

International Cooperation, Technical Assistance and Institutional Capacity Building in Combating Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking: the Role of UNODC

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Introduction

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Colleagues and Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address you today at the national seminar on “Strengthening Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking”. On behalf of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation to share with you the vision for international cooperation in combating drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking. I am confident that with your collective wisdom and active participation, this Seminar will yield significant results as we work towards the common goal of combating drug abuse and trafficking.

Thank you also of your kind presentation which reminded me of how much I have learned from people like you who work at national level and how much work has been made possible in many parts of the world through cooperation between practitioners, policy makers, scientists and international bodies.

Illicit Drug Trends overview

First of all, I would like to provide you with a brief overview of illicit drug trafficking and abuse trends before discussing how we can facilitate further international cooperation. (Change slides)

Trafficking of Opiates

The slide on the screen shows heroin and morphine trafficking trends from 2000 to 2001. This chart is taken from Global Illicit Drug Trends 2003, published in June of this year.

It tells us that there is a huge amount of trafficking in the East Asia and Pacific region as well as in South-West Asia and Europe. Furthermore, what needs to be noted is that trafficking of heroin and morphine is rapidly increasing in East Asia and the Pacific. The chart shows that many countries in East Asia, such as China, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore are experiencing increases in drug trafficking by more than 10% compared to the previous year. (Change slides)

Abuse of Opiates

The next slide is on the abuse of opiates. It is also from the Global Illicit Drug Trends 2003. Abuse, as well as trafficking, is still rampant in South-East Asian countries such as Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and several provinces in the south of China. We find that Australia and New Zealand are the other main consumer countries of opiates. (Change slides)

Trafficking of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS)

While Opiates have long been the main substance of concern in the Asian-Pacific region, the recent emergence of amphetamine-type stimulants as a popular drug raises new concerns in the region.

Another chart from the Global Illicit Drug Trends 2003 is on the screen. It shows trafficking patterns of ATS in the world. Please note that Ecstasy is not shown in this chart. It is obvious from this slide that a vast majority of ATS trafficking takes place in the Asian-Pacific region, and the size of trafficking is expanding at an enormous speed. (Change slides)

Here is another slide showing the trafficking of Ecstasy, including MDA, MDEA, and MDMA. While Ecstasy trafficking takes place mainly in Europe and North America, there is still a considerable amount happening in the Asia-Pacific region. China, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan are major venues of Ecstasy. (Change slides)

Abuse of ATS

Finally, let's review the trend of ATS abuse. A high prevalence of abuse can be seen in Europe, North America, East Asia and the Pacific. Several countries in the East Asia and the Pacific region indicate a very high prevalence of ATS abuse. Because of the very addictive and hazardous effects of ATS, ATS abuse is now one of the most pressing problems we need to combat and suppress as soon as possible.

Some of you may have found that neither large-scale trafficking nor a high prevalence of abuse is reported in regard to Indonesia. Though the statistics show neither major seizures nor a high prevalence of abuse, they do indicate that Indonesia does not appear to be consuming illicit drugs at the level of their neighbors in the region. It is still highly likely that it is a transit country, however, meaning it's one leg of a main trafficking route. Furthermore, as long as drugs flow through Indonesia, the country's citizens are undoubtedly at risk to be exposed and to consume them. Therefore, the capacity of Indonesian society to combat drugs needs to be strengthened and maintained. (Change slides)

Drug abuse and HIV/AIDS infection

Close correlation between injecting drug use and HIV/AIDS infection is another most pressing problem. Research published in 2000 by the Regional Task Force on Drug Use and HIV Vulnerability indicates that HIV infects many drug users, especially injecting drug users. The UNODC Regional Centre participates in the Regional Task Force. According to recent findings, 62% of injecting drug users in Myanmar were HIV positive in 1998. Between 30 to 40% of injecting drug users in Thailand and 45% in Nepal were HIV positive in 1999. It is apparent that injecting drug users seem to contribute to further prevalence of the epidemic. Of all identified HIV-positive cases in Malaysia, 77% were injecting drug users; 69.4% in China; followed by 65.5% in Viet Nam. (Change slides)

There is another study on Indonesia worth mentioning. The Centre for Harm Reduction under the Burnet Institute in Australia has been assessing situations related to drug use and HIV infections in Asia. According to a study conducted in 2001, over a million people were estimated to be injecting drug users; it was estimated that 19% of total HIV infections were associated with injecting drug use. Obviously, the great need to suppress the emerging prevalence of HIV/AIDS adds to the urgency in finding effective strategies to combat illicit drug problems in Indonesia. (Change slides)

The United Nations may respond to such urgent need. The essential components of UN global consensus and best practices on tackling the HIV/AIDS vulnerability due to drug injecting are:

- Reach out services to guarantee accessibility of drug rehabilitation services and a meaningful dialogue with drug users;
- Methadone maintenance services for heroine users in application of recognized international practice; and
- Availability of clean needles, to minimize the enormous risk of HIV/AIDS infection for drug users and mainly for the wider non-drug user community.

Those practices have been repeatedly been proved as effective and harmless. No increase of drug use has been observed.

As a former professor of biology, I cannot avoid to remind you that the HIV/AIDS is nothing else than a RNA virus. You are not students. I know. However, the virus does not change by adapting to different audiences. It remains a RNA virus also when in presence of policy makers. A virus cannot listen and cannot write or speak to negotiate a culturally and politically correct position.

The virus will just kill people if you let it enter into human bodies by leaving one of the two entry doors open : unprotected sex and dirty injections. There is no way to kill the virus when inside a body. We have only one way to win the fight. Do not let it in.

From there we can progress to understanding international schemes to fight against illicit drug trafficking within the United Nations framework. (Change slides)

The UNODC and Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime consists of the Drug Programme and the Crime Programme. UNODC headquarters are in Vienna, and there are 22 Field Offices as well as Liaison Offices in New York and Brussels. In 1971, the UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific started operations in Bangkok, Thailand as the UN/Thai Crop Replacement Programme of UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC). In the three decades since then, the office has been renamed several times and has expanded its mandate in terms of both geography and subject area, as well as acquired its present name. The Regional Centre is currently responsible for 30 countries in the region. (Change slides)

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the UNODC Regional Centre articulates that the Regional Centre aims to enhance joint efforts among countries of the region toward the suppression of illicit drugs and transnational crime. This will be achieved by:

- Strengthening the capacity of government agencies and civil society institutions;
- Facilitating cooperation among countries of the region; and
- Serving as an advocate for a drug resistant region

The Regional Centre plays a catalytic role for collaboration, provides policy advice and technical expertise to agencies and governments, disseminates information and documentation, supports long term planning and programming, and manages project delivery. (Change slides)

Thinking Out of the Box to Enhance Freedom from Fear

The main activities of the UNODC Regional Centre have been:

- Political consensus-building on regional responses to dangerous drugs;
- The law enforcement programme;
- The demand-reduction programme;
- The alternative development programme;
- Advocacy and public-awareness activities;
- Partnerships with civil society;
- Activities in the area of human trafficking;
- Activities in the area of money-laundering; and
- Other crime prevention programme. (Change slides)

Political Consensus-Building

The UNODC Regional Centre is very active in forming consensus among regional and national policy-makers in regard to both drug control and crime prevention. Among a number of such political consensus-building activities, the 1993 MOU on drug control signed by the Mekong sub-region countries and the ACCORD Plan of Action should be presented in detail. (Change slides)

The 1993 MOU and the Sub-regional Action Plan

In 1993 several governments of the Mekong sub-region determined that concerted international efforts were required to address the dire problems of illicit drug production, trafficking, and abuse. As a result, the governments of China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and the UNODC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU aims to enhance regional efforts to:

- Eliminate opium poppy cultivation through economic and social development programmes;
- Eliminate trafficking in narcotic drugs and chemicals used in the refining of heroin and the production of other illicit drugs;
- Reduce demand for and local consumption of narcotic drugs; and
- Address the problem of HIV/AIDS infection associated with injecting drug use.

Cambodia and Vietnam joined in 1995 and the MOU now has six participating countries as well as the UNODC.

The Sub-regional Action Plan for Drug Control (SAP) is a strategic outline to address the problems of illicit drug production, trafficking, and abuse. It was officially endorsed at the first Ministerial Meeting of the six MOU governments and the UNODC in Beijing in 1995. (Change slides)

The ACCORD Plan of Action

'ACCORD' stands for ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs. The ACCORD is the sole ASEAN plus China comprehensive framework for regional drug control cooperation. Its ultimate goal is a drug-free ASEAN by 2015, a goal first set in the October 2000 International Congress "In pursuit of a drug free ASEAN 2015", held in Bangkok. The ACCORD Plan of Action was adopted by 36 countries and 16 international organizations, all of whom participated in the Congress. (Change slides)

The ACCORD rests on the following four pillars:

- Proactively advocating civic awareness on the dangers of drugs and social responses;
- Building consensus and sharing best practices on demand reduction;
- Strengthening the rule of law by an enhanced network of control measures and improved law

enforcement cooperation and legislative review; and

- Eliminating the supply of illicit drugs by boosting alternative development programmes and community participation in the eradication of illicit crops. (Change slides)

The ACCORD intends to overcome previous weaknesses in regional drug control cooperation; namely:

- Weak regional coordination;
- Fragmented strategies, often differing from country to country;
- Limited information-sharing, processing and analysis in the region; and
- The absence of a comprehensive political and monitoring framework for regional drug control. (Change slides)

In order to implement the ACCORD Plan of Action, task forces - one for each of the four ACCORD pillars- will be established. The Regional Cooperative Mechanism to Monitor and Execute the ACCORD Plan of Action has been recently launched as one of UNODC's regional projects. The Mechanism will link all regional drug control stakeholders, integrating activities through data- collection, sharing, and analysis and monitoring of progress. The Mechanism will soon launch a regional database on drug control activities on the Internet. (Change slides)

The ACCORD requires unwavering commitment of its members for successful implementation and development. It requires an ownership of the process and the product; active participation and commitment; collaborative and transparent processes; and a new cooperative culture. (Change slides)

Planned Activities for Indonesia

The UNODC Regional Centre has been preparing, implementing, or assisting various activities to promote drug control and crime prevention in Indonesia. Such activities include:

- Improving ATS Data and Information Systems;
- Strengthening the Capacity of BNN;
- A Global Programme on Computer-based Drug Law Enforcement Training;
- Precursor Control in East Asia;
- An Anti-Money Laundering Project by the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM); (Change slides)
- A programme to prevent HIV/ AIDS vulnerability due to drug injecting
- Strengthening the Sub-regional Legal Response to Trafficking in Persons
- Following-up to Strengthening of Judicial and Prosecutorial Drug Control Capacity;
- An ILO-IPEC Project on Child Labor in Drug Trafficking; and
- A Global Programme against Corruption.

Of the above-mentioned activities, the UNODC is now implementing the ATS database, precursor-control, and money-laundering projects with active Indonesian participation. The UNODC is also assisting the child labor project now being implemented by ILO/IPEC. (Change slides)

Other projects are still waiting for donors' assistance. Among such "pipe-line" projects, one that strengthens the capacity of BNN will be introduced as an example. There is a need to enhance the capacity of BNN as the national coordinating agency solely responsible for the effective planning, formulation of policy, and development of national guidelines in various drug control activities. An environment for multi-sectoral or society-wide approach to drug control issues should also be developed. In the first two years of the project period, BNN will obtain and develop its capacity in

planning, coordinating and implementing its demand reduction policies through trainings, policy reviews and exposure to best practices. In the third year, BNN will embark on some trial activities in demand reduction in close partnership with NGOs and other civil society organizations. (Change slides)

UN funded or executed projects, must now be part of the national comprehensive UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) based on the national UN Common Country Needs Assessment. Therefore it is necessary to have the drug control plans and technical assistance projects integrated in the UNDAF. It will then be much easier and more successful for the Department of Foreign Affairs to develop its task of raising resources from foreign aid and technical assistance agencies, paving the way already for the 2004 activities.

As I discussed, the UNODC Regional Centre is preparing many other activities to enhance the capacity of Indonesian society to respond to various drug and crime issues. Your support for the further development of our initiatives would be highly appreciated. (Change slides)

Conclusion

As we have reviewed together, drug control activities are diversified in their geographical scope, stakeholders and subject matters. We will not achieve total freedom from fear of dangerous drugs and transnational crime by focusing only on one country or region, one stakeholder, or one subject matter. We need to apply multi-national, multi-sectoral, and multi-themed approaches in order to effectively combat such common evils currently facing the global society. Because the UNODC is an international entity, neutral to all countries and societal stakeholders, we are the ideal facilitator and implementer of such a multi-faceted approach to defeat drug and crime networks circumventing the globe. (Change slides)

Thank you very much for your attention.