

**Information Note*****Partners to the Green Customs Initiative receive prestigious 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ozone Protection Award******Montréal, Canada, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007***

The Green Customs Initiative was today honoured with the prestigious Ozone Protection Award in the category of ‘partnerships’ on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Five of the ten Green Customs Initiative Partners were present in Montreal to receive the award. The award, which was presented by the Secretariat of the Montreal Protocol and Vienna Convention, recognises the critical role civil society and international organisations have played in the development and implementation of the Protocol.

Today, customs officers around the world are in the frontline, expected on the one hand to maximise the benefits society can derive from global trade, and at the same time responsible for minimising the risks and threats that such trade can pose – threats ranging from illegal trade in banned or restricted chemicals to managing movements of living modified organisms and trade in rare and endangered wildlife.

The objective of Green Customs is to enhance customs officers’ capacity to detect and act on illegal trade in environmentally-sensitive items covered by the relevant international agreements, and assist them in the facilitation of legal trade in these items. UNEP and its partners in the Green Customs Initiative are devising innovative approaches to work with customs administrations on environmental issues.

The Green Customs Initiative offers a coordinated approach for providing information, training and awareness raising to customs officials to help them monitor trade in commodities of environmental concern. This initiative is supported by the World Customs Organization (WCO), Interpol, the Secretariats of CITES, the Basel Convention, the Montreal Protocol, the Rotterdam Convention, the Stockholm Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). UNEP’s Division of Technology Industry and Economics’ OzonAction Branch is the coordinator of the Initiative and has bought the experience gained with the Montreal Protocol on training customs officers to the whole Green Customs partnership.

In a press release published today by the World Customs Organization<sup>1</sup>, which also received an individual award for its contribution to the Protocol, Michel Danet, Executive Secretary of the World Customs Organization, declared that: “It is a very great honour to win this Award, which is immense recognition of the WCO’s commitment to combating the illicit trade in ozone depleting substances.”

For more information, please visit: [www.greencustoms.org](http://www.greencustoms.org)

<sup>1</sup> The press release of the WCO is available at: <http://www.wcoomd.org/press>