

United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



“Our efforts to promote development and fight drugs and crime will be more effective if they are rooted in partnerships with the young, civil society, governments and the international community.

Working together, we can alleviate the suffering of millions and break the hold of drugs and crime on countries, communities and families.”

~ U.N. Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon

In 1987, the United Nations declared June 26 to be the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The effort addresses the ever-growing problem that illicit drugs represent to the international community. It also is an ongoing commitment to strengthen cooperation and action against drug trafficking and abuse around the world.

Confronting the illicit trade in drugs and its effects remains a major challenge for the international community. “Unless we reduce demand for illicit drugs, we can never fully tackle cultivation, production or trafficking,” says U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “Governments have a responsibility to counteract both drug trafficking and drug abuse, but communities can also make a major contribution. Families, schools, civil society and religious organizations can do their part to rid their communities of drugs. Businesses can help provide legitimate livelihoods. The media can raise awareness about the dangers of narcotics.”ⁱ

Transnational organized crime and drug trafficking is of growing concern. Its broad impact on social and economic development is alarming. Few, if any, countries are exempt. Drug trafficking has severe implications because of its vast illegal profits - an estimated \$322 billion - that it generates annually.ⁱⁱ In several regions known for drug production and transit, criminal groups undermine state authority and the rule of law by fueling corruption, compromising elections, and hurting the legitimate economy. It has been reported that drug profits have been used to support the activities of terrorist organizations.ⁱⁱⁱ

In all cases, criminal influence and money are having a significant impact on the livelihoods and quality of life of citizens, most notably among the poor, women and children.^{iv}



The United Nations is resolved to help create an international society free of drug abuse. This commitment and the establishment of major international drug control treaties do more than help us in the fight against drug trafficking. They seek to protect vulnerable people through a wide range of efforts to which governments commit themselves, such as education and prevention, treatment of drug dependence, care and rehabilitation for drug users, and social support. Over the years, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has launched campaigns to mobilize support for drug control.



Because the threat is so urgent, a task force has been established to implement a U.N. system-wide strategy to coordinate and strengthen responses to illicit drugs and organized crime. This strategy will be built into all U.N. activities alongside peace keeping, peace building, security, development and disarmament activities. In this way, the United Nations seeks to integrate its efforts against drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime into the global security and development agenda.^v

UNODC partners with other organizations to encourage people to actively take part in campaigns. Individuals, communities and various organizations all over the world commemorate this day. Governments, organizations and individuals in many countries, including Colombia, Vietnam, Gambia, Thailand, and South Africa have taken part in public rallies and mass media involvement to promote the awareness of dangers associated with illicit drugs.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sgsm13662.doc.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Testimony-Braun.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://english.safe-democracy.org/causes/links-between-terrorism-and-drug-trafficking-a-case-of-narcoterrorism.html>

^{iv} [http://www.unriscd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpAuxPages\)/4C3D0BE90FAD550480256B6400419B57/\\$file/bp2.pdf](http://www.unriscd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/4C3D0BE90FAD550480256B6400419B57/$file/bp2.pdf)

^v <http://www.un.org/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml>

Resources on international illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime World Report 2012

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2012.html>

2013 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

- Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control
<http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2013/vol1/index.htm>
- Volume II: Money Laundering and Financial Crimes
<http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2013/vol2/index.htm>

DrugFacts: Nationwide Trends

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/nationwide-trends>

