judging that the time was ripe, I arranged for my teammates to intercept the vessel. Our colleagues found 20 pallets of PVC thin plastic sheets, and that was in perfect match with the manifested information. All appeared to be in order. But then my gut feeling was that this was only a decoy. During the course of tracking these culprits, we suspected that this batch of PVC thin plastic sheets was not low-value normal plastic sheet consignment. The smuggling syndicate might deliberately use the relatively cheaper goods to go through the customs declaration in order to evade import tariff and value-added tax of the Mainland.

I instructed my teammates to carry out a normal inspection of the goods and use it as a covert tactic for collecting relevant information. Meanwhile, intelligence was discreetly referred to the Guangdong Customs through appropriate law enforcement mutual co-operation channels. (Details censored for operational reasons).

Two months later, the Guangdong Customs, acting on our lead and upon their further investigation, successfully smashed a giant smuggling syndicate and confiscated printing film amounting to a total value exceeding RMB 300 million. The case was codenamed 'Operation 9-25'.

I am proud of being a Customs Inspector."

Conference between HK and Korea Customs

Commissioner Tong headed a delegation to attend the 25th Customs Cooperation Conference with the Korea Customs Service held in Hong Kong between December 16 and 17, 2004. The delegation of the Korea Customs Service was led by Commissioner Mr Kim Yong-Duk.

In the two-day conference, Hong Kong and Korea Customs reached an agreement on establishing an Immediate Notification System to expedite enforcement actions.

"This is extremely important especially for investigation into dangerous drugs and money laundering cases that require prompt customs intervention," Commissioner Tong said.

In addition, contact points will be set up between the two Customs Administrations to enhance co-operation in tackling cyber crime over the Internet on intellectual property rights. "It is timely to strengthen our co-operation with Korea Customs," Commissioner Tong explained, noting that Hong Kong Customs are stepping up co-operation with the movie industry. Hong Kong Customs are actively considering enforcement action against piracy activities using the peer-to-peer file sharing software over the Internet.

The conference offered a platform for Hong Kong and Korea Customs to discuss further avenue to enhance cooperation on law enforcement. The importance of regional and international cooperation to combat transnational crimes including drug trafficking, cigarette smuggling and protection of intellectual property rights was also highlighted.



Delegation of HK Customs led by Commissioner Tong (second left) with Korea counterparts at the 25th Customs Cooperation Conference.

Meanwhile, the two parties had updated each other on the recent strategic and technological developments in respective administration, discussed various issues of mutual and regional concern, and agreed that a right balance must be maintained between cargo security and trade facilitation.

Information Unit

Hong Kong and Mainland Customs Annual Review Meeting 2004

Chaired by Commissioner Tong, the 2004 Annual Review Meeting between the General Administration of Customs (GAC) of the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong Customs was held in Hong Kong between January 26 and 27, 2005. The nine-member delegation from GAC was led by the Vice Minister of Customs, Mr Gong Zheng.

During the meeting, both administrations looked back on their achievements in co-operation for the past year, including the organization of enforcement seminars and training programmes, operational meetings, exchange of visits, and studies on cargo data sharing and Customs clearance.

Apart from taking stock of the strategy in fighting smuggling activities, we updated each other on the latest developments of their respective Customs operations.

Both administrations agreed to strengthen cooperation through exchange of visits at supervisory levels, implementation of new notification mechanisms, and speeding up of procedural reforms in Customs clearance. We would work closely on implementation of CEPA, particularly in launching publicity and training programmes. A wide range of enforcement measures would be in place, such as a pilot scheme for the notification of export of cigarette consignments to combat cross-boundary cigarette smuggling activities; in-depth studies on Customs control and clearance procedures for road cargo transportation to facilitate cross-boundary flow,

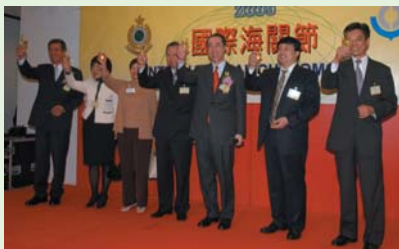


Group photo of the two delegations respectively led by Vice-minister of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Mr Gong Zheng (front row, fourth left) and Commissioner Tong (front row, centre).

During the stay, the GAC delegation visited Lok Ma Chau Control Point and the Customs and Excise Training School to learn about Customs control facilities and training development.

Customs Liaison Bureau

International Customs Day



Guests drank a toast to the International Customs day. (From left) Commissioner Tong; Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development), Ms Sandra Lee; Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry) Miss Denise Yue; Secretary for Security, Mr Ambrose Lee; the Financial Secretary, Mr Henry Tang; Vice-Chair of the World Customs Organization Asia Pacific Region, Mr Gong Zheng and Permanent Secretary for Security, Mr Stanley Ying.

for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry) Miss Denise Yue; Permanent Secretary for Economic Development and Labour (Economic Development), Ms Sandra Lee; Permanent Secretary for Security, Mr Stanley Ying; Mr Gong Zheng; and Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Timothy Tong, toasted for the International Customs day.

Apart from performance by the Customs Band and the Customs Detector Dogs Unit, exhibition panels and display booths on Customs enforcement to combat commercial fraud were also set up.

Under the auspices of the World Customs Organization (WCO), the department awarded the WCO Certificate of Merit to 15 Customs officers for their contribution to fighting against commercial fraud.

The "International Customs Day" was set up by the WCO in 1982 for promoting closer cooperation among Customs authorities in the interest of international trade. HK Customs has been a member of the WCO since 1987.

Customs Liaison Bureau

On January 25, 2005, the Department hosted a reception to celebrate the "International Customs Day" and the theme for this year was "Customs and Commercial Fraud".

The Financial Secretary, Mr Henry Tang, was the Principal Guest for the occasion. More than 300 guests, including the Vice-Chair of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia Pacific Region, Mr Gong Zheng, who is also the Vice Minister of the General Customs Administration of the People's Republic of China, Legislative Council Members, senior Government officials, Consuls-General, local dignitaries, foreign Customs attaches, and Customs representatives from the Mainland and Macau attended the reception.

Following the performances by the Customs Band and the Customs Detector Dog Unit, Mr Tang, accompanied by the Secretary for Security, Mr Ambrose Lee; Permanent Secretary

Secretary for Security commended Customs for record seizure of MDMA tablets

The Secretary for Security, Mr Ambrose Lee, commended Customs officers for its record seizure of 62,700 MDMA tablets, which was made on December 8, 2004. The seizure, weighing about 16.25 kilograms, could fetch about \$11 million if retailed in the market.

Accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Lawrence Wong and Head of Customs Drug Investigation Bureau Ben Leung, Mr Ambrose Lee visited CDIB's head office on the day following the operation. He praised the case officers of their professionalism in cracking down a series of drugs cases recently.

With the arrest of four men, aged between 23 and 34, our officers believed they had smashed a transnational drug trafficking syndicate. The success of this anti-dangerous drugs operation demonstrated our officers' enforcement professionalism and the fruitful cooperation and intelligence exchange between Hong Kong Customs and its overseas counterparts, including Belgium and UK Customs and the Swiss Police.

On December 8, 2004, officers of Customs Drug Investigation bureau (CDIB) mounted a controlled delivery operation and seized 62,700 tablets of MDMA worth \$11 million. The drugs were ingeniously concealed inside aquarium purifiers, which were shipped to Hong Kong from Belgium by express courier service.

Customs Drug Investigation Bureau



Accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Lawrence Wong (left) and Head of Customs Drug Investigation Bureau Ben Leung (right), Secretary for Security Mr Ambrose Lee (centre) visited Customs Drug Investigation Bureau.

International cooperation leads to HK Customs record seizure of ketamine

Hong Kong Customs made a record seizure of ketamine and smashed a transnational ketamine syndicate in an operation code-named "Bayonet" conducted in the Hong Kong International Airport, Tsim Sha Tsui and Hung Hom on March 13 and 14, 2005.

A total of 87.5 kilograms of high-graded ketamine, with an estimated retail value of HK\$30 million, were seized. Four Singaporean men and three Malaysian men, aged between 43 and 50, were arrested.

The success of Operation "Bayonet" is attributed to the intelligence exchange among Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, Anti-smuggling Bureaux of Shenzhen Customs and Guangzhou Customs, coupled with the cooperation rendered by Central Narcotics Bureau of Singapore, Royal Malaysian Police of Malaysia and India Customs.

Commissioner Tong commended the officers involved for their competence and professionalism in cracking the case.



Commissioner Tong (second left) commending the officers involved for their competence and professionalism in cracking the case.



Commissioner Tong said, "By conducting vigorous law enforcement actions and maintaining intensive and frequent intelligence exchange with other jurisdictions, we ensure that Hong Kong will not become a transit point for illicit drugs."

"Indeed this successful case clearly demonstrates that drug traffickers will pay a very high price if they want to conduct criminal activities in Hong Kong."

"Since we do not rule out the possibility that the seized ketamine was intended for the Mainland market, the Hong Kong and Shenzhen Customs authorities will step up intelligence exchanges and mount more joint operations. On the top management level, we have direct dialogues to speedily exchange intelligence. On the operational level, the frontline staff also have very close day-to-day cooperation and joint efforts in combating illicit drug activities," Commissioner Tong said.

Assistant Commissioner (Intelligence and Investigation) William Chow said that there was a demand for ketamine in the Mainland China and Hong Kong. Intelligence revealed an emerging trend of smuggling ketamine into Hong Kong and the Mainland from sources in South East Asian countries, particularly India and Malaysia, as evidenced by the seizure of 94.7 kilograms of ketamine up to now in 2005 compared to the total seizure of 4.8 kilograms in 2004.

"Accordingly, Hong Kong Customs initiated the operation "Bayonet" in early February 2005 with a view to detecting the smuggling of ketamine into Hong Kong and neighbouring regions," he said.

"Apart from maintaining our high vigilance, the Department will continue to cooperate and liaise closely with overseas jurisdictions and the Mainland authorities in order to effectively combat drug trafficking and to combat drug activities at source," Mr Chow said.

Information Unit



Assistant Commissioner (Intelligence and Investigation) William Chow (centre), Head of Customs Drug Investigation Bureau Ben Leung (left) and Group Head (Air Passenger and Apron) N P Kwok at a press conference on the operation (top photo), and pictured with the seizure (bottom photo).

HK Customs commended by Japan Customs



Acting Assistant Superintendent W W Wong receiving the Certificate of Appreciation from the Director of the Tokyo Customs, Mr Keiji Fujiwara.

In recognition of the support and contribution of Hong Kong Customs, Japan Customs presented us a Certificate of Appreciation in Tokyo on Japan Customs Day on November 26, 2004 in Tokyo. The certificate was received by Acting Assistant Superintendent W W Wong of Customs Drug Investigation Bureau.

Hong Kong Customs has all along cooperated actively with international law enforcers combating transnational drug trafficking activities. Japan Customs is one of our partners in investigating transnational drug trafficking cases within the Asia Pacific region. Owing to timely exchange of intelligence between the two enforcement agencies, Japan Customs successfully cracked a series of drug trafficking cases last year.

During his stay in Tokyo, Acting Assistant Superintendent Wong met with investigators of the Japan Customs, National Police Agency of Japan, and other law enforcement attaches to discuss global drug trafficking trends, intelligence exchange and future cooperation.

Despite that transnational drug crimes have become more sophisticated transcending geographical borders, the joint efforts of Hong Kong and Japan Customs have been proven successful in combating such illegal activities. In light of the new drug trafficking trends, Customs Drug Investigation Bureau is committed to enhancing intelligence exchange with overseas counterparts and to taking proactive actions to fight against the crime.



The Certificate of Appreciation received by HK Customs.

Customs Drug Investigation Bureau

5th Meeting of WCO Integrity Sub-Committee

On behalf of Hong Kong Customs, Chairman of the Working Group on Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle and Staff Integrity W L Tam and Staff Officer (Legislation, Order and Procedures) Jim Kwok, attended the 5th Meeting of World Customs Organisation (WCO) Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC), which was held in WCO headquarters in Brussels from March 7 to 8, 2005.

The two-day meeting offered a platform for Customs administrations around the globe to discuss and exchange views on integrity issues, particularly internal practice in maintaining integrity within the force. Apart from member Customs administrations, representatives from other international organizations, such as World Health Organisation and World Economic Forum also attended the meeting.

Representatives from Hong Kong Customs were invited to give a presentation on the integrity practice in Hong Kong and the experience in integrity management. The presentation was well-received by the participants, who held high regard for the effort made by Hong Kong Customs in promoting healthy lifestyle within the force and in benchmarking international best practices of integrity.

Some of the Hong Kong integrity practices were also included in the "Compendium of Integrity Best Practices" which was compiled on the basis of contributions by member administrations. The Compendium, which has been uploaded onto the WCO website, is aimed to assist member administrations in developing their integrity programmes and action plans.

To give steer to member administrations in developing their integrity programmes, ISC had examined the "Integrity Action Plan for 2005/2006" which will be endorsed by the WCO Policy Commission to be held in June 2005 before close of the meeting.



(From Right) Senior Superintendent W L Tam and Superintendent Jim Kwok at the 5th Meeting of WCO Integrity Sub-Committee.

Jim Kwok
Staff Officer (Legislation, Orders and Procedures)
Office of Management Services

Task Group Cigarettes Conference 2004



Group photo of participants of OLAF Task Group Cigarette Conference 2004.

At the invitation of Office European De Lutte Anti-Fraude (OLAF) of European Commission, Assistant Superintendent Rose Ho attended the Task Group Cigarettes Conference 2004, which was held at Noordwijk-aan-zee, the Netherlands, from November 20 to 24, 2004.

The Conference, which is held in its tenth year is an annual meeting for representatives of all member states of European Union (EU) and members of the Cigarettes Task Group and Intelligence Unit within OLAF. It provides a platform for the enforcement authorities to exchange views. Representatives from 27 European states attended the conference this year in which presentations and workshops were held.

Assistant Superintendent Ho gave a presentation on how "Project Crocodile", a transnational anti-cigarette smuggling operation, was initiated to combat cigarettes smuggling by means of circumlocutory paths or "merry-go-round" mode in the Asia Pacific Region, was initiated.

The Conference has not only provided an opportunity for participants to discuss recent developments in the fight against cigarette smuggling and exchange views on improving operational effectiveness, but has also enhanced co-operation among member authorities.

Anti-Illicit-Cigarette Investigation Division
Revenue and General Investigation Bureau

IPR Seminar in Shanghai and Beijing

Acting Superintendent Albert Ho and Senior Inspector H C Wan of the Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau participated in two Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Seminars organized by the Motion Picture Association (MPA) for about 150 Mainland officials between February 23 and 27, 2005. The participating Mainland officers belonged to the Municipal Cultural Market Enforcement Authorities, and were responsible for enforcing the administrative regulations on copyright infringements in Shanghai and Beijing.

During the seminar, acting Superintendent Ho spoke on the protection of IPR by HK Government and enforcement achievements of Hong Kong Customs, while Senior Inspector Wan gave a briefing on the work of the Anti-Internet Piracy Team, particularly on enforcement against "peer-to-peer" file sharing activities. Participants expressed great interest in the topics.

Other speakers included Mr Ma Dong, Senior Judge of the Supreme People's Court of China, Mr Suo Lujun, Deputy Director General of China Copyright Protection Centre and representatives from the Japan External Trade Organization.



(From left) Acting Superintendent Albert Ho, Mr Sam Ho of Motion Picture Association and Senior Inspector Wan attending the seminar.

Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau

Premier International Conference on Combating Money Laundering



Divisional Commander of Drug Proceeds Investigation Division Johnny Lo delivering a presentation at the Conference.

Commissioner Tong was invited to attend "Creating Global Partnership and Synergy in the Fight Against Money Laundering" Conference, which was jointly organized by the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau and the Action Committee Against Narcotics.

The purpose of this international conference, which was held at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from February 16 and 17, 2005, was to step up effort around the globe in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. Participants included local and overseas delegates from regulatory bodies and professionals in financial, legal, monetary and law enforcement sectors.

A number of renowned speakers and experts, including Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China, Mr Li Ruogu, were invited to deliver keynote speeches. Fruitful discussions on hot issues, such as the challenges and opportunities faced by law enforcement agencies, financial sectors and the six designated non-financial businesses and professionals under the latest international anti-money laundering standard issued by the Financial Action Task Force, were also held.

Led by Group Head of Financial Investigation Group Eric Ho, Customs financial investigators, joined the Conference, while Divisional Commander of Drug Proceeds Investigation Division Johnny Lo, gave a presentation on



Group Head of Financial Investigation Group Eric Ho (second right), Divisional Commander (International Financial Investigation) K S Cheng (second left), with Customs officers at the Conference.

international cooperation and Customs' role in combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

The Conference offered a great training opportunity to Customs investigators and provided a platform for over 400 participants to exchange experience in combating money laundering and terrorist financing at regional and international levels. Given the concerted efforts around the globe in combating the problems, the Conference would help strengthening Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre and preventing money laundering and terrorists financing activities within our financial system.

Financial Investigation Group
Customs Drug Investigation Bureau

Meeting with Mainland Customs on Data Sharing and Boundary Clearance

Assistant Commissioner (Boundary and Ports) Ferdinand Leung led a 8-member delegation to attend the 5th Expert Group on Data Sharing and Boundary Clearance Meeting held between HK Customs and the Customs General Administration (CGA) of the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong on January 11, 2005. The CGA delegation was led by Mr Hao Chongfu, Deputy Director General of Department of Customs Control and Inspection. The meeting was also attended by a representative of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR.

Close partnership between Hong Kong and the Mainland Customs was fostered in the meeting. Recognizing the expert group's achievement in enhancing boundary clearance efficiency, the development of cross-boundary transportation and logistics industry, both administrations discussed matters such as the implementation of "Unified Road Cargo Manifest" and mutual recognition of green customs seals. They also explored ways to speed up and simplify cross-boundary customs clearance.



HK Customs briefing the Mainland counterparts on risk management during the meeting.

Control Points Command

"Hong Kong — The Real Experience" Carnival

"Hong Kong — The Real Experience" Carnival jointly organized by Customs, Intellectual Property Department and the Yau Tsim Mong District Civic Education Campaign Committee was held in Kowloon Park on December 11, 2004. As part of the Department's publicity campaign for protecting intellectual property rights, the Carnival was held with the aim of promoting Hong Kong as "Shopping Paradise for Genuine Goods". The Carnival included a mini concert, song dedication programme and game booths.

Representatives from the Police, Consumer Council, Tourism Board, Travel Industry Council, as well as various organizations in the IPR industry also attended.

During the Carnival, Deputy Commissioner Lawrence Wong called on the public and traders for their support in upholding Hong Kong as shopping paradise for genuine goods. Citing the success of the Intellectual Property Rights Protection Alliance, which was set up by the Department and the intellectual property industry in March last year, Deputy Commissioner Wong underlined the importance of joint effort in protecting intellectual property. Full of joy and laughter, the Carnival was ended with singing by pop stars.

Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau



Deputy Commissioner Lawrence Wong speaking at the Carnival.

Reward scheme on reporting counterfeit pharmaceuticals renewed

The Customs and Excise Department and the Hong Kong Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry (HKAPI) announced on December 21, 2004 that the Reward Scheme Against Counterfeit and Trademark Infringed Pharmaceutical Products (the Scheme) had been renewed for another year.

The renewal signifies the joint effort between Customs and the industry in combating counterfeit and trademark infringed pharmaceutical products activities.

It is high on Customs enforcement agenda to crack down on counterfeiting pharmaceutical activities for protecting intellectual property rights. Until November 2004, Customs officers have cracked five concerned cases resulting in the seizure of \$7,625 worth of products and the arrest of six people.

Since the inception of the scheme in November, 2003, 138 relevant calls have been received from the Customs 24-hour hotline. Of these calls, five have led to successful Customs crackdowns.

To promote public awareness of counterfeit and trademark infringed pharmaceutical products and to encourage reports of such activities, the reward has been doubled from \$5,000 to \$10,000 upon renewal of the scheme.

Under the renewed scheme, reward money will be payable to a person providing information in two stages:

Initial payment of \$10,000: for information leading to seizure of counterfeit or trademark infringed pharmaceutical products and charges being laid against the person/company involved.

Additional payment of \$10,000: for information ultimately resulting in criminal conviction of the person/company involved.

The reward scheme, financed by HKAPI and administered by the Customs and Excise Department, aims at encouraging people to report on activities of counterfeit and trademark infringed pharmaceutical products.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, the maximum penalty for selling or possessing for sale any goods bearing false trade marks or false trade descriptions is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Information Unit

Conflict Diamonds and Kimberly Process

Do you know what "Conflict Diamonds" are and what "Kimberley Process" is? Do you know that rough diamonds are prohibited articles in Hong Kong and their import and export are under the control of Kimberley Process Certification Scheme? Do you know that a package of rough diamonds consignment may be worth up to millions of US dollars?



Head of Trade Inspection and Verification Bureau, S M Wong (first left, front row) participates in the Technical Meeting on Kimberley Process in Shanghai.

"Conflict diamonds" are the rough diamonds used by rebellions or their allies to finance anti-government movement, while the Kimberley Process (KP) Certification Scheme is launched by an international forum to stop the trading of "conflict diamonds" and illicit proliferation of armament. Only members of the

Scheme can join the trade of conflict diamond. About 60 economies such as Belgium, Mainland of China, India, Israel, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States, have joined the Scheme, to which Hong Kong is also a member under Mainland China.

To implement the Scheme, Trade and Industry Department (TID) and the Customs and Excise Department are the importing and exporting authorities of the Mainland. Since January 2, 2003, rough diamond has become one of prohibited articles under the Import and Export Ordinance, Cap.60. Anyone carrying on business of importing, exporting, buying or selling rough diamonds must register with TID and comply with concerned requirements while KP certificate issued by TID must be obtained for import and export of rough diamonds. The Trade Controls Branch of the Department is responsible for enforcing the scheme, which includes consignment inspections and investigations.

In 2004, there were about 250 rough diamond registered traders in Hong Kong and the total volume of import and export of rough diamond was about 163 billion dollars.

S M Wong
Head of Trade Inspection and Verification Bureau

"Operation Cold Remedy" Meetings

Acting Superintendent Frankie Y P Cheung and Acting Senior Inspector K H Ma of Controlled Chemicals Group attended the enforcement follow-up meeting on "Operation Cold Remedy", which was held by the Drug Enforcement Administration of US Department of Justice in Mexico City, Mexico from January 20 to 21, 2005. Following the meeting, Acting Superintendent Cheung also attended the regulatory meeting on the Operation on January 24, 2005.



Acting Superintendent Cheung (second from left) and Acting Senior Inspector Ma (third from left) attended the Enforcement Follow-up Meeting on Operation Cold Remedy at Mexico City, Mexico.

The purpose of the enforcement follow-up meeting was to review the progress of the Operation conducted by various participating agencies against illicit trafficking of pseudoephedrine combination tablets to Mexico. It also provided an opportunity for the participants to share their investigation results and to draw up enforcement strategies to crack down the drug trafficking syndicates through prosecution.

During the meeting, Acting Senior Inspector Ma was highly commended by DEA for his effort in carrying out the Operation. At the end of the meeting, Acting Superintendent Cheung and Acting Senior Inspector Ma were presented with Certificates of Appreciation



Acting Superintendent Cheung (front row third from left) and Acting Senior Inspector Ma (middle row third from left) pictured with the representatives of DEA, Mexican and Panamanian Authorities.

by DEA for the contributions of HK Customs Controlled Chemical Groups to this Operation.

As for the regulatory meeting, not only did it enrich the knowledge of representatives of licensing authorities of pharmaceuticals from Hong Kong, Mexico, Panama and the U.S.A. on respective pharmaceuticals control mechanism, it fostered closer cooperation among participating authorities and strengthened measures against the import and export of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine. Under the new control arrangement, it would be more effective to clamp down on traffickers, who might attempt to produce methamphetamine (commonly known as "Ice") from pseudoephedrine by making use of the difference in licensing system of pharmaceuticals between regions.

Controlled Chemicals Group
Customs Drug Investigation Bureau

Unified road cargo manifest implemented in 2005

With effect from January 1, 2005, the unified road cargo manifest which was designed for the convenience of cross-boundary truck drivers and traders was formally implemented by the Hong Kong Customs and the General Administration of Customs of People's Republic of China.

The unified road cargo manifest has been on trial since January 1, 2004. After a year of testing and extensive consultation with the cross-boundary transportation industry and relevant parties involving in cross-boundary trade, the unified road cargo manifest has been revised and improved to better cater for the needs of the stakeholders.

Starting from 2005, drivers or carriers of laden goods vehicles can compile a set of six copies of unified road cargo manifest.

The first two copies are for submission to the Mainland Customs, the third one to Hong Kong Customs, which will collect the copies for Trade and Industry Department (the fourth copy) and the Census and Statistics Department (the fifth copy) respectively, while the sixth copy is for the driver's retention.

For empty goods vehicles, drivers or carriers need to compile a set of two copies of unified road cargo manifest with one for Mainland Customs and another for Hong Kong Customs.

The use of unified road cargo manifest not only save the manifest completion time and improves accuracy in road cargo manifests, but also facilitates cross-boundary trade.

Unified road cargo manifest for empty goods vehicle

Unified road cargo manifest for laden goods vehicle

Information Unit



The leaflets, pamphlets and posters for the anti-illicit fuel publicity campaign.

Anti-illicit Fuel Campaign

To enhance public awareness of illicit fuel, Revenue and General Investigation Bureau and Office of Dutiable Commodities Administration joined hands to launch an Anti-illicit Fuel Campaign in late March. The Campaign aims to encourage drivers to stay away from illicit fuel activities and warn them about the legal consequences of using illicit fuel.

The Working Group of the Campaign has been heavily involved in the publicity elements and design concepts. A design house was hired to provide professional services. Radio announcements, posters, leaflets and pamphlets are used to get across the messages to vehicle drivers and the general public.

The publicity materials, including the Radio Announcements in Cantonese, Putonghua and English, have been uploaded to the Customs website for reference.

Revenue and General Investigation Bureau and
Office of Dutiable Commodities Administration

Formation Inspection Team awarded ISO 9001:2000 certification

Formation Inspection Team (FIT) is awarded ISO 9001:2000 certification for its quality management system. The award presentation ceremony will be held in April, 2005. This is the first time that Hong Kong Customs has obtained such award.

Certification work of FIT's quality management system started in August 2004. In light of the Department's vision in promoting modernization, institutionalization and professionalism, FIT revamped its quality management system in compliance with the ISO Standard. Advice was sought from a consultancy firm, which arranged for FIT members to attend training, from fundamentals of the Standard to becoming auditors.

As required by the ISO Standard, FIT drew up the manuals for its quality management system on October 25, 2004, including "Quality Manual", "Quality Procedural Manual" and "Operation Procedural Manual". These manuals outlined the operation of FIT, to which all members had to strictly adhere for meeting the certification.

To ensure that the Standard was met, an "internal audit" on its quality management system was conducted by FIT trained staff before the Assessment Audit by Certifying Authority. Based on the internal audit results, the system was fine-tuned and teething problems were overcome.



Assessment Audit Day (from left) Certifying Authority Auditors Mr Dennis Law and Ms Beata Tang, Certifying Authority Business Manager Ms Amy Li, Acting Senior Superintendent Alice Leung, Assistant Superintendent Frank Shiu, Chief Trade Controls Office Mrs Y Y Ip Lee and Senior Trade Controls Officer Ms S K Chik.

The Assessment Audit took place on January 24, 2005. The operation of FIT was thoroughly assessed by two ISO auditors, who were satisfied that FIT was qualified for the ISO 9001:2000 certification and made such recommendation to their Head Office in England.

ISO9001:2000 is a global standard first set up by the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) in 1987 for assessing quality management system of organizations. It is reviewed to move with time in assessing the practices adopted by organizations in modernizing their quality management system.

The ISO Standard focuses on system results and effectiveness. Its 2000 Edition which underlines the importance of setting up a quality management system to deliver effectiveness, enhance productivity and customer satisfaction is compatible with different industries, including civil service organizations.

Formation Inspection Team

Note: Formation Inspection Team was renamed "Office of Service Quality" in April, 2005.

Renewal of Illicit Cigarette Informer Reward Scheme

The signing ceremony for renewal of Illicit Cigarette Informer Reward Scheme between Customs and Hong Kong Tobacco Industry was held on January 5, 2005. It marked the joint effort in combating illicit cigarette activities. With incentive rewards given out, the scheme aims at encouraging more reports of illicit and counterfeit cigarettes activities to the Department. Upon renewal, the Hong Kong Tobacco Industry earmarked \$800,000 for the reward money to be given out to public, who had

provided information leading to seizure of illicit cigarettes.

Coupled with the vigorous enforcement action by the Department, the scheme has proved to be successful since its first establishment in 1994.

Revenue and General Investigation Bureau

Assistant Commissioner (Intelligence and Investigation) William Chow (centre) with the representatives of the two contributing members of the Hong Kong Tobacco Industry after the signing ceremony.



No.3 Customs Management Development Course

Visit to Mainland by Course Participants

Given the thriving economic development in the Mainland and the frequent collaboration between Mainland and Hong Kong Customs, bilateral exchange has become an integral part of the No. 3 Customs Management Development Course (CMDC).

To deepen participants' understanding of the organisation structure, law enforcement and customs clearance systems of the Mainland Customs, a four-day (from November 23 to 26, 2004) study visit to Mainland was organised by the Guangdong Customs. It covered talks and visits to different Customs administrations in the Pearl River Delta region.

Led by Superintendent Chan Yiu-wah, Deputy Commandant of Customs & Excise Training School, the participants visited various Mainland Customs facilities, including Guangdong Customs Information Centre, Baiyun new airport; Huang Guang Customs House and Da Pang Customs House.



Course participants with Deputy Commissioner Lawrence Wong (fourth left), Assistant Commissioner Chow Kwong (third left), Assistant Commissioner William Chow (fourth right), Head of Trade Controls Raymond Wong (third right) at Graduation Ceremony.

Office of Training & Development

Afterthought

We are grateful to the Department for having organised the three-week No. 3 Customs Management Development course, which introduced new management skills and concepts to 15 Assistant Superintendents and Chief Trade Controls Officers at one time. We strongly believe that the new management concepts and skills will be effectively applied to our daily work.

Not only did the course provide a platform for participants to share experience with famous professors from local universities, communication experts, training consultants from CSTD and heads of different major formations, it allowed participants to visit Guangzhou and Shenzhen to keep themselves abreast of the latest development of Mainland Customs.

The course culminated in a contest for presentation of individual projects in which participants could apply the knowledge learned right away and suggest new initiatives to the top management. It is rewarding for us to receive the constructive comments from the directorate and heads of formations.

We hope that the Department would continue to organise such useful training courses for middle management officers in the near future.



Course participants with Guangdong Sub-Customs Administration and Participants of "China Customs Research and Study Programme".

Acting Superintendent Leung Shung-chi
Course participant

New initiatives and training programmes by OTD

Office of Training and Development (OTD) has launched a series of the new training programmes recently. These include:

Training Video on CEPA II

To tie in with the implementation of CEPA II with effect from January 1, 2005, OTD has been tasked to provide video training package on manufacturing processes for Trade Control Branch (TCB) frontline staff. With the joint effort of Trade Controls Training Units and the Training Development Group, shooting was arranged at two factories of pharmaceutical products and the video was available by end 2004.

Legal Knowledge Training Course

In response to the need for more training on legal knowledge as revealed by the survey conducted among TCB officers in mid 2004, OTD has organized jointly with City University of Hong Kong (City U) 5 classes on Legal Knowledge Training Course (LKTC) for some 200 TCOG officers (40 trainees per class).

The eight-day training included 32-hour lecture by City U trainers and 24-hour tutorial arranged by OTD.

Training Courses for Mainland Customs

Pursuant to the annual agreement with the Customs General Administration of PRC, OTD organized four training courses for our Mainland counterparts from November 2004 to January 2005, which included

- (a) Intellectual Property Rights Protection Course;
- (b) Anti-Smuggling and Narcotics Control Course;
- (c) Human Resources Management Course;
- (d) Enterprise Management Course.

Each course lasted for two weeks covering Customs duties of both administrations. A total of 60 Mainland Customs officers joined the courses. To best cater for the



Mainland Customs officers participating in Human Resources Management Course with Commandant of Customs and Excise Training School Alan Li (fifth left, first row) and OTD staff.

training need of the participants, the programs were specially-designed to include classroom lectures, demonstration, experience-sharing sessions and on-site visits, some highlights were:

- Introduction to policies of Hong Kong Customs;
- Field visits to various major formations for a better understanding on the daily operations of Hong Kong Customs;
- Field visits to related government departments and institutes, e.g. the Census and Statistics Department, and Civil Service Training and Development Institute on topics of enterprise management and human resources development respectively;
- Field visits to private companies like brewery and tobacco factory on topic of control and management of Licensed Warehouse.

The courses offered opportunities for officers of both administrations to exchange views and share experience on various aspects of Customs duties and would help promoting closer co-operation.

Office of Training and Development

Trial Run of the CSI System

The Container Security Initiative (CSI) System was fully implemented in March 2005 after a comprehensive trial run in February. The CSI System is an electronic infrastructure developed for Customs to receive cargo data transmitted from the Automated Manifest System^{Note} of the US Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in Washington. It aims at facilitating trade and enabling Hong Kong Customs to screen cargo data and identify suspicious containers well in advance before they are loaded onboard outgoing vessels. Unlike the States, carriers are not obliged by law to submit cargo information to Hong Kong Customs before vessel departure. The Department have to rely on voluntary submission of information from local shipping companies and forwarding agents.

The system could not have developed successfully without the cooperation of the CBP. Various technical problems in receiving data were encountered when the System was first developed, which was eventually overcome. We have to thank our CSI officers, including the technical team involved in the planning and design of the system. Most importantly, we were most grateful to CBP, who had sent us a dedicated team of their IT experts from Washington to assist the Department to resolve technical issues in December 2004.

With the joint efforts of experts of CBP and the Department, all US-bound cargo data became accessible by end January 2005. In the last 20 months up to January 2005, about 600,000 container cargo data has been pre-screened by the Department. During the trial run of the CSI System in February alone, about

120,000 container cargo data has been received and processed automatically. The efficiency has been enhanced by four times.

In wake of September 11 tragedy, CSI is the measure implemented by CBP to minimize the risk of containers being used for terrorist attack. Under the Declaration of Principle signed between CBP and the Department on September 23, 2002, Ports and Maritime Command officers will work with CBP officers stationed in Hong Kong to identify suspicious containers since the launching of pilot scheme on May 12, 2003. High risks containers are subject to inspection by HK Customs before they are shipped to the States.

The full implementation of the automated CSI System not only save manpower, it also facilitates trade through sharing of electronic cargo data and advance cargo clearance.

William W M Ng
Head of Ports and Maritime Command

Note: Automated Manifest System is a computer system through which the US carriers and Non-vessel Operating Common Carriers (NVOCCs) submitted the US-bound cargo data 24 hours in advance before it is laden aboard the vessel at the foreign port under the 24-hour Rule of the United States.

Traders Find Product Safety Seminar Useful

Representatives from around 10 local enterprises attended a half-day seminar on product safety organised by Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau (CPPB) and found it useful.

The seminar was held on January 28, 2005 to heighten traders' awareness of product safety and their obligations under Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance and Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance.

and-answer session, representatives became more familiar with the enforcement of the concerned ordinances, particularly their roles and obligations stipulated by law.

In view of the encouraging response from the participants, CPPB will continue to organise similar seminars for traders on regular basis or upon request in the future so as to better traders' understanding of the need to ensure product safety.



Representatives of local enterprises attended the education-oriented seminar on product safety.

Through the presentation and the question-

Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau

WCO e-Learning Programme

The World Customs Organisation has developed e-learning since 2003 to facilitate Customs administrations to train their officers. It has launched a worldwide pilot training programme on the internet, covering 21 modules on Customs controls. Trainees can learn a wide range of topics including "Profiling Air Passengers", "Drugs Body Concealment" and "Selecting Vessels for Search" through interactive exercises and role-play.

In view of the programme content, the Office of Training & Development (OTD) considered it useful to Inspector, Assistant Trade Controls Officer and officers of above grades. To facilitate their access to the programme through the Internet, OTD applied to WCO for user accounts collectively. Login IDs and passwords were subsequently issued in two batches according to the following schedule:

	Service Grade Officer	Trade Controls Officer Grade Officer
January 2005	Chief Superintendent, Senior Superintendent, Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent	Principal Trade Controls Officer and Chief Trade Controls Officer
March 2005	Senior Inspector and Inspector	Senior Trade Controls Officer, Trade Controls Officer and Assistant Trade Controls Officer

Modeling on WCO's programme modules, OTD is planning to develop its own in-house training materials and organize training workshops for our COG officers. A Chinese version of the programme will be provided to meet our practical needs. To keep pace with technological development, it is the Department's initiative to enhance our professionalism through promoting e-Learning by extending the application of the WCO e-Learning programme.



The module on "Profiling Air Passengers" of the internet training programme.



The module on "Drugs Body Concealment" of the internet training programme.

Office of Training & Development

Seminar on "Court Proceedings in Magistrates' Courts"

In view of the overwhelming response from various Formations for attending the seminar on "Court Proceedings in Magistrates' Courts", which was given by Court Prosecutors of the Department of Justice in June 2004, Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau (CPPB) organised another seminar on January 22, 2005. It focused on hot issues, such as disclosure of materials to the defence, and included a question-and-answer session. About 140 officers from all Major Formations attended.

It was with great honour to have Mr Ernest Cheung, Chief Court Prosecutor (Operations) and three Senior Court Prosecutors, namely Mr William

Wong, Mr C K Chu and Ms Karine Sit, to deliver the talk. During the seminar, they provided clear explanation on the importance of disclosure of materials to the defence, consolidation of charges, evidential proof on corporate liabilities, code and conduct when giving evidence in court, techniques in statement taking and making reference to official notebooks in court. The seminar was well received by participants, who all found the occasion useful in strengthening cooperation with Court Prosecutors and offering an opportunity for exchange of experience.

Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau



Superintendent M M Wong (third left, front row) and Chief Trade Controls Officer K K Fan (second left, front row) with Chief Court Prosecutor (Operations) Mr Ernest Cheung (front row centre), the three Senior Court Prosecutors and officers of Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau.

Use of Breathing Apparatus Training Course 2004

The "Use of Breathing Apparatus Training Course 2004" was successfully held by Harbour and River Trade Division (HRTD) at the River Trade Terminal from December 6 to 12, 2004. The five-and-a-half-day course aimed at providing trainees with requisite knowledge on: (a) the safety precautions of working inside the confined spaces on board vessels; (b) the use of the breathing apparatus and associated personal protective equipment; and (c) related rescue techniques and contingency measures. A total of 14 participants of HRTD had successfully acquired relevant qualifications upon completion of the course.

Apart from classroom lecture, practical simulation exercises, including "Manoeuvring in Narrow Space and Darkness", "Casualty Evacuation for Confined Space Workers" and "Entering Confined Spaces at Aft", were held. Moreover, a half-day training session was conducted on board a vessel enabling the trainees to get hands-on experience of using the breathing apparatus.

Since working in confined space can be perilous, only those who are proficient with the usage and the related safety measures can become qualified users of breathing apparatus. As such, a strict standard for becoming a qualified user of breathing apparatus is adopted and trainees have to pass three parts of assessment, namely Written Examination, Personal Practical Assessment and Oral Examination, and Team Assessment.

Although the course was strenuous, the trainees found it enjoyable and were eager to take the challenge. Most of them performed remarkably throughout the course. With concerted efforts and dogged determination, all trainees passed the assessments and became qualified users of breathing apparatus.



A trainee practising to use "Quick Coupling Connector" of his facemask to provide air to another breathing apparatus user.

All in all, the feedback from the trainees was encouraging, especially on the practical exercises which enabled trainees to apply all requisite skills and knowledge. "The course has greatly enhanced my confidence in using the apparatus and knowledge in occupational safety, particularly in working in confined space," a trainee remarked.

Harbour and River Trade Division
Ports and Maritime Command

New Tsing Yi Station to be in operation

Starting from April 2005, the Customs and Excise Department Tsing Yi Station (Tsing Yi Station) is in operation to meet the growing demand for sea cargo clearance service. The new station with container handling capacity of 2.6 million TEUs is set up in Container Terminal No. 9 (CT9), which is on southeastern part of Tsing Yi Island.

The two-storey Tsing Yi Station consists of a dog kennel and a cargo examination platform with holding capacity of eight container trucks. It also includes interview rooms and two detention cells. In addition to the existing equipment for cargo examination, such as X-ray checkers and lonscanners, a Mobile X-ray Vehicle Scanning System will be set up in the station.

Following the second phase deployment of 23 Customs Officers, it will give rise to the strength of 63 officers under the Container Terminal 9 Division of the Ports Control Group of the Ports and Maritime Command.



The Customs and Excise Department Tsing Yi Station.



The cargo examination platform of Tsing Yi Station.

Ports and Maritime Command

Talks by Anti-internet Piracy Team

Since Customs' first-ever successful enforcement action against Peer-to-Peer (P2P) file sharing activities on January 12, 2005, internet piracy activities e.g. using BitTorrent (BT), was curbed. The Anti-Internet Piracy Team (AIPT) will continue to mount round-the-clock surveillance on copyright infringement activities on the internet. Since many teenagers participate in P2P activities, it is strongly believed that enforcement action alone cannot root out such activities.

To heighten the awareness among students and youngsters on the importance of protecting intellectual property rights on the internet, AIPT give talks in schools

concerning internet piracy. So far, AIPT has approached 14 Parent-Teacher Associations and has already delivered four talks since January 2005.

The talks were well received by teachers and parents, who expressed great interest in Customs enforcement against internet piracy and BT file sharing activities. Given the encouraging response, AIPT will continue the educational talks with a view to promoting respect of intellectual property rights among youngsters.

Anti-Internet Piracy Team
Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau



Ms Y W Lam, Principal of C.C.C. Heep Woh College presenting a souvenir to Acting Assistant Superintendent Jimmy Tam for giving the talk.

Product Safety Training Programme

I attended a 3-week attachment training organized by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) from November 22 to December 10, 2004. The purpose of the training program was to enable participant to acquire up-to-date information on the product safety control in Australia, their product safety enforcement strategies and investigation approach.

I was attached to ACCC's Product Safety Section in its Melbourne office and worked closely with its director and two product safety officers. Through discussions, meetings and experience sharing with their officers, I had

a better understanding of their work in how to identify hazardous products, review product safety standards, and reduce risk of injury or death given rise from using the consumer products.

The training has not only broadened my horizon on consumer product safety enforcement but also brought me valuable friendship with ACCC officers.

Lau Ying Fong
Acting Senior Trade Controls Officer
Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau



(From left) Ms Gail O'bryen, Director (Product Safety), Mr Glenn Probyn, Product Safety Officer, Miss Lau Ying Fong, Acting Senior Trade Controls Officer and Ms Margaret Barry, product safety officer at Melbourne Office

Seminar for Trade Controls Officers

About 170 Trade Control Officers attended a seminar organised by the Trade Controls Branch on December 1, 2004. It covered several topics, including:

- (1) Post-2004 Textiles Controls System
(Speaker: Mr Marcus Lau, Head of Textiles Tactical Investigations Bureau)
- (2) The Second Phase of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA II)
(Speaker: Mr SM Wong, Head of Trade Inspection and Verification Bureau)
- (3) Grade Structure Review and Trade Control Bureau Re-organisation in 2005
(Speaker: Mr Paul Sit, Head of General Investigation and Systems Bureau)
- (4) Possible Control on Audio/Video Products
(Speaker: Mr SY Cheung, Head of Consumer Protection and Prosecution Bureau)
- (5) Enforcement of Trade Declaration System
(Speaker: Mr CW Watt, Head of Trade Investigation Bureau)
- (6) Worry and concern of Trade Control Officer Grade
(Speaker: Mr Raymond Wong, Head of Trade Controls)



Head of Trade Controls, Raymond Wong (third right) and five Bureau Heads speaking at the seminar.

Advanced Training Course in Mediation Practice

With the encouragement and support of the Department, I have completed the "Advanced Training Course in Mediation Practice" jointly organized by the School of Continuing Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Mediation Centre, which was held on April 1, 2005.

The 40-hour course, consisting of 13 sessions, is a quarterly course offered to professionals, including lawyers, counselors, social workers, officers of disciplined forces and personnel from the training as well as customer service field. The aim of the course is to provide its students with the knowledge and techniques to resolve a dispute or conflict as the role of mediator.

By definition, mediation is a voluntary and confidential process in which a neutral third party, called a mediator, helps disputing parties isolate disputed issues in order to develop options and alternatives, and reach a consensual settlement by identifying a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict that will accommodate their needs, thereby achieving a win-win situation.

As an officer who needs to receive complaints lodged by members of the public in the first instance, I understand that conflicts very often arise because of a number of reasons, such as misunderstanding of the Customs responsibilities,

invalid expectation of the level of service provided and the breakdown of communication between the complainant and our colleague, etc.

From the perspective of Complaints Investigation Group, the best solution to handle a complaint of minor dispute is however to settle it with mediation rather than conducting a thorough investigation. While a successful mediation will promote the departmental image, enormous resources which will otherwise be spent on formal investigation can be saved. For the time being, I am confident that I will be able to apply those skills learnt from the course to resolve complaints arising from the lack of understanding of Customs jobs and services.

Last but not least, I hope our colleagues can understand that mediation does not mean the admission of fault, but just an alternative to offer the complainant a channel to express his feelings and a solution to settle his complaint. Whenever possible, frontline officers are encouraged to apply mediation service in settling complaints and I will be most happy to share my experience and exchange my newly acquired knowledge with my fellow colleagues.

Inspector Ng Wai-ming
Complaints Investigation Group

HKU Bachelor of Criminal Justice (BCJ) - Graduation

We are pleased to announce that the first class of graduates of the Bachelor of Criminal Justice Programme attended the Graduation Ceremony of the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong on December 5, 2004.

After hard work, 11 graduates received their certificates in the presence of their families friends, who came to share their joy.

Dr Thomas Wong, Head of the Department of Sociology, congratulated the graduates and reminded them "to have an unwavering commitment to life-long

learning, place paramount the best interest of their profession with strong sense of social responsibility to serve Hong Kong community."

He noted that the number of applications for the programmes was on the rise in spite of the recent economic setback. It showed that Hong Kong people dedicated themselves to life-long learning.

Department of Sociology
The University of Hong Kong

Customs Recruitment

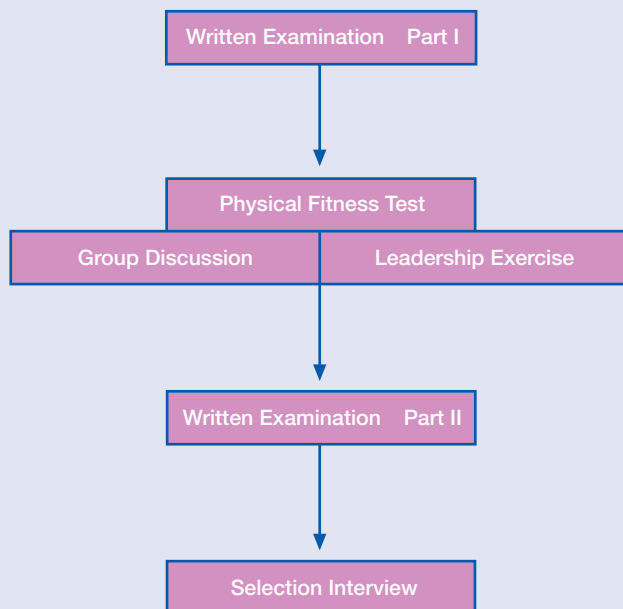
Following the three-year recruitment freeze, approval was granted for the Department in late December, 2004 for recruiting 38 inspectors and 133 Customs Officers. Apart from organizing training and development programmes, the Office of Training and Development (OTD) is responsible for conducting recruitment exercise.

To alleviate the manpower constraint faced by the Department, recruitment exercise was kicked off immediately with the support of the Office of Departmental Administration (ODA) and the Office of Service Administration (OSA). Thanks to all possible preparation OTD made beforehand, the new recruits can be trained at the earliest possible time.

Recruitment advertisements were placed in January this year. The newly recruited Customs Officers (COs) will be admitted to the training school in July and will be joining the force in December after the 20-week training. As for Customs Inspectors, they will undergo training in November and are expected to join the force after a 30-week course. To meet with the challenges arising from the new projects, such as the Shenzhen Bay Control Point, preparations have also been made for recruiting and training more new COs and inspectors.

To reduce administrative cost and to include competency test in the selection process, the Department commissioned a professor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong to review the existing selection process in 2002. Based on his recommendations, a new selection process has been introduced for the first time this year. The new selection processes for inspector and CO are as follows:

New selection process for inspector:



• Written Examination – Part I

Candidates will be invited to attend the Written Examination (Part I) as the first selection step. The examination consists of three multiple-choice tests, including English Language Test, Chinese Language Test and Aptitude Test.

• Physical Fitness Test, Group Discussion and Leadership Exercise

Candidates who have passed the Written Examination (Part I) will be invited to the Physical Fitness Test. On the day of the test, candidates who have passed the Physical Fitness Test will proceed to Group Discussion and Leadership Exercise. In Group Discussion, candidates will be given topics to discuss in a group setting in English and Cantonese whilst in Leadership Exercise, candidates will be assigned as leaders of a small team and are required to complete a physical task.

• Written Examination - Part II

Successful candidates will attend the Written Examination (Part II). The examination comprises two essay questions to assess their presentation skills in Chinese and English and analytical power.

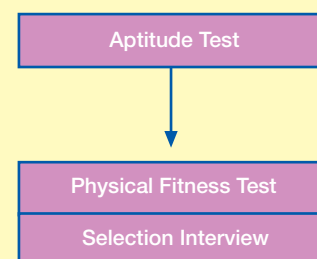
• Selection Interview

Candidates who have passed the Written Examination (Part II) will be invited to attend a selection interview.

During the selection process, candidates will be critically assessed based on the following competencies

- Problem Solving and Decision Making Power
- Operational Planning
- Team Leadership and Staff Management
- Perceptiveness and Adaptability
- Interpersonal Communication Skills
- Integrity
- Drive and Resilience
- Bilingual Language Ability (written and oral)

New selection process for Customs Officer:



• Aptitude Test

Candidates will be invited to attend the Aptitude Test comprising multiple-choice questions (including both Chinese and English questions) as the first selection step.

• Physical Fitness Test and Selection Interview

Candidates who have passed the Aptitude test will be invited to Physical Fitness Test. On the day of the test, candidates who have passed the Physical Fitness Test will attend a selection interview. The interview board will ask questions to further assess the competencies of the candidates.

During the selection process candidates will be critically assessed based on the following competencies

- Decision Making Power and Judgement
- Problem Sensitivity
- Initiative
- Confidence
- Integrity
- Communication Skills
- Team Orientation
- Adaptability towards Change
- Cantonese Language Ability

Office of Training and Development