

**Statement of Representative of
UNDCP Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific
Sandro Calvani**

**on the occasion of the
International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
26 June 2000, Siam Discovery Centre, Bangkok, Thailand**



1) “Drugs destroy lives and communities, undermine sustainable human development and generate crime. Drugs affect all sectors of society in all countries; in particular drug abuse affects the freedom and development of young people, the world’s most valuable asset. Drugs are a grave threat to the health and well-being of all mankind, the independence of states, democracy, the stability of nations, the structure of all societies and the dignity and hopes of millions of people and their families: ” (UN General Assembly 1998)

2) This is not fiction or propaganda ! It is everyday’s drama and desperation for millions of people, youth and families all over the world. For example 680,000 people are registered as drug addicted in China and at least 75 % of bluecollar workers use illicit drugs in Bangkok according to the survey of the Thai Farmers Research Centre in February 2000.

3) I recently visited a drug rehabilitation centre in Kunming (Yunnan, China). It is probably the largest in the world. The thousand of young people and adults who

are struggling to get free from drugs asked me to tell the world that drugs are evil.

Drugs are not gender biased. Drugs are not race or ethnic specific. It is not a rightist or leftist issue. It is not a problem of Southern or Northern hemisphere. Drugs enter homes of poor people and rich ones, of employed and unemployed.

4) Drugs are here to stay at least for a while. People are scared, are afraid, like children who fear the dark. But if we switch on the lights of the community, the lights of our brain, and organize our response and fight back, soon it will be drugs, corruption and violence to fear the people. A community who knows well the dark side of drugs becomes much more able to react and better resist against the scourge.

5) Lights on

Lights on denial

Everybody is aware of the threat and pain caused by drug abuse, but consensus on a possible response by civil society is not being built.

Governments do have agreed plans of action but citizens’ participation are limited or simply not existent.

Most of us have feelings of denial. Don’t you see it ? There is denial of the effectiveness of response, frustration of its limited impact, and denial of our own family and personal responsibility.

Lights on harm of drug abuse, corruption and violence

The free press is informing us everyday of so much pain, abuse, and predatory behaviours of corrupt politicians and civil servants.

Drug fuel corruption and vice-versa. Violence hurts the vulnerable parts of society women and children. Violence also hurts youth, their feelings and aspirations.

Lights on sick human relations

Drugs, corruption, and violence are fuelled by poor human relations. Let us switch the lights on and see clearly how we communicate in the family, inside communities, between politics and society. And at the international level...

Lights on blind folded globalization

When we shout that globalization is always good, rule of market is always good, we cannot see the inhuman poverty and the isolation of minorities, tribal people and different ethnic groups.

When the poor are abandoned, cornered or forgotten, they often survive on illicit crops and production of illicit drugs.

Lights on indifference

Drugs, corruption, violence are not only the result of wrong doers and bad guys. "The world is a dangerous place to live in not because of those who do evil but because of those who watch and let it happen." (By Albert Einstein)

Lights on silly secrecy

Lights on to face and illuminate the fog and low visibility of facts, opinions, and the real impact of drug abuse and drug control.

Lights on are needed to forge ahead among so many risks of doing something and of not doing anything.

Lights on to stop and reverse denial of drug abuse, corruption and violence.

Lights on ganja, gambling, girls and guns

International crime is becoming very aggressive in East Asia. Drugs, corruption, illicit trafficking of humans, arms and dirty money must be rejected and stopped now.

Those who still try to hide will have no safe haven, no secret dark area to plan further their attacks to democracy, development and peace.

Lights on the right response

Lights on is a desire to look to these connections with more clarity, more science on the real effects of drugs, less emotions and more understanding.

By switching lights on we want to stop darkness, secrecy and taboos on the drug abuse situation and on the quality of drug control policies.

It is a call for an in-depth observation and reflection into the suffering of drug addicted people and their families, into the way drug control policies are decided and evaluated.

Lights on is about not being alone

Lights on is a community initiative.

It symbolizes that any good advocacy or awareness of the drug problem, any effective, any effective response to the drugs, corruption and violence must be done in a group.

- Communities can campaign and can change policies,
- Communities can heal drug addicts and violent situations,
- Communities can stop corruption and violence.

Are you depressed or frustrated, furious or unhappy, angry, shocked or confused ? Join lights on , you are not alone.

Lights on appeals to policy makers to put the people at the centre of everything we do.

We hope that soon other people throughout the world will switch lights on against the harm of drug abuse, corruption and violence.

6) Today for the first time in Asia business and the United Nations joined their beliefs and their forces to fight against the harm of drugs, corruption and violence. I wish to thank the Siam Discovery Centre, its managers, and the shops for their support.

By doing so, they are helping mankind to become closer to the global goal of a drugs-free world. Yes, you are a true benefactor of mankind.

I sincerely hope that such a partnership between the United Nations and business will continue and expand.

Thank you.