

TRACIT Participates in Brand Protection Strategy Summit

East Lansing, MI, 24 Sept. 2019 – Today, at a Brand Protection Strategy Summit hosted by the Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection (A-Capp) at Michigan State University, the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) participated in a discussion about the increased sophistication of bad actors exploiting vulnerabilities in regulatory governance and global supply chains. The annual Summit provides an educational forum for U.S. brand owners and federal and state officials to share information and strategies.

On a panel “Lessons of Convergence: Counterfeiting and Other Types of Illegal Trade,” Cindy Braddon, Head of Communications and Public Policy for TRACIT, provided examples of illicit trade from across industry sectors and pointed out the commonalities between all forms of illicit trade.

“Illicit trade affects every company in every sector and in every country,” stated Ms. Braddon. “Illegal fishing represents as much as 33% of global marine capture value and is the leading cause of declining fish populations; illegal logging destroys the carbon sink capacity of forests; 1 in 10 cigarettes in China is illicit; 25% of global alcohol consumption is from illicit bottles; food fraud is the intentional sale of substandard food products and ingredients and meats, dairy products, fish and seafood, infant formula, fruit juices, oils, honey, spices and sodas; and illicit trade in pharmaceuticals is a \$200 billion a year problem.”

Ms. Braddon explained how bad actors exploit vulnerabilities in regulatory environments and supply chains – including online platforms.

“They are engaged in smuggling; counterfeiting; piracy; corruption and bribery; money laundering; tax evasion; they plunder natural resources; abuse supply chains and expose consumers to fake and potentially harmful products,” according to Ms. Braddon. “They violate intellectual property laws by providing fake goods under legitimate brand names; they lie and mis-label their products. Some criminals operate out of their homes, concocting medicines or alcoholic drinks with fake or deadly ingredients; many organized criminals have very sophisticated plants. They traffic their products across borders and exploit gaps in Free Trade Zones; they use maritime carriers and even the USPS to deliver illegal products to consumers – cleverly avoiding detection by using small packages sold over electronic platforms.”

Ms. Braddon summarized TRACIT’s work program and focus on plugging gaps in governance, calling for increased training and resources for law enforcement and border patrols; highlighting the need to have online platforms and deliverers take a responsible role in vetting and reporting counterfeit sellers; and advocating sustained consumer awareness programs.

Cindy explained TRACIT’s focus is on advocacy, conducting research-based studies, developing custom policy and regulatory solutions, and sharing best practices. She also highlighted some of the key projects that TRACIT is undertaking, most specifically, the [Global Illicit Trade Environment Index](#) and custom policy recommendations per country/region; and [Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the UN SDGs](#).

About TRACIT

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade ([TRACIT](#)) is an independent, private sector initiative to drive change to mitigate the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening

government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across industry sectors most impacted by illicit trade.

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