

Interpol Takes on Illegal E-Waste Trade Around the Globe

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With global creation of e-waste projected to rise exponentially as more individuals and businesses spend more time online, the illegal trade of discarded electronics will also become big business.

To help address it, and stem the flow of illegal e-waste around the world, the international police organization [Interpol](#) created in 2009 Global E-Waste Crime group, and last week gathered experts at a three-day conference in Virginia to develop and share strategies for managing e-waste.

"INTERPOL has received an increasing amount of information about the level of organization behind these crimes and the damaging effects of their actions on people and the planet," said David Asante-Apeatu, director of the agency's Specialized Crime and Analysis unit. "We now need to develop this awareness into action which is what this meeting will help achieve and to give all agencies involved the way forward to identify and dismantle the networks behind these destructive crimes."

The three-day gathering includes one day that is open to the public and to stakeholders. Representatives at the conference gave overviews of how their countries were investigating e-waste, covering the following topics:

- What techniques or strategies have been used in your country to investigate and prosecute e-waste violations? Have they worked?
- Has your enforcement program developed any valuable source of leads or contacts for investigating e-waste offenses?
- What have been your country's major challenges in investigating and enforcing e-waste violations: e.g.,
 - resources
 - cooperation from necessary partner governmental departments or foreign countries
 - laws that are either weak or difficult to enforce, anything else?

"Unfortunately, the illegal transport of waste from the industrialized world to developing countries is an increasing problem, in particular when it comes to e-waste," Ingela Hiltula, head of the Swedish EPA's unit for Environmental instruments said in a statement. "To be able to strengthen our methods for supervision in this field we need to exchange knowledge and experiences on a global level and we believe this meeting is a great starting point for doing so."

Participants will exchange information on their respective country's strategic efforts to control illegal e-waste and develop a sustainable information network which will assist environmental law enforcement from both exporting and importing countries.

Addressing e-waste will be a growing concern in the coming years, since recent reports have said that [developing nations will be buried under a surge of exports](#), while many of those same countries will also be generating massive amounts of ewaste as their economies grow.

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