

Intellectual Property Rights Week observed at BoC

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"Stopping the trade in fake goods is a matter of plugging the supply as it is stopping the demand."

This was stressed yesterday by Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales as he led the destruction of seized counterfeit goods at the Bureau of Customs (BoC) in Port Area, Manila as part of the bureau's observance of "Intellectual Property Rights Week."

Morales, in his message, called for increased social awareness of the bad effects of piracy on the economy even as he said that the only way to totally eradicate the smuggling of fake goods in the Philippines is to urge the public to stop patronizing counterfeit brands.

The customs commissioner said that counterfeit goods may be nothing but second-rate trying hard copycats which will never measure up to the standards of original products, but there is nothing phoney about their campaign to stop fake goods from entering the country's ports.

"We, at the Bureau of Customs, have adopted the motto 'they shall not pass' when it comes to counterfeit goods," he said. Morales added that through the destruction of pirated goods, the Bureau of Customs is demonstrating its commitment to uphold the intellectual property laws of the land. Among the seized products in the ceremonial shredding were pirated digital versatile discs (DVDs) and video compact discs (VCDs), shoes, clothes, bags, and cigarettes as part of the accumulated goods seized by the customs bureau that stored them in bonded customs warehouses.

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) chief Fernandino Tuazon cited this year's theme of Intellectual Property Rights Week entitled "Ekonomiya'y Pagtibayin, Produktong Orihinal ang Tangkilikin" (Strengthen the economy, patronize original products) which, he said, echoes the bureau's thrust to stop the entry of counterfeit goods into the country that deprive legitimate products of their target market, affect the sales of good, genuine brands, and adversely affect the country's economy as a whole.

He added that the Auction and Cargo Disposal Division of the Bureau of Customs is in the process of determining the exact amount needed to destroy seized counterfeit goods stored in customs warehouses.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence and Enforcement Group (IEG) Celso Templo deplored the proliferation of pirated products in the country, saying that "piracy is a crime that should not be tolerated as fake goods in local markets are the products of indifference with serious negative implications on the country's international relations.