

Action Committee Against Narcotics visits Kwai Chung Customhouse of Customs and Excise Department (with photos)

The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) members visited the Kwai Chung Customhouse today (February 21) to learn about the latest drug enforcement work of the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and expressed support to the C&ED's efforts in stepping up international co-operation.

Accompanied by the Acting Assistant Commissioner (Intelligence and Investigation) of Customs, Mr James Wong, the ACAN members listened to presentations about the C&ED's enforcement work against maritime drug trafficking by Customs officers, and learned about how the department makes use of advanced examination equipment (such as ion scanners, raman spectrometers and mobile X-ray vehicle scanning systems) to assist its work. The members also watched a demonstration of Customs detector dogs carrying out their duty during cargo clearance.

Mr Wong said, "Being a gate-keeper, the C&ED has all along been attaching great importance to curbing the inflow of drugs, especially through the seaborne channel, by adopting proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies." He added, "In the face of ever-changing drug smuggling trends, partnership and co-operation with global customs administrations and other law enforcement agencies must be strengthened in order to achieve effective narcotics interdiction."

The C&ED has always been playing an active role in regional and international drug enforcement, such as organising the Regional Customs High-level Drug Enforcement Forum and the Regional Drug Enforcement Capacity Building Workshop, which facilitated collaboration and communication among representatives of law enforcement agencies around the world last year. Between September and November 2023, the C&ED also mounted a large-scale joint operation named "Operation Marker" within the Asia-Pacific region with 31 law enforcement agencies to combat drug smuggling activities, leading to successful detection of a total of over 170 related cases in Hong Kong and other regions.

To further demonstrate the leading position of the department among customs organisations, the C&ED will host the 6th World Customs Organization (WCO) Global Canine Forum, with anti-narcotics work as one of the key discussion topics, in March this year to enable experts from around the world to exchange knowledge and best practices in canine training and enforcement. Subject to final confirmation by the WCO, the C&ED will put forward more initiatives to crack down on cross-boundary drug crimes after assuming the position of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia-Pacific Region in the coming July.

The Chairman of the ACAN, Dr Donald Li, commended the relentless anti-drug efforts of the C&ED over the years. Dr Li and the ACAN members expressed full support for the C&ED's upcoming international participation in and commitment to holding the 6th Global Canine Forum and assuming the next WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia-Pacific Region in 2024, which will further consolidate the leadership position of the C&ED in the global customs community. He said he believed the continued collaboration between the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau and the C&ED would contribute to combating drug problems at source and building a drug-free Hong Kong.

