



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

AITTF collaborates on IPO, WIPO Sub-Regional Seminar on Enforcement

October 28, 2024: Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Co-Chair of the Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force (AITTF), Mr. Randall Karim, today delivered opening remarks at the Sub-regional Seminar on Enforcement for IP Prosecutors, Customs Officers and Police Investigators, at Customs House, Port of Spain.

The two-day seminar is a collaboration among the AITTF, World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs (AGLA), and the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO). The meeting set out to engage key stakeholders on building respect for intellectual property (IP), customs enforcement frameworks, fighting counterfeiting and piracy, investigating IP crimes, inter-agency cooperation, awareness raising and public cooperation to combat counterfeiting and piracy.

The Permanent Secretary (PS) said the hosting of the seminar is in alignment with the objectives and ongoing work of the AITTF, noting that one of these objectives is to strengthen the capacity of Ministries and enforcement agencies to combat illicit trade. He also acknowledged the benefit of receiving guidance from the WIPO, key partners in the United States, and other regional counterparts.

One of the key projects on the AITTF's agenda is the development of a local Customs Recordation System, which TTIPO is leading, with technical assistance from the WIPO.

The Customs Recordation and Information System (CRIS) through the Industrial Property Administration System aims to capture information about brand owners, authorised distributors, authorised manufacturers and provide images of genuine goods. The Permanent Secretary said, "This will allow local enforcement agencies to easily search trademark information, as well as receive training from brand owners."

Day two of the seminar will focus on investigation and prosecution of IP crimes, an area, which also fits in with the work of the AITTF.

PS Karim said, “A key measure of the National Action Plan to Combat Illicit Trade is the conduct of training sessions on IP enforcement and prosecution with Customs and Excise Division and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. In that regard, the AITTF continues to support training on IP awareness and enforcement – such as this seminar, and is giving active consideration to the execution of an Anti-Counterfeiting and Anti-Piracy Charter.”

Also delivering Remarks during the Opening Session were Ms. Natasha Barrow, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security and Co-Chair of the Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force; Ms. Trudy Lewis, Deputy Permanent Secretary, AGLA; Ms. Charisma Hampton, Attorney Advisor, Enforcement Team, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; Mr. Todd Reves, Director, Building Respect for IP (BRIP) Division, Global Challenges and Partnerships Sector, WIPO; and Ms. Yasmin Harris, Comptroller, Customs and Excise Division, Ministry of Finance.

In October, the AITTF rolled out phase two of its national awareness plan, which includes radio interviews, informational ad campaigns and national outreach activities toward raising awareness and combatting illicit trade in Trinidad and Tobago.

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