

Hong Kong Customs combats supply and sale of suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted a territory-wide operation codenamed "Venus" in the past three days (May 15 to 17) to combat the supply and sale of suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products. A total of about 13 000 pieces of suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products with an estimated market value of about \$720,000 were seized.

Customs earlier received information alleging the sale of suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products at shops. After an in-depth investigation with the assistance of trademark owners, Customs conducted a territory-wide operation in the past three days, from May 15 to yesterday (May 17). Fifteen retail shops in Causeway Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan, Tai Po, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Sheung Shui were raided and a total of about 6 000 pieces of suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products with an estimated market value of about \$150,000 were seized, including facial masks, eyebrow pencils, contour sticks, cleansing foam, sunscreen, make-up remover and face powder. Twelve men and six women were arrested, including six shop owners and 12 salespersons, aged between 23 and 40.

During the operation, Customs also cracked down on a criminal syndicate supplying and distributing suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products and raided its two storage areas located in Yuen Long and Sheung Shui. About 7 000 pieces of suspected counterfeit cosmetics and skin care products with an estimated market value of about \$570,000 were seized. A 34-year-old male syndicate head was arrested.

Investigation is ongoing and all arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

The Divisional Commander (Intellectual Property General Investigation) of Customs, Ms Peggy Tam, said at a press conference today (May 18) that Customs has been taking stringent enforcement actions against the sale of counterfeit goods. She reminded traders to be cautious and prudent in merchandising since the sale of counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions. She also appealed to consumers to procure goods at reputable shops and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

