

Media Releases 2009

SARS Customs seizes R3.6million worth of Ephedrine

Pretoria, 12 June 2009 – SARS Customs today seized Ephedrine with a street value of R3, 6 million at OR Tambo International this morning. Ephedrine is regarded as the base for most narcotics and is utilised frequently in the manufacturing of Mandrax. The shipment had arrived from Sao Paulo.

The first consignment of five kilograms of Ephedrine was discovered in a vehicle belonging to a courier company operating at the airport. A waybill accompanying the consignment indicated that the entire cache of Ephedrine had not been located and upon further investigation the Dog Unit was able to trace the remaining six kilograms to a container that was to be loaded onto a flight bound for Dubai later this afternoon.

The container was checked and the remainder of the six kilograms was discovered.

Gene Ravele, Head of Customs and Border Management said: “We are very proud of the work that our Customs Dog Unit contributes towards better border management. In light of the Confederations Cup, we are aware that there may be increased attempts to move narcotics into the country and we will ensure that we are able to assist in securing a safe and enjoyable Confederations Cup as indicated to FIFA in our guarantee. ”

The Ephedrine will be moved to the State Warehouse for further forensic testing following which an investigation will be launched.

In another development today, the Dog Unit was involved in the successful seizure of 65 master cases of cigarettes in private storage facility in Marlboro, Sandton. Each master case consists of 50 cartons each comprising 500 packets of cigarettes. The illegal cigarettes with a value of R422 500, 00 were found to have incorrect health warnings and also did not have the diamond stamp that certifies cigarettes that can be legally sold in South Africa.