

Trans-Pacific Symposium on Dismantling Transnational Illicit Networks

Workshop held in Christchurch, New Zealand, 16-18 November 2010

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

More than 100 law enforcement and other government officials from 23 Asia-Pacific economies, and representatives of regional and international organisations, attended a workshop held under the auspices of the Trans-Pacific Symposium on Dismantling Transnational Illicit Networks in Christchurch from 16-18 November 2010.

2. The workshop was co-sponsored by the governments of New Zealand and the United States. On behalf of participants the co-chairs expressed appreciation for the welcome *whakatau* provided by representatives of local *iwi* and the goodwill extended by the people of Christchurch during the workshop.

3. The workshop built on the foundations laid at the inaugural Trans-Pacific Symposium on Dismantling Transnational Illicit Networks hosted by the United States in Hawaii from 9-12 November 2009.

4. The theme for the Christchurch workshop was Inter-Agency Cooperation in Combating Transnational Illicit Networks. The overall aim of the workshop was to continue the dialogue that began in Hawaii, share information and best practices, and confirm key priorities for future cooperation to address pressing challenges such as narcotics trafficking, counterfeit medicines, trafficking in persons, illegal logging, money laundering, and corruption that facilitates illicit trade.

5. Overviews and assessments of transnational organised crime trends globally and in the Asia-Pacific region set the scene for the workshop. It was recognised that the activities of transnational criminal networks threaten economic development, efforts to improve governance, public safety and in some cases national security.

6. Workshop participants acknowledged that the threats posed by increasingly sophisticated transnational criminal networks are evolving and not abating. The variety of criminal activities has increased and these can extend over a number of countries, and even continents. This reality requires law enforcement agencies to strengthen their efforts including through enhanced collaboration with international partners.

7. Numerous challenges that impede effective international cooperation were noted, including:

- resourcing and capacity issues, particularly in developing countries including small Pacific Island states

- differing legal systems and jurisdictional issues;
- issues around information security (including sharing particularly sensitive information).

8. The workshop identified better coordination and communication between national and international agencies as essential for progress to be made on disrupting criminal networks. Improving coordination relies on a number of factors, such as:

- developing a clearer picture of transnational crime trends across the Pacific so that government agencies can develop more effective strategies to address transnational threats;
- building trust between agencies both nationally and internationally;
- establishing enduring working relationships between counterparts in different economies;
- creating a common understanding of the activities of criminal networks and what investigative techniques are available to disrupt them;
- enhanced intelligence and information-sharing arrangements, including common arrangements for evidence sharing to assist in carrying out investigations and prosecutions;
- recognising the challenges that Asia-Pacific partners face and how we can assist each other to overcome them, including through capacity building programmes;
- improving technology, technical skills and leadership capacity;
- making better use of international instruments and cooperative frameworks that are already available including the UN Conventions against Corruption (UNCAC) and Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), and its protocols; and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) principles on combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

9. There was acknowledgement of the importance of maintaining existing regional and international mechanisms for cooperation on combating transnational organised crime, including:

- global organisations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interpol and the World Customs Organisation (WCO);
- established regional bodies such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and associated fora including the ASEAN Regional Forum and ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime, the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee and other Pacific regional immigration, customs and police bodies, and the Organisation of American States (OAS).

- region wide organisations such as Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), with its APEC Anti-Corruption Taskforce and other relevant APEC programmes;

10. Particular note was taken of the recent commitment in Yokohama, Japan by APEC leaders to leverage collective action to combat corruption and illicit trade by promoting clean government, fostering market integrity, and strengthening relevant judicial and law enforcement systems. APEC leaders encouraged member economies to dismantle corrupt and illicit networks across the Asia Pacific region.

11. The workshop highlighted the importance of translating political will and common resolve into concrete results. Attention was given to finding operational solutions and practical outcomes. Follow-up activity will include:

- consultation and engagement on UNODC's proposed East Asia-Pacific regional transnational crime threat assessment;

- plans to expand capacity building programmes on a regional, sub-regional and bilateral basis, in areas such as training for prosecutors to enhance their knowledge of operational requirements;

- continuation of activities in other international and regional fora that support the goals of the Trans-Pacific Symposium;

- participating officials and agencies will take forward learnings from the workshop to improve policy frameworks and operational processes and procedures in their jurisdictions, with a particular focus on achieving better coordination of multi-agency efforts at the national level.

12. The co-chairs consider that holding the Christchurch Trans-Pacific Symposium workshop has furthered the aim of building an informal trans-Pacific 'network of networks' to support efforts to counter transnational criminal threats and illicit networks in our region.

13. As this trans-Pacific law enforcement partnership develops there is strong interest in maintaining the operational focus of the process. Encouragement was given to participating economies considering hosting follow-on activities under the Trans-Pacific Symposium banner, in 2011 and beyond, to enable continuation of the valuable working level discussions, networking and sharing of information that featured in the 2010 Christchurch workshop.