

What is the CCP Women's Network?

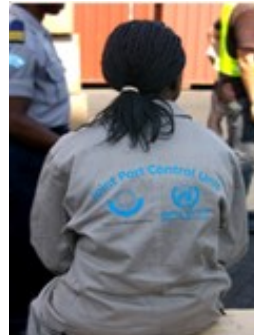
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Customs and law enforcement are traditionally male dominated professions where representation of women remains low. Recognizing the valuable contributions that women make in the law enforcement setting, the Container Control Programme (CCP) has taken steps to address gender disparities at every stage of project implementation.

In order to more actively promote women's roles in CCP and to work towards gender equality in the law enforcement profession, the CCP Women's Network was established in August 2015. Since then, the Women's Network has developed an action-oriented framework laying out its goals, including defining gender indicators to assess impact, encouraging the Programme's Port Control Units (PCUs) to include female officers by enacting gender-sensitized recruitment criteria and flexible working hours, and establishing a support network to build capacity of female officers. A gender awareness training module has become a mandatory part of the two-week theoretical training course. Annual meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the Women's Network and the way forward.

With the Women's Network newsletter, the CCP will provide readers with regular updates on activities undertaken to mainstream gender and the contribution of women to the success of the Programme. We also welcome your suggestions and comments on how we can work better together.

For more information and to sign up for the newsletter, please send an email to: ccp.womensnetwork@un.org



UN Secretary-General Gender Parity Strategy

In September 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres pledged to create a working environment that "embraces equality, eradicates bias and is inclusive of all staff." The report cited the proven linkage between diversity and operational efficiency and effectiveness.

With the Women's Network, CCP has incorporated gender mainstreaming into its standard programme in line with the core values of the United Nations and Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.



PCU officers in Ghana inspect a suspicious shipment.

The Container Control Programme assists governments in implementing effective controls over containerized shipping in sea, land, and airports by establishing inter-agency Port Control Units (PCUs). Experts deliver tailored trainings to the PCUs with a view to minimize exploitation of cargo for trafficking of illicit goods.

Current status

The representation of women in CCP Port Control Units (PCUs) varies between 0% and 60%, but overall representation has been on the rise – female PCU officers now make up 14% of the total, compared to 11% in 2015. In addition, two PCUs are now headed by women: one in Kingston, Jamaica and one in Tema, Ghana.

"I believe that women have an equal and important place in law enforcement. The ratio at the PCU in the Port of Tema is approximately 15 women out of 25 officers, or 60%. Every issue that is gender related is given equal priority and is not treated as an after-thought."

- Female Head of PCU in Ghana

Actions taken

The Women's Network focuses on concrete action to mainstream gender as effectively as possible. In addition to regular meetings, achievements to date include:

- Pilot training module dedicated to gender launched in February 2016 in Cambodia;
- Training module reviewed and improved throughout 2016;
- The number and role of women in trainings and Port Control Units measured;
- Communication platform to connect female CCP staff and PCU officers established.

Meet the women of CCP

To get a glimpse of what it is like to be a female customs officer working in a Port Control Unit, CCP met with Sovinna Som, who works in the recently opened PCU in Sihanoukville, Cambodia.

CCP: Why did you want to become a Customs officer?

Sovinna: I have always looked up to my father who worked for the government. I dreamed to be like him, he was my inspiration. After college I passed the entry-level exam within the Ministry of Economics and Finance and was recruited as a customs officer. I am very proud of where I am now, working as a front line officer, but I want to continue to build on my skill sets and one day work at the National Security level.

CCP: What is the best part of being a member of the PCU?

Sovinna: Right now I want to continue to improve myself professionally as I'm still quite junior in this field. I am very eager to participate in CCP trainings to learn more and expand my skills as a Customs officer. Also, we get the opportunity to protect our Nation from harmful imports coming into the country. I am so proud, so proud of our team when we manage to stop a shipment of illegal goods.

CCP: What challenges are you facing as a young female customs officer?

Sovinna: In Cambodia, we still have a ranking system within our society and sometimes as a young officer we don't hold the same value as senior officials do. As a female officer, I haven't had any particular issues here. There is some of the work I am not allowed to do as a woman, for example, a job that would require me to stay late. But I would say that, in general, I feel like the team tries to promote women.

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Two Women PCU Officers Receive UN Day 2017 Excellence Award/Albania

The Excellence Award, given by the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Embassy in Albania, and the United Nations in Albania, was awarded to two women PCU officers in October, 2017. The officers were praised not only for making Albania's borders and its citizens safer by contributing to the significant seizures at the Durres PCU, but also for championing the gender mainstreaming initiative in customs administration and law enforcement. By challenging prejudices and working in a male dominated sector, they serve as examples for other women considering careers in law enforcement.



Female customs officers in Cambodia