



Discussion Document on Fisheries Crime in the Containerized Trade Supply Chain: Examples from East Africa¹

1. Background

This discussion document is based on the 13th webinar in a series of Blue Justice Forum webinars facilitated by the Blue Justice Initiative Secretariat in conjunction with the UNDP Blue Resilience project.

The theme for the webinar was the ‘**Fisheries Crime in the Containerized Supply Chain**’.

The webinar was presented by Ms. Anne Linn Jensen – Programme Officer with the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP), Mr. Edmund Landy Tei – UNODC-CCP Trainer, and Mr. Ivan Kagambo – Police Officer with the Tanzania Port Authority. A total of 27 participants joined the webinar from a total of 14 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, and United Kingdom). The webinar was moderated by Emma Witbooi from the Blue Resilience project.

2. Topics in Focus

Fisheries Crime in the Containerized Supply Chain – Anne Linn Jensen – Programme Officer with the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP).

1. Around the world, there are 793 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) movements each year (2018). Such a high number of container movements provides plenty of opportunities for legal trade, but also many opportunities for transnational criminal networks.
2. The Container Control Programme (CCP) was launched by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) in 2004. The CCP assists governments in establishing and maintaining effective controls over containerized shipping in seaports, dry ports, land borders, railways and airports.
3. Aiming to minimize exploitation for trafficking in drugs and other illicit commodities, the CCP facilitates trade and protects border revenue while at the same time enhancing interagency collaboration and international information sharing.

¹ The webinar was held on 12 November, 11:00 CET.

4. The CCP establishes inter-agency Port Control Units (PCUs) and Air Cargo Control Units (ACCUs) in seaports, dry ports, land borders, railways and airports to identify and interdict high risk containers. These units are composed of relevant frontline authorities and may include customs, police, wildlife authorities, etc., depending on the national context.
5. In only 16 years, the CCP has managed to become a truly global programme, currently having 120 operational units in 59 different countries across the world. The programme focuses on long-term specialized training tailored to national and regional contexts.
6. In 2016, UNODC received funding from the Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) for a fisheries crime component to the CCP and the GP Wildlife and Forest Crime, the so-called FishNET programme. Fisheries crime is an ill-defined legal concept referring to crimes committed along the fisheries value chain. Because of the typically lenient penalties, high profits and lack of cross-border law enforcement cooperation, transnational organized crime groups are involved in these activities, including in the containerized supply chain.
7. The focus on fisheries crime came as a response to the constant increased TEU and air cargo shipments where fish, fish products and fishing gear were among the transported/smuggled goods in containers.
8. The aim of the CCP fisheries crime component is to provide a coordinated practical customs and law enforcement approach to fisheries crime in the containerized supply chain.
9. Specifically, it aims at enhancing the knowledge of frontline level officers on how to detect and deter fisheries crime in the containerized trade supply chain.
10. The fisheries crime component aims to enhance knowledge on fisheries crime in the containerised trade supply chain among front line level officers
11. Further it aims to enhance inter-agency cooperation between Customs, police, coastguards, navies, and fishery departments
12. One component focuses on cooperation with the private sector in this regard.
13. Regional and international cooperation is encouraged, specifically in relation to information sharing.

Fisheries Crime in the Containerized Supply Chain: A Practical Law Enforcement Approach –
 Mr. Edmund Landy Tei – UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme Trainer.

14. The CCP FishNET component is structured to forge a collaborative working relationship between the PCUs and Fisheries Authority officers, building on synergies and harnessing competences to combat fisheries crime.
15. The programme provides officers with container profiling and tracking skills to enhance their capacity to combat fisheries crime in containerized cargo. The curriculum covers both a global overview and a focus on the national situation, covering both artisanal as well as the industrial fishing sector.
16. The geographical focus of the programme is 1) East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania), 2) West Africa (Benin, Ghana, Togo), 3) South Asia (Bangladesh, the Maldives, Sri Lanka), and 4) Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam).
17. The CCP helps to forge local, regional and international networks, thereby facilitating joint operations between different jurisdictions. The collaborative approach is also visible in trainings themselves, where several countries have come together for workshops to discuss and draw upon experiences from each other.

Fisheries Crime in the Containerized Supply Chain: Fisheries Crime Targeting – Mr. Ivan Kagambo – Police Officer with the Tanzania Port Authority.

18. In 2018, CCP PCU in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania received training on fisheries crime for the first time. Prior, officers had limited knowledge about the workings of transnational fisheries crime in the containerized trade supply chain.
19. The trainings resulted in improved knowledge on fisheries crime and on how it manifests itself in the containerized trade supply chain specifically, both in import and export.
20. The trainings brought the PCU and Tanzanian Fisheries Authority together to jointly address fisheries crime and forge a working coalition. This relationship has led to joint targeting and examination of targets, improved the capacity of both teams.
21. There were also regional meetings with counterparts in Kenya, facilitating information-sharing and cooperation between the two countries.
22. The Covid-19 pandemic led to a reduction in the number of fish import containers moving through the port and limited the number of officers to conduct inspections.
23. Restrictions on movement during lockdown hindered the ability of local fishermen to go fishing, affecting fish and lobster exports and resulting in severe tax revenue losses from the sector.
24. The pandemic and related restrictions also affected local markets, as people were unable to gather to purchase fish.
25. Findings: since many different actors are involved in addressing fisheries crime, coordination is crucial. Enhanced inter-agency cooperation has the potential to facilitate more comprehensive targeting and better prevention.
26. There is also a need to strengthen the capacity of frontline level law enforcement and customs officers working in both sea, land and airports.

In sum:

27. Around the world, there are 793 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) movements each year (2018). Such a high number of container movements provides plenty of opportunities for legal trade, but also many opportunities for transnational criminal networks.
28. The CCP was launched by UNOCD and the WCO in 2004. The CCP assist governments in establishing and maintaining effective controls over containerized shipping in seaports, dry ports, land borders, railways and airports.
29. The fisheries crime component of the CCP aims at enhancing the knowledge of frontline level officers on detecting and deterring fisheries crime in the containerized trade supply chain. Trained agencies work together to tackle this challenge; the private sector and local communities working in the ports are made aware of the negative effects and cooperate with the fisheries departments and law enforcement officers in the CCP units.
30. As many different actors are involved in addressing fisheries crime, coordination is crucial. Enhanced inter-agency cooperation will potentially facilitate more comprehensive targeting and better prevention in the future. There remains a need to strengthen the capacity of frontline level law enforcement and customs officers working in sea, land and airports.

General discussion

Discussion themes included:

1. Impacts of Covid-19 on the containerized trade supply chain.
2. The role of East Africa as a transit spot between Asia (China, Thailand and Vietnam) and destination countries (Congo and Burundi).
3. Hidden illegal products in frozen fish and the process of examination.