US and Maldives Sign Agreement to Curb Narcotics and Terrorism Trafficking

The United States and Maldives signed an agreement in January that will significantly boost the Maldives' ability to combat illegal drug and arms trafficking through a state of the art customs communications system. The agreement enables Maldives to participate in the Customs Asia Pacific Enforcement Report System (CAPERS). The CAPERS network allows participating customs administrations to communicate instantly on national security and anti-terrorism 'issues. There are currently 25 countries participating in the network in various locations in the Pacific, Caribbean, and North America. "The commerce that links our two nations must be protected from illegal trade, narcotics smuggling and terrorism. CAPERS will help strengthen and safeguard our trade relationship;' said Jeffrey Lunstead, US Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

The agreement was signed by Allen Gina, Customs and Border Protection agency, United States and the Honorable Ibrahim Rashad, Minister of State and Principal Collector of Customs on behalf of their respective governments. Collaborations such as CAPERS are designed to promote the exchange of information that will curb customs offenses detrimental to the economic interests and security of a nation. CAPERS will help strengthen and safeguard trade relationships, enhance the prevention of narcotics/contraband smuggling and assist with the detection of other violations of Customs laws by the timely exchange of information. The memorandum of understanding is a continuation of a formal partnership that began with the signing of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement last June in Brussels, Belgium.